

OPINION 8
JOE BIDEN'S
BURDEN**WORLD 11**
WILL NOT ATTEND BIDEN'S
INAUGURATION ON JAN 20: TRUMP**SPORT 14**
HALLER JOINS AJAX
FROM WEST HAM

LUCKNOW, SATURDAY JANUARY 9, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



I AM BEING
TORTURED:
KANGANA
12 VIVACITY

Farm talks fail; all eyes on SC

Lohri, Baisakhi at Delhi borders as next discussion on Jan 15; SC ruling on Jan 11

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The eighth round of talks between farmers unions and the Government ended without any breakthrough on Friday. The talks lasted for over two and a half hours.

Sticking to their key demand of the repeal of three farm laws, the farmer leaders told the Ministers that their "ghar wapsi" from protest sites along Delhi borders can happen only after "law wapsi". But the Centre insisted the talks must be limited to contentious clauses and ruled out a complete withdrawal of Acts.

The next round of talks will be held on January 15 meaning that the farmers will be celebrating Lohri and Makarsankranti at the Delhi borders. Now all eyes are on the Supreme Court which take up the issue on January 11.

According to sources, the next date has been decided after keeping in mind a scheduled hearing of the Supreme Court on January 11 as the Government feels the apex court may look into the legality of the three laws, besides other issues related to farmers' protests. Farmer leader



Farmers' representatives during the 8th round of talks with the Government over the new farm laws at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Friday PTI

Darshan Pal said farmers would not vacate the protest sites even if the Supreme Court tells them to do so.

The discussion between the farmers and the Centre reached stalemate as union leaders decided to observe silence while holding out papers with slogans including "Jeetenge ya Mareenge" (We will either win or die).

The union leaders refused to take a lunch break and stayed put in the meeting room. The situation came to

this point after the Union Agriculture Minister reportedly told the farmer leaders that he will not consider repealing the three contentious laws.

The union leaders told the Ministers that the Centre should not interfere in agriculture matters as various SC orders have declared farming as a State subject.

After the meeting, Tomar said no decision could be reached as unions did not give alternatives to their demand for the repeal of laws. Tomar said

the Government is still hopeful that union leaders will come with alternatives to discuss in the next round of talks on January 15.

On whether the Government made a proposal to farmers to join a pending case in the Supreme Court on issues related to farmers' protest, Tomar said the Government did not make any such suggestion but it is always committed to follow whatever is decided by the SC.

Asked whether the

Government would consider any proposal for allowing States to decide whether to implement the laws or not, the Minister said no such proposal was made by any farmer leader in this regard, but if such a suggestion is made the Government will take a call at that time.

After the meeting, union leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan said the meeting was inconclusive and it was unlikely that any resolution could happen in the next round of talks. "We do not want anything less than the repeal of laws... Government is testing our strength, but we will not bow down. It seems we will have to spend Lohri and Baisakhi festivals here at protest sites," he said.

Another union leader Hannan Mollah said farmers are ready to fight till death and going to court was not an option. "There was a heated discussion, we said we don't want anything other than the repeal of laws. We won't go to any court, this (repeal) will either be done or we'll continue to fight. Our parade on January 26 will go on as planned," he said.

Continued on Page 11

PM to discuss Covid jabs drive with CMs on Mon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India carried out the second Covid-19 vaccination dry run on Friday as it geared up for the rollout of the nationwide drive, the final strategy of which will be discussed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the State Chief Ministers in a meeting on Monday.

Sources in the Government said that soon after the high-level meeting chaired by Modi, the final date for the rollout of the Covid jab is likely to be announced.

The second dry run for the Covid-19 vaccination rollout was conducted in select hospitals in 736 districts across 33 States and Union Territories on Friday. Following the mock drill, Union Health Minister Dr Harshvardhan said that soon it would be a reality to vaccinate the entire population in India against the novel coronavirus, after prioritising risk groups. He was in Tamil Nadu to take stock of the dry run being carried out there.

The Centre has started a new Covid platform to track particulars of potential vaccine beneficiaries and also issue electronic certificates to them,

Soon after meeting, date for rollout of vaccination will be announced



he told reporters after reviewing the dry run of administering Covid-19 vaccine at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital as part of a State-wide programme.

"In the next few days, also in the near future, we should be able to give this vaccine to our countrymen prioritising those who are at risk in public and private sectors. The Government has already made known the scheme of things," he added.

In a country that is vast like India with a population of 1.35 billion, everything was done smoothly and meticulously without any glitches, he said adding that several lakhs of

health workers have been trained adequately.

The details of this 150-page document have been shared with all stakeholders to make the vaccination drive successful, he added.

The Minister said that the vaccines could be made available to "our countrymen" in the next few days. He said that the Government is ensuring every detail of the vaccination programme is conveyed to the people, ie from the national level to the grassroots level.

The Government, in the first phase of vaccination, is aiming to inoculate 30 crore people from the priority groups like frontline health workers, elderly people and those with comorbidities. However, the first to be inoculated will be frontline workers and health-care professionals.

On January 3, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had granted restricted emergency use authorisation to the Serum Institute of India (SII)'s Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin vaccine.

Avian flu confirmed in 6 States, Haryana to cull 1.66L farm birds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday confirmed the presence of bird flu or avian influenza in Haryana and Gujarat. Bird flu has been confirmed in Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat so far.

According to officials, Kheri and Ghanauli has been identified in Haryana as the epicentres of the outbreak. Culling operations of 1.66 lakh birds in five poultry farms are also underway in Haryana's Panchkula district.

The Ministry of Animal Husbandry on Friday confirmed the presence of avian influenza in two poultry farms of Panchkula district, Haryana, and reporting of positive samples in migratory birds in Junagadh district of Gujarat and in crows in Sawai Madhopur, Pali, Jaipur and Mohar districts of Rajasthan.

According to the Ministry, two of the three samples sent by the Haryana Animal Husbandry Department from poultry farms in Panchkula's Barwala belt to the High Security Animal Disease Laboratory in Bhopal tested positive for bird flu on Friday.

More than 4.37 lakh poultry birds have died in Panchkula's Barwala and Raipur Rani areas, considered Asia's second largest poultry belt, over the past 26 days. While the Jalandhar-based Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratory is still processing the samples sent to it, the Bhopal lab has confirmed the



A worker sprays disinfectant inside a poultry farm, following the bird flu cases in bordering State Himachal Pradesh, in Jammu, on Friday PTI

presence of influenza.

According to the Ministry, the culling operations have been completed in both the affected districts of Kerala. The disinfection process is underway.

Egg and poultry consumption has gone down in some parts of the country where the outbreak of the virus has been reported. Traders have said that although there is no effect on the farm, their sales have diminished over the past few days as preventive measures in several States include a ban on the sale or transport of poultry products.

In view of the spread of bird flu in Kerala, the Dakshina Kannada district in Karnataka has banned the transportation of poultry from the State. Kerala, MP, HP and Gujarat have banned sale of poultry products in the affected areas.

50 birds die in Delhi in 4 days, concerns amid bird flue scare

New Delhi: The death of around 50 birds, mostly crows, in the national Capital over the last four days has raised concerns amid a bird flu scare. "We received information about the death of crows in Dwarka and Mayur Vihar

Phase 3 and of a few wild birds in Hastal in West Delhi. However, it is yet to be ascertained if bird flu infection is the reason," Dr Rakesh Singh from the animal husbandry unit of the Development Department said.

Staff Reporter



Dead crows in a park in Mayur Vihar Phase III in New Delhi on Friday PTI

linging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-



Indian Army personnel in full combat gear, including helmets and rifles, standing in formation.

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non-operational stressors that add on "have compounding adverse effects on health and combat efficiency of soldiers and thus affecting their respective units."

In this regard, officers experience comparatively much higher cumulative stress levels as compared to the Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and Other Ranks (OR) and the stress causative factors are also different.

Highlighting the overall job satisfaction and pride in uniform remains high among JCOs and ORs, the study said, "It seems to be a growing matter of concern among officers, requiring urgent interventions from the highest levels of Government."

"Despite harsh and chal-

lenging service conditions, Indian Army personnel remains highly motivated to serve in CI/CT areas voluntarily. However, the Officers lack a similar level of trust, faith, and confidence in their leadership that JCOs and ORs

Army personnel, the study noted that non

CM: Committed to welfare of masses

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the government would ensure that essential commodities were available to the common man at fair price. He reiterated that a comprehensive framework using information technology would be developed to facilitate the benefit of government welfare schemes to the masses. The CM made the observations after watching a presentation by Food and Civil Supplies department in Lucknow on Friday.

Yogi asked Food department officials to develop effective mechanism to prevent periodic hike in prices of pulse and said that the process of issuance of ration cards on line and off line be continued.

Referring to logistic facilities in the state, the CM said that there was need for augmenting warehousing capacity. He said that the Union government has provided adequate finances for infrastructure development in rural areas for agriculture sector. "Godown construction could be financed from the funds available in centrally sponsored schemes and the work would be implemented after setting up Farmers Producers Organisation (FPO)," he said.

Action taken against 2,100 corrupt officials so far

Lucknow (PNS): Aiming to cleanse government functioning, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has initiated action against more than 2,100 officers, including 50 PCS officers, for engaging in corruption in the last three years and a half.

"The Yogi government believes in zero tolerance against corruption which is reflected in the action initiated against over 2100 officials and employees for graft charges. Some have been jailed and stringent action has been taken against others," a government spokesman said on Friday.

To buttress his point, the official said that between 2017 and 2019, Prosecution department acted against tainted officers and staff in 1648 cases of corruption and employees in 42.85 per cent of trap cases were punished.

While in 2017, 38 officials

were arrested accepting bribes, 390 such personnel were caught in 2018. In 2019, atleast 835 employees were arrested in corruption cases and 26.47 per cent officers and staff were punished while caught red-handed accepting bribes while 25 per cent were indicted in probes. The Appointment department took stringent punitive action against 50 PCS officers and minor punitive action against 44 PCS officers since April 1, 2017. The UP Police department also acted against 480 tainted personnel in the last two years on complaints of corruption and three officers were dismissed. Besides, 68 police personnel were also punished for dereliction of duty. Action was also taken against officials and employees for misbehaving with people and 429 police personnel were penalised in the last two years.

Not an airstrip in 4 years of BJP regime: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav accused the BJP government of lying and claimed that it had failed to take development works forward in the state. He also alleged that all development which was being witnessed in the state was done by the previous SP regime.

"The BJP regime could not develop even an airstrip in UP in the last four years and the power distribution lines too have not been mended. I am happy that saints, seers of Chitrakoot are thanking the previous SP government for development in this region. The present regime has stopped all development here," said Akhilesh during a chat with media persons outside Shri Kamta Nath temple and Kamadgiri temple in Chitrakoot on Friday afternoon.

Stressing the importance of Chitrakoot as a religious place, the SP chief said, "Prayers offered here are always granted. We will pray from here that the Yogi government goes soon and urge the people to

remove it as the first given opportunity."

On the recent gang rape and murder of a 50-year-old Anganwadi worker in Budaun, Akhilesh said that it was unimaginable that such a heinous crime could take place in a temple and its pujari was involved. "The police has become toothless in this regime and the Budaun police could not find the prime accused in the last five days," he said.

Referring to UP's law and order situation, the SP chief said that even High court and Supreme Court have said that jungle raaj prevailed in the state alleging that maximum fake encounters and custodial deaths took place under the current government. "Even today I read in the newspaper that courts have advised the government not to impose NSA unnecessarily," said Akhiesh.

"How many lives have been lost because of those who speak about 'shamshan and kabristan'. There have been irregularities in various schemes including those for 'shamshans' (cremation grounds). These people have crossed all limits of corruption," the SP chief alleged.

Ayodhya signs MoU with IIM-Indore to ensure cleanliness

Lucknow(PNS): Ayodhya Municipal Corporation has signed an agreement with Indian Institute of Management (Indore) to ensure cleanliness in the Temple city and help it become the cleanest city of the country. Indore is rated as the cleanest city in the country.

Ayodhya Municipal Commissioner Vishal Singh said on Friday that an agreement was signed between the two institutions. "Taking cue from Indore, an effort is being made to develop Ayodhya as a high-quality religious city by implementing that model here," he said.

"People will be made aware about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Clean India Campaign. Experts of IIM Indore will also train the staff of Ayodhya Municipal Corporation under the agreement," he said.

A five-member team has been set up under Director of IIM Indore, Professor Himanshu Rai which will work to enlist Ayodhya as one of the cleanest cities in the country. After the construction of Ram temple commenced in Ayodhya, the government as has been constantly making efforts for all-round development of the city.

"Ayodhya Municipal Corporation is preparing to stamp Ayodhya as an international religious and spiritual tourism centre. Availability of facilities is being ensured to promote tourism here and hence cleanliness become all the more imperative here," Singh said.

Ex-Army Signal Corpsman nabbed for espionage

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a counter-espionage operation, the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) netted a retired Indian Army soldier from Hapur on Friday. On his inputs, another suspect was arrested from Gujarat.

A Lucknow-based Military Intelligence (MI) Unit tipped off the ATS in December last year about an ex-Army Signal Corps soldier Saurabh Sharma who was allegedly working for Pakistani intelligence agency since 2016.

The MI had earlier inputs about the involvement of retired Army personnel in espionage activities after which 'Operation Cross-Connection' was initiated to trace Saurabh Sharma. The UP ATS painstakingly worked on the inputs for a month to and tracked down the retired Army Signal Corps man from his parental house in Bihuni area of Hapur.

During quizzing, Sharma admitted to his involvement with Pakistan intelli-

gence agency and revealed that he was contacted by Pakistan Intelligence Operative (PIO) on Facebook in 2014 posing as a Defence journalist.

Sharma admitted that he started sharing sensitive military information in return for money since 2016. He said that he shared information in the form of text, audio and pictures, additional information was also passed to the PIO through WhatsApp calls. It surfaced that Sharma received several payments from his handlers. On the basis of inputs provided by Sharma, the ATS in Gujarat arrested Anus Mitauli from Panchmahal in Godhra. Mitauli used to transfer funds to Sharma on the instruction of his Pak handler. Sharma was discharged from the Indian Army on medical reasons in June, 2020. However, his activities were identified through his mobile phone. An FIR was lodged against Sharma under Sections 120B and 123 of the IPC and Sections 3, 4, 5 and 9 of Official Secrets Act (OSA) and

Sharma admitted that he started sharing sensitive military information in return for money since 2016. He said that he shared information in the form of text, audio and pictures, additional information was also passed to the PIO through WhatsApp calls

Section 13 of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) at Gomti Nagar police station in Lucknow. He will be produced in a court and the ATS team will seek his custody remand to further interrogation. Sleuths of various agencies from UP and Central Intelligence agencies would join the ATS during quizzing.

Six IPS, 31 PPS officers shifted

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government transferred six IPS and 31

Additional SPs on Friday.

Asd per an official communique, SP of Sant Kabir Nagar, Sanjay Kumar II was posted as SP of Regional Intelligence in Varanasi while SP of Lalitpur, Brijesh Kumar Singh was transferred as SP of Railways in Gorakhpur.

Similarly, SP of Auraiya, Kamlesh Kumar Dixit was shifted as SP of Regional Intelligence in Gorakhpur, while SP of Chitrakoot, Prakash Swaroop Pandey was posted as Additional Commissioner of Trade Tax in Lucknow. Hitherto SP of Mathura, Uday Shankar Singh was sent to Prayagraj as Commandant of 42nd battalion PAC.

SP, Regional Intelligence, Varanasi, Surendra Bahadur was transferred to DGP headquarters in Lucknow. Besides, 31 Additional SPs were also given new postings.



NOTICE

I have changed my son name from Vansh to Vansh Sharma Rajat Sharma S/o Ashok Sharma R/o Abhinandan, 15/92-C, Civil Line, Kanpur.

NOTICE

I, V. VASANTHI W/o - Army No. 15416132X Rank NK, Vijaya Prakash P Unit 1 TT Wing AMC, Centre & College Lucknow have changed my name from V.VASANTHI to K.VASANTHI. My name should be corrected in service records.

NOTICE

In registration of my daughter SUNDUS FATIMA (scholar no. 10922 & UID 6986295) of ICSE 2019 & class XII-B. My name SEEMA KHAN is written incorrect. The correct name is SEEMA KHANAM W/O ABDULLAH KHAN R/O H.NO. 375, Mukeriganj, Bilariya Ki Chungi, AZAMGARH-276001

NOTICE

I BEENOO SINGH Spouse of Number 16016852F Hav. DEVESH KUMAR SINGH GAUR Resident of Vill. Ratanpur Teh. Rasulabad Dist. Kanpur Dehat U.P. have changed my name from DEENOO SINGH to BEENU DEVI Vide affidavit dated 18.03.2020 before Rasulabad Kanpur Dehat Court.

NOTICE


I Tej Kumar Shukla father No. 15788592 N Sep Amit Kumar Shukla resident village-Sarai Katayan Post-Sonik Dist-Unnao (U.P.) I declare that my name and DOB were Mistakenly Named Tej Kumar and DOB 01/07/1959 in my son's Army record. While my correct name is Tej Kumar Shukla and DOB is 19/09/1956. Affidavit No. 45AE 231991 dt. 07.01.2021.



यू पी प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि
(उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार का उपक्रम)
कार्यालय: महाप्रबन्धक जेन-7, यू पी, प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि, लखनऊ
बंगला तट, मोनोई रोड, मोनोई नगर, लखनऊ
E-Mail: gm_7@upprojects.org

शुद्धि-पत्र
पत्रक: 27/पीसीओएल/महाप्रबन्धक-7/ई-टेन्डर दिनांक: 07.01.2021

एतद्वारा जनपद बलरामपुर में राप्ती नदी के बाँये तट पर स्थित नौबस्ता-रजवापुर की बाढ़ से सुखा हेतु ड्रेजिंग एवं चैनलाइजेशन कार्य हेतु इस कार्यालय की अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना-11/UPPCL/GM-7/E-TENDER/2020-21 दिनांक 29.12.2020 आमंत्रित की गयी थी, जो दिनांक 07.01.2021 से दिनांक 15.01.2021 तक डाउनलोड/अपलोड की जानी थी, जिसकी टेक्निकल बिड दिनांक 15.01.2021 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 18.01.2021 तक डाउनलोड/अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसे दिनांक 18.01.2021 को अपरान्ह 1.00 बजे तक सबमिट/जमा किया जा सकता है। टेक्निकल बिड उसी दिन अपरान्ह 3.30 बजे अखोहस्ताक्षरी के उपरोक्त कार्यालय में खोली जानी प्रस्तावित है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित अन्य विवरण एवं शर्तें इत्यादि कारपोरेशन की वेबसाइट www.upprojects.org पर देखी जा सकती है।
महाप्रबन्धक जेन-7
यू पी पीसीओएल, लखनऊ



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा
Bank of Baroda
(Erstwhile Vijaya Bank - Now Bank of Baroda)

Regional Office, Kanpur Dehat : 2nd Floor 118/330, Gunti No. 5, Kaushalpur Kanpur-12
Branch : Kannauj, Distt. Kannauj

Possession Notice
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules.
The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for amount & interest thereon.
The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property and O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand & Possession Notice Date
1.	Borrower : Shri Sandeep Narayan Shukla S/o Shri Naveen Chandra Shukla, R/o : House No. 211, Mohalla Kutlupur, Tehsil & Distt. Kannauj. Guarantor : (1) Smt. Sushila Devi W/o Shri Naveen Chandra Shukla (2) Smt. Archana Shukla W/o Shri Sandeep Narayan Shukla (3) Shri Naveen Chandra Shukla S/o Shri Balak Ram Shukla, All Above R/o : House No. 211, Mohalla Kutlupur, Tehsil & Distt. Kannauj. Demand Notice Date : 01-02-2019 • Date of Constructive Possession : 04.01.2021 Description of Mortgage Immovable Property : House No. 211, Mohalla Kutlupur, Pargana & Tehsil Kannauj, Distt. Kannauj in the name of Smt. Sushila Devi W/o Shri Naveen Chandra Shukla, Area : 70 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : Open Land of Shri Akhilesh Dubey, South : 12 Ft. Wide Lane of Nagar Palika, East : Plot of Shri Krishna Bihari, West : House of Shri Ram Shankar Mishra. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 21,62,222.90 + Intt.+ Others Charges
2.	Borrower : M/s Archan Perfumers & Products, Proprietor : Shri Sandeep Narayan Shukla S/o Shri Naveen Chandra Shukla, Address : House No. 100, Mohalla Kutlupur, Makrand Nagar, Tehsil & Distt. Kannauj. Guarantor : (1) Smt. Archana Shukla W/o Shri Sandeep Narayan Shukla. (2) Smt. Sushila Shukla W/o Shri Naveen Chandra Shukla (3) Shri Naveen Chandra Shukla S/o Shri Balak Ram Shukla, (4) Shri Gopi Mohan Tripathi S/o Shri Ashwani Kumar, All Above R/o : Mohalla Kutlupur, Makrand Nagar, Tehsil & Distt. Kannauj. Demand Notice Date : 03-06-2019 • Date of Constructive Possession : 04.01.2021 Description of Mortgage Immovable Property : House No. 100, Mohalla Kutlupur Makrand Nagar, Tehsil & Distt. Kannauj in the name of Smt. Archana Shukla W/o Shri Sandeep Narayan Shukla, Area : 92.73 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : House of Shri Umanath Tiwari, South : House of Shri Suresh Prasad, East : Road of Nagar Palika, West : House of Shri Yogesh Agnihotri O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 29,00,867.34 + Intt.+ Others Charges
3.	Borrower : M/s Harsh Enterprises, Address : Near Pal Chauraha Chowki, Mustafabad, Kannauj. Proprietor : Smt. Sarita Pal W/o Shri Sanjeev Kumar Pal, R/o : Village Bandhwa Post Barauli, Tehsil & Distt. Kannauj. Demand Notice Date : 23-10-2019 • Date of Constructive Possession : 04.01.2021 Description of Mortgage Immovable Property : Property Consisting at Village Bandhwa, Mauza Barauli, Pargana & Distt. Kannauj in the name of Smt. Sarita Pal W/o Shri Sanjeev Kumar Pal. Area : 50.23 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : House of Shri Krishna, South : House of Shri Mahendra Singh, East : House of Shri Krishna, West : Lane O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 28,10,110.66 + Intt.+ Others Charges

Date : 09-01-2021 **Place : Kannauj** **Devisi Officer**



हर गर्भवती माँ को हो
एहसास, कि वह है
सबसे खास !



