

OPINION 8
ANATOMY OF
UTTARAYANA

WORLD 11
AT LEAST 34 DEAD AS INDONESIA
QUAKE TOPPLES HOMES, BUILDINGS

SPORT 14
SIRAJ ABUSED BY
GABBA CROWD

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 157 Issue 15
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, SATURDAY JANUARY 16, 2021; PAGES 14 & 3



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AMIT SALUTES
BRAVE
SOLDIERS
12 VIVACITY

World's largest Covid vaccination drive begins

PM to launch campaign via video conferencing today at 10:30 am; Vardhan says it is beginning of the end of coronavirus pandemic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the first phase of the pan-India rollout of world's largest Covid-19 vaccination drive on Saturday at 10:30 am via video conferencing.

The drive involves two vaccines — Covishield and Covaxin — developed by AstraZeneca-Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech respectively.

A day before the vaccination drive against coronavirus, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Friday said the step is "probably the beginning of the end" of Covid-19. The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had earlier this month approved Oxford Covid-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country, paving the way for a massive inoculation drive.

This vaccination programme will cover the entire length and breadth of the country, with a total of 3006 session sites across all States and UTs which will be connected virtually throughout the exercise.

In the first phase, priority groups and healthcare workers, both in Government and private sectors, including ICDS workers, in all-around 100 beneficiaries will be vaccinated at each of the session sites. Adequate doses of both vaccines have been already delivered across the country. India, which reported first Covid case late January last year is currently the world's second worst-hit country with over 1.05 crore cases and over 1.51 lakh deaths. Over, 213,000 cases are currently active.

The phased rollouts will initially vaccinate one crore healthcare and two crore frontline workers, followed by around 27 crore senior citizens and people with co-morbidities like diabetes, hypertension, organ transplants, etc. In all, 30 crore people are going to be inoculated by July this year.

Speaking at the 146th India Meteorological Department foundation day, Vardhan cautioned that even if the vaccination drive is on, there should not be lowering of guard and



Workers prepare for the Covid-19 vaccination drive for frontline health workers at a Govt Hospital in Mumbai on Friday AP

people must follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour. "Tomorrow is an important day...It is the last phase of

the battle against coronavirus. I say, this is probably the beginning of the end of Covid now which is going to start tomorrow," Vardhan, who is also

Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Minister, said. The Minister on Friday

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL
CASES: 1,05,42,068
DEATHS: 1,52,094
RECOVERED: 1,01,76,506
ACTIVE: 2,09,083



STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	19,84,768	50,336	18,81,088
Karnataka	9,30,668	12,158	9,09,701
Andhra Pradesh	8,85,616	7,138	8,76,140
Tamil Nadu	8,27,614	12,236	8,08,571
Kerala	8,36,884	3,416	7,65,757
Delhi	6,31,884	10,732	6,18,357
Uttar Pradesh	5,95,142	8,543	5,76,519
West Bengal	5,64,098	10,026	5,46,849
Odisha	3,32,949	1,951	3,29,088
Rajasthan	3,14,372	2,744	3,05,953
Chhattisgarh	2,92,612	3,544	2,82,145
Telangana	2,91,118	1,574	2,85,102
Haryana	2,65,964	2,979	2,60,801
Bihar	2,58,289	1,449	2,52,858
Gujarat	2,54,849	4,360	2,43,739
Madhya Pradesh	2,50,429	3,740	2,39,581

also reviewed preparations for the vaccination drive as he visited the Dedicated Covid Control Room which has been set up on the Nirman Bhawan premises of the Ministry.

He scrutinised the working of CoWIN, an online digital platform, which will be used to drive the Covid-19 vaccination programme in the country. It will facilitate real-time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualised tracking of beneficiaries for Covid-19 vaccine. This digital platform will assist programme managers across

national, State, and district levels while conducting vaccination sessions. It will help them track beneficiary coverage, beneficiary dropouts, sessions planned v/s sessions held and vaccine utilisation, said an official from the Ministry.

The platform enables national and State administrators to view & sort data of beneficiaries as per their gender, age & co-morbidity. They can also view the metadata of vaccinations and Adverse Event Following Immunization reported from constituent districts across States and UTs.

295 CASES IN DELHI, LOWEST SINCE MAY 9; POSITIVITY RATE DIPS TO 0.44 PC

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 295 fresh Covid-19 cases on Friday, the lowest in more than eight months, even as city Health Minister Satyendar Jain said the positivity rate has slipped to an "all-time low" of 0.44 per cent.

Farmers-Govt talks inconclusive again

Govt asks unions to create an informal group to discuss finer points of the laws

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The ninth round talks between the farmers and the Government on Friday again failed to end the stalemate over the farm laws. While farmers insisted on the repeal of the laws and legal guarantee of the MSP, the Government asked them to be more flexible in their approach and expressed willingness for necessary amendments.

However, both sides have agreed to continue the dialogue despite the Supreme Court constituting a committee to mediate on the issue.

The next round of talks will be held on January 19, the day the court-appointed committee is likely to start consulting stakeholders to end the impasse. This was the first meeting after the Supreme Court stayed the enactment of the laws and legal guarantee of the MSP.

In the meeting that lasted for nearly five hours, including a lunch break, the Government requested unions to create an informal group to discuss finer points of the laws so that a way forward can be found in the wake of the Supreme Court's



Representatives of farmer unions leave after the ninth round of talks with the Government over the new farm laws at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Friday PTI

direction.

Besides their major demands, unions alleged police repression on people associated as well as not associated with the ongoing protests, NIA raids on transporters and arthiyas in Punjab who are supporting farmers' protests and were providing logistic support for the agitation.

The farmer representatives have also raised questions on the cases that have been lodged

against the farmers and urged the Government to address this and prevent it. During the meeting, the Karnal incident where agitating farmers ransacked the venue of Manohar Lal Khattar's "kisan mahapanchayat" came up.

"Talks took place over three farm laws in a cordial atmosphere and detailed discussions took place on some issues, but couldn't reach a decisive stage. We suggested

they can form an informal group of people who can understand the laws better and prepare some concrete proposals, detailing what are farmers' expectations and what clauses are problematic for them, which the Government can consider with an open mind," Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said after the meeting with the farmer leaders.

Continued on Page 11

Prez donates ₹5L for Ram temple

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The fund collection drive for the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya kicked off on Friday with President Ram Nath Kovind donating ₹5 lakh.

The President made the contribution to the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerath Kshetra Trust set up by the Government to look after the construction and management of the temple.

"President Shri Ramnath Kovind ji contributes ₹5,00,100 for the construction of Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya," said Champat Rai, general secretary of the trust.

A delegation comprising Vishva Hindu Parishad's international working president Alok Kumar, Teerath Kshetra Trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri, and temple construction committee head Nripendra Misra met the President on Friday to seek his contribution.

"He is the first citizen of the country so we went to him to initiate this drive. He donated a sum of ₹5,01,000," he said.

The VHP and associated bodies have launched a fundraising campaign — Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir Nidhi Samarpan Abhiyan — from January 15 to February 5 where they will reach out to Hindu families in different States.

Continued on Page 11

TMC rebel MP Shatabdi to fly to Delhi to meet Shah today

Roy criticises party leadership for bias, hints at announcing big decision today; likely to join BJP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengali cine star-turned Trinamool Congress MP Shatabdi Roy on Friday said she was going to Delhi where "it may not be out of ordinary to meet big politicians" like Home Minister Amit Shah.

Roy on Thursday set off ripples in the party ranks after posting a cryptic Facebook message dropping hints about a "decision" that she might take by "2 pm on January 16".

In Delhi, Amit Shah met senior BJP leaders from West Bengal to discuss strategy for the coming Assembly elections. Sate BJP chief Dilip Ghosh and senior leaders like Mukul Roy and Kailash Vijayargya were among those who called on Shah.

Even as Bengal BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said that senior politicians were welcome in his party if they changed their



said, "Shatabdi has nothing against the Chief Minister ... and all other issues can be addressed ... though I think she will not quit the party."

Whether the three-time Birbhum MP would be joining the BJP on Saturday was not made clear by her but the actor-turned politician considered close to senior Bengal Minister Subroto Mukherjee said she would "take a decision in Delhi".

On whether she would meet Amit Shah, she said, "I can't say because it is not out of ordinary to meet big politicians like him." Earlier she said, "If I take a decision, then I will let you know at 2 pm on the 16th of January."

Her Thursday Fan Club post reads: "It feels as if some people do not want that I go to you. I am not informed about many programmes. If I am not informed, how can I go? This is causing me mental anguish."

Roy, who was available for comments to the media outside her residence, however, could not be contacted by senior leaders like Sudip Bandopadhyay and Derek O'Brien over telephone, party sources said.

Continued on Page 11

J&K calm but can burst with rage any time: N Command

Lt Gen says J&K situation may flare up as Pak using terror as state policy

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Sounding a word of caution on the prevailing situation in Jammu & Kashmir, GOC-in-C, Northern Command Lt Gen YK Joshi on Friday said the internal situation in J&K, which is stable and under control, has the propensity to flare up at any time.

Interacting with the media persons after paying tributes to the "bravehearts" of the Indian Army on the occasion of Army Day in the Northern Command headquarters in Udhampur, Lt Gen Joshi also claimed that Pakistan has not renounced from using terror as an instrument of state policy.

Additionally, he went on to say, "We have seen the Chinese



and so on." Referring to the prevailing security scenario, the Army commander said that the relentless operations on the Line of Control backed with a robust multi-agency grid in hinterland has forced the deep state in Pakistan to recalibrate its approach to handle this situation.

He said, "The terrorist networks across are trying hard to abet recruitment by extensive use of social media."

The recent District Development Council elections have conveyed the resolve and will of the common people to shun separatism and embrace democracy, he said. Commenting on the situation in Jammu & Kashmir, Lt Gen Joshi said the abrogation of Article 370 and improvement in governance have been major game changers that helped in restoring the faith of the common people in the institutions of the Government.

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BJP picks Sharma for MLC polls, likely to be made Dy CM

VN BHATT ■ LUCKNOW

The BJP announced four candidates for the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council polls, including three candidates who were re-nominated and the fourth candidate is bureaucrat turned politician AK Sharma, who joined the BJP on Thursday.

The re-nominated candidates are deputy Chief Minister Dr Dinesh Sharma, State BJP president Swantra Deo Singh and Laxman Acharya. The BJP is yet to announce the remaining 6 candidates. The last date for filing nomination is January 18. There are a total 12 seats that will go to the polls.

BJP sources said a Cabinet reshuffle is likely after the council polls. Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma is likely to be the next chairman of the UP Legislative Council as incumbent Ramesh Yadav, who belongs to the Samajwadi Party, is retiring on January 31.

Details on Page 2

BSP plans to go alone in UP, Uttarakhand polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party has decided to contest the coming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand alone. Party chief Mayawati made an announcement to this effect while addressing party cadres at a simple function to mark her 65th birthday in Lucknow on Friday. She also promised a free Corona vaccine for all if the BSP was voted to power in these states.

On her birthday, Mayawati also urged the Centre to concede to the demands of farmers, who have been protesting against three Farm laws for the last two months on Delhi borders. The BSP chief said, "Our party is committed to bettering the lives of the poor and the neglected which is why we were able to form government in UP four times. But casteist, capitalist and myopic opposition parties did not like

it and hence united against the BSP and conspired to stop us from coming to power. Now these parties are busy dividing votes of the weaker sections of the society."

Mayawati further said, "Our party workers have to overcome all obstacles and work for these deprived sections, they have to be positive and work for the people to ensure a return to power like in 2002."

"The Assembly polls are due in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in the near future. The BSP wants to make it clear that unlike in Bihar Assembly polls and last Lok Sabha elections, the party will not form any alliance with any party. We will contest both UP and Uttarakhand Assembly polls on our own and form the governments," she stressed. The BSP could not win a single seat in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and it could bag only 19 seats in 2017

UP Assembly polls. However in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, it aligned with the Samajwadi Party and bagged 10 seats. After the last general elections, the two parties parted ways. The BSP chief welcomed the Corona vaccination drive slated to start from Saturday and said that all citizens should be given the shot free of cost. "If it is not done free of cost, the BSP will ensure free vaccination when it comes to power," she promised.

On the occasion, Mayawati also released a book named 'A Travelogue of My Struggle Ridden Life and BSP Movement - Vol 16', and said that she would further strengthen the self respect of the cadre and movement of the party. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also wished the BSP chief on her birthday over phone on Friday morning. Several other leaders across party lines too greeted her on the occasion.

CAPSULE

NITHARI: SURENDRA KOLI CONVICTED IN 12TH CASE

Ghaziabad: The Ghaziabad Central Bureau Investigation (CBI) court on Friday convicted Surendra Koli in the 12th case of infamous Noida's Nithari murders. However, Mohinder Singh Panthar was acquitted due to lack of proof.

FOREX RESERVES HIT NEW HIGH OF \$586.082 BN

Mumbai: The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$758 million to reach a record high of \$586.082 billion in the week ended January 8, RBI data showed on Friday.

905 BIRDS FOUND DEAD IN MAHARASHTRA

Mumbai: As many as 905 birds, including 753 poultry birds, were found dead in Maharashtra in a 12-hour period and samples have been sent to the labs to check if any of them carried the avian influenza virus, an official said.

Govt to set up land banks along e-ways

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to further promote industrialisation in the state, the Yogi government will be setting up land banks along expressways. The tracts would be utilised for setting up industrial units on demand of entrepreneurs.

Initially, land banks would be created along Agra-Lucknow Expressway and Purvanchal Expressway. The former was opened to traffic in 2017, while Purvanchal Expressway was likely to be opened for public by March end for light vehicles. Setting up industrial units along these two expressways will help in transporting goods within 10 to 12 hours across any corner of the state.

Being a land-locked state, transportation has been a major challenge for entrepreneurs investing in UP. This is a major reason that the govern-

ment was now preparing to develop industrial parks on sides of expressways. Investors who have put in funds in the state have been demanding the creation of industrial units along expressways for long. Such units will provide good connectivity to industries. Places that have been marked for construction of Industrial parks are proposed on Agra-Lucknow Expressway are Hargaoon village (Ferozabad), Buhana village (Agra), Pohara village (Chitrakoot) along Bundelkhand Expressway and Bara village (Barabanki) along Purvanchal Expressway.

Currently, five expressways are being laid in Uttar Pradesh. Besides, Purvanchal Expressway, construction has been started on Bundelkhand Expressway, Gorakhpur Link Expressway and projects for Ganga Expressway and Ballia Link Expressway have been proposed.

Govt to digitise sacrifices made by martyrs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The heroic sacrifices of martyrs for the independence of the country will now be accessible from any corner of the world at the click of a mouse. The Yogi government is set to bring all events of the state related to freedom movement on a digital platform so that anyone could read about the great freedom fighters.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed officials to collect all material related to freedom movement and literature related to martyrs and make them available online. Yogi has earlier directed to organise Chauri-Chaura centenary celebrations for a full year from February 4 and

mark the occasion on the martyr memorial sites of all districts by organising programmes.

There are many historic stories of martyrs of the independence struggle in Uttar Pradesh, including the 1925 Kakori loot of Lucknow, 1922 Chauri-Chaura incident of Gorakhpur and Meerut revolt of 1857.

As a mark of respect to the martyrs, the government is now going to digitise them bringing them online. "The CM has also given instructions to conduct research on subjects related to the contribution of martyrs in freedom struggle and start scholarships in universities," an official said.

37 stadiums to come up across state

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to encourage youths to actively participate in sports in Uttar Pradesh, the state government has started the construction of 37 new stadiums across the state.

While Yuva Kalyan and Prantiya Raksha Dal departments will be constructing 18 stadiums under 'Khelo India', 19 new stadiums will be constructed on directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

"Work is in full swing for the construction of 35 stadiums at Ayodhya, Hardoi, Kanpur Dehat, Gorakhpur, Kaushambi, Agra, Banda, Pratapgarh, Bijnore, Hathras, Prayagraj, Kushinagar, Gonda, Banda, Badaun, Mirzapur, Unnao and Hamirpur," a senior official said.

All sports complexes will have halls with all facilities for indoor games like badminton, volleyball, wrestling, kabaddi and weight lifting. Tracks and playgrounds will also be constructed as per the quality of the ground.

"Besides, talented players from rural areas, youths aspiring to join the Army, Paramilitary and police will also be imparted training facilities here," the official said.

"The Union government has also given its nod and construction work of all stadiums will be completed soon. Youths will get better sports facilities in these complexes in their own districts," Nodal Officer of Khelo India and Deputy Director of Yuva Kalyan and Prantiya Raksha Dal department, Shilpi Pandey said.

BJP names 4 candidates for council polls, 2 SP candidates file papers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The BJP announced four candidates for UP Legislative Council polls, while two Samajwadi Party candidates - Ahmed Hasan and Rajendra Chaudhary filed their nominations for the polls on Friday. The SP candidates filed nomination papers in the presence of party chief Akhilesh Yadav and other party legislators.

Meanwhile on Friday, the BJP announced four candidates, including three, repeated for the elections. The renominated candidates were Deputy CM, Dinesh Sharma, UP BJP chief Swatantra Deo Singh and Laxman Acharya. Bureaucrat-turned politician A K Sharma, who joined the BJP on Thursday, was the fourth candidate announced by the BJP.



The ruling party was yet to announce the remaining six candidates and party sources said that candidates were likely to be announced soon as the last date for filing nomination is January 18. Voting for 12 seats will be carried out. Sources in the BJP claimed that a cabinet reshuffle was likely soon after the Council polls. Present Deputy CM, Dinesh Sharma was likely to be the



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath giving away a cheque of Rs 2 lakh to Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust from his personal account on Friday

West UP farmers bar parties, pro-law people from their stir

Lucknow (PNS): With farmers intensifying their stir against the three farm laws, residents of several villages in Baghat have banned the entry of political parties and farmers associations, supporting the contentious laws. A decision to this effect was taken by a panchayat of 36 castes held in Baghat recently.

"Anyone who is in favour of the farm laws is not welcome in these villages. If you want an entry to show your loyalty to the farmers, not to the government," Saroorpur Kala village pradhan Jeet Singh said in Lucknow on Friday. Singh further said that in a panchayat, members unanimously decided to ban entry of political parties and farmers' outfit supporting the farmers' agitation. "We do not want to share food and place with those who have an anti-farmer mindset," he said. Former pradhan Tejveer Singh stressed, "We do not have anything to do with any party. We are farmers and support our brethren protesting the

draconian laws for the last two months - first in Punjab and now in Delhi. We disown people talking the language of the government." Farmers from western Uttar Pradesh have been carrying on with a sit on in Baraut of Baghat for the last 30 days. The agitators have collected around Rs 5 lakh in form of donations for the on-going stir. The agitating farmers have changed their strategy by holding protests at different places to motivate their brethren. On Thursday, divisional president of Bharatiya Kisan (BKU) Padam Singh organised a day-long dharna at Meerut Cantt station while on Friday, a similar protest was held in Saharanpur. On Saturday, a dharna will be held at Bijnore, followed by protests at Hapur. The BKU has asked its district units to hold chaupals in different villages to make farmers aware as to why the farm laws were being opposed. The decision was taken after the BJP sent its cadre to the villages with a pro-farm law booklet.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE
I army no. 1398772F Rank L/Nk Ram Karan Prasad S/o Chokit Prasad R/O VIII, Mujdiha, P.O. Mujdiha, Teh. Kaptanganj, Distt. Kushinagar declare that I have changed my wife's name from Sandhya to Sandhya Devi all concerned note, Ram Karan Prasad.

NOTICE
I have changed my name from Manju Kumari to Manju Devi. My date of birth is 01-03-1986. I should be known in future by my name Manju Devi W/o Dharmendra Yadav (HAV) No. 14835392P, Address - Sehan Ghorang, Sant Kabir Nagar, U.P. - 272165.

NOTICE
Be it known to all men that in the document of my class 10, passing year - 2019 R.No.-1196316/008, Uniq ID - 6984976 marksheet has been lost its used be illegal, SHIVANKAN PATHAK S/O ASHOK PATHAK, R/O- BAKHARIYA AURIYA U.P.

NOTICE
My wife name as recorded in the service book is "BALEVA KILASH N", is wrong. Her true and correct name is "NINAMA KAILASH BEN RAMESH BHAI" and the same should be amended and recorded in the service book. NINAMA RAMESH KUMAR KANJI BHAI, Address-Lichha, Chhapra, Bhioda, Sabarkantha, Gujrat, Pin-383245

आवश्यकता
आवश्यकता है मद्रस हाबीबिया लालगोपालगंज प्रयागराज (उच्च आदिया) में
प्रधानाचार्य का एक पद एवं आधुनिकीकरण अकादमि का एक पद रिक्त है। प्रधानाचार्य हेतु शैक्षिक योग्यता फाजिल एवं कामिल (फारसी) की उपाधि, मुन्शी/मैलवी या उच्चतर कक्षाओं का न्यूनतम पाँच वर्ष का शैक्षिक अनुभव अथवा दीर्घकालिक सेवा, फारसी में 50 प्रतिशत अंकों सहित एम्.एड. तथा उपरोक्तानुसार पाँच वर्षों का शैक्षिक अनुभव अथवा फाजिल/एम्.एड. तथा दीर्घकालिक/अरबी/ फारसी परम्परागत प्राध्व शिक्षण में दुरुस्त सहित उपरोक्तानुसार तीन वर्षों का शैक्षिक अनुभव। वेतनमान 47600-151100 लेवल-8 एवं अन्य नए न्यूनतम आयु 30 वर्ष। तथा आधुनिकीकरण अकादमि हेतु शैक्षिक योग्यता परालनाक या प्रशिक्षित स्नातक या स्नातक केतनमान मातृ सरकार द्वारा निर्धारित मानदेय न्यूनतम आयु 18 वर्ष। इच्छुक अर्जियों विज्ञापन की तिथि से 21 दिन के अन्दर अथवा आदेश पत्र समस्त शैक्षिक योग्यताओं के साथ प्रत्येक के पदानुक्रम से मद्रस उपरोक्त पद भेजे।
प्रबन्धक मद्रस हाबीबिया लालगोपालगंज, प्रयागराज

Missing man found lynched in Bijnore

Lucknow (PNS): A 45-year-old man, reported missing since Thursday, was lynched by unknown miscreants in Afzalgarh area of Bijnore. His battered body was found lying in a pool of blood on Friday morning and his motorcycle was found lying nearby. A case was registered and further investigations were on.

Veer Singh of Machhmar locality went out to purchase household items on Thursday evening. When he did not return home till late, his brother Ramgopal launched a hunt but failed to trace him. Singh's mobile phone was also found to be switched off. Later, the harried brother informed the police about Singh's disappearance.

On Friday, Ramgopal learnt that an unknown body was lying in Afzalgarh and rushed there only to find his brother's body. Later the police was informed and investigations were on. Meanwhile in muzaffarnagar, a 51-year-old Corona positive patient jumped to his death from the fourth floor of the Medical College building on Thursday. While victim Raj Kumar's kin alleged negligence on part of the hospital, the police suspected that the deceased took the extreme step under depression.

Rajkumar's son, Sudhir, along with other family members and villagers staged a sit-in dharna on the hospital premises demanding immediate action against the guilty. They were pacified after the hospital authorities and senior police officers assured action after an inquiry. In another case, a 30-year-old man committed suicide by hanging himself at Pakri village of Surwaha area in Bhadohi. Sheshmani Yadav (30) hanged himself in his room after a fallout with-in the family. Yadav used to work in Mumbai and had returned home last week.

UP Cong chief, others protest for farmers' rights, held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu, party leader in Legislative Council, Deepak Singh along with several workers and leaders were detained as they attempted to march towards Raj Bhawan to observe 'Kisan Adhikar Diwas' on Friday.

The Congress had announced to observe 'Kisan Adhikar Diwas' and gherao Raj Bhawan to protest the new Farm laws. Confrontation between Congress workers and the police were reported from across the state. Talking to media persons, Lallu said that the Yogi government was infringing on their democratic rights to hold peaceful protests. "When the BJP is organizing big rallies, programs and the Chief Minister himself is celebrating 'Gorakhpur Diwas' and other events, why only opposition parties, specially Congress leaders were being stopped or arrested for demonstrating against the government's failures in the



name of implementing Corona protocol. The Congress will continue its fight against this kind of oppression," said the state Congress chief. Prominent among those detained were Congress district chief, Ved Prakash Tripathi, City chief, Mukesh Chauhan, former minister RK Chaudhary, State Mahila Congress chief Mamta Chaudhary and others.

CITYBRIEFS



3-DAY ITM KICKS OFF
Principal Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Mukesh Kumar Meshram inaugurated ITM Lucknow, India's leading B2B travel, tourism showcase and conclave, at Paryatan Bhawan on Friday. Also present were chairman and managing director of ICM Group Ajay Gupta and other senior officials from Jammu & Kashmir Tourism, Gujarat Tourism, Himachal Pradesh Tourism, Uttarakhand Tourism, and Uttar Pradesh Tourism.

The 3-day showcase & conclave is supported by Uttar Pradesh Tourism and Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation. B2B travel agents and tour operators from Lucknow and nearby cities will be interacting with the officials of UP Tourism department, hoteliers and promote their products and destinations. The basic purpose is to boost tourism awareness worldwide.

"We believe that the inflow of domestic and out-bound tourists will increase in the coming months and Lucknow will play a vital role in promotion of tourism. With the kind of stressful lives that we lead, one tends

to looks for refreshing holidays and unique travel destination to unwind and to simplify this need, we organise ITM-Lucknow annually. The constant support and eager interest from travel industry makes it a success year after year," managing director of ITM Ajay Gupta said.

MOU SIGNED

CEO of City Montessori School Roshan Gandhi recently signed an MoU with Alliance Française de Lucknow (AFL) for teaching French in all school campuses with a view to enhancing employability skills, providing opportunities for pursuing higher studies in France, student exchanges and many related initiatives for the promotion of French language and culture. Divisional Commissioner Mukesh Meshram, along with counsellor for education, science and culture at the Embassy of France in India and country director of French Institute in India M Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens, and president of AFL Zohra Chatterji, was present on the occasion.