प्रधानमंत्री सुरक्षित मातृत्व अभियान
09 जनवरी, 2021

दौरे पड़ना

उच्च रक्तचाप

योनि से रक्त साव

हाथ-पैरों या चेहरे पर सूजन

भ्रूण का कम हिलना या न हिलना

तेज़ सरदर्द/धुंधला दिखना

तेज़ बुखार

त्वचा का पीलापन

योनि से साव

खतरे के लक्षण

सतर्कता से जिम्मेदारी निभायें, पूरी जांचें करावें

हर माह की 9 तारीख को सरकारी अस्पतालों में

- गर्भवती महिलाओं की निःशुल्क विशेष सेहत जांच
- परिवार नियोजन, पोषण तथा प्रसव स्थान हेतु काउन्सिलिंग

1 ब्लड टेस्ट

2 यूरिन टेस्ट

3 ब्लड प्रेशर

4 हीमोग्लोबिन

5 अल्ट्रासाउंड

स्वास्थ्य संबंधित जानकारी एवं शिकायत निवारण हेतु सम्पर्क करें **104**

पहली बार माँ बनने पर प्रधानमंत्री मातृ चंदा योजना के अन्तर्गत तीन किशतों में रु. 5000/- की धनराशि लाभार्थी को देय है। अधिक जानकारी हेतु सम्पर्क करें **7998 7998 04**

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Printed and Published by Vijay Prakash Singh for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Pvt. Ltd., 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226016 and Printed at Tin Tin Printech Pvt Ltd., C-33 Amausi Industrial Area, Nadarganj, Lucknow. Editor: Chandan Mitra. Resident Editor: Vijay Prakash Singh. RNI No. 2016/57. Lucknow Telephones: EPABX: 4036600 Fax: 2345582. Allahabad Office: (0532) 2420818, 2421018, 3290460. Kanpur Office: (0512) 2304006, 2304416. Varanasi Office: (0542) 2414294, 2414295. Delhi Office: No. 6, Behind Gulab Bhawan, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455. Communication Office: F-31, Sector 6, NOIDA, Gautam Budh Nagar-201301, U.P. Phone: 0120-4879800 & 4879900

Covid positivity rate comes down to 2.7%

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Covid positivity rate in Lucknow has come down to 2.7 per cent even as the number of coronavirus cases is dipping. "There are no cluster areas now and the Covid positivity rate in January has been at 2.7 per cent while the overall positivity rate has also come down to 5.4 per cent," a senior health official said. The positivity rate had peaked in September after which it has been on a constant decline.

Meanwhile, medical superintendent of Lok Bandhu Level-2 Covid hospital Dr PN Ahirwar said they have been getting less number of patients lately. "The serious ones who cannot be treated here are sent to other hospitals, but currently there are very few patients being referred since most are recovering," he pointed out.

Dr Ahirwar said they have 40 beds for serious patients and 25 of them have been occupied currently. He said they have also set up a post-Covid ward. "There have been patients who come with complaints of extreme weakness and breathlessness. However, the number is not very high," he said.

Besides, Centre of Bio-Medical Research (CBMR) director Alok Dhawan said that a coordination committee has been formed with SGPGI and a meeting will be held on Monday to decide on the areas

for collaboration. "Collaboration in the area of scanning the brains of Covid patients will also be discussed along with other areas. The only challenge is that we cannot scan the brain of a person when he or she is Covid positive. We can take serum samples but we have to be careful that there are no viruses in it. These are things which will be communicated to the coordination committee," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr Tanmay Ghatak from SGPGI said they are carrying out research on pulmonary thromboembolism in Covid-19 patients. It implies blood clotting in the pulmonary artery. "There is a tendency of clotting inside the vessels in this disease, as discussed by various Italian scientists in their works and as seen in the autopsy of Chinese patients. Here we are trying to find out if the trends are similar in our setting as well," he said. He added that there are several studies going on in this area globally.

"We are carrying out a test of thromboelastography which measures the potential of blood to form a clot, and this test is done for early detection of disease. Our research is based on which Covid patient has the tendency to develop this disease. There are different types of patients and we are trying to find out which are the patients with comorbidities developing this disease," Dr Ghatak said.

Meanwhile former pan-chakarma specialist at Lok Bandhu Hospital Dr Adil Rais said that the Ayurveda research was carried out on 120 patients to know the impact of Ayurvedic products and medicines in Covid cure and they are planning a follow-up.

"We are planning to carry out blood investigations along with the same research protocol with Covid. We can take Ayurveda to another level by giving a scientific validation to the whole exercise through such investigation and it will be carried out at Lok Bandhu Hospital itself," he said. He added that in the previous research which they had carried out, 40 patients had been given Ayurvedic medicines and 37 of them recovered in five days while of the 40 patients who were given ginger and garlic, 34 recovered on the fifth day. There was also a control group of 40 patients.

"In Ayurveda, Covid is taken as fever and the primary cause of fever is indigestion or decreased digestion," he said. "If we look at the death and recovery rates, India has done better than the world because of these spices which we have been using. If these are taken in a proper manner, the digestion gets better and leads to better immunity which helps fight coronavirus," he said.

CM satisfied with number of tests done so far

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Expressing satisfaction over 2.5 crore Covid tests having been conducted in the state till date, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said that medical testing plays a vital role in breaking the chain of coronavirus infection.

Testing should be carried out with full capacity and about 10 lakh RT-PCR tests have been carried out in KGMU Lucknow so far, he noted. The CM, who was presiding over an unlock review meeting in Lok Bhawan on Friday, also said that vigil should be maintained

at every level. "All the arrangements in Covid hospitals should be maintained and the availability of medicine, medical equipment and adequate availability of oxygen be ensured. Contact tracing and surveillance should be carried out to full capacity," Yogi said.

The CM also said that all the arrangements with regards to Covid vaccination should be completed in time and necessary directions should be issued after regular monitoring in the districts.

"All the preparations for the dry run of the vaccination, which is to be carried out on

January 11, should be reviewed thoroughly. People should be made aware about prevention from coronavirus infection. E-Sanjivani App should be widely publicised so that more and more people can avail the facility of online medical consultation," the CM said.

On Friday, 130 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow while 203 patients recovered. Lucknow's death toll stands at 1,127 while there are 2,320 active cases in the district. The fresh cases included 14 from Rae Bareilly road, 12 from Gomtinagar, and 10 each from Chowk, Mahanagar &

Alambagh. Across the state, 775 persons tested positive, including 22 in Kanpur, 29 in Ghaziabad, 21 in Gautam Buddh Nagar, 39 in Varanasi and 23 in Meerut, taking the UP tally to 5,91,893. There were 17 deaths in the state, including three in Lucknow.

Meanwhile, a Covid-19 patient survived three heart attacks at SGPGI. Ram Bux Verma (42) was admitted to the Rajdhani Covid Hospital of SGPGI after testing positive for coronavirus on November 30. He was discharged on January 8. The patient was managed initially on oxygen support,

antibiotics and nebulisation but his condition deteriorated and he was given high-flow nasal cannula and NIV support. Despite all measures, his condition continued to worsen and on December 8, he was intubated and put on mechanical ventilation. He had a cardiac arrest after six hours but he was revived as per ACLS protocol. Then again, he had two more cardiac arrests but he survived. He was shifted to pulmonary ICU after testing negative for Covid twice on December 11. He was gradually extubated and his oxygen requirement decreased.

Kids to play and learn at Anganwadi centres



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Under the chairmanship of Governor Anandiben Patel, a programme was organised jointly by AKTU and district administration on Friday for distribution of necessary materials at 40 Anganwadi centres in Lucknow. The programme was organised in eight blocks of the district, including Chinhat, Maal, Malihabad, Bakshi-Ka-Talab, Sarojininagar, Mohanlalgarh, Gosanganj and Kakori. One Anganwadi centre in each block has been made a nodal centre by AKTU and district administration.

The governor said that AKTU Vice-Chancellor Prof VK Pathak has worked with a commitment to making the Anganwadi centres self-reliant in terms of availability of facilities. "This is a place where children come to learn and it is the responsibility of all of us to visit nearby Anganwadi centres and become partners in the overall

development of these children," she said. The materials include educational toys, alphabet & number, blocks, toy fruits & animals, educational maps, playbooks, pictorial story books, white boards, weight machines, first-aid boxes, tricycles, swings, pictorial tables, pedestals, utensils etc.

She added that the materials for distribution are all easy-to-break objects, but there is no need to save them for that fear. "These materials have been provided to the centres for children to learn and play. Use them boldly for children to learn and play. Children will come to the centres to play and it is your responsibility to educate them," she told the officials concerned. She said that for pregnant women, the government provides Rs 5,000 per month for nutrition through DBT and that Anganwadi and ASHA workers must spend this amount for the purpose.

Two arrested in Thakurganj murder case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two persons were arrested from Buhar Pul under Thakurganj police station on Friday for their alleged involvement in the murder of property dealer Vipin Vishwakarma on January 5. The accused were identified as Sushil Kumar and Rishabh Yadav. Two country-made pistols and seven live cartridges were recovered from their possession. Sushil said the weapons were used in the crime. Two of their accomplices, identified as Shubham and Pavan Yadav, managed to escape.

Sushil told the police that the motive for murder was money dispute. He said the victim had been given money long time back but he was not returning it despite repeated warnings. He said the plan was chalked out last month but they were waiting for an opportune moment. Police said the accused were rounded up with help of informers and surveillance on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday. Thakurganj inspector Raj Kumar said the two who managed to flee would be nabbed soon.

Meanwhile, a fire broke out in a confectionery godown in the wee hours of Friday. The godown belonging to Himanshu is situated in Charbagh under Naka police station. Goods were damaged in the fire but there were no reports of any casualty.

नये साल में नयी उड़ान स्वास्थ्य सुरक्षा और सम्मान

मुख्यमंत्री आरोग्य मेला

प्रत्येक रविवार पूर्वाह्न 10:00 बजे से अपराह्न 4:00 बजे तक

समस्त प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केन्द्रों (शहरी व ग्रामीण) पर स्वास्थ्य कैंप लगाकर उपचार किया जायेगा।

टीबी हारेगा

देश जीतेगा

“यूपी सरकार का एक ही सपना स्वस्थ स्वच्छ प्रदेश हो अपना”

आरोग्य मेला में प्रदान की जाने वाली सुविधाएं

ओ0पी0डी0 सेवाएं। टी0बी0, मलेरिया, डेंगू, दिमागी बुखार, कालाजार, फाइलेरिया एवं कुष्ठ रोग से सम्बन्धित जानकारी, आवश्यक जाँच, उपचार एवं संदर्भन सुविधाएं। प्रधानमंत्री जन आरोग्य योजना एवं मुख्यमंत्री जन आरोग्य अभियान की जानकारी तथा पात्र लाभार्थियों को गोल्डन कार्ड वितरण। गर्भावस्था एवं प्रसवकालीन परामर्श तथा सेवाएं। पूर्ण टीकाकरण परामर्श तथा सेवाएं। बच्चों में डायरिया एवं न्यूमोनिया के रोकथाम, बचाव एवं उपचार की जानकारी एवं सुविधाएं। कुपोषित बच्चों का चिन्हीकरण एवं उनके उपचार हेतु समुचित कार्यवाही।

समस्त जानकारीयों हेतु सम्पर्क करें

104

लखनऊ नगर निगम

मैं हूँ स्वच्छ व जिम्मेदार लखनऊवासी

मुझे पता है, हमारा लखनऊ स्वच्छ सर्वेक्षण 2020 में प्रदेश में 1st व देश में 12th स्थान पर रहा।
स्वच्छता सर्वेक्षण 2021 में अपने लखनऊ को No. 1 बनाना है।

मैं, हमारे आस-पास की स्वच्छता व सुन्दरता को देखकर हमारे लखनऊ को
टुंठा/टुंठी 100 में से 100 अंक।

सार्वजनिक व व्यावसायिक क्षेत्रों में भी स्वच्छता को देखकर हमारे लखनऊ को
टुंठा/टुंठी 100 में से 100 अंक।

सफाई मित्र, हमसे गील-सूखा के साथ-साथ हानिकारक व जैव अपशिष्ट
कचरा भी अलग-अलग करवा लेते हैं।

सार्वजनिक व सामुदायिक शौचालय की स्वच्छता व देखभाल के आधार
पर मैं हमारे लखनऊ को टुंठा/टुंठी 100 में से 100 अंक।

मैं, अपने निकटतम शौचालयों को आसानी से पगुल पर भी डुब सकता/सकती हूँ।

स्वच्छता से सम्बन्धित सभी शिकायतों का निराकरण मैं लखनऊ-वन
सिटीज़न एप या स्वच्छता एप से कर लेता/लेती हूँ।

मेरी तरह आप भी स्वच्छता सर्वेक्षण 2021 में अपना बहुमूल्य
फीडबैक देकर अपने लखनऊ को No. 1 बनाने में सहभागी बनें।

<https://swachhsurvekshan2021.org/CitizenFeedback>

21 teams to verify progress of projects in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma has constituted 21 teams of officers for making physical on-site verification of the quality of construction works and progress of 102 major completed or under-construction projects worth over ₹ 50 lakh in the district. He has directed the teams to conduct inspection of such projects of NHAI, Bridge Corporation, PWD, CPWD, UPSCIDC, C&DS, Housing Development, UPPCL, PAC-CFED, State Construction Corporation, Ganga Pollution

Control Unit, Construction Division of Jal Nigam, Electricity, Mandi Parishad and Smart City.

The DM also asked the officers to examine the details of third party inspection done earlier apart from seeing if any problems were being faced in the projects and sought the reports with relevant summary by January 13. He also directed that during verification, photographs of the investigating officers and projects must also be provided along with the inquiry reports. He has given strict instructions to the working agencies to ensure that the projects under con-

struction should be completed with quality as per the standard norms within the stipulated time period. The DM instructed the agencies concerned that during construction work, presence of departmental JEs and AEs should be ensured at all places during verification apart from ensuring adequate security arrangements at the construction sites and negligence would not be tolerated at any stage.

Meanwhile, Sharma has written a letter to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), District Inspectors of School (DIOS), Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) and District Programme

Officer, directing them to inspect all the buildings where the students sit within the next three days and if any of the departmental buildings in the district is in dilapidated state, procedures for their demolition should be started by January 11 as per rules. According to the DM, if any building is found to be in dilapidated state after January 11 and it is not mentioned in the report, then all its responsibility will be on the concerned departments. The DM has also instructed the Chief Development Officer (CDO) to provide the details of all such buildings within a week.

Postal dept playing vital role in eradication of TB

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Along with the Health department, the Postal department is also playing an important role in eradication of tuberculosis (TB) disease. Through the postmen, mucus samples of TB patients are rapidly being supplied to the labs of the Health department, which has also accelerated the identification and rapid treatment of patients. Apart from this, ₹ 500 per month is being paid to all identified and treated TB patients through DBT in their India Post Payments bank accounts. Significantly, 'Active Case Finding (ACF)' in TB search campaign is going on in UP from January 2 to 12, in which health workers are visiting every home in the selected area to search for suspected TB patients.

Post Master General (PMG) of Varanasi Region



PMG KK Yadav telling about Postal department support in TB-free campaign in Varanasi

Pioneer

Krishna Kumar Yadav said that under the joint initiative of Indian Postal and UP Health departments to eliminate TB from root, sputum and other samples of TB patients after packing from the Designated Microscopy Centres (DMC) are being transported through Postal department to the con-

cerned CBNAAT (Cartridge Based Nucleic Acid Amplification Test) and Drug Sensitivity Testing (DST) labs of the district.

Samples from remote community and primary health centres (CHCs/PHCs) are being sent to the laboratories by postmen within 24 to 48 hours,

so that their purity can be maintained, said Yadav, adding that that 2,458 samples have been collected and sent by the postmen to the testing labs since May in Varanasi Region only.

Senior Superintendent (Post Office) of Varanasi Region Sumit Kumar Gaat informed that postmen are collecting these samples from 31 places in Varanasi district.

In four districts of UP including Lucknow, Chandauli, Agra and Budaun, this pilot project was launched from July 15 last year which was later on extended to all the districts from May 1 this year.

In a programme organised in Lucknow, the then Director (Postal Services) of the Lucknow Headquarters Region, Krishna Kumar Yadav along with State TB Officer Dr Santosh Gupta had launched this initiative.

31 more test positive in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 31 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Friday, increasing the total number to 21,548. No casualty has been reported during the day and the death toll remained at 368. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 59 and 57 of them have been recovered from home isolation while two from the hospitals, increasing the number to 17,828 and 2,935

respectively. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 20,763, leaving 417 active cases. The recovery rate is 96.35 per cent, while the mortality rate is 1.70 per cent.

In the first report of the day, 27 positive patients were found out of 2,752 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 5,40,245 and the results of 3,259 are awaited. Out of them, 5,18,701 were negative while 21,544 were positive.

The total number of samples collected was 5,66,511. Earlier, a male aged 80 from Suttola and a female aged 62 from Bhuvneshwar Nagar Colony succumbed to COVID-19 at Sir Sundarlal Hospital, Banaras Hindu University (SSH BHU). With the addition of four new red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,661 including 177 red zones. Three green zones have been converted into the red zones again. There are 2,484 green zones

with eight new ones.

Meanwhile, mass / group corona antigen tests continued and all the 210 tests were found negative at SSPG Hospital Kabirchaura apart from 42 at CHC Shivpur, 59 at Vivekanand Hospital Bhelupur, 225 at LBS Hospital Ramnagar and 110 at SSH BHU. Along with this, samples of 174 from SSPG, 28 from Vivekanand and 250 from LBS Hospital have been sent for RTPCR investigation.

Tributes paid to Baduan gang-rape victim

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Girl students of Shree Agrasen Girls PG College on Friday paid their tributes to the alleged Badaun gang-rape victim and demanded the government to ascertain justice to her at the earliest.

The girl students gathered on the college campus in Paramanandpur here and paid their rich tributes to the victim by lighting candles and expressed their anger against the brutality made on her. They linked the Badaun case with the Nirbhaya case and said that this case should not be prolonged like the Nirbhaya case in which the justice had to wait for almost eight years.



Agrasen girls protesting against Budaun rape case in Varanasi on Friday

Pioneer

They demanded the government to set up a fast track court to hear this case and ascertain justice to the victim at the earliest. They also demanded death sentence to the accused in this case. Among those who were present

on the occasion included Dr Akriti Mishra, Payal, Priyanka and Amrita.

GUEST LECTURE SERIES: Aiming at discussing various paradigms of business, the Faculty of Business Studies of Kashi Institute of

Technology (KIT) organised a guest lecture series under 'Dialogue the Leaders Speak' programme.

The chief guest Uday Rao formally inaugurated the series by lighting ceremonial lamp at the institute premises in Mirzamurad here and threw light on various paradigms of business and their management style. The students of MBA Shweta Singh and Shivani Singh presented the 'Business is an Art' of the programme. In the beginning, the head of faculty Dr BK Singh outlined the objective of the dialogue. Prof M Aishwarya conducted the programme and many attended it including Vishal Rai.

PM may flag off train to Kevadia on Jan 16

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to give a New Year gift to his parliamentary constituency when he will flag off a new train from Varanasi Junction (Cantt) to Kevadia (Gujarat) through virtual platform in view to help the tourists visit 'Statue of Unity', the world's biggest statue located near Sardar Sarovar Dam on January 16. This statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is one of the dream projects of Modi. The train will also link the two great rivers of Ganga and Narmada. The rake comprising Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches have already



Rake of proposed train to Kevadia standing at Varanasi Cantt station on Friday

been brought here on Thursday from Railway Coach Factory (RCF), Kapurthala (Punjab) and this 20 coach train has four general compartments along with eight Sleeper, two each of Third AC and Second AC and one First AC coaches apart from two power cars. In this

train, general compartments are designed in such manner in view to provide better facilities to the passengers including mobile charging points, bio toilets, clean drinking water from water purifier machines and comfortable seats.

Though flagging off sched-

ule has yet not been confirmed, it is expected the detailed time-table including stoppages of the train between Varanasi and Kevadia would be announced soon by the Railway Board. However, the proposed plan to start this new train has raised the eyebrows of many as a large number of regular trains have yet not been restarted since the suspension of their journey due to coronavirus pandemic. Most of the long-distance trains are running these days in the name of special ones and the commuters are still waiting for several passenger, EMUs, DEMUs and other such local trains of shorter distances.

Many people become victims of blackmailing through Adult app

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Beware if you share your personal life pictures on Facebook, Instagram or any other social media. In recent times, many people in the city have become victims of blackmailing through Adult app. This app from America stole many of their personal information and photographs and put them on the escort site and other banned services. The game of blackmailing started after this.

Substantial amount was demanded for the removal of photographs by the fraudsters. Some people even gave money quietly. But some of them reached the police. In one case, the police complained to the app, then photographs and

other information have been removed. But it was not told how the photographs reached out to them.

A few days ago, a man working in a government office at Civil Lines complained to a cyber cell of the Crime Branch. He said that a few days ago a message came on WhatsApp that the name and photo of a girl from his family had been put in the adult site's escort service.

If they paid for the money online then the photos would be removed from the site. Otherwise, along with the photo of the girl, her mobile number will also be put on the adult site. The government employee was taken aback.

The distraught man first approached the police and then

reached the Crime Branch. It was found here that many more citizens like him have complained to the Adult website. Their personal information and data is being stolen and blackmailed.

When many such complaints came, the police started an investigation. When the Crime Branch mailed the adult site giving complete information, the photograph was removed from the site, but who had put the photo and other information on the app, was not informed. Police sources said that the police are not in a position to do much due to being a foreign app. However, every time the app was mailed, photographs and other information were immediately deleted.

The one who blackmails gullible people on the adult site first demands for ₹ 5,000 to 10,000 only due to which many people who were victims of blackmailing, quietly gave the money but soon they were blackmailed again. When the police investigated, it was found that the accounts in which the money was transferred were closed.

Police launched an investigation into the report of several people being embroiled through a foreign dating app. When contacted to the app, objectionable photos and other personal information were deleted from there. Police are under investigation. More action will be taken soon, added Ashutosh Mishra, SP Crime.

Former BHU V-C admitted to SRN Hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Former Vice-Chancellor of BHU Prof GC Tripathi was admitted to the Covid ward of SRN Hospital on Thursday after complaining of breathlessness. He is scheduled to be taken to PGI Lucknow on Friday morning.

On December 31, Prof GC Tripathi's Covid report came positive. He was in home isolation. He was found to be moderately infected during testing at the

CT scans at the time. When he reported difficulty in breathing, he was immediately rushed to SRN Hospital. According to Dr SP Singh, Principal of MLN Medical College, Prof CT scan has also been done with all the testing of Tripathi. He is feeling bet-

ter than before.

Former Governor of West Bengal Keshari Nath Tripathi a corona-infected is undergoing treatment at SGPGI Lucknow. According to family sources, doctors have said that after performing a CT scan, his health is better than before. His oxygen saturation is also fine. On the other hand, supporters are engaged in worshipping for his better health.

Meanwhile, the pace of corona infection has decreased. On Thursday, 28 new Covid positives were found in 24 hours. While 33 people beat corona. Many days later no one died of the infection.