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा Bank of Baroda
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Sale Notice for Immovable Properties "APPENDIX-IV-A (See Provision to Rule 8(6))
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso of Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, Constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of below mentioned accounts. The details of Borrower/s/Guarantor/s/Secured Assets/s/Dues/Reserve Price/E-Auction date & time, EMD and Bid increase Amount are mentioned below:

Date of Auction: 03.02.2021	Last Date of EMD Submission: 01.02.2021 upto 4.00 P.M.						
Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower/Guarantors	Description of the Immovable Property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues	Date & Time of E-Auction	Reserve Price/EMD/ Bid Increase Amount	Status of Possession (Constructive/Physical)	Property Inspection Date & Time
1.	Borrower- Mrs Jarin Khan w/o Mohd Ahrman Khan and Mr Ahrman Khan S/o Wasiz Zaman	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Flat No-106, First Floor, BCC Gravity Apartment Situated at CP-14/CP/105, Avas evam Vikas Parishad, Rajajipuram, Near Tikait Rai Talab, Lucknow. Total Area 1000 Sq Ft. Bounded: North: Common Passage, South: Open to Sky, East: Flat No 105, West: Flat No 107	Rs. 3336150/- + Interest & other charges	03.02.2021 01:00 PM to 2:00 PM	31,50,000/- 3,15,000/- 10,000/- (Bid Increase Amount)	Constructive	16.01.2021 to 30.01.2021 between to 10:00 PM to 4:00 PM
2.	Borrower : Mr. Kamla Prasad Navik S/o Sh. Jawahar Lal Navik, R/O ES 2/317, Sector F, Jankipuram, Lucknow and Mrs. Surasati Devi W/o Kamla Prasad Navik, R/O ES 2/317, Sector F, Jankipuram, Lucknow	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Residential House no. H-4/112, Type E.W.S. (18/40), measuring 40.74 sq.mtr., situated at Barawan khurd, Hardoi Road Yoja, Lucknow, Owned by : Mr. Kamla Prasad Navik S/o Sh. Jawahar Lal Navik, Boundaries : North : H.No. H 4/111, South : H.No. H 4/113, East : 9 mtr wide road, West: H.No. H 4/139	Rs. 21,94,468.50 + Interest & other charges	03.02.2021 01:00 PM to 2:00 PM	19,80,000/- 1,98,000/- 10,000/- (Bid Increase Amount)	Constructive	16.01.2021 to 30.01.2021 between to 10:00 PM to 4:00 PM
3.	Borrower- M/s. S Shoppers Prop. Mr. Manoj Kumar Singh S/O Mr Chandrajevar Singh	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of /Plot No:24 in village Kamta in Khasara No: 454,454/1, Minjumla within the Registration Sub-District Lucknow and District Lucknow, Bounded: North: Plot No 25, South, Plot No 23, East : 25Ft wide Road, West : Plot No 27	Rs. 74,47,063/- + interest + other charges	03.02.2021 01:00 PM to 2:00 PM	1,29,96,000/- 1,29,960/- 10,000/- (Bid Increase Amount)	Constructive	16.01.2021 to 30.01.2021 between to 10:00 PM to 4:00 PM

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Bank of Baroda secured website i.e. www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm & <https://ibap.in>. Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No. 7565003608

Date: 16.01.2021, Place: Lucknow Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

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1,200 health workers in city to be administered vaccines

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the vaccination drive kicking off on Saturday, 1,200 health workers in Lucknow will be given the shots at 12 centres. District immunisation officer MK Singh said 100 health workers will be vaccinated at each centre. The vaccines have been sent from the District Immunisation Centre to the nine cold chain points from where the same will be taken to the 12 centres.

"Keeping in mind that there could be some wastage, we have sent 110 doses of each vaccination site. The vaccines will reach the centres at 8 am on Saturday," he said. The vaccination drive will begin at 9 am and conclude by 5 pm. The exercise will kick off immediately after being launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The 12 hospitals where the vaccination drive will be conducted include KGMU, TS Mishra Hospital, SGPGI, RMLIMS, Balrampur Hospital, Veerangana Avanti Bai Women Hospital, ERA's

Medical College & Hospital, Sahara Hospital, and Chinhat, Maal, Indiranagar and Mohanlalganj CHCs. According to Singh, there is excitement amongst the health workers ahead of the drive.

DG, Medical Health, DS Negi said that across the state, the vaccination drive will be carried out at 317 sites.

Director of Balrampur Hospital Dr Rajeev Lochan said they are fully prepared for the vaccination drive.

"Health workers are happy that they will get vaccinated, so that they can be safe from coronavirus infection," he said. He added that they are trying to make the Covid vaccination exercise comfortable and safe.

"Preparations have been completed at the waiting, vaccination and observation areas. Beds have also been made available and we are making it safe by having all possible medicines and all possible equipment to combat any side-effects. Our anaesthesia incharge will be present in the observation room," he said.

He added that for the

address of the prime minister, they have put up a large TV set in the waiting area and also a camera in case the PM chooses to interact with beneficiaries or hospital authorities.

RMLIMS director Dr AK Singh said they have activated one out of the total 9 session sites for the vaccination drive.

At SGPGI too, preparations were completed and all the 18 booths were ready even though vaccination drive would take place only at one booth. Doctors, staff nurses, patient helpers and sanitation workers will be vaccinated. The vaccination committee met Medical Education Minister Suresh Khanna and apprised him of the preparations.

Nodal officer for Covid immunisation (KGMU) Dr Nishanth Verma said the drive will begin at one booth and 100 health workers will be vaccinated. "Other booths are also ready and vaccination will be carried out there in the coming days," he said.

Meanwhile, head of Microbiology department of SGPGI Dr Ujjwala Ghoshal

said their team has completed 8 lakh RT-PCR tests. "We would like to take this opportunity to thank all who made it possible. The entire team has been working 24x7 since March last year with sincerity and dedication. We are sure that we will tide over this pandemic in the time to come," she added.

Meanwhile, 109 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow on Friday even as the city's tally crossed the 80,000-mark. As many as 179 patients recovered, taking the number of recoveries to 77,192. The death toll stands at 1,151 while there are 2,133 active cases in the district. The fresh cases included 14 from Rae Bareilly road, 13 from Gomtinagar and 10 from Chowk. In the state, 482 persons tested positive, including 14 in Kanpur, 19 in Ghaziabad, 34 from Varanasi, and 18 from Meerut, taking the UP tally to 5,95,614. There were 15 deaths in the state, taking the tally to 8,588. Besides, 956 patients recovered, taking the recovery figures to 5,77,475.



Friday namaz was offered at the Asafi Masjid nine months after it was stopped in the wake of coronavirus outbreak. City magistrate and Hussainabad & Allied Trust secretary Shashi Bhushan said the namaz was offered amidst Covid protocols

Permission sought for opening of classes VI to VIII

Lucknow (PNS): Even as it thanked the state government for its continued support and recent declaration of permitting schools to function in a single shift of 5 hours, nullifying the previous 3-hour double-shift format, Unaided Private Schools' Association sought permission for opening of classes VI-VIII.

Addressing mediapersons on Friday, president of the association Anil Agarwal said they are in constant touch with the government regarding the demand. He said that schools would give an opportunity to all the students who remained absent throughout the year 2020-2021 in view of the pandemic. "Such students will be allowed to appear for the final exams after clearing the dues, and subsequently they will be promoted to the next class. However, the dues have to be cleared mandatorily to be able for the students to appear for the exams. There will be efforts to minimise the hike to the rolled back fee of 2020-2021. Maximum relief will be extended to the students and their parents," he added. Agarwal said teachers should also be given priority along with health workers in the vaccination drive beginning Saturday.

Manager of real estate firm found hanging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Manager of a real estate firm was found hanging in its godown in Transportnagar under Sarojinagar police station area on Friday. He was identified as Dharmendra Sachin (35), who was a native of Kanpur and living with his cousin for the past 10 years in a flat at Sunrise Apartment in Sarojinagar. His cousin lodged a complaint with police, stating that Sachin committed suicide. However, he did not state the reason for the drastic step. Reports said that Sachin had cordial relations with everyone in his workplace and there was no complaint against him. Investigating officer SN Yadav said efforts were on to ascertain the reason for suicide.

Meanwhile, body of a youth was recovered from an isolated place near his house in Sushant Golf Club area under Gosainganj police station on Friday morning. The deceased was identified as Rajendra Rawat. Father Cheda Rawat identified the body and told the police that his son had left the house in search of a job along

Two impostors held on charges of extortion

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two persons were arrested from different places on Thursday night for allegedly extorting money from people by posing as cops. As per reports, Ritesh Mishra of Varanasi was picked up for interrogation from Aishbagh under Bazaar Khala police station Thursday at 11 pm. A fake police ID card and 10 passport-size photographs in police uniform were recovered from their possession. Another accused was picked up from near Thakurganj crossing. He was identified as Krishna Kant, a resident of Telibagh under PGI police station. A fake

police ID card and two pairs of fake uniform were recovered from his possession.

Meanwhile, police arrested two persons for lifting a tractor and trolley from Bajrang crossing under Indiranagar police station. They were identified as Kaleem and Rajitram. Three stolen mobile phones were recovered from their possession. Indiranagar police station incharge Ajay Prakash Tripathi said the thieves were nabbed within few hours. Commissioner of Police DK Thakur has given a cash reward of Rs 20,000 to the police team that nabbed the culprits.

with a neighbour on Wednesday. When Rajendra did not come back, his father and others started searching for him, but in vain. He then lodged a missing complaint on Thursday morning. Farmers

noticed the body on Friday morning and informed the police. Gosainganj police station incharge VK Singh said the deceased was unemployed and there were reports that he was a drug addict.

Foggy conditions to continue in city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Meteorological department has forecast moderate to dense fog conditions in the state capital on Saturday. In the state, there is a warning for cold day and cold wave conditions at isolated places and dense to very dense fog in the morning at a few places over east UP and at isolated places over west UP.

On Friday, there was dense fog in the morning, followed by clear skies later on. MeT director JP Gupta said that fog is being caused by moisture in the air and calm wind conditions. "Cold conditions will be the same in Lucknow on Saturday as on Friday," he said.

On Friday, the state capital recorded the maximum temperature at 21.3 degree Celsius, which was normal, while the minimum temperature at 6.4 degree Celsius, was 1.2 degrees below normal.



In the state, the coldest were Churk and Agra at 3.7 degree Celsius each. According to MeT officials, low temperature with chilly winds aggravates the cold conditions at times. "Cold is tolerable but there are mild health con-

cerns for vulnerable people such as infants, pregnant women, elderly, people with chronic diseases etc. There is also an increased likelihood of various illnesses like flu, stuffy nose or nosebleed due to prolonged exposure to cold. One

should not ignore shivering because it is the first sign that the body is losing heat, and it is important to remain indoors in that case. Frostbite can occur due to prolonged exposure to cold as the skin turns pale, hard and numb and eventually black blisters appear on the exposed body parts such as fingers, toes, nose and earlobes. "Severe frostbite needs immediate medical attention and treatment," an official said.

Dense fog contains particulate matter and other pollutants which get lodged in the lungs, clogging them and decreasing their functional capacity which increases episodes of wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath and causes eye irritation. Dense fog contains pollution of various types and these pollutants in the air may tend to irritate the membranes of the eyes, causing various infections," he said.

Stress on inter-personal relationship among employees at workplace

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The inter-personal relationship amongst employees at the workplace leads to their engagement and commitment towards the organisation, resulting in increased productivity, and positive organisational culture and environment. However, some of the destructive practices such as workplace ostracism affects the organisational culture negatively.

Assistant professor in the department of Rural Management at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University Lata Bajpai Singh, along with her collaborator, published a research paper in an international journal according to which in order to strengthen interpersonal communication and to create a healthy work culture at the workplace, organisational administration can hold social interaction-based activities and events across different verticals which

would strengthen the bond, reduce negativity and decrease employees' intent to quit.

BBAU spokesperson Rachna Gangwar said that as per the research, workplace ostracism is understood as being excluded or dismissed from work-related groups.

"Workplace ostracism is being practiced in different ways such as silent treatment, silent bullying, purposeful ignorance by co-workers and superiors and unfair treatment," she pointed out. She said the research article concludes that workplace ostracism develops an intention amongst the employees to quit.

"The effect of relationship between workplace ostracism and employees' intention to leave the organisation reduces due to personality dimensions of the employees as well," she said. In this research study, Shalini Srivastava from Jaipuria Institute of Management (Noida) was the collaborator.

Kisan Mela inaugurated at CIMAP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 20-day Kisan Mela was inaugurated at Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) on Friday. Various programmes based on agro-technology are being organised for farmers. Due to the pandemic and restrictions, only 100 pre-registered farmers and entrepreneurs will be allowed on daily basis. On Friday, 100 farmers from different states took part in the Kisan Mela. CIMAP director Dr Prabodh Kumar Trivedi addressed participants and briefed them about the institute's involvement in

farmer services through agrotechnologies, herbal products and innovative approaches.

Former acting director of CIMAP Dr Alok Kalra, former chief scientists Dr AK Singh and Dr VKS Tomar were present as special guests. They addressed the participants on knowledge-based agrotechniques and its importance for farmers.