According to CMO Dr Prabhakar Rai, 6504 people were examined on Thursday. Teams in the mela areas compiled samples. Infection was

confirmed in a total of 28 people. Six people recovered in hospital and 27 in home isolation. The active cases are now 450, added Dr Prabhakar Rai.

RDX ATTACK CASE TO BE HEARD ON JAN 15: The MP-MLA court of Prayagraj could not hear the case of RDX attack on Nandi on Friday owing to absence of the first investigation officer on Covid pretext. Cabinet Minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi had been attacked with a remote controlled RDX bomb in 2010, in which he had sustained serious injuries and two persons including a journalist and a security guard were killed. Now this case will be heard on January 15.

Nandi has hired a Delhi High Court lawyer JP Sharma who is considered to be an

expert in RDX attack cases. Nandi, who was a minister in the Mayawati Cabinet at the time of attack, had to spend years in hospital. Now he is a minister of the Yogi Cabinet. Scribe Vijay Pratap Singh and security guard Rakesh Malviya had died in this bomb attack.

The prime accused of this July 12, 2010 case Anand Shandilya alias Rajesh Pilot of Madhya Pradesh had been arrested, and later he died owing to brain stroke. The prime conspirators Vijay Mishra MLA and his relative Dilip Mishra were wanted in this case for quite some time. Now they are in jail.

The court could now hear this case on Friday as the first investigation officer AK Nigam could not ensure his presence owing to Covid.

Criminal arrested after encounter

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

A dreaded criminal Salman was arrested on Thursday night after a brief encounter by the Newa police outpost incharge under the Dhoomanganj police station. One of his associates Ashok Pasi was also arrested from Naini the same night. Salman had terrorised the local residents of Dhoomanganj 10 days ago by lobbing bombs on the house of a railway contractor near Sriram Sweet House.

A resident of Etawa, Salman was at present living in Preetam Nagar area of Dhoomanganj. He was wanted

in about a dozen cases of crime in Etawa and Prayagraj.

On Thursday night the Newa police outpost incharge was on a regular vehicle checking. At 1.40 am he spotted a mobike rider trying to evade the checking. When the police asked him to stop, he opened fire and lobbed bombs on the police party. The S-I immediately passed message and Dhoomanganj police immediately reached the spot and surrounded the criminal. Salman continued to fire to make an escape, but when the police answered in the same language, he sustained a bullet injury on his leg and fell on the

road. He was later taken into custody and sent for medical aid.

The police recovered from his possession a pistol, cartridges, bombs and a bike.

In a separate incident one of Salman's associate Ashok Pasi was also arrested from Naini after a brief encounter. He had escaped from Kaundhiyara after committing a crime.

CRET-2020: Allahabad University (AU) will conduct its Combined Research Entrance Test (CRET)-2020 on January 17. The entrance exam will be conducted at 14 centres in offline mode in

Prayagraj between 11am and 1.30 pm under strict observation of COVID-19 prevention guidelines as issued by the government, informed Prashant Agarwal, Director of Admission-2020 of AU.

Candidates will be able to download their admit cards for appearing in the entrance exam from the officials website of AU from January 8, he shared.

All aspirants would undergo mandatory thermal scanning before getting into examination halls and would also need to wear facemask and observe all other guidelines for appearing in the admission test.

Seminar on literatures from Indian subcontinent begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

A three-day online International Seminar on 'Literatures from Indian Subcontinent: A Review of Different Dimensions' from January 8 to 10, commenced on Friday, organised by the Department of English, Iswar Saran PG College, Prayagraj in collaboration with The English and Foreign Language University, Hyderabad. The inaugural session began with the welcoming of the chief guest Prof Sangeeta Srivastava, Vice-Chancellor, University of Allahabad, the guest of honour Sangeeta Jaitely, an educationist, social reformer and activist, the keynote speaker Prof Kapil Kapoor, Chairperson, IIAS Shimla and the president of the session Prof Sharwan Kumar Sharma- Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Director, Centre for Canadian Studies, Gurukul Kangri, Haridwar. The guests were welcomed by the Principal Prof Anand Shanker Singh. The seminar has nearly ten resource persons from Nepal and ten from other countries. Fifty participants are registered from countries like UK, Canada, Australia, California, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Poland.

Prof Anand Shanker Singh, Principal in his welcome address, presented a brief and critical analysis to the history of Indian English literature and also talked about the rich Indian tradition

and culture and how literature played an important role in knitting its ethos.

The chief guest Prof Sangeeta Srivastava charted the history of Indian English literature beginning from English Education Act which made English a medium of education in India. She also mentioned about the Charter Act of 1813.

She continued and specifically talked about the stalwarts of Indian literature like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekanand and Toru Dutt. She further added that the need of the time is to encourage comparative literature and use literary theories in literary studies.

Dr Jai Singh gave a brief introduction to the theme of the seminar and is hopeful to explore new vistas and dimensions on the topic in the upcoming days of the seminar.

The keynote speaker Prof Kapil Kapoor, began by quoting Plato 'nothing in this mortal life is worthy of great concern'.

He said that literature of the subcontinent despite political divisions and boundaries, in the consciousness of feeling presents one entity. He made us understand the crude aspects of poetics in the simplest possible form.

The presiding address was delivered by Prof Sharwan Kumar Sharma. He said knowing the roots is important as there are common

cultural affinities through which we can identify literature of various countries. He talked about conscious meditative state and cosmological approach towards literature. In the end he said one needs to be a 'Sahridya' and what is most important in Kavya is togetherness of words and their meaning. He also referred to four kinds of knowledge i.e exact, false, mistaken perception and compressed knowledge.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr Anuja Saluja, convener, Department of English (Director of the programme) and compered by Dr Shaista Irshad, convener of the programme.

TRAFFIC POLICE'S DIVERSION PLAN FAILS: Traffic police's diversion plan failed to bring order to the chaos as commuters were stuck for hours in a massive snarl between Phaphamau Bazaar Road and Shantipuram Crossing and, adjoining streets on the Lucknow-Prayagraj highway again on Friday.

On Sunday, traffic movement was restricted on Basna Bridge after a portion of soil caved in near the approach road of the bridge due to a damaged pipeline.

The police came up with a diversion plan for the vehicles passing through Beli Kachar Road.

However, the road is one

of the busiest ones and the volume of traffic is quite high, the diversions failed to avoid a jam between Shantipuram Crossing and Phaphamau Bazaar Road.

Commuters caught in the jam blamed the traffic police authorities for not chalking out an effective diversion plan. They said the snarls caused a lot of inconvenience to those commuting daily to health centres, primary schools and blocks.

Chhaya, a government employee, said, 'We were stuck in the jam for around an hour. The jam was due to mismanagement on the part of traffic police, who failed to implement the diversion plan effectively'.

Satyam, another commuter, said 'While I was returning from Nawabganj to Prayagraj, I saw the police diverting the traffic towards Shivgarh to avoid rush. However, it failed to avoid a jam.'

A senior traffic police official said that the movement of two-wheelers and light four-wheelers was being diverted through Beli Kachar Road since Tuesday. 'An adequate number of traffic policemen and home guards have also been deployed to avoid a chaos-like situation.'

Meanwhile, senior police officials including IG (Prayagraj zone) KP Singh inspected the Phaphamau route on Friday.



Divisional Commissioner, Raj Shekhar holding an Udyog Bandhu meeting at his camp office

Pioneer

DC chairs Udyog Bandhu meeting

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Divisional Commissioner, Raj Shekhar while chairing the Udyog Bandhu meeting late on Thursday expressed concern over laxity and apathy of the officials in the construction of the drainage system of Rania Industrial Area. He said despite a deadline given to carry out the survey on top priority it had not been done. He directed that the survey should be completed by January 12 and the report submitted at the Commissionerate latest by January 20 or else the officials concerned will be answerable.

He said when it had been directed that the primary report must be submitted by conducting a quick survey at the end of December, UPSIDA could not submit the report which showed gross negligence and misconduct on part of the officials concerned. He warned that now if the action was not taken by the department within the stipulated time-frame, strict action will be taken against the officials of the department concerned. The Joint Commissioner of Industries said that the construction of boundary wall in the park located on Road No 3 of Panki Site 5 had been completed by UPSIDA and its handover was to be done to IIA.

The DC directed that the hand over of the park should be

done latest by January 15. He was further informed regarding the construction of the road connecting the industrial area Panki and Dada Nagar and the bridges coming in way, its repairing of the potholes in front of the Kanpur Fertiliser and Steel Authority of India Ltd had to be completed. He said the fact that this work had not been completed till January 7 and directed the Executive Engineer that this work will now be completed by April 2021.

Shekhar expressed concern and displeasure and directed that the work should be completed by February. He added that if this work was not completed by April, then the money will be recovered from the contractor concerned. He said the work was to be completed by March 2019, which was not completed till date. Regarding the reconstruction of drains and roads of Industrial Area Jainpur, the UPSIDA apprised that the revised assessment had been sent to the headquarters and approval and tendering of the assessment will be completed within three months. He was informed that the work will be completed in five months after the acceptance of the tender. He was irked over the failure to set right the high mast lights and said that it should be completed by January 31.

The report of the National

Productivity Council had been received regarding the functioning of the CETP set up in the Jainpur Industrial Area. Action will be taken on the basis of the report at an accelerated pace. The Commissioner instructed that in every condition the work should be completed by August 2021. He warned that the date will not be increased and in case of non-completion of the work, responsibility will be fixed.

In the last meeting regarding the point raised by Laghu Udyog Bharti, it was informed that a committee for redress of grievances had been set up at UPSIDA Headquarters level, which consisted of members of IIA and Laghu Udyog Bharti. He said the Industry Association demanded that problems should be sought and resolved through all Association. He also directed that a reminder letter regarding the house tax of industries should be sent to Principal Secretary, Urban Development.

Regarding the establishment of fire station in Rania Industrial Area, it was informed that 5300 square metre land near Kundan College, Rania and 2.5 bigha land near the power grid at Bilsaraya Road Jariha have been identified. It was directed that a proposal for land for immediate fire station should

be submitted. Similarly, in order to release the budget for the fire station under construction in Panki Industrial Area, a letter should be immediately sent to government regarding amalgam of plots of Super House and other issues related to time extension fee should be flagged to CEO, UPSIDA for expedition action. He was irked over the failure of the handover of the dispensary of the Regional Office State Employees Insurance Corporation and the Joint Commissioner was directed to ensure handover after meeting the new officials of PWD and ESIC.

The DC directed that the Executive Engineer, KESCo, would visit the entire industrial area of Dada Nagar and Panki and inform about the status of the works. He strictly directed that lights will be installed by the Kanpur Municipal Corporation only after the cable was laid by KESCo.

It was also informed by the industry association that the wires are hanging too low and this could be damaged by the movement of trucks. Prominent who took part in the meeting were representatives of industry associations and officials of various departments and the meeting was conducted by Joint Commissioner Industries, Sarveshwar Shukla.

PNB joins hands with IIT-K to set up Fintech Innovation Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Punjab National Bank joined hands with IIT-Kanpur to set up the FIRST Fintech Innovation Centre on the IIT-K campus. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed at the PNB Headquarters, Dwarka, New Delhi, in the presence of CH SS Mallikarjunarao, MD & CEO of PNB and top officials from the bank. The IIT-Kanpur and FIRST under this partnership, will set up a 'Fintech Innovation Centre (FIC)' as a vehicle for research and developing technological solutions to address challenges and explore opportunities in the BFSI space.

PNB intended to create new products and solutions with technological innovations by creating a Fintech Innovation Centre at IIT-K involving IIT-K's experienced faculty members with the help of FIRST. The collaboration of technical prowess from IIT-



MoU being signed between PNB and IIT-K to set up the FIRST Fintech Innovation Centre on the IIT-K campus.

Pioneer

Kanpur and financial expertise of PNB will make it an apt 'Fin-Tech' partnership that will help build innovations and entrepreneurial excellence. The Fintech Innovation Centre will be supported by a holistic ecosystem of financial institutions, academia, VC funds, technology companies and key government organisations.

Planned focus areas included Fintech, Digital Lending, Payments, Cyber Security, etc. The bank will get

access to the pool of Fin-Techs incubated by IIT-Kanpur along with their innovative solutions. Mallikarjunarao said it was an important day for PNB and IIT-Kanpur, where both were embarking on a journey to bring expertise of country's premier academic institution into banking & financial services.

He said this shall provide an opportunity to the start-ups and Fintech companies incubated by IIT-Kanpur to devel-

op technological solutions for Punjab National Bank and financial ecosystem.

He said there was a need to provide omni-channel solutions to various segments of customers like retail, agriculture, MSMEs etc. with forward and backward linkages. He added that it was important to ensure last mile connect and Turn Around Time (TAT) in satisfying the customer requirements through digital or physical touch points at every link. The Fintech players and startups can participate in developing customer facing technology solutions to extend the link between customer and bank through peripheral solutions, Open Banking etc.

Prof Amitabha Bandyopadhyay from IIT-Kanpur, said on the occasion, with establishment of PNB-FIC at IIT Kanpur, world class research will be undertaken in Fintech related neo-technologies for developing advanced solutions for the bank.

United Mercantile Coop Bank signs MoU with Reliance Nippon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

United Mercantile Coop Bank Ltd signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Reliance Nippon Life Insurance Co Ltd to meet the life insurance needs of its customers. A special function was held to apprise its customers about the new venture and its new products related to life insurance. As per the pact the company will act as a guide and advisor on issues of everyone's need. Life insurance was one area which helped the person in adverse conditions or in times of financial crisis.



United Mercantile Coop Bank Ltd signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Reliance Nippon Life Insurance Co Ltd.

Pioneer

The gathering was informed that the UML endeavour was to provide

insurance benefits to all its members and their families as well.

FDP on emerging digital India perspectives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The two-week Faculty Development Programme on 'Emerging Digital India Perspectives' organised by the Academic Development Cell, CSJM University (facilitated by ICT-IIT Kanpur) was started on Wednesday. The inaugural ceremony was chaired by Prof Neelima Gupta, Vice-Chancellor, CSJMU as chief guest, Prof BV Phani of IIT Kanpur and Prof Rachna Asthana, Director, AIITH, Kanpur, as guests of honour. Dr Anil Kumar Yadav, Registrar, CSJMU and Prof Sanjay Swarnakar, Dean Academics, CSJMU were also present on the dais as special guests. The programme will be focused on understanding the prospects of Information and Communications Technology. It will be a multifaceted learning experience about unified communications and the integration of telecommunications and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage and audio-visual, that enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information. Dr Rashi Agarwal, HoD-IT, UIET, CSJM University welcomed and introduced the dignitaries. Prof Rachna Asthana, Director, AIITH, Kanpur shared her wisdom with the audience. She talked about how ICT is a broad subject and the concepts are evolving. She noted that the FDP will focus on narrowing the gap between the academic approach to electronics and ICT domains as currently provided by the educational institutions and the practically oriented approach as demanded by the industry.

Prof BV Phani, Professor, IIT-Kanpur shared his vision of the FDP, which is working towards enhancing the domain expertise of interested faculties with a special focus on the faculties of the three northern states of U.P., Haryana, Punjab and the two union territories of Delhi and Chandigarh, through a continuous engagement model with courses upgraded regularly. Prof Neelima Gupta, Vice-Chancellor, CSJM University, expressed her views about the FDP and she emphasised that to be effective in education, ICT must be fully integrated into the pedagogy. Specifically, when teaching literacy and math, using ICT in combination with 'Writing to Learn' produces better results than traditional methods alone or ICT alone. She also noted that Information and Communication Technology can contribute to universal access to education, equity in education, the delivery of quality learning and teaching, teachers' professional development and more efficient education management, governance, and administration. Prof Varsha Gupta, Professor-Life Sciences, CSJM University gave the vote of thanks.

She expressed gratitude towards the dignitaries for sharing their valuable time and wisdom with all present and with that, the inauguration of the Faculty Development Programme on 'Emerging Digital India Perspectives' came to an efficacious conclusion.

2 criminals held

KANPUR (PNS): Panki police have arrested two notorious criminals and recovered 10 looted mobile phones and one bike from them. Accused have confessed their involvement in many other incidents of loot held in the area. Anshu Pal son of Rama Kant Pal of Panki B Block had gone to Panki temple on December 4. After proceeding from house, he received a call of his friend. When he was texting with his friend, two bike-borne miscreants looted his mobile phone and escaped. As the incident was recorded in CCTV cameras installed there, police launched raids to nab the miscreants on the basis of CCTV footages and colour of their bike. On a tip-off, police reached Sabzi Mandi Road where, after seeing the force, two bike-borne youths began to escape. They were cornered and arrested by the police. On being quizzed, they were identified as real brothers Pinku Gautam and Rinku Gautam of Chhatarpur, Shivrajpur.

NER GM reviews works

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

General Manager of North Eastern Railway (NER) Vinay Kumar Tripathi on Thursday during a meeting organised on MS Teams did a detailed review of the progress of the ongoing works on NER. During the review, for continuous improvement in the methodology of railways importance of effective training for human resource development, various tasks to be done for employee welfare and importance of other identified works was underlined. The GM received information about the updated status of the works being done for the expansion and improvement of facilities available at Signal and Telecom Training Centre, Gorakhpur, newly-established Zonal Rail Training Institute, Ghazipur, Divisional Multi-Disciplinary Training Institute, Izzatnagar, including NER's all training institutes and hostels. Tripathi gave several practical suggestions while reviewing the ongoing work for the implementation of Hospital Management Information System in hospitals of Varanasi and Izzatnagar divisions. He said that to prevent cattle run over (CRO) cases such sensitive sections should be identified and the work of boundary wall/ fencing should be done as per requirement.



Commercial Manager (CCM) SC Prasad, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer (PCME) AK Pandey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)/ Construction RK Yadav, Principal Chief Engineer (PCE) Satish Kumar Pandey, Principal Chief Signal and Telecom Engineer Anil Kumar Mishra, Principal Financial Adviser Tanuja Pandey, Principal Chief Security Commissioner/ RPF, Atul Kumar Srivastava, Chief Project Director/Station Development SK Mishra, secretary to GM, DK Khare, CPRO Pankaj Kumar Singh and Deputy General Manager /General Krishna Chandra Singh, DRM/Lucknow, Dr Monika Agnihotri, DRM/ Izzatnagar Ashutosh Pant and ADMR/Varanasi Praveen Kumar and other branch officers. The heads of departments, DRMs and senior railway officers present in the meeting while describing Tripathi's suggestions as very practical assured to implement them fully.

Rajbhasha Committee meeting held

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The virtual meeting of the Zonal Railway Rajbhasha Implementation Committee was held under the presidency of NER GM Vinay Kumar Tripathi on Thursday. Principal heads of department, ADMR-cum-Additional Chief Rajbhasha Officer and chief workshop managers were present in the meeting. On the occasion for Railway Board's Collective Award Scheme for the year 2019 for maximum use of Hindi the GM honoured the Engineering department, headquarters, Lucknow division among the divisions and Signal Workshop among workshops. While wishing everyone a happy new year on the occasion, GM said that it was a pleasure to see that the entire work culture of NER was in Hindi. He said Hindi language is not only a means of expression of feelings and thoughts of Indians, but

cultural, religious and spiritual values of the country too are associated with it. In this way the official language Hindi is playing an important role in strengthening Indian society and the country as well, he said and added that it's vocabulary was extensive. It also has the full ability to express scientific, engineering and technical concepts and that is why the learned have recognised it as the official language in the Indian Constitution. He said we can maintain the importance of the official language Hindi in our work area with its constant use. Tripathi added that it was indeed a matter of pride that the Rail Mantri Rajbhasha Medal will be awarded by the Ministry of Railways to this Railway's Inspector General- cum-Principal Chief Security Commissioner, Railway Protection Force (RPF) Atul Kumar Srivastava. Under Railway Board Individual Cash

Award Scheme Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (SDEE), Izzatnagar, Sumit Garg, Pradeep Kumar, Principal, Signal and Telecom Training Centre, Gorakhpur, and Chief Office Superintendent, Lucknow Division, Uma Raman Srivastava, and Senior Publicity Inspector, Varanasi division, Himanshu Rao, have also been awarded. Welcoming all the members present in the virtual meeting, Chief Rajbhasha Arvind Kumar Pandey said it was the need of the hour that they had to hold the meetings through virtual medium. He said that it was indeed a matter of pride that their Railway has been getting awards in the field of Rajbhasha from the Ministry of Railways. Deputy Chief Rajbhasha Officer Omkar Nath Singh thanked all the members present in the virtual meeting which was conducted by Rajbhasha Officer Dhruv Kumar Srivastava.

Gkp-Patliputra spl to run from Jan 13

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of the passengers will run the 05080/05079 Gorakhpur-Patliputra-Gorakhpur special train from January 13 to March 31 five days a week i.e. on every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 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. The 05080 Gorakhpur-Patliputra special will from January 13 to March 31 depart from Gorakhpur every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday at 03.35 hrs, Pipraich at 04.05 hrs, Kaptanganj at 04.28 hrs, Ramkola at 04.53 hrs, Padrauna at 05.12 hrs, Dudahi at 05.30 hrs, Tamkuhi Road at 05.45 hrs, Thawe at 06.55 hrs, Gopalganj at 07.10 hrs, Dighwa Dubauli at 07.55 hrs, Mashrakh at 08.20 hrs, Marhaura at 08.48 hrs, Khairah at 09.40 hrs, Goldinganj at 10.33 hrs, Dumri Juara at 10.41 hrs, Bada Gopal at 10.50 hrs, Panchpatia Deoria Halt at 10.57 hrs, Avtar Nagar at 11.03 hrs, Ambika Bhawani Halt at 11.09 hrs, Dighwara at 11.16 hrs, Sitalpur at 11.24 hrs, Nayagaon at 11.35 hrs, Parmanandpur at 11.43 hrs, Pahleha Ghat at

12.31 hrs, Digha Bridge Halt at 12.44 hrs and reach Patliputra at 12.53 hrs. During the return journey 05079 Patliputra-Gorakhpur special train will from January 13 to March 31 depart from Patliputra every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday at 14.55 hrs, Digha Bridge Halt at 15.00 hrs, Pahleza Ghat at 15.14 hrs, Parmanandpur at 15.47 hrs, Nayagaon at 15.56 hrs, Sitalpur at 16.06 hrs, Dighwara at 16.22 hrs, Ambika Bhawani Halt at 16.29 hrs, Avtar Nagar at 16.35 hrs, Panchpatia Deoria Halt at 16.41 hrs, Bada Gopal at 16.56 hrs, Dumri Juara at 17.04 hrs, Goldinganj at 17.11 hrs, Khairah at 17.45 hrs, Marhaura at 18.08 hrs, Mashrakh at 18.30 hrs, Dighwa Dubauli at 18.54 hrs, Gopalganj at 19.38 hrs, Thawe at 20.15 hrs, Tamkuhi Road at 20.53 hrs, Dudahi at 21.06 hrs, Padrauna at 21.23 hrs, Ramkola at 21.40 hrs, Kaptanganj at 22.15 hrs, Pipraich at 22.36 hrs and reach Gorakhpur at 23.50 hrs. A total of 13 coaches will be attached in the train, including two of SLRD, 10 general second class and one of air-conditioned chair car.