During the programme, leading aroma industry representatives addressed the farmers about demand, supply and quality aspects of essential oil in national and international markets. A special interactive programme, 'Kisan Goshthi'

was also organised in which Dr Saudan Singh, Dr VR Singh, Dr Sudeep Tandon and Dr RK Srivastava delivered speeches on mentha, geranium cultivation, agro-technologies, quality distillation and business opportunity, respectively.

Dr Rajesh Verma, Dr RS Sharma, Dr Manoj Semwal, Dr Rushikesh and Dr Sanjay Kumar were also present in the question-answer session. A programme was also held to make incense sticks and more than 25 women participated in it. Display of new agrotechniques, publication on medicinal and aromatic plants were also organised for the farmers.

65-year-old booked on rape charge

Pilibhit: A 65-year-old man has been booked for allegedly raping two sisters at a village here, police said on Friday. An FIR was lodged against Satnaam Singh (65) on Thursday after a probe into it by Circle Officer Pramod Kumar, Superintendent of Police Jai Prakash said.

The two girls, aged 15 and 13, worked at Singh's place and were allegedly raped by him for a year, police said. The victims' family alleged that they have been trying to lodge a complaint in this regard for the past one month but police did not listen to them. They approached offi-

cial at Puranpur tehsil and informed them about it after which an FIR was registered on Thursday. The SP said a probe has also been ordered against the area SHO for not taking the case seriously. The SP said in their complaint, the girls' family did not give any date of the incident and alleged that they were being raped for the past year. A detailed probe into the matter is on, the SP said. PTI



Army Day was celebrated in Lucknow with a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at the Central Command War Memorial (Smritika) on Friday morning. General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Central Command, Lt Gen IS Ghuman, along with serving officers and jawans, laid wreaths in memory of the brave martyrs who laid down their lives in defence of the motherland. The last post was sounded and a two-minute silence was observed for peace of the departed souls. The veterans fraternity also paid homage to the martyrs. Army Day is celebrated on January 15 in recognition of Field Marshal KM Cariappa's taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander, in 1949.

Special posts of DSP created

Lucknow: The UP government has created special posts of DSP to oversee security at Ramjanmabhoomi in Ayodhya, Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi and Mathura's Krishna Janmabhoomi. The posts have been created on the recommendation of the DGP and seven officers appointed to oversee security arrangements at the religious places, according to an order issued by ADG (Administration) PC Meena. According to the order, Deputy Superintendents of Police Anil Rai, Pradeep Singh Chandani and Ratneswar Singh, all posted in Varanasi, will now be the DSP (Security) at the Kashi Vishwanath temple. PTI

Four persons killed in two separate road accidents

Lucknow: Four people, including a minor boy, were killed and one was seriously injured in two separate road accidents in Fatehpur, police said on Friday. Three people were killed when their motorcycle was hit by a speeding truck on the Kanpur-Allahabad national highway near Ambapur village here late on Wednesday evening, said Upendranath Rai, SHO of Thariyapath station. The deceased have been identified as Chandrasekhar (40), his son Shubham (6) and

Rambaran (41), he said. The truck driver fled the spot leaving behind his vehicle. Efforts are on to nab him, he added.

In the second accident, a man was killed and another seriously injured after their motorcycle was hit by an unidentified vehicle, the police said. The incident took place at Naubasta Road in Khagha township. The deceased has been identified as Rakesh (45), said SHO, Khagha police station, RK Singh. The injured has been

admitted to the hospital, he said.

Meanwhile, in Shahjahanpur, a man was killed over a land dispute in Gunah Khamariya village in Banda area here on Friday, police said. Ratiram (40) was shot dead by one Rajnish with his licensed revolver, Superintendent of Police, S Anand said. Police have lodged an FIR against six people. The body of victim has been sent for postmortem, police said, adding that the accused is absconding. PTI

9 more victims identified as police probe sexual abuse case against expelled BJP functionary

Jalaun: The police here have identified nine more victims, including seven minors, on the basis of data recovered from a laptop and other devices seized from an expelled BJP office-bearer arrested on charges of sexually exploiting two children, an official said on Friday. Efforts are on to contact these victims and record their statements, said Station House Officer (SHO), Konch police station, Imran Khan. Ram Bihari Rathore, the former vice-president of the BJP's Konch unit, was arrested on Wednesday on the basis of a complaint lodged by the

two children. Soon after Rathore's arrest, his laptop, DVD and hard disc were seized from his house. During their examination, nine more victims — seven minors and two women — have been identified, Khan said.

"Efforts are on to contact these victims and their families. Their statements will be recorded," he said. Their statements will be recorded in connection with the existing FIR against Rathore. No fresh case is being lodged as of now, he said. In the investigation so far, Khan said, no evidence has been found to sug-

gest that the obscene material was being sold to any porn site or in the market. Superintendent of Police Yesh Veer Singh had also inspected Rathore's house and office, the SHO said.

The two children who had lodged the complaint against Rathore had alleged that he used to sexually abuse them in his office, he added. Explaining how the matter came to light, Khan said a few days ago, Rathore had lodged a complaint with the police that her CCTV and digital video recorder (DVR) had been stolen. Later, two minors

were apprehended with the equipment and questioned. During investigation, obscene material was found on the DVR. The children who had stolen the equipment were being blackmailed by Rathore with the obscene videos, he said. Khan had on Thursday said 15 to 20 videos were found on Rathore's laptop, DVD and hard disc in which he is seen sexually exploiting children. The accused would lure young children by giving them money and made their obscene videos that he would use to blackmail them, he had said. PTI

Covid vaccination drive to be launched today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The parliamentary constituency of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to be part of the national COVID-19 vaccination drive to be launched on Saturday and all the preparations regarding this have been completed with getting the vaccines reached to the identified centres with safety. The PM will also virtually hold a dialogue with any person to be administered the vaccine in the district during launching of the vaccination drive.

The timing for the drive is from 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday and the vaccination in the district will begin as soon as the PM launches it virtually, the Chief Medical Officer Dr VB Singh informed adding, the

vaccination programme will be conducted at six centres in the district including the District Government Women Hospital in Kabirchaura, Pt Deen Dayal Government District Hospital near Pandeypur, Heritage Medical College in Bhadwar, Sir Sunderlal Hospital in BHU, Community Health Centre, Kashi Vidyapeeth and Community Health Centre, Sewapuri. The vaccine will be administered on as many as 100 persons at each centre and the first vaccine will be administered on a sanitation employee, the CMO informed adding, the list of total 600 persons to whom the vaccine is to be administered, has already been prepared. The vaccines have been made available to all the

identified centres with the safe cold chains and proper protection and all the preparations regarding the vaccination programme have been completed, he informed further. As many as 34 magistrates have been appointed to ascertain the vaccines to get reached to the regional vaccine centre, district vaccine centre and 16 cold chain points safely before the vaccination. These magistrates will discharge their duty in three shifts.

There will be three rooms for every vaccination session and the first one is a waiting room where identification process will be done, while in the second room health workers will be vaccinated and in the third room they will have to wait 30 minutes after vaccina-

tion. In each session only those would be vaccinated whose names are uploaded on the portal, he informed adding, the Adverse Effect Following Immunisation (AEFI) kits will also be available at all immunisation centres apart from an adequate number of masks, sanitisers and other necessary materials.

It is pointed out here that the district has received 20,000 doses of vaccine. The first dose of the vaccine will be administered on 10,000 persons and thereafter the booster dose will be administered on these persons after 28 days. The vaccine is to be administered in three phases and the vaccine is to be administered on the employees related to health service under the first phase.

Corona warriors honoured on Army Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Braving cold wave, when the Shatabdi Super Specialty Block of the Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) reverberated with the waves of patriotic songs, every audience seemed to be awash in the warmth of patriotism on the occasion of Army Day here on Friday. The army band was performed by 39 Gorkha Training Centre (39-GTC). This presentation was made to honour the contribution of physicians and health workers of SSH BHU against the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Golden Jubilee of India's victory in the 1971 war was also celebrated through this presentation organized in the context of the Republic Day celebrations.

During this time, the military band played many patriotic songs like 'Kadam Kadam Khede Jaaye', 'Jai Ho', 'Ae Watan, Ae Watan', 'Mera Rang De Basanti Chola' and 'Saare Jahan Se Achcha'. Rector Prof VK Shukla, Director of Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) Prof BR Mittal, Medical Superintendent (MS) of SSH Prof SK Mathur, Prof Incharge of Trauma Centre Prof Sanjeev Gupta, Prof Gopal Nath, Prof



Army band performed on Army Day at SSH BHU in Varanasi on Friday to pay homage to corona warriors

Sunit Kumar Singh, Prof RN Chaurasia, Deputy Medical Superintendents Prof Saurabh Singh and Prof GN Srivastava, Dean of Students Prof MK Singh, Chief Proctor Prof Anand Chaudhary, apart from faculty members, resident doctors, nursing staff, health workers and hospital staff were present to watch the military band.

Addressing the programme after the performance of the band, BHU Rector said that the doctors are being called 'corona warriors' today during the pandemic but army personnel always play the role of warriors. Saluting the duty

of the army, Prof VK Shukla said that if we are here today only because of the might and passion of the Indian Army. IIM BHU Director said that we are all grateful for the great contribution of the Indian Army. He said that the patriotic songs performed by the military band today played a very important role in the freedom struggle of the country and infused new energy and sentiment among the people. Prof Saurabh Singh said that this is a very special occasion when the defenders of the country's borders and the corona warriors have gathered to honour each other. He said that

the contribution of medical personnel in this phase of the pandemic is unmatched and the appreciation of it is less.

17 COVID-19 CASES: As many as 17 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Friday, increasing the total number to 21,729. As the day saw no casualty, the death toll remained at 374. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 50 and all of them have been recovered from home isolation, increasing the number to 18,098. As no patient has been discharged from the hospital, the number remained at 2,955. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 21,073, leaving 282 active cases. The recovery rate is 96.98 per cent, while the mortality rate is 1.72 per cent. In the first report of the day, 17 positive patients were found out of 3,090 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 5,58,849 and the results of 2,570 are awaited. Out of them, 5,37,120 were negative, while 21,729 were positive.

The total number of samples collected was 5,83,523. Earlier, a male aged 72 from Soniya succumbed to COVID-19 at Apex Hospital.

VHP starts fundraising drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Wishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and organisations having the ideologies similar to it, have on Friday started a door to door fundraising drive (Nidhi Sangrah Abhiyan) in the parliamentary constituency of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to construct a splendid Ram Temple in Ayodhya from the Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) by offering the first receipt of drive to Baba Vishwanath.

The drive is to continue till February 27 and a target of raising the fund of ₹11 crore from across the country.

The activists of the VHP reached the KVT in the morning and offered the first receipt of drive before the idol of Baba Vishwanath after performing puja.

It is pointed out here that the Shri Ram Janmboomi Tirth Kshetra Trust has printed the coupon with barcodes of ₹10, ₹100 and ₹1000 while to raise the big amount, the receipt has been printed. The

VHP has divided the district in two parts- South and North for the purpose and their offices have also been opened at Boulia in Lahartara and Maldahia respectively.

There are 240 localities in the district including 120 in South and North each. A total of 1,500 teams have been constituted to raise funds by visiting door to door in these localities.

The activists of VHP and organisations such as RSS, Akhil Bharatiya Sant Samiti and Bajrang Dal which have

ideologies similar to it have been included in the teams. An App in the name of Shri Ram Janmboomi Tirth Kshetra has also been prepared to ascertain the transparency in the drive.

The teams led by incharge of North office Rajan Tiwari visited the localities after having darshan and performing puja at Kal Bhairav Temple. A team of the BJP also joined the drive and started raising the fund from the house of first citizen of city and Mayor Mrudula Jaiswal.

IIT-BHU, HDFC Bank sign MoU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU) and HDFC Bank Ltd here on Friday. Under this MoU, HDFC Bank contribute an amount of ₹50 lakh for the duration January 1 to December 31 this year to IIT-BHU whereas the latter utilise the fund for the funding, mentoring and incubating the Start-Ups under I-DAPT-HUB Foundation. IIT-BHU Director Prof Pramod Kumar Jain and Circle Head (Varanasi), HDFC Bank Ltd Manish Tandon signed the MoU.



IIT-BHU and HDFC Bank officers signing MoU in Varanasi on Friday

necessary infrastructure for creation and translation of technology to market readiness, by supporting adoption of it by existing ventures and creation of start-ups ventures, and by creating networks between academia, industry and financial institutions and other such assistance as required.

He informed that HDFC Bank Ltd through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is engaged in supporting Start-Up Incubator funding programmes and accordingly this MoU will help in advancing the objective of the I-DAPT-HUB Foundation. He further informed that I-DAPT-HUB Foundation shall utilise the grant amount towards its administrative, skill development and training programme expenses and allocated/distributed to the Start-ups. The pool of Start-ups will consist of

Start-ups selected by HDFC Bank or from I-DAPT-HUB Foundation incubated start-ups. On this occasion, Prof Rajiv Prakash, Dean, Research & Development, Prof Rajnesh Tyagi, Dean, Faculty Affairs and HDFC Bank officials were also present.

CELEBRATED: Former UP Minister and divisional incharge of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Raghunath Chaudhary said that in the forthcoming Panchayat elections, the party would contest strongly and increase its seats remarkably. He also expressed his confidence about forming the party's government in the state after the assembly election in 2022. He was addressing a function organised at Shastris Ghat here on Friday to celebrate the 65th birthday of party chief and former Chief Minister Mayawati. After a long gap through

this programme, the party has tried to show its strength and termed Mayawati as a leader of social justice, they observed the day as 'Jankalyankari Diwas' (public welfare day).

Presiding over the function, former incharge of Sewapuri assembly unit Devbrat Sharma said that 'Bahen' Mayawati during her regime not only worked for the welfare of the dalits but also for all the castes as she always believed in the principle of 'Sarvjan Hitay, Sarvjan Shukhay'.

He said that if the party came to power again it would work for the welfare of common people.

Conducting the function, district president Navin Bharat said that for giving international facilities to the state, racing tracks and Yamuna Expressway were constructed during Mayawati's regime. He said that Behanji is the first choice of the youth as during her regime she had created a large number of jobs. The function was also attended by sector incharges Rajesh Bharti, Laxman Ram, Sanjay Maurya and Harsh Rajbhar, Subhash Rajbhar, Sujit Maura, Rizwan Ahmed, Pappu Patel and Sudha Chaurasia.



Dense fog on a cold morning in Prayagraj

Pioneer

600 health workers to get vaccine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Six hundred health workers will receive the first corona vaccine shot in Prayagraj on Saturday. The first lot of vaccine arrived here with full precautions on Thursday, and six vaccination centres have been created to administer dosage.

Centres where the vaccine will be administered include MLN Medical College, Divisional Colvin Hospital, District Women Hospital, Kamla Nehru Hospital, CHC Roraon, and CHC Phulpur.

List of the health workers who will receive vaccine shots in the first phase has been prepared, and the officials were quite vigilant to ensure that the lapses of dry run are not repeated.

In the first phase nine

lakh health workers are to be vaccinated in the state.

ARRESTED: Police have arrested another accused who was involved in beating a dolphin to death, seen in a canal in Pratapgarh district of UP. So far, three accused have been arrested. The police are conducting raids in search of other accused.

It may be pointed out here that a dolphin was spotted in the canal near Kothariya village under the Nawabganj police station of Pratapgarh district on December 31. Seeing this, a dozen villagers from Unchahar village in Rae Bareilly district reached there and beat the dolphin to death. Police and Forest department team reached the spot following the information of the incident and took the body of

the dolphin in its custody. After the postmortem, the dolphin's body was buried by digging a pit near the canal.

In this case, the sub inspector Bhayaram Pandey of the Forest department had filed a case against unknown people under the Wildlife Protection Act. The video of Dolphin being killed went viral on internet media on January 7. The police had identified 12 accused from the video and arrested Rahul son of Chhotalal, Anuj son of Rampal residents of Hariharpur police station Unchahar, Rae Bareilly and Rahul of son Ayodhya resident of Azadnagar police station Unchahar Rae Bareilly on January 7.

Police are conducting raids at the possible where-

abouts under the Unchahar police station in search of the other eight accused who are still at large. The accused persons are absconding leaving the house after the cops raided at their residences. Meanwhile, the police arrested an accused Ashish, a resident of Unchahar, Rae Bareilly on Thursday. Police is questioning him about the whereabouts of other accused. All the accused belong to Unchahar police station area of Rae Bareilly district. Nawabganj SO Akhilesh Pratap Singh said that in search of the other eight people accused of killing the dolphin, the possible whereabouts are being raided. However, another accused has been arrested in this connection, the SO added.

19 more test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The corona report of 19 people, including a doctor, has come positive in the last 24 hours in Prayagraj district here on Thursday night. About 4,353 people were screened during the day. About 13 people also became infected-free. No corona infected died even on the fifth day.

According to Nodal Officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai, the number of corona infected is steadily decreasing as the scope of testing increases. Still people are being made aware to apply masks, make proper distances and wash hands frequently with soap.

So far a total of 28,828 people have been infected with 19

patients in the Nootal Officer's Mutabik district. About 6,987 people have been discharged from various Covid hospitals after treatment. About 21,060 people have infection free in home isolation.

According to Dr Rishi Sahai, the medical college has received a positive report of a judicial officer, an ASI, a constable, a constable of the RAE, along with the former head of the gastro department.

DOZEN CROWS FOUND DEAD: A dozen crows were found dead on Friday morning near Brahmauli intersection under the Nawabganj police station in Pratapgarh district of UP. When the villagers got noticed, they informed the police about

it. The Animal Husbandry department team along with Nawabganj SO also reached the spot. The Chief Veterinary Officer sent all the crows for its postmortem in view of the possibility of bird flu.

For the last four days, there have been incidents of birds dying in Kunda, Nawabganj. On Friday, a dozen crows were found dead near Brahmauli village under the Nawabganj police station. On this information the team of Animal Husbandry Department reached the spot. The team has sent all the dead crows for post-mortem.

According to the Chief Veterinarian, all the birds that have been found dead so far have no symptoms of bird flu.

On the same day, on Thursday, four sparrows were found dead in Saroj Basti of Manapur village under the Aspur Devsara police station.

In this regard, Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Vijay Pratap Singh said that so far all the cases of birds dying, no evidence of bird flu was found. It is common for birds to die in the months of December and January due to excess cold. However, as a precaution, every effort is made to conduct a postmortem of each dying bird to see if they have died due to bird flu. The District Magistrate has directed the Animal Husbandry Department, Forest Department to work in coordination.

Col Rajan Manocha Memorial inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

On Friday, Colonel Rajan Manocha Memorial was inaugurated by his wife Sonu Manocha at Mela Parade Ground Prayagraj. This memorial was raised under the guidance of Maj Gen IM Lamba, GOC Purva UP and MP Sub Area. During this ceremony, wreaths were laid by Maj Gen IM Lamba, KP Singh, IG Prayagraj, Bhanu Chandra Goswami, DM Prayagraj and Colonel Vivek Debas, Commandant OD Fort.

As a nodal officer for Kumbh 2019, Colonel Rajan Manocha played a pivotal role in coordinating exceptional security and administrative arrangements for crores of pilgrim who visited 'Sangam'. Attributable to his scrupulous planning and persistent efforts, Kumbh 2019 was first in many ways especially since Akshayvat and Saraswati Koop were permanently opened for public. This memorial will always remind us about contribution made by the officer.

PUJA THAKUR PASSES A W A Y : Veteran theatre actress of the city Puja Thakur, popularly known as Puja Bhabhi is no more. She breathed her last in Mumbai



Colonel Rajan Manocha Memorial inaugurated by his wife Sonu Manocha at Mela Parade Ground Prayagraj

Pioneer

where she had gone to give company to her daughter. She was around 62.

An inborn actor, Puja started theatre activities in her youth, and after her marriage with Nandu Thakur, a very well known theatre personality, she dedicated herself for the cause of theatre. She spent most of her time at All India Radio, and in drama rehearsals. After the death of her husband, she got a job in Education department, but her dedication towards theatre remained unhampered. She started a national level theatre festival in the memory of Nandu Thakur, and invited celebrated directors of nation-

repute to perform with their teams.

Her acting talent in Godaan, Karni Katha, Ek Kathputali Albeli, Apna Apna Dard, Hazar Chaurasi Ki Maa, Purna Purush, Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki, Hamlet and several other plays will be remembered for years.

For the past many years she had been working with Vinod Rastogi Smriti Sansthan. The Sansthan artistes mourned her demise at a sorrow soaked condolence meeting on Friday, and termed her death as an irreparable loss to Prayagraj theatre.

ROAD SAFETY

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED: Kaushiki Welfare Society Prayagraj launched a Road Safety Awareness campaign in the city to ensure the success of the programmes of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for minimising accidents and save lives.

The president of the society Kiran Chaurasia informed that the road safety awareness camps were organised in over half-a-dozen localities of the city, and besides displaying road safety signals and making people aware of the rules, educative cultural programmes and puppet shows were also organised.



Kanpur Divisional Commissioner, Raj Shekhar, visits the Kanpur Zoological Garden to see preventive measures for Bird Flu on Friday

Pioneer

Div Commissioner reviews preventive measures at zoo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar directed the Kanpur Zoological Gardens officials to send the samples of water and excreta of the birds for testing for Bird Flu to NISHAD, Bhopal every fortnight.

He also directed the zoo authorities, health officials, veterinary officials and district administration officials to arrange for health check-up of the entire zoo staff involved in the direct handling of the birds. He said an awareness camp should also be organised in the zoo for the zoo staff and officials.

The divisional commissioner visited the zoo to take a first hand feedback of the preventive measures and steps taken to handle Bird Flu and later held a detailed review meeting with the officials. He was accompanied by Director zoo, Conservator of Forest, CDO, AD Animal Husbandry, ADM (City), CVO, DFO, ACM 6 and several other officials of the Forest and Animal Husbandry departments.

It may be mentioned here that the first case of Bird Flu was reported in Kanpur Zoo on January 9 and around nine birds died in two days.

The divisional commissioner was informed by the zoo officials that after the death of those birds, no death had been reported of any bird on the zoo premises. He was also informed that the Kanpur Zoological Gardens authorities had taken

all necessary steps and precautionary measures as advised by the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) and the directed by the Animal Husbandry department for effectively handling the Avian influenza.

The steps taken were closing down of the Zoo premises, declaring it a containment zone, taking samples of water and bird excreta on regular basis, sanitisation of the premises, medical examination of staff dealing directly with birds, provision of PPE kits, cleaning and disinfecting the water bodies inside zoo, making separate isolation area and cages for birds showing symptoms and those under treatment.

The DC found that outside the one-kilometre radius of the zone till 9 km area, the observation zone was monitored by the district administration and animal husbandry department team and they were checking the poultry shops in that area and were collecting random samples and sending them for testing. He was also informed that till date more than 340 samples had been collected and sent for testing.

The DC said as per the control measures, barriers had been set up at the district entry points for checking the transportation of poultry and products for effective control of the situation.

The divisional commissioner also directed the Animal Husbandry department to depute one staff of the depart-

ment also along with police staff at each entry point for effective checking and daily reporting be ensured from these check points.

Shekhar also appealed to the people of Kanpur city to stay alert and to inform the district administration or the police about sudden death of any bird in their area for immediate action and preventive measures.

He said the samples were also being sent to the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) at Bareilly for testing of the Avian Influenza.

DC VISITS LEATHER CLUSTER: The DC visited the proposed site of the Mega Leather Cluster and said it would have a great positive impact on environment protection, Clean Ganga campaign and would boost the export of leather goods.

He said the 38.17 hectare land exchange proposal between the gram sabha land and the reserved land would be prepared in the next one week and sent to the government for approval by January 20 by Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) and UPSIDA.

He said the revised proposal of 34.5 hectare land that the UPSIDA needed to give to the government in exchange of the reserved land would be submitted to the district magistrate's office in the next one week. He said 95 hectare gram sabha land had already been transferred in favour of the UPSIDA as on date.

After visiting the site, it was

also found that there was a need of a two to four lane road from Ramaipur to Sachendi. The DC said the total length of this road would be 11 km. He directed the PWD SE and SDM Sadar to get it examined and to prepare a proposal for the two lane road extendable to four lanes in the next 15 days and submit the proposal at the commissionerate.

Shekhar also directed the SDM Sadar to identify all the ponds and water bodies as per the oldest records and to measure them on the site and ensure that they were retained in the same condition in records and on site also and give one copy with map and revenue records to the UPSIDA and the SPV. He also asked the UPSIDA and the SPV to prepare and submit the detailed project report (DPR) as soon as possible to the government.

The DC also directed SE Power Transmission to check for dedicated power requirements for the mega leather cluster and also check for shifting of any major high tension lines in the area and to report back to commissionerate in one week.

He also visited the proposed site of the Mega Leather Cluster at Ramaipur village.

He was accompanied by Ashraf (Director, Mega Leather Cluster Development UP Limited) now referred to as Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), SE PWD, SE Transmission, SDM Sadar, GM UPSIDA and other officials.

7 of a family sustain burns as kin sets house afire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Seven members of a family sustained burns when a youth set the house of his in-laws afire in Juhi police station area on Friday morning.

Prior to setting the house afire, the youth locked the doors of all the rooms from outside to prevent the family members from coming out. He was upset after an argument with his wife when she refused to return with him.

Hearing the screams, the neighbours rushed to the house and rescued the family members, seven of whom sustained serious burns. The neighbours rushed the injured to hospital.

The police have launched raids to nab the guilty youth. As per reports, daily wager Hiralal of Bibi Ka Hata at Rattapurwa had married his daughter, Manisha, to a driver, Mukesh Kumar of Itauli under Bilgram police station of Hardoi district, three-and-a-half years ago. The couple have an 18-month-old son.

About a month ago, following differences with her husband, Manisha had come to her parents' house and was living with them. Since then, whenever Mukesh wanted to take her back with him, she refused.

On Thursday night, during an argument on the phone and when Mukesh threatened Manisha with her life, Hiralal filed a complaint at the local police outpost.

On Friday early morning, Mukesh suddenly arrived there and knocked the doors to take Manisha back with him. His in-laws did not open the doors and asked him to return.