AMRITSAR-JAYNAGAR SPL: The railway administration had as per information released earlier had cancelled the following trains till March

31 due to fog. The movement of these trains will be started again as follows:- The movement of 04674 Amritsar-Jaynagar special train running from Amritsar every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday will be resumed from January 15. Likewise the movement of 04673 Jaynagar-Amritsar special running from Jaynagar every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday will be resumed from January 16. The movement of 04006 Anand Vihar Terminus-Sitamari special running daily from Anand Vihar Terminus will be resumed from January 15. The 04005 Sitamari-Anand Vihar Terminus special train running daily from Sitamari will be resumed from January 17.

RESCHEDULED: The railway administration due to non-interlock work being done at Unnao station is rescheduling the timings of the following trains. The timing of 05117 Chhapra-Mathura Jn special train running from Chhapra on January 13 timings will be rescheduled and run from Chhapra two hours late at 07.20 hrs. The 05067 Gorakhpur-Bandra Terminus Special train running from Gorakhpur on January 13 will be rescheduled and run from Gorakhpur one hour 30 minutes late at 07.00 hours.

Vijay hits century Valuables stolen

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 at the Mini Stadium of Varanasi Division, North Eastern Railway (NER), a match between Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Engineering department was played on the sixth day. After winning the toss, the Engineering department batted first and scored 203 runs for the loss of four wickets in 20 overs. For the first time in the five-year history of this tournament, a player scored a century. Vijay scored 100 runs off 61 balls besides Vineet contributed 34 runs and Abhishek 22. Sheshnath took two wickets for RPF. In reply, the RPF team was dismissed for 100 runs in 17 overs, Surendra contributed 23, Shah Nawaz 16 and Javed 12 runs. For Engineering department Vineet took four wickets and Akhilesh took two and won the match by 103 runs. Vijay was given the Man of the Match Award for his brilliant century. In Thursday's match the umpires were Kalam Ali and Pramod Rai.



CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Valuables worth around ₹20 lakh, including ₹2.20 lakh in cash, were stolen from a jewellery shop under Ahraura police station on Wednesday night. Reports said the neighbours were taken aback when they saw a hole in its rear wall and informed its owner. Later the police reached the spot along with a sniffer dog but fail to get any clue. Shop owner Rajesh Rastogi told CO Chunar that the valuables worth around ₹20 lakh, including ₹2.20 lakh cash kept in safe had been stolen.

BODY FOUND: The body of a man was found in a car in Bariaghat under City Kotwali police station. The deceased, Shashikant Tiwari (52), a resident of Bariaghat, was residing at present in Patengara locality of Vindhyachal. On getting information City Kotwali police reached the spot, informed his family and took his body for completing legal formalities. After registering a case the police have started investigating the matter.

MISHAP: A teacher died in a road mishap on Thursday. Tahir (40), son of Saifuddin, belonging to Garaudi village under the Adalgaat police station was going on his motorcycle on Naranpur-Varanasi road when he was hit by a truck near Imambada in Baraiapur village. On being informed his family there spot along with police. Later the police took his body into custody and sent it for the post-mortem examination.

DGCA issues guidelines for Covid-19 jab transportation



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday issued the guidelines for the transportation and handling of the Covid-19 vaccines by airlines and airport operators, directing them to pack the vaccines in packets of dry ice. "Passengers shall not be allowed on board. Any other occupants on board should only be allowed if required under demonstrated urgent operational needs. (additional flight crew for the return flight or additional persons needed for the cargo handling," the DGCA noted.

"Dry ice transforms into carbon dioxide gas at temperatures higher than -78 degrees Celsius under normal atmospheric pressure and therefore it is classified as "dangerous goods" by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), it said.

"All operators while engaging in transportation of COVID-19 vaccines packed with dry ice shall establish the maximum quantity of dry ice that can be loaded in a given cargo hold or in the main deck (passenger cabin) when a passenger version is deployed for all cargo operations," the DGCA noted.

"Non-scheduled operators, including aircraft engaged in general aviation that are required to participate in the carriage of Covid-19 vaccines packed in dry ice, shall seek specific approval before commencing such operations. Compliance with ICAO Doc 9284 (Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air) is the responsibility of each operator," it added.

Elaborating on the need to package the vaccines with dry ice the DGCA noted that the temperature maintenance

IMA urges members to come out, support vaccine rollout programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing confidence in the efficacy of the Government approved vaccines, the Indian Medical Association (IMA), the private medical doctors' body in the country, on Friday said that it is reaching out to its members to get vaccinated against Covid-19 with an aim to ensure that 'jab hesitancy syndrome' does not play spoilsport in the proposed Covid-shot roll out.

"We have instructed and guided all of our doctors to come out openly and support this programme, wherever it is happening, both in terms of manpower and infrastructure cover," said IMA National President Dr JA Jayalal, in a press conference here.

He added: "Our main concern is to dispel any hesitancy on the part of the people to come out openly."

The IMA has 1,800 branches across the country,

and has been vocal about representing doctors' needs through the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been reports and online surveys from across the country showing that there was considerable hesitation even among the medical community to take the vaccine as soon as it is available.

Dr Jayalal also said that he expected Covaxin — the indigenous vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech — to produce 62-63 per cent efficacy, but would "wholeheartedly welcome" anything above 50 per cent efficacy.

Covaxin was granted emergency use authorisation alongside Serum Institute's Covishield on 2 January, despite not having completed its phase 3 trial. The subject expert committee was criticised for granting approval before an interim analysis was conducted or efficacy data made public.

"The safety part is tested in phase 2, phase 3 is talking

about efficacy. The efficacy part, 50 per cent is also pass mark, 100 per cent is also pass mark. Anything above 50 per cent, we are wholeheartedly welcoming that," Jayalal said, adding, "Covaxin has not completed the phase 3 trial, but still it is safe. We are expecting it to produce 62 to 63 per cent efficacy."

He further claimed the vaccines approved by the subject expert committee would protect against the UK strain, even though there is no data in the public domain to support this.

"It's only a small structural change in the virus. The vaccine is absolutely effective against the new strain," he said.

"We would like to tell the public that the first vaccine is still masking, social distancing, and hand washing. Even during vaccination or other treatment, masking and social distancing should be followed," Jayalal said.

ishable air. Dry ice continually sublimates at temperatures higher than minus 78 degree celsius under normal atmospheric pressure," the guidelines said.

Bharat Biotech seeks DCGI's nod for intranasal shots' clinical trials

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech, whose intramuscular coronavirus vaccine Covaxin has got emergency approval last week, has now sought drug controller nod to conduct clinical trials for its intranasal jab for the viral disease.

Sources in the DCGI said that it has applied for permission to start Phase 1 and 2 trials of the 'BBV154' - a novel adenovirus vectored, intranasal vaccine for coronal virus - to be conducted at various locations. The vaccine will be a single-dose one.

The nasal vaccine is different from the two intramuscular vaccines which recently got approval, due to being non-invasive, needle-free, not requiring trained healthcare workers, eliminating needle-associated risks, and suitable for children and adults, having scalable manu-

facturing.

One drop of vaccine in each of the nostrils is sufficient, the firm said.

The pharma major has tied up with Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis to develop novel "chimpanzee adenovirus" (Chimpanzee adenovirus), a single dose intranasal vaccine for COVID-19.

According to the firm, an intranasal vaccine stimulates a broad immune response at the site of infection, in the nasal mucosa, which is essential for blocking both infection and transmission of Covid-19. The preclinical trial of its intranasal COVID-19 vaccine was already completed for toxicology, immunogenicity and challenge studies.

The vaccine has demonstrated protective efficacy in mice and hamsters. Mice and hamsters immunised with its single dose conferred superior protection against SARS-

CoV-2 challenge, "more so than one or two intramuscular immunisations of the same vaccine and dose".

"Thus, intranasal immunisation of ChAd-SARS-CoV-2-S can create an immune response in the nose, which is the point of entry for the virus, thereby protecting against disease, infection and transmission," Bharat Biotech said in a statement.

On January 3, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute of India - were approved for restricted emergency use. Both are two-dose vaccines.

While the full efficacy of Covaxin is yet to be determined, it was given go-ahead by the DCGI citing 'public interest'. Covaxin is an indigenous developed vaccine by Bharat Biotech, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

"The operator should take all necessary steps to ensure that the flight crew is not harmed by carbon dioxide incapacitation or intoxication. Any other occupants on board should only be allowed if

required under demonstrated urgent operational needs. (additional flight crew for the return flight or additional persons needed for the cargo handling. Adequate number of CO2 detectors should be avail-

able in the cabin," it said.

The country is preparing for the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines and the second nationwide mock drill on January 8.

GURGAON SCHOOL MURDER CASE

CBI files chargesheet against 4 cops

Conductor Ashok Kumar of school cleared of charges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a supplementary chargesheet against four Gurugram police officers for falsely implicating a school bus conductor, extorting confession from him and fabricating documents against him in the 2017 Gurgaon school murder case relating to the killing of a seven-year old student. The CBI has cleared the conductor Ashok Kumar of the school bus who was initially a suspect in the case as per the Gurgaon police probe.

In its supplementary chargesheet in the case, the CBI underscored that "there is sufficient evidence for prosecution" against the four police officials for allegedly implicating the bus conduc-

tor and accusing him of murder and sexual assault. In the February 2018 chargesheet, the CBI had named a juvenile in conflict with law as the prime accused for the murder of the seven year old boy. The special court has fixed January 15 as the date for taking cognisance of the chargesheet.

The bus conductor was arrested by Gurugram police on September 8, 2017 but a special court released him on bail on February 28, 2018.

Kumar had earlier alleged that he was tortured, beaten, hung upside down and his head submerged in water by police officials to obtain a confession from him.

Kumar had said, "I was asked to parade before the

media and they humiliated me in front of my family and public. Since then, I have had sleepless nights and I am still trying to regain my lost self-esteem and reputation."

The four police officials have been charged for framing incorrect documents like daily diary entries, voluntarily causing hurt to extort confession, criminal intimidation and disobeying the law for seeking the conductor's attendance for investigation to his prejudice.

"The Central Bureau of Investigation has filed a supplementary chargesheet against four then officials of Haryana Police including ACP, Inspector, SI etc. in the Court of Special Judicial Magistrate, CBI Cases, Panchkula (Haryana) in an on-going investigation of a

case," the CBI said in a statement.

CBI had registered the case on September 22, 2017 on the request of Haryana Government and took over the investigation of the said case, earlier registered by the Police Station Bhondsi, Gurugram (Haryana) on September 8, 2017.

The case related to murder of a 7-year old boy, a student of Class II at a private school (Vidyalaya), Sohna Road, Gurugram (Haryana) on September 8, 2017.

"It was revealed during CBI investigation that the conductor earlier arrested by Gurugram Police was not involved in this murder case. Further investigation of the case was continued. During further investigation, the alleged role of said Police

officials came to light and a supplementary chargesheet was therefore filed against them," it said.

After investigation based on scientific evidence including inspection of scene of crime, forensic examination, minute analysis of CCTV footage, analysis of various call records, circumstantial evidence and examination of several persons, the CBI had apprehended a student of senior class of the said school on November 7, 2017.

After investigation, a chargesheet was filed on February 5, 2018 under IPC section relating to murder against the arrested "juvenile child in conflict with law" who was also a student of senior class at the school.

Nadda launches 'Ek Muthi Chawal Sangharsh' today to counter Opp's anti-farmer narrative

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A head of Prime Minister's visit to the poll-bound West Bengal in the third week of this month, BJP president J P Nadda is flying to the State on Saturday to launch the party's campaign titled 'Ek Muthi Chawal Sangharsh' in Burdwan district to counter the Opposition's charge that the BJP Government at the Centre is not sympathetic to the farmers

According to the BJP media-in-charge head Anil Baluni, Nadda will launch the rice collection campaign in Burdwan district. This campaign initiative will be precursor to party workers visiting farming households across 48,000 villages to collect rice.

Battle of Bengal

"It is a month-long drive to collect rice, which will then be used for a community meal for farmers, and the poor," he said.

The BJP President would stress on the theme of 'strengthening farmers' in the state.

Against the backdrop of ongoing farmers agitation on the outskirts of Delhi running 44-days, the party has instructed its functionaries to carry out door-to-door campaigns, write letters and hold meetings locally across the states covering all the booths to dismiss the allegations that the farm bills are aimed at providing benefit to corporates.

What the party president will initiate will be taken fur-

ther by the functionaries at all booth levels. The party has already underlined how farmers in the state have been deprived of the benefits of the Kisan Samman Nidhi that offers Rs six thousand a year to farmers through direct bank transfer, said the BJP.

This will be Nadda's second visit to West Bengal. Last year on December 10, during a two-day visit, Nadda's convoy allegedly came under attack which invited sharp response from union home minister Amit Shah who later visited the state.

Nadda will also hold roadshow in Burdwan and hold. Press conference, said Baluni in a statement.

Prime Minister is expected to visit the state on January 21.



A vendor smokes 'hookah' while sitting on a boat on the bank of Dal Lake after a recent snowfall, in Srinagar on Friday PTI

Kerala Governor gives anti-farm laws speech in Assembly

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A day after M K Stalin, president, DMK, alleged that the new Farm Laws enacted by the Centre would dispose the farm lands from the farmers and deny them the rights to cultivate in their own farms, it was the turn of Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of neighbouring Kerala to lambast the BJP-led Government for the anti-farmer, anti-people and anti-Kerala laws.

Delivering the inaugural speech of the 2021-22 budget session of the Kerala Legislative Assembly on Friday, the Governor alleged that the new farm bills would push the State into a major crisis. "These agrarian laws will undermine regulated markets, result in eventual demise of minimum support price and tilt the balance of bargaining power definitively in favour of corporate middle men. Kerala being a consumer State is also going to be adversely affected by the amendment of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the resultant hoarding and profiteering," said the Governor.

Referring to the arrest of M Sivsankar, the former principal secretary to Chief Minister M Sivsankar in connection with the gold smuggling scam and the questioning of C.N Raveendran, the chief minister's all powerful additional secretary,

the Governor lambasted central agencies for their high-handed activities. But the Governor did not name the officers mentioned above in his speech

"Actions of certain Central Government agencies have overstepped the constitutional contours and are impeding the development activities and flagship programmes undertaken by the State. This has had a demoralising effect on honest and hard working officers. In such a situation co-operative federalism will lose its content and remain only in form. My Government has made this position abundantly clear before the public and its communication with the Centre," said the Governor.

The rest of the speech was an account of how Kerala became the role model for the world in countering the Covid-19 pandemic with the active cooperation of the local self government bodies, doctors, nurses and para medical staff. The State, the Governor claimed, ensured that the entire population got their three square meals every day without any help from the Centre.

The Congress-led Opposition raised slogans while the Governor was delivering the speech and walked out of the House demanding the immediate resignation of P Sreeramakrishnan, the Speaker, for his alleged role in gold smuggling scam and hawala operations.

Bengal Guv to meet Shah, submit reports on State

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar is likely to submit his report to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the state of affairs in Bengal when he meets him in New Delhi on Saturday.

Though there was no disclosure from the Governor's office on the agenda of Saturday's meeting, some sources said that the two leaders could discuss the politically volatile situation in Bengal which is going to polls a few months from now.

The Governor who has been highly critical of the way the Bengal Government functions and who has often expressed his apprehensions about possible bloodshed in the coming elections, may talk in favour of bringing additional number of central forces than what is usually required for an election in the State, sources said.

Dhankhar may also speak in favour of hastening up the imposition of model code of conduct so as to bring the allegedly deteriorating law and

order situation in the State under control, sources said referring to his statement a couple of days ago when he said that there was a need to improve the reputation of Bengal as a poll-bound state.

On whether the Saturday's meeting has anything to do with what transpired between him and Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee when she paid an "unscheduled" visit at Raj Bhavan holding an hour-long meeting with Dhankhar a couple of days ago, officials said "the two are different issues and may not be related."

The Governor has not only been critical of the State's alleged deteriorating law and order situation but he also alleged how the bureaucrats of Bengal had become politically heפקked. He earlier said how a number of IPS and other officers were acting as political servants of a particular political outfit (read Trinamool Congress) instead of acting as servants of Constitution.

Dhankhar's meeting with the Home Minister is likely to coincide with BJP national president JP Nadda's second

Nadda is likely to launch a campaign christened "ek mutho chaal" (a handful of rice), party sources said adding he will visit the residences of farmers where he will accept "anna daan" (accepting grains) from them

visit to Bengal when he will hold a road show at erstwhile Left bastion of Burdwan, some 75 miles from Kolkata.

Nadda is likely to launch a campaign christened "ek mutho chaal" (a handful of rice), party sources said adding he will visit the residences of farmers where he will accept "anna daan" (accepting grains) from them. Nadda will also hold a "Krishak Suraksha Gram Sabha" (village meet on farmers' safety) at Katwa town in the same district.

Meanwhile, the State police administration on Friday withdrew permission of Nadda's road show down CS Road in Burdwan sensing security problems, sources said adding the administration had offered to five permission for road show via GT Road instead.

Elsewhere the BJP leaders

Kailash Vijaybargiya, Mukul Roy and Suwendu Adhikary on Friday held a massive rally at Nandigram from where they said vowed to bring Parivartan of Parivartan (change of change) in apparent reference to the political change brought in 2011 by Mamata Banerjee overthrowing the Left Front Government.

Saying that the movement against Tata Nano plant at Singur in which he too had taken part with the Chief Minister was a big blunder, Roy said that "after we come to power in Bengal we will jointly appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to return the Tata company to the State."

Attacking the Chief Minister for failing the people of Nandigram where 14 people had died in a police firing while they were taking part in a land movement in 2007, Vijaybargiya said that "the officers who were involved in the firing were now members of the Trinamool Congress... instead of sending them to jail as promised the Chief Minister has made them her friends."



request to repatriate an Indian boy named Mohammed Bashir who had inadvertently crossed over to Pakistan from the

Poonch Sector on 24 December 2020". Defence PRO said, "Pak Authorities finally accepted the proposal on 06 January

2 boys who inadvertently crossed over into Indian territory repatriated

PNS ■ JAMMU

Two young boys, who had inadvertently crossed the line of control between India and Pakistan in the Poonch sector, were reunited with their families shortly after their custodies were handed over to their respective armies on Friday.

Defence PRO in Jammu said, "On 31 December 2020, Master Ali Haider, a 14 year old boy from Mirpur district of

Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (POJK) had inadvertently crossed over to India in the Poonch District of Jammu and Kashmir. The boy seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter". According to him, "On 03 January, a request was quickly made to Pakistan Authorities to repatriate him on humanitarian grounds".

"Pakistan authorities were also reminded of our earlier

Growth pangs

Is the worst economic impact of the Coronavirus over?
How will the Govt create 10-15 million jobs in a year?



We can all agree that 2020 was an awful year and economic growth across the world, other than in just a few countries, came to a grinding halt. In India, the pitiable sight of millions of labourers and workers walking home to their villages, some not able to complete their journeys due to fatal accidents or the virus itself, was possibly the most tragic sight of the year. Even well-heeled white collar workers in several industries, including the media, found themselves pushed to the wall and tens of thousands lost their jobs in several industries across the world. But as more details emerge and demand rebounds, the most pessimistic projections for economic growth, which seemed doomed after the contraction in the first quarter, and projections of a 15-20 per cent decline seemed like reality. But as the economic activity seems to have revived, projections for the total decline for this fiscal have gone down from the earlier 15-20 per cent to now a decline of under eight per cent for the entire year, as predicted by the National Statistical Office. Even if you do not trust the Government, the predictions by other global financial institutions and banks are showing that the economic decline in India has been mitigated. The demand for products like automobiles and consumer durables appears to have come back, and even grown, as the December sales figures for cars have displayed. And predictions for the next year have grown dramatically, with some figures showing as much as 10 per cent growth.

But will the job growth come back? With a net decline in jobs last year, and many millions of young people joining the market over the past year, that is the biggest single problem with the Indian economy. How will the Government create 10-15 million jobs in the public and private sectors in the coming year? Can it be done through demand creation with lower taxes and incentives such as reductions in the Goods and Services Tax? That is an open question. The hands of the Indian Government are tied; with some farmers demanding higher prices for their produce and taxes already quite high, what can be done? This will require creative thinking from the Government's quarters, and the mandarins should carefully listen to the economists and domain experts with different thoughts across the board. The stock markets are booming but, without the creation of jobs, the problems will just be kicked down the road and an army of unemployed youth will pose a major problem for any Government that is in power. And, sadly, this is a problem not just in India but one that is haunting almost all countries across the world.

Dying humanity

The incident of people clubbing a Gangetic dolphin to death raises serious questions about our ability for compassion



There are times when it is difficult to love humanity and all that it stands for. When a newborn or an 80-year-old grandmother is raped, one can't help wondering what we are all about and how did we descend to such depths? The news of a Gangetic dolphin being beaten to death with sticks, rods and axes by a group of men in Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh is one such moment. The heartbreaking incident took place on December 31 as the world was in good cheer and preparing to usher in the New Year. A video of the deadly assault on the Gangetic dolphin, which by the way is a protected species, is doing the rounds on social media and those who have had the heart to watch the extremely disturbing clip are appalled. In a display of

extreme cruelty, the men are seen raining blows on the hapless dolphin as blood gushes from its body. Some men can be seen holding down the helpless creature. Someone can be heard saying: "*Faaltu mein maar rahe ho, yaar* (You are assaulting it for no reason.)" However, this half-hearted overture did nothing to stop the men. It reminds one of the disinterest and weak response of the three policemen in Minneapolis, US, as a policeman Derek Chauvin knelt on the neck of a supine George Perry Floyd who struggled to breathe and eventually died. If the three officers had put up some resistance, Floyd would have been alive today. Similarly, if the bystanders watching the gruesome hacking to death of the aquatic mammal had been more forceful, the dolphin could have been saved. That this comparison between the death of a human and a dolphin may offend many will not come as a surprise. Because, after all, haven't humans always considered their lives to be more important than that of the other species we are supposed to share the world with? What else can explain this mindless act of abject cruelty? An official of the forest department, who responded to a call pertaining to the dolphin's torture, reportedly found it lying lifeless by the side of a canal. His First Information Report states that there was a crowd of villagers surrounding it but nobody was willing to reveal how it died. This bid to protect the perpetrators makes the villagers complicit in the crime. That the three men were arrested after the video went viral on social media is small consolation. They will most probably be out of prison in no time as implementation of laws is half-hearted at best when it comes to animal rights.

So, the question is this: How is it that the perpetrators of such heinous crimes often go unpunished when cruelty against animals is a cognisable offence under Section 428 and Section 429 of the Indian Penal Code and the country has one of the strictest wildlife protection laws in the world? While some countries are now waking up to regulating trade in wildlife, India leads the prohibition on ivory trade. Some of the biggest triumphs for animal welfare in India in the last decade saw the ban of dolphinariums in 2013, prohibition on animal testing for cosmetics in 2014, followed by a ban on the import of cosmetics tested on animals. India also prohibited the export of shark fins for use in soup and the country does not allow wild animals in circuses. Despite all the good work that is being done by the Government in framing such stringent laws, why is it that on a daily basis we are confronted with heart-wrenching stories of depraved human behaviour towards animals? We obviously need to take such cases more seriously and there should be heavier fines, harsher sentences and the rate of convictions must go up. For this to happen, we must sensitise our law-enforcement agencies to the rights of animals to be treated with kindness and dignity and about how grave an offence it is to subject an animal to cruelty. We must make them realise that as animals can't defend or speak up for themselves, it is the duty of the enforcers to defend them by upholding the laws meant to protect them. The law-enforcement agencies must not always wait for activist judges to lead the way in this regard. Plus we, as a society, must teach our children the basic truth that the world is meant to be shared by all of God's creations and we must learn to live together with them. They have as much right to live on this planet as we do. In fact, animals form a vital part of the eco-system and biodiversity and each creature has a role to play in the circle of life. If we disrupt that, we will have to bear the consequences. For instance, the recent pandemic is a result of our utter disregard for the laws of nature and biodiversity. We must unequivocally raise our voices against cruelty to animals each and every time such aberrations occur and schools must create awareness about this vital issue. We need to raise a more sensitive and humane society than we are raising now. Else, we just don't have the right to call ourselves humans anymore.



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Perhaps the second-most important problem — the first being the COVID-19 pandemic — that President-elect Joe Biden would inherit on assumption of office as President of the United States would be the situation in Afghanistan. The danger of the Taliban taking over the country has never been more real than now since their ouster from power in 2001. The question is: What should and can the Americans do at this juncture? For answers, one must start by looking at what is now happening in that country.

The first thing that strikes one is the sharp escalation of the Taliban's ruthless drive to capture power by mounting fierce attacks on the Government's forces in the countryside and terror strikes in Kabul ever since the Trump Administration signed a peace treaty with them on February 29, 2020. Particularly alarming is their new emphasis on targeted killing of individuals such as journalists, civil society activists, physicians, champions of democracy and Government officials.

Besides the Islamic State, which has claimed to have perpetrated a couple of attacks, nobody has claimed responsibility for the rest. In a report in *The Washington Post* datelined January 2, 2021, Pamela Constable and Sharif Hassan cited a voicemail response in which the chief Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that the militant outfit had nothing to do with the killings. Blaming these on the Afghan Government's intelligence agency, he said that the country would need "educated" Afghans when peace finally came.

The Afghan Government officials have, on the other hand, held the Taliban responsible for the growing violence and the killing of individuals. *The Washington Post* report mentioned above cites them as saying that they had made a number of arrests, and the Interior Minister, Massoud Andarabi, as telling Afghan lawmakers that, according to those arrested, the attacks were planned by a cell in Logar province. The report also quotes First Vice-President Amrullah Saleh, a former national intelligence chief, as tweeting that unclaimed bombings and targeted assassinations of civil society activists were "pillars of the Taliban terror campaign linked to their negotiating strategy".



egy". It quoted him as further saying that they wanted to break the Afghan people's political will and demand impossible concessions.

Anyone familiar with the Taliban's ways, and those of their masters — Pakistan's notorious Directorate-General of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) — would know that the Afghans are right. An analysis of the purpose of the terror strikes will also support this conclusion. These are clearly aimed at achieving three objectives — to terrorise people into not resisting their violent takeover bid, to delegitimise the Afghan State by projecting it as one incapable of protecting the people, and to warn the incoming Biden Administration not to change the terms of the February 29 treaty.

As to the first, there is, by all accounts, a climate of fear and a feeling of siege in Kabul as well as the countryside, at least one-half of which is under the Taliban's control. People are afraid to come out of their homes. Many are beginning to believe that a take-over by the Taliban is inevitable and, hence, it is best to hedge their bets.

As for the attempt to delegitimise the Afghan Government, the latter has not been sitting on its hands. First Vice-President Amrullah Saleh, whom President Ashraf Ghani has put in charge of the Afghan capital's security, has produced a plan, called the 'Kabul Security Compact'. While it has produced some results in terms of reducing crime, continuing terror strikes and targeted killings are perpetuating a climate of

intense insecurity. A report by Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Fatima Faizi in *The New York Times* of November 7, 2020, shows how the terror strikes and the targeted killings by motorbike-borne terrorists or through the attachment of magnetic bombs to vehicles, have led to growing popular discontent with the Afghan Government for failing to protect its citizens — promises notwithstanding.

The third possible objective, to warn the incoming Biden Administration not to change the terms of the February 29 treaty, indicates how advantageous the terms are to the Taliban. These bind the US to reduce its forces in Afghanistan to 8,600 — with its allies drawing down their forces proportionately — within the first 135 days of the agreement coming into force. A complete withdrawal of the US forces will be effected within 14 months. It also calls for an exchange of 5,000 Taliban fighters held by the Afghan Government with 1,000 Afghan security force prisoners with the Taliban by March 10, 2020, when talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban were due to start. Also, the US would not only lift the sanctions it had imposed on the Taliban but work with the United Nations to lift those that the latter had imposed on it.

The question here is whether the incoming Biden Administration would stand by and watch if the Taliban sought to storm into power by terrorising into inaction all those who are opposed to it, and undermining the Afghan

Government's credibility and ability to resist through a campaign of unremitting violence and terror. Or, would it intervene and, if so, in what manner? The question that follows is: Why should the US intervene? There are two dimensions to any discussion on the matter — strategic and geo-political in terms of the US's interests, and moral in terms of protecting and furthering human freedom that it always swears by.

The consequences of not doing anything or enough to stop the Taliban from coming to power would be disastrous for the US. It turned its attention away from Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the Russian troops in February 1989. It did nothing even when the Taliban, formed in 1994 by Pakistan's ISI, turned Afghanistan into a medieval hell and put all women virtually under house arrest, besides enabling Osama bin-Laden and the al-Qaida to function freely. The result was 9/11. It may be a different kind of attack this time, and the target, instead of being in mainland US like the two World Trade Centre buildings, may be American interests abroad. There, however, will be an attack or attacks because the Taliban is committed to imposing its own joyless, puritanical and anti-women brand of *Salafist* Islam and *Sharia* rule worldwide. The US, with its massive military and economic power, is not just a major roadblock on its way. The country is the embodiment of a way of life that is anathema to it. Based on the modernity

evolving in the matrix of the Renaissance and 18th century Enlightenment, its ethos is defined by its enshrinement of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" in its Declaration of Independence as among the inalienable rights given to all humans by their creator, and its life is marked by forward movement towards greater gender justice and personal and sexual freedom.

There is thus a deep cultural component to the visceral hatred that the Taliban and all fundamentalist Islamist entities harbour towards the US. President-elect Biden must bear this in mind and chart America's strategy toward the Taliban accordingly. The need to attend to the strategic and military compulsions arising from such a situation is increased by the moral dimension, deriving from the Taliban's attitude to women as mentioned above. How the Taliban treated them when in power becomes clear from the following account by Lt-Gen Kamal Moinuddin (Retd) of the Pakistan Army in the *Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-97*:

"Girls are being denied education; women have been prevented from working. If they leave their house, they have to be covered from head to foot with a veil (*burqa*); besides being veiled, the women have to be accompanied by a male relative when they venture out on the streets. Shopkeepers have been directed not to sell goods to unveiled women. Rickshaw drivers are not to pick up women passengers unless they are fully covered. Women caught violating these rules are imprisoned, as are the shopkeepers and rickshaw-drivers."

The argument that the Taliban have changed does not hold. In an article titled *The false inclusivity of the Taliban's emirate* (www.aljazeera.com), datelined October 26, 2020, Mehdi J Hakimi writes: "Notwithstanding repeated claims that they support women's rights, for instance, the Taliban has continued to attack girls' schools. Also, women and young people, while comprising most of the country's population, are conspicuously missing from the Taliban's negotiating team."

The conclusion is simple. The incoming Biden Administration must not shrink from intervening to prevent the Taliban from storming into power riding a wave of escalating violence.

(The author is Consulting Editor, *The Pioneer*. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUND BITE

We are performing the Opposition's duty. It is our responsibility. The Speaker has put a blot on the House by interfering with a Central agency's work.

Kerala Leader of Opposition
Ramesh Chennithala



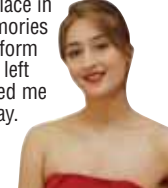
The violence and destruction taking place at the US Capitol must stop. Anyone involved must respect law enforcement officers and immediately leave the building.

US Vice-President
Mike Pence



Theatres hold a special place in our hearts. All those memories of watching my idols perform on the big screen always left me starstruck. It motivated me to become who I am today.

Singer
Dhvani Bhanushali



The Queensland Government is fully entitled to protect its people. Similarly, the Indian cricket board is fully entitled to protect its team.

Former India captain
Sunil Gavaskar



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Take US vandals to task

Sir — The storming of the Capitol Hill by outgoing US President Donald Trump's supporters is shocking because it is a direct assault on democracy and a crying shame. Though Trump claims that Joe Biden won the elections fraudulently but he has failed to come out with any concrete proof. It was really a dark day in the history of the US that the vandalism and violence — which claimed at least four lives — took place when it should have been a smooth transition of power. Trump's call to his supporters to torch the Capitol is highly reprehensible and disgraceful. This sort of anarchy cannot be tolerated in a democracy. A high-level investigation should be ordered into the incident and the circumstances leading up to it and those involved in the violence should be suitably penalised as it would serve as a lesson to would-be vandals. Also, the authorities concerned should see to it that Biden's swearing-in ceremony on January 20 takes place without any untoward incident or embarrassment to the world's oldest democracy.

Sravana Ramachandran
Chennai

Expand the gamut of credit reach for farmers

The farmers' protest and the ongoing stalemate is probably a good time for the Union Government to consider at least a few important changes to the laws as well as the problems of growers as middle-of-the-road alternatives. Of course, the repeal of these badly conceptualised and designed laws is the most preferred option.

The most important change that the Government should undertake is to remedy its blunder that allows it to be a judge of its own policies and as the final arbiter of disputes between parties. The second problem that needs urgent attention is the issue of extreme price volatility, especially at harvest time. Third, apart from the decline in the margins of cultivation, one of the biggest problems is the availability of credit from the formal banking sector. In 2019, an RBI internal working group agreed that the Kisan Credit Card's (KCC) penetration was only 10 per cent of the total agricultural households.

Hence, expanding the credit reach is the need of the hour as it will go a long way in helping the smaller cultivators. The discontent needs to be seen in the context of the rising cost of cultivation, the recent

TMC's conundrum

Sir — Prashant Kishore, the chief strategist for the Trinamool Congress (TMC), is on the wrong foot this time. That the strategist of such repute is now making bizarre statements shows the party's desperation.

The swing as of now appears to be in favour of the BJP. The

unprecedented exodus of the party's leaders and elected representatives, which the party had never experienced earlier, has caught Mamata Banerjee by surprise. The entire party is dejected and gloomy about its impending defeat as it is increasingly becoming clearer that the TMC may not reach even a respectable figure in the upcoming

Assembly elections.

The people of West Bengal, fed up of extortion, political murders, poor law and order situation, poor administration and corruption, are supporting the BJP in strength and want to change the State Government. The exodus is really telling a story.

Gundu K Maniam
Barrackpore



moves to dismantle subsidies and the sharp increase in taxes on diesel prices, which are pinching all categories of farmers.

The widespread discontent is also fuelled by the fact that successive Governments have not shown any keenness in resolving the longstanding problems over the years.

Shovanlal Chakraborty
Kolkata

Guvvs are just stooges

Sir — Perhaps there is something in their seat of power that compels Governors to behave in a specific way against the 'interests' of the State Governments. Former Chief Justice of India P Sathasivam, who was Kerala's Governor for five years, was in the eye of the storm on more than one occasion.

Sathasivam's successor Arif Mohammad Khan has demonstrated that he is no less when it comes to taking on the State Government. Khan objected to the convening of the special session of Kerala Assembly to discuss the contentious farmers' issue. Although he later agreed to a revised request of the Government, his demeanour is definitely a sign of things to come. Governors have always been a subject of ferocious debate among the media, public and politicians, so much so that there were suggestions in some quarters to abolish the Governor's post altogether though that sounds too radical a proposition.

Ganapathi Bhat
Akola

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A united India in the making

The real achievement of the farmers' agitation is that it has united the people who were till now divided on caste and communal lines



MARKANDEY **KATJU**

There was no progress in the eighth round of talks between protesting farmers' unions and the Government on the three farm laws on Friday. So what will be the next move of the growers? The farmers have besieged Delhi for over a month now and one of their leaders, Rakesh Tikait, had earlier announced that they would join the Republic Day parade on Rajpath with their tractors on January 26. They are already taking out tractor rallies on the outskirts of Delhi. But when they try to enter Delhi from outside, it is very likely that the growers will be stopped by the police. By force if need be. To allow a mob of protesting farmers to storm Delhi and join the Republic Day parade means surrendering authority and losing face. And no Government will allow that. So, a violent confrontation on the borders is likely. However, one hopes that things will not come to such a pass.

By their long-drawn agitation, the farmers have ensured that the three laws, though in the statute book, cannot be implemented on the ground, because the atmosphere is so emotionally surcharged in Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh (UP) and some other States. One would not be surprised if the grain silos built by some corporates are soon attacked, like the 1,500 mobile towers in Punjab. About 800 million of India's 1.3 billion people depend directly or indirectly on agriculture and almost all have sympathy with the agitating farmers. Also, many industrial workers, lawyers, intellectuals, sportsmen, Bollywood actors, ex-service-men and so on are supporting the stir. Even soldiers and policemen would largely be sympathetic, as a jawan or a policeman is a peasant in uniform, or the son of a peasant. Though being a member of a disciplined force he cannot express his sympathy openly.

And what about the farmers' votes? Till now our politicians had been successful in keeping growers divided on the basis of caste and religion, but this agitation has united them. So how will that affect the next elections in Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Assam this year and in UP, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat next year? Most of the voters in these States are farmers. This is the real nightmare for the ruling party today.

The real achievement of the farmers' agitation is that it has united the people of India who were till now divided on caste and communal lines. This was exploited by our crafty politicians. Our people were so divided and polarised on the basis of caste and religion, that unity was missing and we were often fighting each other. Till of late, most of the stir in India were either religion based e.g. the Ram Mandir movement, or caste-based like the Gujjar, Jat or Dalit agitations. The anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protest was perceived by many as a predominantly Muslim agitation. Anna Hazare's fight against corruption soon fizzled out too. This disunity was a problem to which Indian thinkers could not find a solution for decades and it had become a dilemma for the country. Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, the farmers of India, one of the most neglected sections of our society, have resolved the problem which was plaguing the nation for long. By using their creativity they have forged a unity among our masses which was missing for decades. Their agitation has smashed the barriers of caste and religion and people have risen above them. Also, they have kept at a distance our politicians, who have no genuine love for the country, but are only interested in power and pelf, for which they polarise Indian society by manipulating and spreading caste and communal hatred, only for creating vote banks.

The farmers' agitation is on a real economic issue because the growers were not getting adequate remuneration for their produce. It is not on an emotional and sentient issue like building a temple. The farmers' agitation is a milestone in our country's history. It will result in creating a political and social order under which India rapidly industrialises, gets totally transformed from an underdeveloped to a highly developed, prosperous country, which ensures a high standard of living and decent lives for all our citizens. As a great Asian leader said: "When hundreds of millions of peasants rise like a typhoon or tornado, it will be a force so powerful and so swift that no power on Earth will be able to resist it." The national aim of the united citizens must be to transform India from an underdeveloped to a developed, industrialised country, for only then can we get rid of our poverty, backwardness, massive unemployment, appalling level of child malnourishment, almost total lack of proper healthcare and good education for the masses and other social evils. Such a transformation is only possible by sweeping away all the filth of feudal thinking and practices (in the form of casteism, communalism, superstitions and so on) which had gathered over centuries in India. The farmers' stir is a step towards that national unity.

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal.)

THOUGH I DISAGREE WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION, NEVERTHELESS THERE WILL BE AN ORDERLY TRANSITION ON JANUARY 20.

—US PRESIDENT
DONALD TRUMP



IF HE WANTS TO BE UNIQUE AND BE DOUBLY IMPEACHED, THAT'S UP TO HIM AND HIS CABINET AS TO WHETHER HE SHOULD STAY IN OFFICE.

—SPEAKER, US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NANCY PELOSI

New role for CSR

The social responsibility agenda now has a wider role in pandemic management, with the Govt expanding the scope of spending to include firms engaged in R&D of vaccines



MOÏN **QAZI**

Sustainability has been on the agenda for us for a while but it never piqued our minds so aggressively. COVID-19 has accelerated the adoption of sustainable practices as never before. It has taught companies that there can no longer be business as usual. We have been provided a once-in-a-generation opportunity to heal the environmental damage caused by overexploitation and unsustainable business practices. It is time now to press the reset button, build resilience and create long term value that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable.

We are seeing a growing realisation that businesses should play an active role in changing the world for the better. Hence, a great deal of money has been flowing into the social sector. Like individual citizens who have moral and social responsibilities, businesses are being perceived as corporate citizens who need to commit a part of their time, talent and resources for the welfare of society as they draw their sustenance from it. Corporate Social Responsibility better known by its acronym CSR is a business approach that aims at managing an organisation in a way that it contributes towards sustainable development by delivering social, economic and environmental benefits to all its stakeholders.

Corporate altruism in India has found a new purpose since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the nationwide lockdown upending economic activity on the one hand and disrupting lives, especially of the poor, on the other, companies have not only opened their purse strings but also rolled up their sleeves to respond proactively to the pandemic. Over the past few months, corporates have been using all or most of their CSR kitty to combat the outbreak, be it through contribution to the PM CARES Fund, other relief funds, distribution of food, masks, personal protective equipment (PPE) kits or relief material to the needy.

The CSR agenda now has a wider role in pandemic management, with the Government expanding the scope of CSR spending to include companies engaged in research and development (R&D) of new vaccines, drugs and medical devices. These amendments to the CSR rules permit such companies to categorise as CSR activity any COVID-related R&D activity even if it is undertaken as part of its normal course of business.

There have been two more policy changes; the first was to allow all donations for COVID-related efforts to be eligible for 100 per cent tax deduction. The second allows firms who contribute over and above the minimum prescribed amount, to later offset the excess against the CSR obligation arising in subsequent years, if they so desire.

Corporate India has already suggested that the Indian Government approve use of CSR funds for vaccinating their employees. The recommendation came from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and Ernst & Young (EY), in a study titled 'Protecting India: Public Private Partnership for vaccinating against COVID-19.' The report avers that in order to have 1.3-1.4 lakh centres for inoculation, about 60 per cent of India's existing public healthcare infrastructure will have to be converted into vaccination centres. The report also mentions how the public sector can potentially provide just about 60,000-70,000 healthcare inoculators, as against the minimum one lakh professionals needed.

CSR is the umbrella term for how a business relates to the broader cultural, economic and political

“CORPORATE ALTRUISM IN INDIA HAS FOUND A NEW PURPOSE SINCE THE ADVENT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. WITH THE NATIONWIDE LOCKDOWN UPENDING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY ON THE ONE HAND AND DISRUPTING LIVES, ESPECIALLY OF THE POOR, ON THE OTHER, COMPANIES HAVE NOT ONLY OPENED PURSE STRINGS BUT ALSO ROLLED UP THEIR SLEEVES TO RESPOND PROACTIVELY TO THE PANDEMIC”



ical environment in which it operates. It is one of the biggest buzzes in a corporate business, signalling that a company cares; and that it allies profit with principle. It addresses many areas such as corporate governance, human rights, health and safety, the environment, work conditions and contributions towards economic development. The overarching goal of CSR is to drive a change towards sustainability.

This phenomenon has given rise to a new crop of mega donors who are upending long-established norms in the staid world of big philanthropy. Not only are they increasingly willing to take on hot-button social and political issues, they also have a problem-solving and impact-making mindset rather than one focused on publicity.

The CSR movement began as a response to the prevailing opinion that businesses should play a role in ameliorating social problems due to their vast economic resources and overarching influence in the daily lives of people. Steel tycoon and one of the greatest philanthropists, Andrew Carnegie, whose business ethos was "to do well in order to do good" was one of the earliest advocates of the concept of CSR.

Businesses are powerful social entities and the most respected among them feel the need to do much more than making money. They believe in using the power of a business for solving tough problems that plague society. They are involved in a wide variety of causes, such as education, healthcare, skills training, entrepreneurship, women empowerment, food security, livelihoods and supporting services for the differently-abled.

India has a unique law — the Companies Act, 2013 and the CSR Rules — which came into effect on April 1, 2014. It is the first country to stipulate that the companies expend their resources on effective CSR programmes. The approved activities under Schedule VII of CSR include eradicating extreme

hunger, poverty and promotion of education, gender equality and women's empowerment as well as reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating diseases. Ensuring environmental sustainability and prompting employment enhancing vocational skills are other activities approved under CSR.

However, there is a crucial difference between CSR as understood in western countries and the way it is implemented in India. A generally accepted gold standard for CSR in the western world is that it must be closely integrated with a firm's business strategy so that the programmes create a shared value for the company's shareholders and its stakeholders. In India, that linkage is explicitly prohibited for CSR, focusing solely on its role of contributing towards societal welfare.

CSR could, however, be more socially relevant when it is driven by altruistic motives rather than a mandated policy obligating charitable actions. It is very difficult to legislate moral obligations. Laws set the minimum standards, but they do not create an impetus or ambience for a philanthropic mentality.

There are, unfortunately, marked aberrations in the CSR agenda which need a course correction. Many businesses harbour a variety of secondary aims and often use CSR for enhancing their social profile and boosting their business markets. Charity leaders have a geographic bias with corporations funding projects closer to their headquarters. Consequently, more remote regions where development aid is acutely needed are being bypassed by this new social revolution.

Politics can also skew priorities, with companies looking to gain goodwill by backing Government-led projects rather than initiating more socially relevant initiatives.

Despite all the hyperbole, the great economist Milton Friedman argued in the year 1970: "The doctrine of social responsibility is frequently a cloak for

actions that are justified on other grounds rather than a reason for those actions." There can be the subtle use of CSR to brush off a bad reputation as well as to camouflage any dark acts.