On this, Mukesh abused them and threw petrol inside the house. By the time Hiralal and other family members were able to sense the gravity of the situation, he threw the burning cigarette lighter into the house which suddenly caught fire.

Hiralal's neighbour Kamlesh Kumar said in the incident, Hiralal, his wife Shiv Kumari, daughters Manisha, Radha, Vandana, Uma and son Manish sustained serious burns.

Superintendent of Police (South) Deepak Bhuker said four teams were deputed to nab Mukesh.

LIC MD on visit to Lucknow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Managing Director of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, Raj Kumar is on an official visit to Lucknow. He addressed the top officials of the LIC and discussed strategies to boost business and ensure that in the pending quarter of the financial year it performed the best. On January 15 the Regional Manager of LIC will address all the Senior Divisional Managers of 12 divisions and discuss new strategies to boost business in the new financial year. Raj Kumar is the 13 batch direct recruit.

Rawatpur-Kalyanpur traffic to be streamlined: SP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Superintendent of Police (West) Anil Kumar said in view of the massive traffic jam witnessed on the road between Rawatpur and Kalyanpur, it had been decided to regulate traffic on the route with immediate effect.

He said the bottleneck at Rawatpur was due to the illegally parked private and UP Roadways buses on the road-sides.

He said it had been decided that bus parking on the route would not be allowed.

He said on the road between Rawatpur and Kalyanpur, there were several level crossings and the public transport to and fro at these crossings was the major reason for the traffic jams.

Trains to be cancelled, diverted

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

In connection with the doubling patch work between Ballia-Phephna stations of Varanasi division due to pre-non interlocking (PNI) work from January 17 and non-interlocking (NI) work from January 27 to 30 the cancellation, short termination/short origination, diversion etc of the following trains will be done by the railway administration as follows, CPRO PK Singh said.

CANCELLATION: The 03121 Kolkata-Ghazipur City special will remain cancelled on January 17 and 24, the 03122 Ghazipur City- Kolkata special on January 18 and 25, 05111 Chhapra-Varanasi City special from January 25 to 30 and 05112 Varanasi City-Chhapra special from January 25 to 30.

SHORT TERMINATION/ ORIGINATION: The 03105 Sealdah-Ballia special to run from Sealdah from January 16 to 29 will be short terminated at Chhapra Jn. The 03106 Ballia-Sealdah special to run from Ballia from January 17 to 30 will be run from Chhapra. The 04056 Anand Vihar Terminus-Ballia special to run from Anand Vihar Terminus will be short terminated at Aunrihar Jn on January 18, 20, 22, 25, 27 and 29. The 04055 Ballia-Anand Vihar Terminus special to run from Ballia on January 19, 21, 23, 26, 28 and 30 will be run from Aunrihar Jn.

DIVERSION: The 04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar Humsafar special to run from Jaynagar on January 17, 19, 22, 24, 26 and 29 will be diverted via Chhapra-Bhatni-Mau, the 04652 Amritsar-Jaynagar Humsafar special to run from Amritsar on January 22 and 24 will be diverted via Mau-Bhatni-Chhapra, the 09165 Ahmedabad-Darbhanga special to run from Ahmedabad on January 17, 20, 22 and 24 will be diverted via Mau-Bhatni-Chhapra and the 09166 Darbhanga-Ahmedabad special to run from Darbhanga on January 20, 23, 25, 27 and 30 will be diverted via Chhapra-Bhatni-Mau. Besides the 04650 Amritsar-Jaynagar special to run from Amritsar on January 16, 18, 20, 23 and 25 will be diverted via Mau-

Bhatni-Chhapra, the 09065 Surat-Chhapra special to run from Surat on January 18 and 23 will be diverted via Mau-Bhatni-Chhapra, the 05050 Gorakhpur-Kolkata special to run from Gorakhpur on January 20, 23 and 27 will be diverted via Bhatni-Sivan-Chhapra, the 04008 Anand Vihar Terminus (ANVT)-Raxaul special to run from ANVT on January 19, 21, 26 and 28 will be diverted via Aunrihar-Bhatni-Chhapra, the 04018 ANVT-Raxaul special to run from Anand Vihar Terminus on January 20, 27 and 29 will be diverted via Aunrihar-Bhatni-Chhapra, the 04016 ANVT-Raxaul special to run from Anand Vihar Terminus on January 22 and 24 will be diverted via Aunrihar-Bhatni-Chhapra, the 05115 Chhapra-Delhi special to run from Chhapra on January 23 will be diverted via Bhatni-Mau-Aunrihar. The 09051 Bilsad-Muzaffarpur special to run from Bilsad on January 23 will be diverted via Aunrihar-Bhatni-Chhapra, the 05116 Delhi-Chhapra special to run from Delhi on January 24 will be diverted via Aunrihar-Bhatni-Chhapra, the 05049 Kolkata-Gorakhpur special to run from Kolkata on January 27 will be diverted via Chhapra-Bhatni, the 05160 Durg-Chhapra special to run from Durg on January 28 will be diverted via Aunrihar-Bhatni-Chhapra and the 09305 Dr Ambedkar Nagar-Kamakhya special to run from Dr Ambedkar Nagar on January 28 will be diverted via Aunrihar-Bhatni-Chhapra.

Meanwhile 01061 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT)- Jaynagar special will be run on January 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 by being controlled by 50 minutes. The 01061 LTT- Jaynagar special will be run on January 18 by being controlled by 105 minutes. The 01061 LTT- Jaynagar special will be run on January 27 by being controlled by 90 minutes. The 01062 Jaynagar-LTT special will be run on January 29 by being controlled by 40 minutes. The 09045 Surat-Chhapra special will be run on January 18 and 25 by being controlled by 30 minutes and the 09045 Surat-Chhapra special will be run on January 27 by being controlled by 65 minutes.

DM reviews works, issues directives

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar directed the officials concerned to link each and every job card under MNREGA with Aadhar card. At a meeting of BDOs to review development works at the Collectorate on Thursday, the DM directed them to ensure presence of technical assistants in office at 10 am, after signing the attendance register they moved according to their tour programme and visited the sites. He directed them to ensure job of 100 days to job card holders and clear their wages without inordinate delay. He directed for the completion of renovation works of ponds under Garib Kalyan Yojna. To expedite the works he directed the BDOs to ensure presence of field staff at the sites

as per requirement and no false reporting about the progress will be tolerated. The DM told BDOs to go to the sites if progress was not satisfactory and clear the hurdles, if any. In view of panchayat elections he told the BDOs to visit all polling stations and if any of them was not in proper condition then suggest an alternative. About the voters' list the BDOs were told to ensure deletion of bogus names and addition of names of eligible persons. In another meeting the DM took stringent action against defaulters in disposal of cases under IGRS. During the review 21 departments were found to be defaulters and the DM directed them to dispose the cases same day and report to the officer concerned at Collectorate. He directed all officers to review on a daily basis in case any matter was pending.

Tanakpur-Singrauli spl from Feb 3

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for convenience of people will run 05074 Tanakpur (TPU)-Singrauli (SGRL) tri-weekly special from February 3 every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 05073 Singrauli-TPU tri-weekly special from February 4 every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday leave Singrauli at 16.15 hrs, Chohan at 18.30 hrs, Churk at 19.03 hrs, Sakhinagar at 19.17 hrs, Lusa at 20.06 hrs, Saktigarh at 20.55 hrs, Chunar at 21.55 hrs, Mirzapur at 22.25 hrs, Vindhyachal at 22.38 hrs, Meja Road at 02.21 hrs, Naini at 01.35 hrs, Prayagraj Jn at 02.50 pm, Prayag at 03.09 hrs, Phaphamau at 03.24 pm hrs, Ram Chaura Road at 03.47 hrs, Lal Gopalganj at 03.55 hrs, Kunda Hamanganj at 04.11 hrs, Garhi Manikpur at 04.24 hrs, Pariawan Kalakankar Road at 04.33 hrs, Unchahar at 04.46 hrs, Laxmanpur at 05.03 hrs, Rae Bareilly at 05.30 hrs, Harchandpur at 05.49 hrs, Bachhrawan at 06.05 hrs, Nigohan at 06.23 hrs, Lucknow (NR) at 08.10 hrs, Alamnagar at 08.29 hrs, Sandila at 09.03 hrs, Hardoi at 09.52 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 11.03 hrs, Bareilly (NR) at 12.20 hrs, Bareilly City at 12.40 hrs, Izzatnagar at 12.58 hrs, Pilibhit at 13.55 hrs, Majhola Pakariya at 14.25 hrs, Khatima at 14.42 hrs and reach Tanakpur at 15.25 hrs. A total of 17 coaches will be attached in it.

TPU-SGRL SPL: The 05074 Tanakpur-Singrauli special will from February 3 every Monday, Wednesday and Friday will leave Tanakpur at 08.25 hrs, Khatima at 08.50 hrs, Majhola Pakariya at 09.09 hrs, Pilibhit at 09.48 hrs, Izzatnagar at 10.43 hrs, Bareilly City at 11.10 hrs, Bareilly (NR) at 11.25 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 12.33 hrs, Hardoi at 13.48 hrs, Sandila at 14.35 hrs, Alamnagar at 15.28 hrs, Lucknow (NR) at 16.05 hrs, Nigohan at 16.53 hrs, Bachhrawan at 17.05 hrs, Harchandpur at 17.21 hrs, Rae Bareilly at 18.00 hrs, Lachhmanpur at 18.22 hrs, Unchahar at 18.50 hrs, Pariawan Kalakankar Road at 19.04 hrs, Garhi Manikpur at 19.28 hrs, Kunda Hamanganj at 19.40 hrs, Lal Gopalganj at 20.13 hrs, Ram Chaura Road at 20.35 hrs, Phaphamau at 21.25 hrs, Prayag at 21.40 hrs, Prayagraj Jn at 22.20 hrs, Naini at 22.42 hrs, Meja Road at 23.16 hrs, Vindhyachal at 00.40 hrs, Mirzapur at 01.05 hrs, Chunar at 02.15 hrs, Saktigarh at 02.46 hrs, Lusa at 03.20 hrs, Sonbhada at 04.10 hrs,

at 18.22 hrs, Unchahar at 18.50 hrs, Pariawan Kalakankar Road at 19.04 hrs, Garhi Manikpur at 19.28 hrs, Kunda Hamanganj at 19.40 hrs, Lal Gopalganj at 20.13 hrs, Ram Chaura Road at 20.35 hrs, Phaphamau at 21.25 hrs, Prayag at 21.42 hrs, Prayagraj Junction at 22.20 hrs, Naini at 22.42 hrs, Meja Road at 23.16 hrs, Vindhyachal at 00.40 hrs, Mirzapur at 01.05 hrs, Chunar at 02.15 hrs, Saktigarh at 02.46 hrs, Lusa at 03.20 hrs, Sonbhada at 04.10 hrs, Churk at 04.22 hrs, Chohan at 06.00 hrs, Anpara at 07.20 hrs and reach Shaktinagar at 8.20 hrs. During return journey the 05075 Shaktinagar-TPU special will from February 3 every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday leave Shaktinagar at 15.45 hrs, Anpara at 16.14 hrs, Chohan at 18.30 hrs, Churk at 19.03 hrs, Lusa at 20.06 hrs, Saktigarh at 20.55 hrs, Chunar at 21.55 hrs, Mirzapur at 22.25 hrs, Vindhyachal at 22.38 hrs, Meja Road at 02.21 hrs, Naini at 01.35 hrs, Prayagraj Jn at 02.50 pm, Prayag at 03.09 hrs, Phaphamau at 03.24 hrs, Ram Chaura Road at 03.47 hrs, Lal Gopalganj at 03.55 hrs, Kunda Hamanganj at 04.11 hrs, Garhi Manikpur at 04.24 hrs, Pariawan Kalakankar Road at 04.33 hrs, Unchahar at 04.46 hrs, Lachhmanpur at 05.03 hrs, Rae Bareilly at 05.30 hrs, Harchandpur from 05.49 hrs, Bachhrawan at 06.05 hrs, Nigohan at 06.23 hrs, Lucknow at 08.10 hrs, Alamnagar at 08.29 hrs, Sandila at 09.03 hrs, Hardoi at 09.52 hrs, Shahjahanpur at 11.03 hrs, Bareilly at 12.20 hrs, Bareilly City at 12.40 hrs, Izzatnagar at 12.58 hrs, Pilibhit at 13.55 hrs, Majhola Pakariya at 14.25 hrs and reach Tanakpur at 15.25 hrs. A total of 17 coaches will be attached.

Sanatan Mandir Chetna Society honours Singhal posthumously

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Former international president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Ashok Singhal, was posthumously awarded the Sanatan Dharm Ratna-2020 award by the Sanatan Mandir Chetna Society.

Society's patron Swami Rambhadracharya handed over the award to the VHP's state organisation secretary Madhuram at a function organised in Chitrakoot on Thursday.

The award carries cash of ₹ 1 lakh which would be used in construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Swami Rambhadracharya is presently delivering Ram Katha at the foothills of Kamadgiri in Chitrakoot.

Secretary Ajay Mishra said the prize money of ₹ 1 lakh was received by the state organisation secretary Madhuram on the directives of senior VHP leader Champat Rai.