CSR has usually been peripheral in most organisations and it is not woven into the texture of the business. Even as annual CSR expenditure is on the rise, the impact on the ground remains a matter of debate. Further, it is not always necessarily transparent or mission oriented. Sometimes, it is driven by a need to improve the brand reputation and even worse, to act as a moral counter-balance for unethical practices.

However, a significant amount of any CSR expenditure comes with some strings attached — terms that dictate exactly where and how it must be used. While this may be appropriate in some cases fundamentally it reflects a serious lack of trust in the non-profit entities and hinders their ability to operate effectively.

When donors insist that their money should go exclusively to the people served, there is not enough money left for the non-profit entities to focus on building their own organisations. They are, therefore, unable to invest in talent, technology, systems or reporting. Reporting requirements are often an onerous administrative burden for voluntary organisations which have to devote their scarce skills to educated, English-speaking personnel for writing reports for the donors rather than running programmes.

A sincerely and honestly run charity always delivers rich dividends in the long run. That is the lesson we learn from both philosophers and business leaders. It is wise to remind ourselves of the advice of Henry Ford: "A business absolutely devoted to service will have only one worry about profits: They will be embarrassingly large."

(The writer is a well-known development professional of international repute. The views expressed are personal.)

Amend COTPA to make curbs on tobacco more effective

However, riding roughshod on the rights of people is not done in a democracy. Raising awareness and counselling are a better way to achieve results



ASHOK **PATIL**

The Centre recently released draft changes to its tobacco control law. The proposal aims to ban smoking zones in hotels, restaurants, airports and calls for raising the minimum legal smoking age from 18 to 21. The draft changes have also tightened existing provisions to ban advertising at kiosks and prohibit sale of loose cigarette sticks, which form the bulk of the sales. If implemented, the plan will hit the sales of companies such as ITC, Godfrey Phillips India and a unit of Philip Morris International which operate in the \$12 billion cigarette market in India. Not surprisingly, the tobacco industry is opposed to these new proposals and will take it up with the

Government and the companies will raise concerns before the public consultation period of the proposal ends on January 31. To its credit, India has over the years introduced tobacco controls and launched campaigns to deter its use, but the enforcement of law has been a challenge.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) nearly 1.35 million people die each year in India due to tobacco use. Worldwide, tobacco use causes more than seven million deaths per year and if the pattern of smoking globally doesn't change, more than eight million people annually will die from diseases related to tobacco use by 2030. The WHO has been at the forefront of the fight against tobacco and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) was the first coordinated global effort to reduce its use. The WHO FCTC entered into force on February 27, 2005, and requires signatories to implement evidence-based measures to reduce tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke. When effectively implemented, the WHO FCTC is a

fundamental tool to reduce the devastating global consequences of tobacco products on health, lives, economies and environments. With 182 parties as of May 2020, the WHO FCTC is one of the most widely-adopted treaties in the United Nations (UN) system. India was one of the founding parties to the treaty, signing it in June 2003 and ratifying it in June 2004.

The treaty contains a broad framework of obligations and rights and requires parties to implement effective tobacco control measures beyond those required by it. To date, parties to the FCTC have adopted implementing guidelines for several Treaty Articles and the Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products to increase international cooperation to fight tobacco smuggling and better control the legal tobacco trade.

India introduced a more comprehensive anti-tobacco legislation based on the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee on Subordinate Legislation, 1995. Accordingly, the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of

Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003, (COTPA) came into force on May 2004. The preamble of this COTPA is to prohibit the advertisement of and to provide for the regulation of trade and commerce in, and production, supply and distribution of, cigarettes and other tobacco products and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The COTPA was adopted over 15 years ago and was developed before the coming into force of the global, evidence-based treaty on tobacco control, the WHO FCTC and the Guidelines for Implementation. Though COTPA is intended as a comprehensive law on tobacco control — providing protection from involuntary tobacco smoke and misleading advertisements, with focus on protecting minors from the influence/hazards of tobacco — with the passage of time and a greater understanding of the full range of measures necessary to combat the tobacco epidemic and the industry, lacunas and gaps in the Act have become apparent

and proved to be a major challenge in its effective enforcement.

Drawing from best international practices, it is imperative to fix the existing loopholes in the Indian legal framework on regulation of tobacco. For this purpose, the following recommendations are suggested for amending the COTPA 2003 by experts on consumer law. Currently, Section four of the COTPA Act states: "No person shall smoke in any public place. Provided that in a hotel having 30 rooms or a restaurant having seating capacity of 30 people or more and at the airports, a separate provision for smoking area or space may be made."

It is recommended that the proviso be deleted as it provides exemptions contrary to the WHO FCTC to which India is a signatory. It is also contrary to the Supreme Court judgement in the Murli Deora vs Union of India case 2001 and thus needs to be done away with.

Section five of the COTPA prohibits direct, indirect advertisement, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco. It needs to be amended for it to

comprehensively ban advertisement, promotion, and sponsorship of tobacco, by all persons and through all mediums of communication, including mobile, internet and so on.

Not only would this bring India in compliance with the WHO FCTC, it would also be in conformity with the apex court's guidelines delivered in the Health for Millions vs Union of India and others case. A similar clause in this same section allowing for advertisement at points of sale and on tobacco packs needs to be deleted.

Sections 20, 21, 22 and 24 of the COTPA prescribe penal provisions. It is recommended that the said penalties be substantially increased to ensure deterrence against violation of the law. The aim of these recommendations is to make the Indian legal framework on regulation of tobacco more robust and more effective in achieving its goals. For proper implementation and to give effect to the spirit of the law, it is necessary that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and other Government bodies should take appropriate measures for the

same. Plus, it is vital to ensure proper implementation of the rules on the ground.

However, just riding roughshod on the rights of people is not the way for any democracy to go. The Government and all stakeholders must raise awareness regarding the detrimental effects of tobacco use. They must be counselled so that they can give up the habit eventually. Till then the Government must come up with ways to allow people to smoke without harming the health of non-smokers. Persuasion, counselling and awareness will help more in the long run than rigid provisions that force people to break the law. Also, the Government must look at providing an alternative to tobacco farmers so that their livelihood is not snatched away from them. Tobacco use is a social malaise and a health hazard and the Government will do well to involve all stakeholders in its elimination.

(The writer is Professor at NLSIU, Bengaluru; Fellow, Asian Law Institute. The views expressed are personal.)

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

"IT and auto stocks pulled their weight today ahead of TCS earnings as bulls went berserk, lifting Indices by 1.5 per cent buoyed by positive

At the close of trade, the company's market valuation was at Rs 1,01,671.34 crore on the BSE.

Mumbai: The country's largest software services firm TCS on Friday reported a 7.2 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹ 8,701 crore for the December 2020 quarter. This is against a net profit of Rs 8,118 crore in the year-ago period, Tata Consultancy Services said in a regulatory filing. Revenue of the city-based firm grew 5.4 per cent in the quarter under review to ₹ 42,015 crore from ₹ 39,854 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, it added. "Growing demand for core transformation services and strong revenue conversion from earlier deals have driven a powerful momentum," Rajesh Gopinathan, chief executive officer and managing director of TCS, said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The GDP contracted by a record 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter following a national lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The contraction came down to

An important advantage

"From the demand side except government consumption all other components namely private consumption, investment, exports and imports are estimated to contract in FY21," it said.

As per the GDP esti-

In the current fiscal, manufacturing sector is likely to see a contraction 9.4 per cent whereas growth was almost flat at 0.03 per cent in the year-ago period. The NSO estimates significant contraction in 'mining and quarrying', and 'trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting'. *PTI*

Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.59 per cent higher at USD 54.70 per barrel. **PTI**

RUPEE vs Dollar

73.24
 (+7p)

Date	Rate	Change
1	73.02	(+9p)
4	73.11	(-4p)
6	73.17	(-15p)
8	73.31	(-20p)

PTI GRAPHICS *Inverted Scale* **JAN**

PGHH	11297.1	11304.95	11107.95	11266.15
IOB	11.24	11.26	11.04	11.09
CREDITACC	778.75	802	778.75	799.7
JCHAC	2639.4	2675.95	2603.3	2617.8
PRSMJOHNSN	90.25	90.55	87.5	88.5
BAJAJHLNDG	3145.8	3145.8	3125.2	3131
NILKAMAL	1508	1547.35	1505	1512.15
HATHWAY	34.5	34.8	33.6	33.75
MAHLIFE	385	390	372	381
IRB	114.7	116.4	113.5	114.55
AEGISLOG	258.85	261.35	253.6	258.25
VAIBHAVGBL	2714	2755.3	2650.5	2671.1
DCMSHRIRAM	390.75	394.2	385.9	388.85
CARBORUNIV	410	410	400.95	408.35
STARCEMENT	108	108	105.15	106
TRITURBINE	84.5	90.7	83.7	89.05
VIPIND	379.5	381.1	375	377.2
MAHLOG	435	447	435	443.8
MINDACORP	95.45	95.45	92.1	92.47
CAPPL	502	508.2	497.6	499.85
POLYMED	524.4	526.4	510.85	511.45
LINDEINDIA	997.7	1017.45	997	999.4
METROPOLIS	2100	2124.75	2090	2114.4
FDC	328.5	332.55	328.5	328.9
JTEKTINDIA	91	91	88	88.8
EDELWEISS	70.95	71.35	70.3	70.6
TIMKEN	1339	1340.6	1280	1282.5

TFV	1992.2	1988.95	1960	1967.15
TVSSRICHAK	1869	1887.05	1822.65	1866.15
TINDIA	838	838	819.4	833.8
TATAINVEST	1029.25	1038	1023.6	1024.65
MAHSCOOTER	3730.2	3762	3688.85	3728.7
GARFIBRES	2291.6	2310	2271.75	2294.05
DBCORP	85.1	86.25	84.05	84.35
CHABOT	187.1	188.4	182	183
GPPL	94.95	96.25	94	95.5
CERA	3550	3591.45	3515	3548
EIHOTEL	98.5	99.35	97.4	98
SYMPHONY	1055	1060	1047.55	1053.15
JAGRAN	46.3	46.3	45	45.45
GILLETTE	5791	5900.35	5791	5883.4
CRISIL	1983	1983	1941	1952.45
GULFOILLUB	724.3	744.55	718	736.45
VSTIND	3664.1	3691.1	3623	3665.7
SHOPERSTOP	205.05	207.55	202.3	202.7
ZYDUSWELL	2078.6	2080	2057	2067.15
AKZOINDIA	2447.9	2465.4	2400	2402.8
ECLERX	911.75	920	905.25	912.9
SUNDRMFAST	544	558.25	544	557.2
POWERINDIA	1298.85	1330	1291	1295.35
CHOLAHLDNG	591.95	591.95	571.55	577.05
MHRIL	216	216.65	211.05	212.35
AIANG	1995	2012.85	1980	2001.35
RATNAMANI	1588	1601.15	1561.15	1580.1
ZENSARTECH	238	240.9	236.55	238.1
THERMAX	980	985	961.25	976.95
NH	475	475	440	452.3
RESPONIND	195	198.05	183	185.9
ESABINDIA	1849.35	1849.95	1772	1778.45
MOLINDAIN	495.45	402.15	391	401.7
SOLARINDS	1137.1	1139	1110	1129.1
ORIENTREF	241.9	248.75	239.1	240.55
KRBL	245.7	246.4	244.55	244.95
MAHINDCIE	171.6	174.95	171.6	174.9
MAFSIN	939.9	939.9	915.15	919.3
TCSNBRANDS	440	442.6	432.75	436.05
GESHIP	281	281	276.4	278
NAVNETEDUL	85.95	87.2	84.5	84.6
BRIGADE	260	263.35	259.9	261.9
OMAXE	80.55	84.05	77.7	79.55
MAHEAMLEAS	328.75	331.45	317.05	319.55
GRINDWELL	754.35	763	740	744.95
GDL	124.65	125.65	122	123.15
INDOSTAR	339.2	339.55	327.9	331.05
ASTERDM	167.5	167.95	166	166.65
KSB	640.6	643.1	635.5	636.7
VTL	1085	1085	1058.75	1071.95
TEAMLEASE	2776.3	2776.3	2706.25	2718.4
TCIEXP	998.75	1001.3	979.75	991.8
IFILWAM	1025.05	1060.25	1025.05	1052.35
WABCINDIA	5612.95	5650	5600	5616

Trump condemns supporters for storming Capitol

Pledges smooth transition of power to Biden

Washington: Donald Trump has finally condemned the mayhem caused by his supporters in the US Capitol, saying they do not represent America, as the beleaguered president vowed to ensure a "smooth, orderly and seamless" transition of power to President-elect Joe Biden.

In a new video message, a day after he urged the crowds to head for the Capitol, where they forced their way inside, Trump said America is, and must always be a nation of law and order.

"Like all Americans, I am outraged by the violence, lawlessness and mayhem. I immediately deployed the national guard and federal law enforcement to secure the building and expel the intruders," Trump said in the recorded video posted on YouTube on Thursday and released by the White House.

The demonstrators who



Syrian graffiti artist Aziz Al-Asmar, right, finishes work on his depiction of the events in Washington after Trump's supporters stormed the Capitol, on a wall of a house destroyed in an airstrike, in Binish, Idlib province, Syria on Friday

AP

infiltrated the Capitol have defiled the seat of American democracy, he said.

"To those who engaged in

the acts of violence and destruction, you do not represent our country. And to those who broke the law, you will pay. We

have just been through an intense election and emotions are high, but now tempers must be cooled, and calm restored,"

he said.

Delivered in monotone and read from a teleprompter, Trump's remarks bore little resemblance to those on Wednesday, in which he told his rioting supporters, "We love you."

In an unprecedented assault on democracy in the US, thousands of supporters of outgoing President Trump stormed the Capitol building on Wednesday and clashed with police, resulting in four deaths and interrupting a constitutional process by Congress to affirm the victory of Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the November 3 election.

Trump, who is facing pressure from members of his Republican Party and a potential impeachment, also accepted the result of the election and pledged a smooth transition of power to Biden.

Biden will be sworn in as the 46th US President on January 20. Amidst the chaos and violence, US Congress on Thursday early morning verified the Electoral College victory of Biden and Harris.

Trump considering self-pardon: Reports

Washington: Embattled President Donald Trump has discussed with his close aides the possibility of pardoning himself before leaving the office on January 20, US media reports have said, amid growing calls for his removal from the White House.

According to CNN, some of those conversations happened in recent weeks, and Trump has asked about the legal and political consequences of a self-pardon.

The news comes as Democratic and Republican

lawmakers alike rebuked Trump's conduct as thousands of his supporters stormed the US Capitol building on Wednesday and clashed with police, resulting in four deaths and interrupting a constitutional process by Congress to affirm the victories of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the November 3 election.

It is not clear if the issue has come up since Wednesday's mayhem at the Capitol building fomented by the President's rhetoric or after his recent

controversial call with the Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, the report said, citing multiple sources.

The president has also asked for legal opinions on whether he has the authority to issue a self-pardon and has been advised on the potential political fallout, it said.

The New York Times reported on Thursday that Trump has suggested in conversations since Election Day that he wants to pardon himself, citing two people familiar with the discussions. **PTI**

Will not attend Biden's inauguration on Jan 20: Trump



Washington: President Donald Trump said Friday he won't attend President-elect Joe Biden's Inauguration on January 20. He will be the first incumbent president since Andrew Johnson to skip his successors inauguration.

"To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th," Trump tweeted.

Trump offered no clues for how he would spend his final hours in office. Biden will become president at noon on January 20 regardless of Trump's plans.

On Thursday, Trump delivered a video statement admitting his presidency would soon end — though he declined to mention Biden by name or explicitly state he had lost. **AP**

UK approves Moderna vaccine for rollout against Covid-19

London: The UK's regulatory authority on Friday approved a third Covid-19 vaccine for use in the country, made by the company Moderna.

However, supplies of the new jab are not expected to be available until the spring in a few weeks' time as the UK has pre-ordered 7 million doses. In trials with more than 30,000, the Moderna vaccine offered nearly 95 per cent protection from severe Covid-19.

The Moderna vaccine

works in a similar way to the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine that is already being offered by the National Health Service (NHS). It requires temperatures of around -20C for shipping — similar to a normal freezer. In comparison, the Pfizer/BioNTech one requires temperatures closer to -75C, making transport logistics much more difficult.

The Oxford/AstraZeneca jab is easier to store and distribute, as it can be kept at normal fridge temperature. **PTI**

Iran's top leader bans virus vaccines from US, Britain

Tehran (Iran): Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Friday banned Iran from importing of American Pfizer-BioNTech and Britain's AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines, a reflection of mistrust toward the West.

In a televised speech, he said the import of American and British vaccines were "forbidden," referring to the surging death tolls from the virus in both countries.

"I really do not trust,"

them, Khamenei said of those nations. "Sometimes they want to test," their vaccines on other countries, adding, "I am not optimistic (about) France," either.

However, Khamenei okayed the import of vaccines from other "safe" places, and remains supportive of Iran's efforts toward producing a vaccine. The country began testing its vaccines on humans December. The product is expected to hit the local mar-

ket in spring.

Hardliners in Iran have longed opposed the U.S-made vaccines. Iran's Revolutionary Guard in December rejected the use of foreign-made vaccines altogether.

Gen. Mohammad Reza Naghdi said the Guard "does not recommend the injection of any foreign vaccine" candidates based on genetic material known as messenger RNA, which carries the instructions for cells to make proteins. **AP**

Seoul court orders Japan to compensate 12 Korean sex slaves

AP ■ SEOUL

A South Korean court on Friday ordered Japan to financially compensate 12 South Korean women forced to work as sex slaves for Japanese troops during World War II, the first such ruling expected to rekindle animosities between the Asian neighbors.

Japan immediately protested the ruling, maintaining that all wartime compensation issues were resolved under a 1965 treaty that normalised their ties.

The Seoul Central District Court ruled the Japanese government must give 100 million won (USD 91,360) each to the 12 women who filed the lawsuits in 2013 for their wartime sexual slavery.

The court said Japan's mobilization of these women as sexual slaves were "a crime against humanity." It said that the mobilisation happened when Japan "illegally occupied" the Korean Peninsula from 1910-45 so that its sovereign immunity cannot shield it from lawsuits in South Korea.

The court said the women were the victims of "harsh sexual activities" by Japanese troops, which caused bodily harm, venereal diseases and unwanted pregnancies and left "big mental scars" in the women's lives.

Observers say it's unlikely for Japan to abide by the South Korean court ruling. A support group for the Korean women said it may take legal steps to freeze Japanese government assets in South Korea if Japan refuses to compensate the women.

Swedish PM defends Christmas shopping mall trip

Copenhagen: Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven on Friday defended his visit to a mall to buy a Christmas present for his wife despite Swedish authorities repeatedly urging people to stay away from shopping centers to avoid spreading the Covid. Lofven, who didn't break any laws, was the latest Swedish official to have gone against the advice given to the public by himself and Sweden's Public Health Agency. Earlier this week, an official resigned following reports that he had gone on vacation to the Canary Islands over Christmas. **AP**

US envoy to UN to visit Taiwan, China threatens 'heavy price'

United Nations: US Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft will travel to Taiwan and reinforce the US government's "strong and ongoing support" for Taipei's international space, a visit China says it "firmly opposes" and warned that Washington will "pay a heavy price for its wrong action." The US Mission to the UN said in a statement on Thursday that Craft will travel to Taipei on January 13-15 for meetings with senior Taiwan counterparts and members of the diplomatic community.

"During her trip, the Ambassador will reinforce the US government's strong and ongoing support for Taiwan's international space," the statement said.

Craft will also deliver remarks on

January 14 at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs on Taiwan's "impressive contributions" to the global community and the "importance of Taiwan's meaningful and expanded participation in international organisations. The Chinese mission to the UN said Beijing "firmly opposes" Craft's visit to Taiwan.

"There is only one China in the world and the Taiwan region is an inalienable part of China's territory. The Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole China," a spokesperson of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations said in a statement. **PTI**

5 nations want Iran to deliver justice on downed plane

Copenhagen: The countries whose citizens were killed when Iran accidentally shot down a Ukrainian jetliner said Friday they want Iran "to deliver justice and make sure Iran makes full reparations to the families of the victims and affected countries."

In a joint statement marking the one-year anniversary of the Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 crash, Ukraine, France, Canada, Britain and Sweden said they want Tehran "to provide a complete and thorough explanation of the events and decisions that led to this appalling plane crash." Sweden earlier had said that Iran had agreed to compensate the families of the foreign victims. The shutdown by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard happened the same night Iran launched a ballistic missile attack targeting US Soldiers in Iraq. **AP**

FROM PAGE 1

FARM TALKS FAIL, ALL EYES ON SC

Jai Kisan Andolan union leader Ravinder Kaur was seen crying after the meeting and said many mothers have lost their sons and many daughters have lost their fathers.

Besides Tomar, Commerce and Food Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash, who is an MP from Punjab, have been holding talks with unions at Vigyan Bhawan.

Around one hour after the meeting, the three Ministers stepped out of the discussion hall for their own internal consultations, after union leaders decided to observe silence while holding out papers with slogans including 'Jeetenge ya Mareenge' (We will either win or die).

The union leaders, however, refused to take a lunch break and stayed put in the meeting room. Before the start of the meeting, Tomar had also met senior BJP leader and Home Minister Amit Shah for about an hour. Separately, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also met Shah.

CHAOS AT IGIA

Meanwhile, a survey conducted by a social media platform LocalCircles, revealed that most people want bubble flights shut with all countries that have reported cases of the B.1.1.7 strain while 32 per cent of citizens are in favour of continuing to run these flights with a similar or reduced schedule. The findings are based on the responses received from over 8,000 citizens across 207 districts in the country. Stating that in its survey two days prior to the Government announcing temporary suspension of the flights to the UK on December 22, 50 per cent of respondents had suggested suspension of bubble flights, among others, from the UK and other countries.

According to the survey, "some 45 per cent citizens said they prefer shutting all such flights to and from countries which have cases of the new B.1.1.7 coronavirus strain till January 31

and reassess then, and another 19 per cent also said to keep all such flights shut till January 31." Also, another 19 per cent suggested instituting mandatory Covid-19 negative test certificate at boarding and mandatory test or quarantine at arrival and keep flights running per schedule.

Nearly 13 per cent maintained that flights should be kept running per reduced frequency but suggested instituting mandatory Covid-19 negative test certificate at boarding and mandatory test or quarantine at arrival, it said.

According to the Government, 30 flights will operate every week - 15 each by Indian and UK carriers. This will stand till 23 January, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri has said.

26/11 BUTCHER LAKHVI GETS ONLY 5-YEAR JAIL FOR TERROR FINANCING

"It has become routine for Pakistan to come up with farcical actions prior to important meetings," he said when asked about the jail sentence to Lakhvi, and issuance of an arrest warrant against Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar by another Pakistan court.

"UN proscribed entities and designated terrorists act as proxies for Pakistani establishment to fulfil its anti-India agenda. It is for the international community to hold Pakistan to account and ensure that it takes credible action against terror groups, terror infrastructure and individual terrorists," Srivastava said.

Lakhvi pleaded before the court that he was "falsely implicated" in this case. He was accused of running a dispensary and using funds collected for terrorism financing.

"He and others also collected funds from this dispensary and used these funds for further terrorism financing. He also used these funds for personal expenses," the CTD said.

Interestingly, Lakhvi was presented before the Lahore ATC on Friday and

was convicted the same day in the terror financing case registered against him some time ago.

The court was told that Lakhvi, a resident of Renal Khurd Okara district of Punjab, was living in Islamabad before his arrest in this case.

Lakhvi, 61, who was on bail since 2015 in the Mumbai attack case, was arrested by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab province on Saturday. He was designated as a global terrorist by the UN in December 2008 for being associated with LeT and al-Qaeda and for "participating in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing or perpetrating of acts by, in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf or in support of" both the entities.

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

Last month, the UN Security Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee allowed for a monthly payment of Pakistani Rupee 1.5 lakh for Lakhvi to meet his personal expenses.

The permission was granted 10 days before his arrest. Lakhvi has named his son Hafizur Rehman and brother Saadat Bashir Waheed who would send him PKR 90,000 and PKR 60,000 respectively in his bank account. He said that his son and brother both have the bank accounts in the same branch.

The global terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is instrumental in pushing Pakistan to take measures against terrorists roaming freely in Pakistan and using its territory to carry out attacks in India and elsewhere.

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

on due to COVID-19 pandemic.

On Thursday, an anti-terrorism court in Gujranwala issued an arrest warrant for banned Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar on the charges of terror financing.

STRESS TAKING HEAVY TOLL ON ARMY PERSONNEL

Observing that various management measures implemented by the Army and the Defence Ministry during the last 15 years have not been able to achieve the desired results, the study said, "Units and sub-units under stress are likely to witness an increased number of incidents of indiscipline, the unsatisfactory state of training, inadequate maintenance of equipment, and low morale, motivation, and esprit-de-corps, thereby, adversely affecting their combat preparedness and operational performance."

Some of the major organizational causes of stress among officers according to the study include, inadequacies in the quality of leadership, overburdened commitments, inadequate resources, frequent dislocations, lack of fairness and transparency in postings and promotions, down gradation in pay and status, inadequate promotional avenues, lack of motivation amongst juniors, non-grant of leave, indifferent attitude of civilian officials and short command tenures."

For JCOs and ORs, some of the perceived organizational stressors include "delay and denial of leave, excessive engagements, domestic problems, humiliation by seniors, lack of dignity, unreasonable restrictions on the use of mobiles, lack of recreational facilities, conflict with seniors as well as subordinates, health problems, the inadequacy of train reservation, inefficient administrative support, financial problems, lack of transparency in promotions, non-adherence to unit tarbeets, delay in crediting of financial claims and poor quality of rations as well as cooked food."

‘Kidnapping for marriage’ still thriving in Bihar

Patna: Marriages are said to be made in heaven but in some pockets of Bihar tying the knot in the shadow of the gun is not unusual. 'Abduction for marriage' in districts such as Jamui, Lakhisarai, Begusarai, Jahanabad, Patna, Nawada and Vaishali takes place frequently despite it having serious consequences later on.

One such incident was reported on Thursday when five unidentified men abducted Subham Kumar, a 20-year-old youth from Gangasara village under Barbaria police station in Lakhisarai district while he was taking a morning walk with two friends. The kidnappers forced him to marry a girl in Jamui district.

Subham was recently selected for a clerical job in the Army and the bride's family knew about it. They then hired a gang to execute the kidnapping.

Another similar incident took place on March 24, 2020, when a pharmacy student Amit Kumar was kidnapped from Jandaha in Vaishali district and was taken to Samastipur for marriage with a minor girl. Kumar was in tears at being forced into marriage while the girl was also weeping as her father was getting her married against her wishes.

In June 2019, three youths belonging to Paharpur in Gaya district went to Nawada's famous Kakolat waterfall, where they were allegedly kidnapped by six men at gunpoint. They forced one of the youth Nityanand Kumar Rai to tie the knot with a minor girl, who was a Class 10 student.

All three youth were beaten by the bride's family before forcing Rai to marry. They released

his friends with a stern warning and held Rai captive in their house.

Later, the minor girl claimed before the Duty Magistrate that she knew Rai since he visited her village to attend a marriage function.

Kidnapping for marriage has a long history in Bihar. As per data available with IANS, 2,695 cases were reported in 2020 and only seven cases turned out to be fake. The highest number of such cases took place in September 2020 when Bihar police registered 349 cases in all 43 police districts. There were 336 cases in March 2020, 325 cases in October, 305 in June, 304 in February, 301 in July, 286 in August, 270 in January, 138 in May and 81 in April 2020. The Bihar police did not register any cases in November and December 2020. Bihar police official said the 'kidnapping for marriage' number in 2020 is lower compared to 2019 and 2018 probably due to the lockdown and pandemic.

In 2019, Bihar police registered 4,498 kidnapping for marriage cases and only 10 of them were false. A maximum of 480 cases were reported in May 2019, 454 in March and 443 in June. In 2019, Bihar police registered 4,498 kidnapping for marriage cases and only 10 of them were false. A maximum of 480 cases were reported in May 2019, 454 in March and 443 in June.

These kidnappings generally take place during the marriage seasons. The abduction of Subham was probably done in desperation in a non-marriage season (Kharwas).

The Lakhisarai district Superintendent of Police) told

IANS, "The girl knew Subham from before. After his selection in the Army, her family became worried that he may refuse to marry the girl. Hence, they opted for 'Pakaduah Vivah' (Kidnapping for Marriage)."

The police officer said such an act has severe consequences. The chances of the girl being abandoned after such a marriage are always high. But the girls' families do not bother about spoiling her life.

Amitabh Kumar Das, a Bihar cadre retired IPS officer, said, "The dowry in specific castes is quite high and it is not possible for every girl's father to afford it. Hence, persons who belong to middle or lower income groups opt for forced marriages."

"Despite it being a crime, it is a trend seen in districts such as Lakhisarai, Jamui, Patna and other areas of western Bihar to select eligible grooms for their daughters. After the marriage, they apply pressure on the groom's family to settle the matter," Das added.

Himanshu Kumar, a social worker in Bihar's Nalanda district, said, "It is a social evil which is generally attempted by families who may not be rich but have influence and a stronghold at the panchayat or block level." "After conducting a forced marriage, the bride's father negotiates with the groom. They even apologise to them and pay money to settle the matter but such 'Pakaduah Vivah' is successful only if the girl is smart, mature and beautiful, and adjusts in the groom's family. The bride's family also applies pressure through influential persons in the village to settle the matter," Himanshu said. **IANS**




ARJUN RAMPAL
I have completed shooting *Penthouse* with Abbas Mustan ji. Now I will start shooting for *Dhaakad*. After that, I will resume shooting *The Battle Of Bhima Koregaon*. After that, I will start working for the second season of *The Final Call* and then, there is a film with Aparna Sen called *The Rapist*.



MIKA SINGH
The farmers are not just protesting for their rights. It's for the country. If the farmers are not looked after, the whole food chain gets disturbed. The farmers, especially the ones from Punjab, have really put up a brave face. I am with the farmers and I hope things get resolved soon and we come to a conclusion.



ATIF ASLAM
Since the unfortunate Coronavirus outbreak, this would be my first onstage performance. I am humbled to be a part of the concert and to be able to continue entertaining my fans in this testing time. I couldn't think of a better way to start off the new year and an attempt to keep the spirits high and heal through music.



MRUNAL THAKUR
I have encouraged parents to enroll their girls into learning self defence skills so they don't find themselves dependent on men. I want every girl to know that she is her own superhero. Beyond the strength of Wonder Woman and Bat Woman, lies within her the inner strength to fight against every adversity that comes her way.



MILEY CYRUS
Music is my medicine. *Mary Jane SEVR* revolves around loss & heartache, which I am currently experiencing after Mary Jane's (her dog) passing. MJ was a true queen. She wore her grace, dignity & kindness like a crown. She will never be forgotten and will forever be missed. To know her is to love her.

CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES

THE CINEMA OF TOMORROW

Directors DEEPA MEHTA and MYNA MUKHERJEE talk to CHAHAK MITTAL about how films can be made more inclusive of human rights and focus on showcasing humanity, especially in these uncertain times of a pandemic

Q *Funny Boy* is an adaptation of Shyam Selvadurai's eponymous novel. How do you think film adaptations do justice to the actual story as a film cannot delve very deep into a character like a book or we can say, some things can get lost in translation?

Deepa: This is the third book that I am adapting into a film. I have adapted Bapsi Sidhwa's book for *Ice Candy Man*; Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and now, Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*. Shyam and I worked very closely on this. I had a great time doing it. It took me some time before I agreed and Shyam sent me the script. I told him that I was doing it only because he was involved.

Q Oscars is looked at as the 'once in a lifetime' dream. You have been fortunate enough to receive it once and now are in the race for the second time (for *Funny Boy*). How are you taking it? What was your reaction when you got to know about it the first time?

Deepa: Oscars is something that I am very honoured to be considered for. Even though the submissions have changed, every time there's been something that has come up, it has only led on to something even better. That has been the nature and fate of this film. So, I am excited that the film is being sent to the best picture category.

I can only hope that the Indian audience connects with this. This is a film about prejudice, overcoming it and healing from love.

Q What do you think is the role of cinema during these uncertain times of a pandemic?

Myna: Looking back at 2020, I felt it was an unpredictable time, an unthinkable year and very unprecedented days. A year

'zero', it can be called. As I look back upon those months of extraordinary challenges, insurmountable losses and deeply unsettling fears, I feel this huge debt of gratitude to one of the only refuges we have had — cinema. It has been the antidote, the safe space that kept us engaged and kept families and friends close in conversation through the social distancing that COVID-19 imposed. Cinema brought us together in moments of laughter, thrill and adventure, mystery, and most of all, empathy. Good cinema is a call to action. It moves people, rouses us from apathy and reminds us of our shared humanity.

Q How do you think cinema can be more inclusive of human rights? How do you think *I-View World* represents such cinema?

Myna: I believe that during this time, more than ever, of a profound, shared crisis across the world, we need to put the spotlight on the 'human' in humanity. As individuals and communities struggle to face the devastation of the pandemic, the impact on basic human rights, including access to medical and economic survival, is felt most severely by those on the margins and the ones, who are already impacted by stark inequalities.

'I-View World 2020' is a curation of more than 50 unconfined, unflinching narratives that are powerful, transformative, intersectional and intergenerational. These are the stories of freedom, choice, equality and justice but they are also reminders of histories — sometimes failed ones, but with the potential for newer visions of the future. Together, they lend solidarity, amplify concerns and ask urgent questions about belonging and identity, marginality and community, sexuality and gender, ecology and climate change. In short, these beautiful, remark-



able films reflect the complex world around us. The idea is to channel both the aesthetics and politics of the moving image to gain cultural insight and to understand art at the intersections of visual activism.

Deepa: *I-View World 2020* was an innovative, courageous and liberating film festival. I was really honoured, bemused and chuffed up to be a part of such an important event — which became all the more relevant because of these dark COVID-19 times.

Q What was the criteria of choosing the films for the same?

Myna: We thought much about our

structure before choosing a hybrid format. While most of the screening was virtual, we decided to add a few physical screenings as an important gesture towards strengthening our commitment to the future of film and filmmakers, the industry and the theatres that were hit the hardest. Needless to say, the scale of the screenings will be a fraction of what they typically are and will follow comprehensive COVID-19 regulations. For us, the screenings are symbolic of resistance and an insistence that art is vital and will persist. It encouraged the audience to support the cinema of tomorrow and let filmmakers explore newer projects with an open eye.



CELEB TALK 15 MINUTES

'It's my good fortune'



Filmmaker SATISH KAUSHIK lauds Uttar Pradesh as *Kaagaz* premiers. He says that it's great in terms of shooting films as the artistic culture and the locations coupled with conducive film policy of the state attract everyone

Filmmaker Satish Kaushik, whose latest directorial venture *Kaagaz* was premiered here, has said that "Uttar Pradesh is a great state in terms of shooting films, while the artistic culture and the locations coupled with conducive film policy of the state attracts everyone."

Kaushik said that after the proposed Film City in UP, dreams of young artists to work with the top Bollywood directors and producers will now be fulfilled in their own state.

"It is my good fortune that my first film *Kaagaz* released in the cinema hall after COVID-19 pandemic. As the film is based on a



real story of a man from the state, people will now get a chance to see the life of the rural areas of UP. Undoubtedly, there are a lot of beautiful locations in this state, and I personally believe that more films from Mumbai will be shot in UP once the Film City in Noida is built," he said.

Kaushik's *Kaagaz* is also streaming on Zee 5 originals. Apart from Pankaj Tripathi, the film stars Monal Gajjar, Mita Vashisht and Amar Upadhyay in prominent

roles. Besides directing the film, Kaushik has also acted in it. He has played the role of Pankaj Tripathi's lawyer Sadhu Ram Kevat.

Talking about sharing the screen with Tripathi, Kaushik said, "When I was enacting scenes with him in the film, I tried to be as good as him. I think *Kaagaz* will be one of Pankaj's best films."

Kaagaz was shot at Kanduni village in Sitapur district, about 60 km from Lucknow. The film's story is based on the life of Lal Bihari, a farmer and social activist from a small village named Amilo in Azamgarh. In the film, Tripathi plays a bandmaster who discovers he is officially dead in government records and decides to set things right and prove that he is alive. Produced under the banner of Salman Khan Films and Satish Kaushik Entertainment Production, the film's screenplay is written by Imtiaz Ali. The filmmakers are holding a special screening using the mobile movie theatre technology in Sitapur district on Friday. "This mobile theatre format reaches viewers instead of viewers going to the theatre. I am so glad that the film will reach so many people through this release. Nothing makes me happier to know that *Kaagaz*, our labour of love, would reach a wider audience, especially in the interiors where watching cinema is still a far-fetched dream," said Kaushik.

—IANS

STUDIO CHAT 15 MINUTES

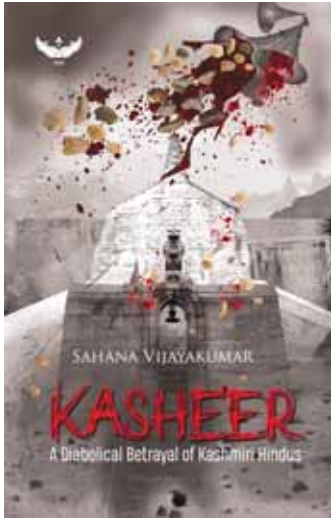
Chronicles of a life-long exile

Author SAHANA VIJAYAKUMAR says that her book — *Kasheer: A Diabolical Betrayal of Kashmiri Hindus* —brings forth the story of Kashmiri Hindus and the unfortunate mass exodus of the community from their motherland in 1990 against the backdrop of Kashmir's Islamisation

Originally written by author Sahana Vijayakumar in Kannada in 2018, Garuda Prakashan's new book *Kasheer: A Diabolical Betrayal of Kashmiri Hindus* brings forth the story of Kashmiri Hindus and the unfortunate mass exodus of the community from their motherland in 1990, against the backdrop of Kashmir's Islamisation. Translated to English after the abrogation of Section 370 in the state, the powerful book comes as "the plaintive cry of Kailash Pandit".

Contending that the reporting on Kashmir has whitewashed the human tragedy of Kashmiri Hindus, *Kasheer* retells the tale in a fictionalised account which is all too real and catches the facts of deception, betrayal, propaganda and political ambitions that have all but erased the memories of oppression of Kashmiri Hindus from the nation's conscience. It extricates the truth of human tragedy and presents it with brutal honesty.

Sahana undertook first-hand research during her visit to Kashmir and interviewed hundreds of locals for the book. According to her, the Kashmir issue cannot be understood without grasping the layers of traditional-



ism, reformism, secularism and fundamentalism within Islam.

"It is a travesty that some stories go untold, lost in the cacophony of dominant narratives and complex realities. The story of the Kashmiri Hindus is one such tale. As necessary it is to wish that the coming days are filled with optimism for Kashmir, it is equally essential to know the unfortunate story of the Kashmiri Hindus who were driven out of their mother-

land. This is their story. This is the story of Kashmir," she said about the book. "Covering the genesis of Kashmir and its progress from social, religious and political dimensions, this novel not only visualises both the contemporary and historical pictures of Kashmir, but also scrutinises the underlying philosophies of Sanatana Dharma and Semitic religions," she added.

The bold narration uses multiple metaphors, including that of Aarti Kaul's unconceived womb to voice out what happened to Kashmiri Hindus. The book derives its name from Koshur language, in which Kashmir translates to *Kasheer*.

Noting that the author has synthesised the historical perspective and the contemporary reality pertaining to Kashmir very well, renowned Kannada scholar S L Bhyrappa, who has written the book's foreword, said that she connected with the very few Kashmiri Hindus who have "returned home" and were living in ghettos, and witnessed all the places that bear testimony to thousands and thousands of religious conversions under intimidation, rape, murder and bloodshed.

DIALOGUE 45 MINUTES

All Creatures Great and Small, a beloved TV series of yore, is back as a reboot because producer Colin Callender saw the serio-comic adventures of veterinarians in a close-knit rural community as tonic for a politically divisive era.

Then the pandemic arrived, and a series knitted together with vivid characters, engaging stories and the beautifully filmed British countryside — and, of course, lots of animals, farm and otherwise — provided more reason to revive the world depicted by author James Herriot.

Herriot was the pen name for James Alfred ‘Alf’ Wight, who began working as a novice vet in northern England’s Yorkshire area in 1940, kept at it for five decades, and drew on his experiences for his 1970s and 80s semi-autobiographical works.

“I first thought about revisiting the books after the Brexit vote in 2016 in England and the Trump election sort of happened back to back,” Callender said, events highlighting what he termed a “schism” between city and country dwellers in both the UK and the United States.

Viewers might embrace a show that reinforced values of cooperation and collaboration — whatever one’s “political persuasion,” Callender said — and provides an escape from the “very complicated and messy and disturbing world that we’re all living in.”

Enter the new take on *All Creatures Great and Small*, the title of Herriot’s first bestselling book published in America and of the original series of 90 episodes that aired from the late 1970s to 1990.

The seven-part series debuts Sunday as part of PBS’ *Masterpiece* from GBH Boston and marks the start of the showcase’s 50th season. Set in the late 1930s, its cast includes newcomer Nicholas Ralph

TIMELY TONIC

A TV series of yore, *All Creatures Great and Small*, is back as a reboot because producer COLIN CALLENDER saw the serio-comic adventures of veterinarians in a close-knit rural community as tonic for a politically divisive era

as Herriot and oft-seen actors including Samuel West (*Darkest Hour*, *Notting Hill*), who plays Herriot’s mentor, and Anna Madeley (*Deadwater Fell*) as housekeeper Mrs Hall.

Diana Rigg made one of her final screen appearances as Mrs Pumphrey, the wealthy and devoted owner of frequent patient Tricky Woo, her overfed Pekingese played by the expressive Derek. A decision about how to handle the loss of Rigg, who died in September 2020 at age 82, has yet to be announced.

Filming wrapped in February 2019, with production completed during last spring’s COVID-19 lockdown. The series aired first in Britain and was a hit, with critics lauding it as a worthy remake; it was quickly renewed for a second season.

For Ralph, a stage-trained actor who grew up in Scotland, it’s a pinch-me start to his screen career.

“I went to drama school because I wanted to be surrounded by the best and I wanted to train in that way,”

he said. “You just can’t help but get inspired by that. And then when you meet these people like Samuel West, Dame Diana Rigg, they’re really lovely, and so helpful and open with any advice.”

Ralph turned to Herriot’s books in approaching the role and came away impressed by the author and his work. “What hit me immediately was his intelligence, his compassion for the animals and his dedication to his practice of veterinary, and also his compassion and patience in working with people — the farmers and Siegfried, his older, eccentric boss,” the actor said. “It’s also a complete culture shock for James as well. He gets thrown in the deep end about the politics and the people of this little village, and he comes from the big city.”

For Callender, going back to Herriot’s work revealed to him ways to make the new series differ from the original and



boost its appeal to a contemporary audience.

“The books were much funnier than I remembered when I first read them many years ago, so humor was very important,” he said. “The fish-out-of-water story, the fact that the James Herriot character is from Scotland and going to Yorkshire, was really center stage in the way we told the story.”

There’s also more attention to women and, with the help of technology, better scenery.

“What we wanted to do was bring to life the

female characters more fully” than they are portrayed in the books, Callender said. “So characters like Mrs Hall have been given real backstories and real agency in the story this time.”

And with digital cameras and drones now available for taping, the richly green and open landscape of the Yorkshire Dales comes to life as a place that “we, the audience wanted to be or want to go back to,” he said.

—AP



I am being tortured: Kangana

Actor Kangana Ranaut has alleged that she is being tortured mentally, emotionally and physically. She further claimed she has been asked not to disclose to anyone about the kind of torture she is being subjected to.

Kangana released a video on her verified Twitter account where she spoke about the cases filed against her and the torture that she is facing every day. She added that we are going back to the medieval age where women were burnt at stake.

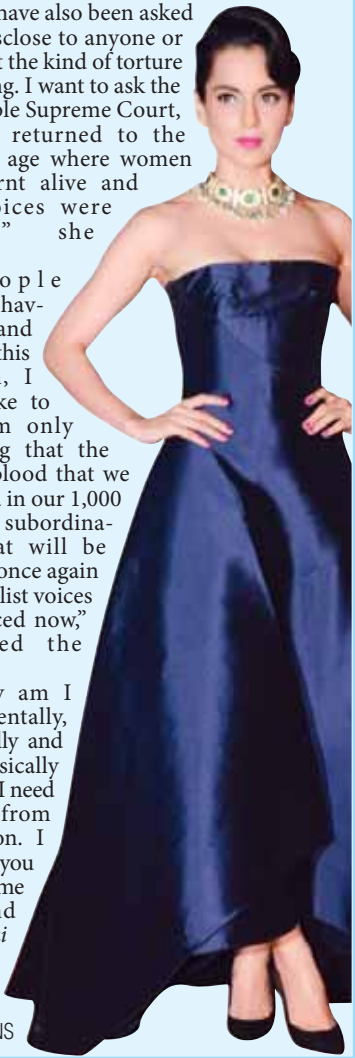
In the video, Kangana speaks in Hindi: “Ever since I have started speaking for the interest of the nation, the way I am being treated and tortured, the entire country can see that. My house was broken in an illegal manner. Everyday new cases are being filed against me because I have spoken for the interest of the farmers. One case has been filed against me even for laughing. My sister Rangoli has protested against doctors being tortured during the beginning of the pandemic. A case was filed against her and my name was also dragged into it, whereas I was not even on Twitter at that time. Our honourable Chief Justice ji has rejected it.”