"CERVICAL CANCER AFFECTS MOST WOMEN IN INDIA: As cervical cancer affects most of the women suffering from cancer in India, the



Swami Rambhadracharya giving away Sanatan Dharm Ratan Award posthumously to Ashok Singhal in Chitrakoot on Thursday

need of the hour is to create an awareness towards the new treatment regimens, like brachytherapy, that are available for the treatment of the disease. Though this is the only preventable cancer, still cervical cancer has the highest mortality rate among Indian women. This was stated by Dr Neerja Maurya, consultant, radiation oncology at Regency Superspecialty Hospital, at a press conference here on Friday.

She said India accounted for nearly one-fourth of the

world's cervical cancer deaths, with 60,078 deaths in 2018, as per a research paper published in the Lancet Global Health.

Dr Maurya said the average age of getting cervical cancer was 40-50 years and cervical cancer was found to be maximum in women of this age group. She said the main symptoms of cervical cancer were irregular bleeding, bleeding even after the end of menstruation and irregular discharge.

Dr Maurya said, "Radiotherapy is the key role of EBRT and brachytherapy for

the treatment of cervix cancer. Both EBRT and brachytherapy are standard treatment in advanced cervix cancer (IB-IV A). With this, we can reduce the risk of surgery by doing brachytherapy only in the first stage."

According to a research, after chemotherapy or EBRT (external beam radiation therapy), the patient's chances of survival increases with brachytherapy. A study conducted in the United States found that women who underwent brachytherapy increased 12 per cent in the last four years of survival compared to women who had IBRT. Dr Ashish Raj Kulshreshtha, consultant, radiation oncology, said, "Brachytherapy is done in our institute by planning through CT scan which reduces the risk of side effects along with good coverage of the tumour. And it also takes very little time for treatment and recovery. We often recommend this minimally invasive technique to our patients as it has good side effects as well as survival chances and can be done on an OPD basis."

Felicitated

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAIAN

Vice-Chairman of Bundelkhand Vikas Board (BVB) and veteran Bollywood actor Raja Bundela who was the chief guest at an event in Government Medical College (GMC) honoured doctors, nurses and other medical staff members for their outstanding contribution during Covid-19 phase. He appreciated principal Dr Dwijendra Nath and said GMC had done a commendable job. On BVB's behalf he presented a trophy and a certificate of appreciation to medical staff and said Bundelkhand's welfare was his top-most priority. Principal presented a memento to the chief guest. Shakti Gahoi, OS Thakur, Brahmanand Khare, Ashish Tiwari and Ashish Dwivedi were also present.



NER AGM Amit Kumar Agrawal under the two-day programme while conducting window-trailing inspection of doubling-cum-electrification works from Bhatni to Aunrihar railway station reached Varanasi on Thursday. On the occasion SDE-III Atul Tripathi, RVNI's PD-III VK Shukla and other senior officers were present. Thereafter AGM inspected NER's joint crew lobby situated at Varanasi Jn and saw on the crew management system details of signing on and signing off of guards and loco pilots as per rules and records regarding mileage km, breath analysis, competence certification and pre-medical examinations. To ensure safe way of working he reviewed quality and availability of walkie-talkie, fog-safe device and cracker signals. He did a thorough inspection of CMS console, close circuit cameras, breath analyser machine, linen, safety devices, specific fuel consumption etc and gave directions to the officials concerned. Agarwal also inspected the guard and loco pilot crew's restroom in the lobby, meditation room and directed the employees to ensure timely rest, weekly rest, facility passes, holidays and other benefits as per rules. On the occasion ADRM (Infra) Praveen Kumar, SDME (O&F) Alok Kesharwani, SDO Virendra Yadav and SDOM (General) AK Saxena were present.

Sasikala faction, ADMK merger chances brighten

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Possibilities of VK Sasikala (the jailed former aide of late Jayalalithaa) joining hands with the AIADMK led by Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy and his deputy O Panneerselvam got brightened on the auspicious occasion of Pongal which was observed with gaiety across Tamil Nadu on Thursday.

The initial signals of such a scenario came from S Gurumurthy, Tamil Nadu's leading political commentator and chief editor of Thuglak, the popular magazine launched by late Cho Ramaswamy. Sasikala who has been convicted for four years in a disproportionate wealth case will come out of the Bangalore jail anytime after January 27, according to S Pandian, her lawyer.

"If there is a realignment of forces and there is unity, it is always good. But the final word is with the party leadership," said Vaigaichelvan, former Minister and AIADMK's spokesman.

Terminating the Dravidian political parties and other fringe parties as the major threat faced by Tamil Nadu and India, Gurumurthy said it was the

responsibility of all patriotic people in the State to ensure the defeat of the DMK and its allies. "The DMK is an embodiment of corruption, favoritism, communalism and anti-nationalism. Though the AIADMK too is corrupt, it has got certain positive characteristics. The AIADMK is nationalistic as envisaged by party founder MGR and his chosen successor Jayalalithaa. But the DMK is a family owned enterprises which has made corruption its hallmark," said Gurumurthy while addressing a public meeting held late Thursday evening to mark the 51st anniversary of the magazine Thuglak.

He said he was borrowing the words of Arun Shourie who asked all non-Congress political parties in 1989 to come together to defeat the Rajiv Gandhi Government. "Those were the days when the Government at the Centre was enmeshed in corruption charges. Military deals involving purchase of Bofors, HDW ships, Scorpene sub marines and the Fairfax controversy were plaguing the Rajiv Gandhi led Government. The opposition parties were divided and were confused over aligning with the rival parties. It was then that Arun Shourie who was the

editor of Indian Express told them that their house was in fire and not to waste time waiting for Ganga water to douse the flames. Shourie told them to make use of even drainage water to douse the fire," said Gurumurthy.

He explained that his friend Rajinikanth opted out of the political race only because of ill health. "You should remember that we don't have an alternate leader to take over from Rajinikanth if there is more deterioration in his health. We cannot afford to lose Rajini," said Gurumurthy.

What stood out in his speech was the comments he made about judiciary. "Most of the judges, from trial courts to the apex court, are having allegiance to the persons who appointed and promoted them. The case involving former IT minister and DMK leader Dayanidhi Maran is an ideal example.

A judge belittled the findings that the nation has lost hundreds of crores because of the private telephone exchange set up by Maran in his Chennai home misusing his official power. But the judge asked the former minister to pay up Rs 1.5 crore and disposed of the case," said Gurumurthy.

New bailey bridge to restore traffic on Jammu-Srinagar highway

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

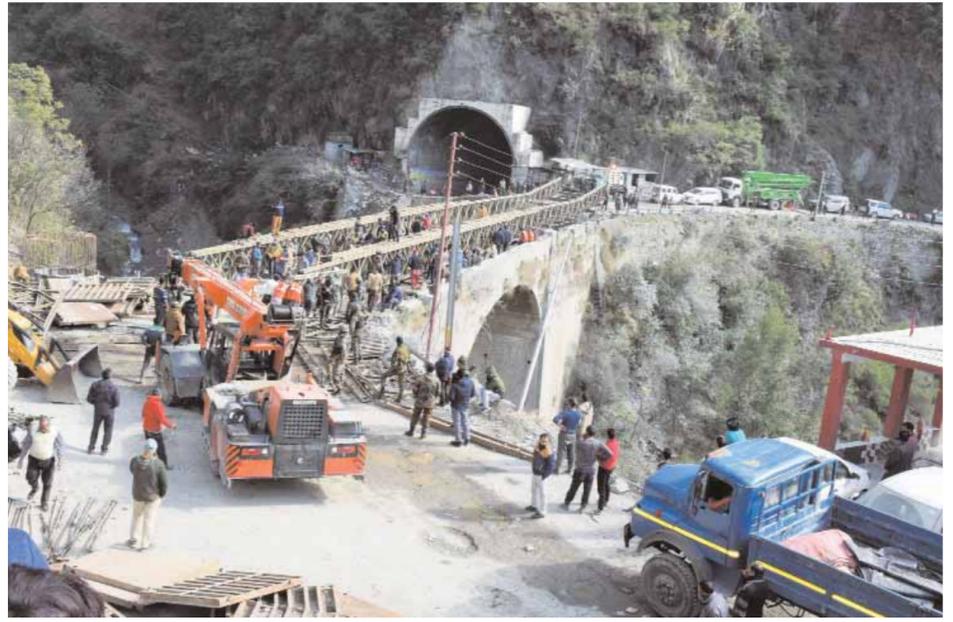
Vehicular traffic and movement of security convoys, which remained suspended along the 300-Km long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway since January 3, is set to be restored from Sunday with the completion of 120-foot-long, 40-ton bailey bridge near Kela Morh in Ramban district in a record time of three days.

After the mandatory testing of the bailey bridge the road link would be thrown open to rush essential supplies to the Kashmir valley. Braving intense cold wave conditions, men and machinery of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) are working round the clock to complete the job at hand.

Chief Engineer of Project Beacon of the Border Roads Organisation, Brigadier IK Jaggi along with Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Nazim Zai Khan Friday supervised the bridge construction work on ground zero.

Briefing media persons Brigadier IK Jaggi said "More than 50 percent of the work on 120 foot long, 40 ton bailey bridge has been completed and the left over work is expected to be completed on January 16. After mandatory testing the local authorities are hoping to throw open the road link for movement of traffic on January 17.

Brigadier IK Jaggi said, "we had launched the construction work of the 120 foot long bailey bridge at the location on January 14 and by



Pic of an under construction bailey bridge at Kela Morh, Ramban

Saturday evening we will complete the task". He said, due to the collapse of the retaining wall of the existing bridge a 28 meter long gap was created. He said, "we have covered the gap using a 120 foot long span as it is considered safe to restore the link".

Chief Engineer BRO said, "we have put all the resources available for completing the bridge". "Work is going on war footing as all men and

machinery have been put to use. We are sure that by tomorrow evening the Bailey bridge will be completed and ready for traffic" he added.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban Nazim Zai Khan said, construction of Bailey bridge is nearing to completion at Kela Morh and a trial run would be conducted tomorrow before starting the movement of vehicles on the bridge. He said that the construc-

tion of Bailey bridge is going on round the clock and Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has completed more than 50 percent of bridge launching work till early Friday morning.

Due to prolonged suspension of traffic movement on the strategic highway the common people are facing many hardships. Convoy movement of security forces was also affected due to suspension of traffic. Initially, the traffic on

the National Highway was suspended on January 3 following a fresh spell of snowfall. After remaining closed for six long days the traffic was partially restored on January 9 to clear the rush of stranded vehicles and essential supplies. A day later the traffic was suspended again after a retaining wall of a bridge collapsed near Kela Morh in Ramban district on January 10.

Kerala to offer 2 million jobs in 5 yrs: Min

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M)-led LDF Government in Kerala would create "at least" two million jobs for the unemployed people in the State in the next five years, according to Thomas Issac,

Minister of Finance. Presenting the fifth and last budget of the Government led by Pinarayi Vijayan in the State assembly on Friday (Kerala goes to the polls to elect a new legislative assembly by April 2021), Issac said despite the non-cooperation from the Centre, Kerala has done exceedingly well in the last five years.

"The changes that has happened in the global employment market and the superb expertise gained by Kerala in controlling the Covid-19 pandemic has helped us to address the problem of unemployment.

We are opening a digital platform in February 2021 to launch the massive employment generation programme. This would be a trend setter for the rest of the world," disclosed Issac in his record-breaking budget speech which he read out in 3 hours 20 minutes.

All people in the State would get a minimum monthly pension of Rs 1600, said the minister. "Every household would be given laptops and free internet connection. Poor sections of society would continue receiving food kits free of cost.

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday grilled senior NCP leader and former Minister Eknath Khadse in connection with a questionable land deal in Pune, for seven-long hours.

Khadse —who was to have appeared before the ED on December 30, but had sought time to do so because of his indisposition —arrived at the

ED grills Eknath Khadse for 7 hours

investigation agency's office at 11 am. After a seven-hour-long grilling, he stepped out of the ED's office at around 6 pm.

Talking to media persons after the first round of questioning, Khadse said: "I cooperated fully with the ED today and will continue to do so even in future. I have replied to all their questions and provided all evi-

dence required in the matter. I will continue to provide whatever information they require from me".

Sixty-eight-year-old Khadse, who had quit the BJP and joined the NCP on October 23, had said soon after joining the Sharad Pawar-led party that "if the BJP unleashes ED against me, then I will release

CDs against the BJP leaders".

Responding to the ED's summons, Khadse had earlier said: "The land in the MIDC deal has been transferred in the name of my wife. I have absolutely nothing to do with this land deal. Earlier, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Pune, the Anti Corruption Bureau, Nashik, Income Tax depart-

ment and a judicial committee headed by retired Bombay HC judge Dinkar Zoting, had looked into the allegations against me. Now the ED has summoned me for questioning. I will appear before it," Khadse had said. It may be recalled that on June 4, 2016, Khadse had resigned from his post as the State Revenue Minister over irregularities in the purchase of a plot of land at Bhosari in Pune district.