“I have even been ordered to give *haajri* (attendance) at the police station although I don’t know for what reason. I have also been asked not to disclose to anyone or talk about the kind of torture I am facing. I want to ask the honourable Supreme Court, have we returned to the medieval age where women were burnt alive and their voices were silenced” she added.

“People who are having fun and enjoying this situation, I would like to tell them only one thing that the tears of blood that we have shed in our 1,000 years of subordination, that will be repeated once again if nationalist voices are silenced now,” concluded the actor.

“Why am I being mentally, emotionally and now physically tortured? I need answers from this nation. I stood for you and it’s time you stand for me. *Jai Hind*,” tweeted Kangana.

—IANS



ARTS & CULTURE 30 MINUTES

THE TREE OF LIFE

Artist JYOTI BHATT’s intaglio, ARPITHA REDDY’s oil on canvas and sculptor VIVEK DAS’s papier mache creation of a *Kalpavriksha* stand apart for their depth and substance, says UMA NAIR

This millennium of two decades comes to an end. In the contemporary art world, this is the time to look at the classic tree of life as a composition in art practices. In the many examples, this critic has seen three such works stand apart for their own depth and substance. Jyoti Bhatt’s intaglio, Arpitha Reddy’s oil on canvas and sculptor Vivek Das’s papier mache creation.

Kalpavriksha, also known as *kalpataru*, *kalpadruma* or *kalpa-padapa*, is the wish-fulfilling divine tree in Hindu mythology. It is mentioned in Sanskrit literature from the earliest sources. It is also a popular theme in Jain cosmology and Buddhism.

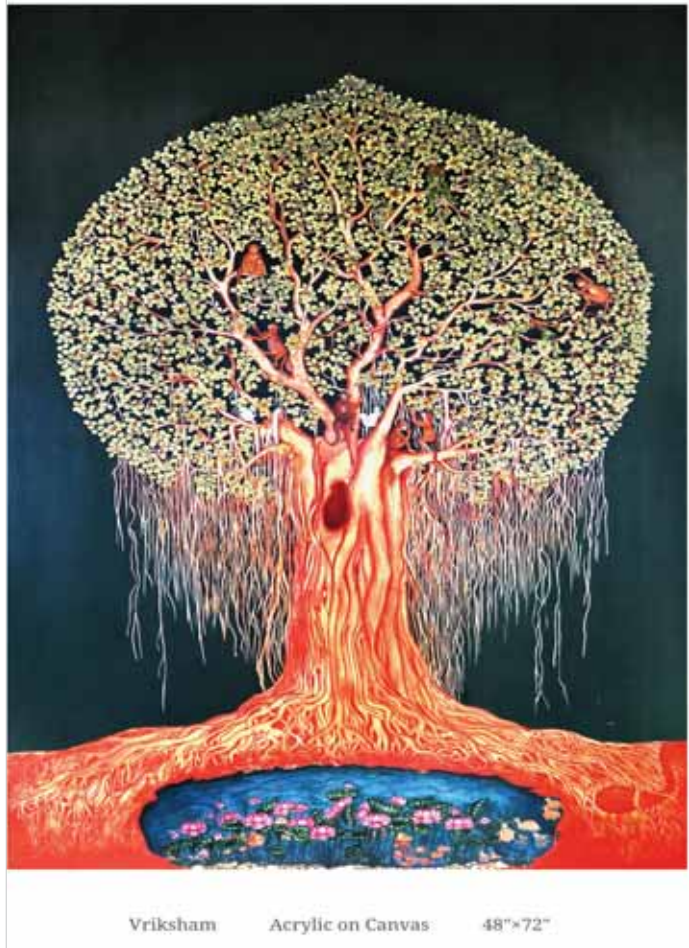
In Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, we find that the *kalpavruksha* is the eternal giver. It grants wishes pertaining both material and spiritual. While providing us with shade, fruits, nuts, wood and life giving oxygen that purifies air, the *kalpavruksha* helps human mind to focus on attaining spiritual enlightenment.

VIVEK’S PAPIER MACHE

Vivek Das’s *Kalpavriksha*, created last month, is a papier mache creation that looked like a transverse section of a tree that has seen generations. The beauty of his *Kalpavriksha* is that it echoes the power of a landscape. The concept of the tree is translated in a manner that is deeply evocative as well as original.

Here is a modernist mould *kalpavriksha* that echoes Hermann Hesse when he wrote that trees are penetrating preachers for sanctuaries. We know that the “tree of life” has been used worldwide by numerous theologies, philosophies and mythologies. It reflects the link between heaven, earth and the underworld. It has been used in the form of a mural as well as sculptures, drawings and paintings.

“The philosophy I refer to is *vasudeva kutumbakam*,” says



Vriksham Acrylic on Canvas 48”x72”

Vivek. “The world is our home and all living creatures are connected to each other. I have tried to connect the mud house wall and a tree form to connect the atmosphere,

habitat of humans, birds, animals and any living species.”

Vivek does not go into the details but creates sunken spaces that make us imagine that the



kalpavriksha has swirling branches and creates a mythical symbolism, suggesting the perpetuity of life in the turquoise green blend that he creates as a candid but hint-

ed canopy. In the curved colours of upper reaches, we can imagine branches that twist, swirl, turn, spiral and undulate, creating a tangle of strong branches, long vines



and fragile threads, perhaps an expression of life’s complexity.

JYOTI’S INTAGLIO

Jyoti’s most iconic print is his *Kalpavruksha* which embodies the principle of “*Purush-Prakruti*”. According to Jyoti, he had made two plates — the second plate, *Purush-Prakruti*, is 10 x 10 inches. Details are mesmeric here — he takes the metaphor of eyebrows to create a sublime portrait. He recalls that he must have been reading a poet describing a woman’s eyebrows as *dhanushya* (bow) because he created the *dhanushya*-shaped eyes five times and then compared that shape to the wings of parrots, leaves of trees and so on. The vertically arranged form would have reminded him of the mythical tree and so we see this replete in rhythms of the earth and erotic hints of child birthing. The work celebrates minimalism and the evocative juxtaposition of iconic symbols and the beauty of nature.

ARPITHA’S PAINTING

Trained in the Guruvayoor School of murals and frescoes, Arpitha Reddy’s *Kalpavruksha* is created as the mascot and masterpiece for *Vriksha 2019* that was exhibited at India International

Centre and Charles Correa’s marvellous architectural creation Bharat Bhavan Bhopal.

Arpitha took her source and inspiration as the mythical *Kalpavriksha*, said to have appeared during *samudramanthan* along with Kamadhenu. Thus, she personified the earthly manifestation of the heavenly *kalpadruma*. *Kalpavriksha* (of five types) are said to be located in the gardens of Indraloka with the *devas* and *asuras* at perpetual war over the wish fulfilling trees. Kalidasa’s *Meghadutam* tells us that *kalpatarus* yielded garlands, clothes and provided for all finer-ies for the women in Alaka, capital of Kubera’s Yaksha kingdom. Thus, while bestowing immortality, we find that *kalpavriksha* also provides for all our material desires. In her *kalpavruksha*, she has parrots, monkeys, fruits and lotuses, all part of a cosmic and celestial abundance.

These three creations embody the expanse of the imagination, the understanding of Vedic ritual and beliefs and also gives us a glimpse of the power of the manifestations of art practices that can be a signature of human power over the world. Indeed, art is long and life is short.

INDIA DOMINATE DAY 2

Gill scores maiden Test fifty after Jadeja, Bumrah hold Aus for 338 despite Smith's 131

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Steve Smith's typically gutsy hundred was neutralised by Ravindra Jadeja's four-wicket haul and rookie Shubman Gill's fluent half-century as a resolute India reached 96/2 after dismissing Australia for 338 on the second day of the third Test here on Friday.

The Indian bowlers, especially Jadeja (18-3-62-4) and the ever-dependable Jasprit Bumrah (25.4-7-66-2), were brilliant with their length on a flat SCG deck where Smith (131 off 226 balls) along with Marnus Labuschagne (91 off 196 balls) raised visions of a 450-plus total by taking the side to 206 for 2 at one stage.

But in the end, 338 was all they managed in a little less than 106 overs with none of the other batsmen making any telling contribution.

It was only fitting that Jadeja's split second brilliance from the deep found Smith short of his crease.

Then it was the calm and collected Gill (50, 101 balls), who was assured during those cover drives off Nathan Lyon and equally breathtaking while presenting his forward defence to Pat Cummins.

The 21-year-old and Rohit Sharma (26 off 77 balls) added 70 in 27 overs but more importantly set the stage for skipper Ajinkya Rahane (5 batting off 40 balls) and Cheteshwar Pujara (9 batting off 53 balls) to cash in on the batting-friendly conditions on the third day.

It was Gill's maiden Test half century in just his second match.

Despite the cloud cover for the better part of the day, there was no swing on offer and lack of moisture meant that there wasn't any turn or for that matter, even some movement off the pitch.

The Australian attack looked more insipid than ever and Rohit, playing his first game in nearly two months, did all the hard work for nearly two hours before failing to check an upish drive that was pouched by the bowler.

But it was a day when India had

two openers, who were both ready to pull the fast bowlers during their opening spells and dominate Lyon with precise footwork.

Both frittered away good starts but in broader context, provided the launchpad which the team failed to get in the first two Tests.

The first two sessions could be ide-

ally described as fascinating with Australia getting 172 runs in just under 51 overs, largely due to some positive batting by Smith, Labuschagne and down the order Mitchell Starc (24 off 30 balls).

But Jadeja and Bumrah, especially with the second new ball, were on target even as debutant Navdeep Saini (2/65) leaked a few runs due to sheer inexperience.

The Sydney track didn't have much help for the slow bowlers in the first two days but that didn't deter Jadeja from denying Labuschagne a deserving hundred.

In a stop-start first session, Labuschagne, who was looking good for a hundred, when he got

an arm ball from Jadeja, which bounced a bit more denying him room for a non-existent cut shot.

The result was a smart catch by skipper Ajinkya Rahane, who positioned himself a bit wide at the first slip.

Labuschagne's 196-ball innings had 11 boundaries and no one deserved a three-figure score more than him. He and Smith, in their bid to neutralise India's leg-side field, played some eye-catching strokes.

Smith completed his half-century in the very next over after Labuschagne's dismissal, off Ravichandran Ashwin (0/74 in 24 overs), who has been well below his best during the five sessions that India had been on field.

The two batsmen had little trouble as they blended caution with aggression perfectly during the first hour on a track that's offering slow turn with no visible demons in it.

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

The Indian bowlers continued bowling in straight lines with a heavy leg-side field that they have been employing since the second Test match.

What changed for Australia was the understanding of the opposition strategy better as they showed aggressive intent.

While Jadeja got a couple of wickets, both Ashwin and him erred on the shorter side of the length giving Smith ample opportunity to rock back and play through the vacant spaces in the off-side area.

While the pronounced shuffle was still there, Smith did cover his leg-stump while going across and was hardly troubled by the Indian bowlers.

Despite a tight leg-side field, he was able to find on-side gaps and once it was 278 for 7 after Pat Cummins' dismissal, the next 60 runs came in a jiffy in 11 overs, courtesy Smith's aggressive approach.

New 3-day lockdown in Brisbane puts 4th Test under fresh cloud

PTI ■ SYDNEY

A new three-day lockdown in Brisbane has put Cricket Australia in a spot of bother as it makes desperate efforts to hold the fourth and final Test against India in the Queensland state capital from January 15.

The Lockdown was announced less than 24 hours after top cricket board officials from India and Australia were engaged in a discussion on relaxation of hard quarantine measures for the visitors.

"Cricket Australia executives are urgently trying to determine the impact of a three-day lockdown in Brisbane on next week's fourth Test at the Gabba, which was already under a cloud because of India's hesitation to fly north and be subjected to tighter bio-security restrictions," the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

"A hotel quarantine worker's positive test to the more contagious UK strain of Covid-19 is the latest spanner in the works for CA's hopes to close out the Border-Gavaskar

'Oz would like to play at the Gabba'

Sydney: Australia "would like to play" the fourth and final Test against India in Brisbane, batting mainstay Steve Smith said on Friday even as Queensland entered into a three-day coronavirus-forced lockdown casting fresh doubts on the fate of the match.

Smith said nothing changes for them as players.

"To my knowledge, not anything is changed from our point of view, we will wait and see and that is not our decision to make, we are the players and we go where we are told and do what we need to do, but we would like to play at the Gabba for sure," Smith said. **PTI**

Trophy series at the Gabba," it further wrote.



PTI ■ SYDNEY

The plan was to vary pace of his deliveries and create angles since there was not much turn on offer, said all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja after his four wicket haul reduced Australia to 338 on day two of the third Test.

Jadeja returned with figures of four for 62 in 18 overs besides getting rid of centurion Steve Smith with a brilliant direct hit.

"The idea was to create pressure as this wasn't a wicket where you would get chance in every over. You can't bowl all deliveries at same pace on this wicket as there was no turn on offer. You had to mix and match and create angles," said Jadeja

I've delivered more often than not with both bat & ball: Jadeja

Smith's run out stands out for Jadeja

PTI ■ SYDNEY

An exceptional all-rounder, India's Ravindra Jadeja was pretty chuffed about running Steve Smith out with a direct hit in the ongoing third Test and called it his "best ever" fielding effort which he can watch any number of times.

Smith, who was batting on 130 and was in a mood to slog every ball in company of No 11 batsman Josh Hazlewood, couldn't beat a direct throw from Jadeja, who sprinted from his deep square leg position and effected a direct hit

with throw reminiscent of the great Kapil Dev during his hey-days.

Asked what will he like to watch, the four wickets he got or the run-out, the senior all-rounder replied: "I will rewind and play this run-out as this is my best effort. A direct hit from outside the 30-yard circle and that's like a moment that gives you that satisfaction."

"Three or four wicket hauls are fine but this run-out will stay with me," said the Saurashtra all-rounder.

and set your innings as per match situation. Initially, if I get start, then I play in a flow. It is good if I bat high up in the order," said Jadeja without specifying the position where he wanted to bat.

He also praised young teammate

Shubman Gill, who struck his maiden fifty on Friday.

"He has the temperament to play a long innings. He got a good start today. He is showing good signs. Hopefully, he will have a long career."

Being faster on feet, putting concerted pressure on Ashwin worked: Smith



PTI ■ SYDNEY

Faster footwork along with the tactic of attacking Ravichandran Ashwin straightaway worked wonders for him during his first century on home soil in three years, Australian batsman Steve Smith said on Friday.

Having just managed to score only 10 runs in the first Two Tests, Smith roared back to form as his 131, single-handedly steered Australia to 338, their first innings total, despite a middle-order failure.

MOST TEST HUNDRED AGAINST INDIA				
Players	Innings	100s	Runs	Average
Steve Smith	25	8	1570	74.76
Garry Sobers	30	8	1920	83.47
Viv Richards	41	8	1927	50.71
Ricky Ponting	51	8	2555	54.36

Faisel Features

"I decided to be a bit more positive. I think early on, I hit him over his head, just put a bit of pressure on him so that he bowls where I wanted him to bowl. It was a concerted effort to do that and I was happy with the way I played him," Ashwin said during virtual press conference.

Smith also said that he did not change his technique against the fast bowlers but was "just being faster on his feet particularly against the spin".

"In this game, I was probably a little more aggressive early and tried to put it back on the bowler a little bit more.

"I got off to a nice start, I was almost run-a-ball 20. So (I) got myself going and got into my innings and then you just have to play the game, absorb pressure when you need to, put pressure on when you need to and I did that pretty well in this innings," he added.

The sarcasm wasn't lost on any-

one when he said that it was nice to be back in form even though he had scored two 60-odd ball hundreds in the ODIs.

"...I have read a lot of things as I think I have said numerous time and plenty of people said I was out of form, so it was nice to come back I guess in the form, if that's what you want to call it," Smith said.

"It was only two or three weeks ago when I scored two hundreds at the SCG. It kind of makes me laugh sometimes when people say that kind of things," the anger was palpable.

"(I) missed out on the first two Test matches obviously, come-back today and scored some few runs and help I guess put us in a decent position," the 31-year-old added.

According to Smith, the total put up by Australia is a decent one, though they would have liked to score a few more runs.

Gill one of India's brightest prospects: Gavaskar

Sydney: Former Indian opening batsman Sunil Gavaskar heaped praise on Shubman Gill, who scored his first half-century in international cricket on Friday to get India off to a solid start.

Gill scored 50 from 108 balls, smashing eight boundaries to earn praise for his excellent stroke play but Gavaskar was particularly in awe of his defence against the Australian pace attack.

"What we saw today confirms that he is one of India's brightest prospects," Gavaskar said during the post-match show on *Sony Network*.

"The way he got behind the line of the ball more than any of the shots that he played and he played some sparkling ones was so impressive," he added.

Gavaskar who is regarded as one of the best-ever opening batsmen to play the game felt it was a trait every batsman playing in that position must have.

"That is the thing you want to look at when you look at opening batsmen how quickly and accurately they get behind the wall. Shubman Gill's defence was as good as his batting. I think he has a big future ahead," Gavaskar said. **PTI**

Haller completes Ajax move

Amsterdam: Sébastien Haller ended his underwhelming 18-month spell at West Ham by signing for Ajax for 22.5 million euros (\$27.5 million) on Friday in a move that bolsters the Dutch league leader's injury-hit front line.

The Ivory Coast striker joined West Ham from Eintracht Frankfurt for a club-record

fee of \$55 million in July 2019, but only scored 14 goals and lost his place in the team midway through last season to Michail Antonio, a converted

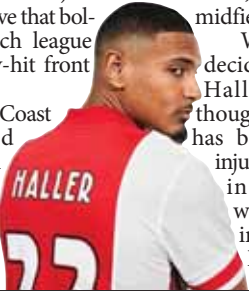
midfielder. West Ham decided to sell Haller even though Antonio

has been hit by injury problems in recent weeks, leaving manager David

Moyes with few alternatives up front.

Ajax made its move for Haller, who has a contract until June 2025, with David Neres, Lassina Traore, Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Bryan Robbey all sidelined with injuries.

"This is a club that you can perform, you can play Champions League, you can fight for the title every season," Haller said in a video posted on Ajax's website. **AP**



Senior IOC member not sure Tokyo Games will happen

AP ■ TOKYO

A senior member of the International Olympic Committee has said he "can't be certain" the postponed Tokyo Olympics will open in just over six months because of the surging pandemic in Japan and elsewhere.

The comments by Canadian IOC member Richard Pound to British broadcaster the *BBC* came as Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared a state of emergency on Thursday for Tokyo and surrounding prefectures.

"I can't be certain because the ongoing elephant in the room would be the surges in the virus," Pound said speaking about the future of the Tokyo Games.

Japan's emergency order, which is largely voluntary, will be in force until the first week of February.

Tokyo reported a record of 2,447 new cases on Thursday, a 50% increase from the previous day —

Senior IOC member not sure Tokyo Games will happen

which was also a record day. Japan has attributed over 3,500 deaths to Covid-19, relatively low for a country of 126 million.

It's crunch time for Tokyo. Organisers say the Olympics will take place, but they are not expected to reveal concrete plans until spring. That's about the same time the torch relay begins on March 25 with 10,000 runners crisscrossing the country for four months leading to the opening ceremony on July 23.

Pound also hinted athletes should be a high priority for a vaccine because they serve as "role models."

"Athletes are important role models, and by taking the vaccine they can send a powerful message that vaccination is not only about personal health, but also about solidarity and consideration for the well being of others in their communities," Pound said.

The IOC has said the Olympics, first delayed by the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, will not be postponed again and would be canceled this time.

Barca must be perfect to reclaim title: Koeman

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona have been warned that they can't drop any more points if they are to win LaLiga by coach Ronald Koeman.

They currently trail leaders Atlético Madrid by seven points but the Rojiblancos also have an important two games in hand.

As a result, Koeman issued a plea for perfection from his players as they prepare to take on Granada this weekend.

"I think we can still do it (win the league) and that's the most important thing," Koeman told reporters.

"It requires a big effort and we must help ourselves and get help from



others but we can't drop any more points.

"We've already dropped points where we couldn't so it is a lot of pressure for the players knowing that we can't lose anymore."

"In a season when you have 20 more games to play, normally it isn't much

pressure but with the way things are now, we can't trip anymore."

While he also confirmed that Samuel Umtiti is now ready and available to feature again, the Dutchman once more insisted that signings must be made this month.

"For this season, it is important for us to make signings in the winter market," he added.

"In some positions we need more competition or effectiveness. There are several reasons to try to make signings."

"That's what I think but it is the club's decision and if it isn't possible then it isn't possible. We'll continue with the same idea and look ahead to next year."

SA include five newcomers for Pak Tests

AFP ■ CAPE TOWN

South Africa on Friday named a 21-man squad for two Tests in Pakistan, starting in Karachi on January 26.

The squad includes two fast bowlers, Daryn Dupavillon and Ottneil Baartman, who have not yet played at Test level. Dupavillon has played in one One-Day International.

The pair effectively replace fellow fast bowlers Glentton Stuurman and Migael Pretorius, who were in South Africa's squad for the recent Test series against Sri Lanka but who suffered injuries and had to be released. Also included is Kagiso Rabada, South Africa's leading fast bowler, who missed the Sri Lanka series because of injury.

Baartman as well as batsmen Keegan Petersen and Sarel Erwee are the only players who have yet to appear in an international match, although Petersen will be part of a South



African squad for the third time. Also named were two extra spin bowlers in left-armers George Linde and Tabraiz Shamsi.

"Considering that the conditions that will be faced are largely unknown to the South

African team, we wanted to strengthen the attack," said selection convener Victor Mpsang.

According to a statement from Cricket South Africa, the team will depart for Pakistan on a commercial flight on January 15 and will spend a period in quarantine in Karachi before starting a programme of training and intra-squad matches.

It will be South Africa's first tour of Pakistan since 2007/08.

A separate squad will be announced next week for three T20 Internationals which will follow the Tests.

Squad: Quinton de Kock (captain), Temba Bavuma, Aiden Markram, Faf du Plessis, Dean Elgar, Kagiso Rabada, Dwaine Pretorius, Keshav Maharaj, Lungi Ngidi, Rassie van der Dussen, Anrich Nortje, Wiaan Mulder, Lutho Sipamala, Beuran Hendricks, Kyle Verreynne, Sarel Erwee, Keegan Petersen, Tabraiz Shamsi, George Linde, Daryn Dupavillon, Ottneil Baartman.