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण खाण्ड, उ०प्र० जल निगम, बहराइच
पत्रांक : ११/वि-३/०८
दिनांक - १२/०१/२०२१
अल्ट्राकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना
उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम की ओर से जनपद बहराइच में कृषिकल नैन (विद्युत/जल) कार्यक्रम अन्तर्गत ०५ नमूने स्वच्छ उपकेंद्र पर सोलर आर.ओ. प्लांट के अधिष्ठापन एवं अन्य तत्सम्बन्धी निर्माण कार्य हेतु निविदा प्रकाशन दिनांक १५.०१.२०२१ से दिनांक २०.०१.२०२१ के अन्तर्गत ०५:०० बजे के मध्य वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in> से डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड किये जा सकते हैं। निविदा दिनांक २१.०१.२०२१ को पूर्वाह्न ११:०० बजे कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, देवी पारतन मण्डल, उ०प्र० जल निगम, गोंयडा के कार्यालय में खोली जायेगी। निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य एवं निविदा कार्य का विस्तृत विवरण उ०प्र० शासन की ई-प्रक्रिया पोर्टल (e-procurement) के वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in> से प्राप्त करें। निविदाओं को खोलने की सूचना की जायेगी, जिसके लिये निविदादाता को ई-निविदा अधिष्ठाया में भाग लेने हेतु आवश्यक कार्यवाही पूर्ण करनी होगी।

उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा सूचना
१०/विप्राकांठ(रु/२०२०-२१)
निविदा सूचना - १०/विप्राकांठ(रु/२०२०-२१)
२०२०-२१ के अन्तर्गत २२० केली उपकेंद्र पण्डरा, बाराबंकी पर घास कटाई एवं अन्य कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की गई है। ई-निविदा दिनांक ३०.०१.२०२१ को १२:०० बजे तक ई-वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर अपलोड की जा सकती है। निविदा भाग-१ खुलने की तिथि ३०.०१.२०२१, समय १३:३० बजे, भाग-२ (ग्राहक पार्स) खुलने की तिथि तदनुसार ई-वेबसाइट पर सूचित की जायेगी। निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य ₹ २३६/- मात्र (₹ २००.००+ जीएसटी १८ प्रतिशत अतिरिक्त)। सन्दर्भित निविदा हेतु बरोहर धनराशि ₹ २,०००/- मात्र है। कार्य की कुल मात्रा, निविदा ई-निविदा पोर्टल पर उपलब्ध है। अधोस्वाहासी को बिना कारण बताये निविदा निरस्त करने का अधिकार होगा। निर्धारित तिथि के विस्तार तथा सुद्धि पत्र से सम्बन्धित सूचना यदि कोई होगा तो केवल वेबसाइट पर खोली जायेगी। अतः स्वयं को अपडेट रखने के लिए उपरोक्त वेबसाइट को निरन्तर देखें। अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत परियोजना खाण्ड-तृतीया, लखनऊ। पत्रांक-५६, दिनांक-१५.०१.२०२१, "साष्टरहित में बिजली बचाय"

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या - ०५/ECTD/(L/L)
२०२०-२१ अधोस्वाहासकता द्वारा निम्न - विस्तृत कार्य हेतु पृथक - पृथक ई-निविदाएं दो भागों में ई-वेबसाइट पोर्टल <http://etender.up.nic.in> के माध्यम से आम लाईन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।
१. १३२ केली विद्युत उपकेंद्र, आशा हरदोई पर राजकीय मेडिकल कॉलेज हेतु ०१ अदृ ३३ केली 'बे' के फाउण्डेशन का निर्माण कार्य। कार्य अवधि ०१ माह, बरोहर धनराशि ₹ ४,०००.०० (चार हजार मात्र) निविदा शुल्क ₹ ५९०.०० (जीएसटी १८ प्रतिशत अतिरिक्त)। उक्त निविदा की Technical Bid एवं अन्य शर्तें तथा मात्रा बीजक इत्यादि का विस्तृत विवरण www.upptcl.org देखा जा सकता है एवं www.etender.up.nic.in साइट पर प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। निविदा के परिशिष्ट/सुद्धिकरण, निरस्तीकरण की सूचना मात्र निगम की वेबसाइट www.upptcl.org तथा www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड की जायेगी, जिसका समाचर पत्र में प्रकाशन नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा दिनांक १५.०२.२०२१ को १४:०० बजे तक साइट पर अदाता जा सकता है तथा दिनांक १७.०२.२०२१ को १४:३० बजे से निविदाएं खोली जायेगी। अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत जनपद परियोजना खाण्ड - प्रथम, लखनऊ। पत्रांक-७२, दिनांक-१५.०१.२०२१, "साष्टरहित में बिजली बचाय"

NCP MIN RAPE CHARGE ROW

Sharad Pawar softens stand, says let law take its course

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what came to his party's Minister accused of rape Dhananjay Munde, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Friday softened his stand over the accusation of rape made by a woman against Dhananjay Munde after two more political leaders alleged that the woman was trying to honey trap them, and said that the police be allowed to investigate the matter.

Ruling out indirectly any possible action against Munde at the party level, Pawar said: "Since allegations have been made against the woman who has complained against Munde, we have come to a conclusion that the police be allowed to do a comprehensive probe into the matter. We are confident that the police will do a good job. Hence we will not interfere in the probe. All we have suggested to the government that ACP-level be woman be asked to conduct the probe".

On Thursday, Pawar had termed the charges made by a woman were "serious" and said that he would take a call on the issue, after consulting his senior party's important colleagues. "The charges are serious...The matter is with the police...it is

also in court...they will decide, however, we as a party would like to decide on it. I will speak to my colleagues and decide," Pawar had said. Alluding to his yesterday's comment, Pawar said: "Yesterday when I had commented on Dhananjay Munde issue, I said that the issue was serious. But by then, certain facts were not in the public domain. I came to know that there was a similar complaint against the same lady by different political party leaders," Pawar said.

In effect, Pawar was referring to the statements made by BJP leader Krishna Hegde and MNS leader Manish Dhuri, who had come in indirect support of Munde by claiming that the woman who had made allegations of rape against the NCP minister had tried to "honey-trap" them. In a related development, Maharashtra's Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said: "Law will take its own course. Everyone is same before law...santri" or 'mantri'...the matter would be investigated as per law".

Munde has been accused of rape by a singer Renu Sharma, with whose sister Karuna Sharma the minister has admitted to have been in a relationship and sired chil-

dren. After Pawar distanced himself from the controversy by saying that the charges against Munde were "serious", Munde had on Thursday received support from an unexpected quarter, as Hegde and Dhuri trained their gun on the woman who had accused the minister of having raped her sister.

"Renu Sharma has been calling me, messaging me and coaxing me since 2010 to have a relationship with her. This harassment went on to the point of stalking. Through my sources I found out that she is a dubious person who is setting up a honey trap. I totally avoided meeting her," BJP leader Krishna Hegde had said in his complaint lodged with Senior Inspector of Amboli police station Kamte.

On his part, MNS leader Manish Dhuri had said separately: "The woman (Renu Sharma) who has now complained against Munde had obtained my telephone number. She used to follow me. She tried many times to get to close to me. Having realised that she had honey trap several influential people, I tried to distance myself from her.... If I had got involved with her, I would have become another

Dhananjay Munde".

Meanwhile, having come under fire various quarters, Renu Sharma - who has accused Munde of rape - said that she would take a step back if all wanted her to do so.

"Agar Mai galat hun to itne log ab tak yu nahi aaye mere liye bolne, Mai piche hatungi to bhi mujhe apne ap par garv rahega ki pure Maharashtra mein Mai akeli ladki lad rahi thi jabki maine kisi party vishesh ka naam tak nahi liya our ab mujhe girane k liye," complaint-woman Renu Sharma tweeted. "Ek kaam kariye ap sab hi Faisal le lijiye, Bina kuchh Jane agar ap sab our jo mujhe jante hen wo bhi galat arop laga rahe hen to ap sab mil k hi decide kar lo, Mai hi piche hat jai hun jaisa ap sab chah rahe ho," Sharma said in his second tweet.

Meanwhile, Renu Sharma's lawyer Ramesh Tripathi said that he was receiving death threats and has received multiple calls. "I have informed the police accordingly.... The allegations are being made against my client to destroy the main case and divert attention from the main issue in the case"

Mumbai cops seize 345 kg ganja worth ₹5.2 cr, arrest 1

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a second major drug haul in less than a week, the Mumbai Police on Friday seized 345 kilograms of Ganja (marijuana) worth around Rs 5.2 crore and arrested one person in connection with the seizure.

Six days after the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) seized 200 kilograms of ganja and imported drugs like "OG Kush" (a strain of cannabis Indica) in raids conducted in Mumbai's north-western suburbs, the Mumbai police raided a small flat at Chandivali's Sangarshnagar locality in north-east Mumbai and seized huge quantity of drugs.

Acting on a tip-off, the Mumbai police raided a small flat in building no. 10 of the Slum Redevelopment Authority complex at Sangharsh Nagar area of Chandivali and seized 345 kilograms of Ganja (marijuana) worth around Rs.5.2 crore.

"After examining the CCTV footage in the area, we have arrested one - Ashok M. Metre (39). We have arrested him and booked him under the NDPS Act," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 10) Maheshwar Reddy said. Following the seizure of drugs, the Saki Naka Police are keeping a close watch on the illegal activities in the area.

SORIL INFRA RESOURCES LIMITED (CIN : L52190HR2005PLC07980)				
Extract of the consolidated unaudited financial results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2020				
Particulars	(Rs. in crores)			
	3 months ended 31 December 2020	Year to date figures for current year period ended 31 December 2020	3 months ended 31 December 2019	
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	
Total income	50.42	142.85	64.54	
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before tax, exceptional and extraordinary items)	5.40	23.20	5.67	
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	5.40	23.20	5.67	
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	4.98	18.95	4.39	
Total comprehensive income for the period (comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax))	4.99	19.22	4.94	
Paid-up equity share capital	31.50	31.50	31.50	
Earnings per share before extraordinary items (face value of Rs. 10 per equity share)				
*EPS for the quarter/ nine month are not annualised)				
- Basic (Rs)	1.58 *	6.02 *	1.39 *	
- Diluted (Rs)	1.58 *	6.02 *	1.39 *	
Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve) as per audited financials of the previous year March 2020			208.83	

Note to the financial results:
1) The above results have been reviewed by the audit committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 15 January 2021. These financial results have been subjected to a limited review by the statutory auditors of the Company.
2) Key standalone financial information of SORIL Infra Resources Limited:

SORIL INFRA RESOURCES LIMITED (CIN : L52190HR2005PLC07980)				
Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2020				
Particulars	(Rs. in crores)			
	3 months ended 31 December 2020	Year to date figures for current year period ended 31 December 2020	3 months ended 31 December 2019	
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	
Total income	43.59	113.69	52.21	
Profit / (loss) before tax	2.73	7.13	0.34	
Net Profit / (loss) after tax	2.73	6.77	0.34	

3) The above presentation is an extract of the detailed format of quarter/ nine month financial results filed with the stock exchanges under regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarter/ nine month financial results are available on the Company's website (<http://sorilinfraresources.com>) and on the website of BSE (<http://www.bseindia.com>) and NSE (<http://www.nseindia.com>).

Registered Office: Plot No. 448-451, Udayog Vihar, Phase-V, Gurugram - 122016
Place : Gurugram
Date : 15 January 2021
For and on behalf of Board of Directors
Anil Malhan
Executive Director

Yaari Digital Integrated Services Limited

(Formerly known as Indiabulls Integrated Services Limited)
(CIN: L51101HR2007PLC079999)

Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2020				
Particulars	(Rs. in Crores)			
	3 months ended 31 December 2020	Year to date figures for current year period ended 31 December 2020	3 months ended 31 December 2019	
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	
Total Income from Operations	56.07	164.39	77.51	
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(25.53)	(66.59)	25.34	
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items))	(25.53)	(66.59)	25.34	
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(28.62)	(76.07)	18.70	
Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	132.28	296.13	264.18	
Equity Share Capital	17.87	17.87	17.87	
Earnings per Share (EPS) before extraordinary items				
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	
Earnings per Share (EPS) after extraordinary items				
- Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	
- Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(3.40)	(9.27)	1.92	

Note to the financial results:
1) The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 15 January 2021.
2) Key Standalone Financial Information:

Yaari Digital Integrated Services Limited (Formerly known as Indiabulls Integrated Services Limited)				
Extract of Consolidated Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended 31 December 2020				
Particulars	(Rs. in Crores)			
	3 months ended 31 December 2020	Year to date figures for current year period ended 31 December 2020	3 months ended 31 December 2019	
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	
Total Income	0.49	4.03	0.12	
Loss before Tax	(27.38)	(58.29)	(13.71)	
Net Loss after Tax	(27.38)	(58.29)	(13.93)	

3) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Nine months Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Nine months Financial Results are available on the Company's website (<https://indiabullsdigitalservices.com>) and on the website of BSE (<https://www.bseindia.com>) and NSE (<https://www.nseindia.com>).

Registered Office: Plot No. 448-451, Udayog Vihar, Phase-V, Gurugram - 122016
Place : Gurugram
Date : 15 January 2021
For and on behalf of Board of Directors
Kuber Khera
Executive Director & CEO

Honest State poll officials get EC shield ahead of polls

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls in five States, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday stepped in to protect officials assigned to the election duty to ensure free, fair and impartial elections. Taking note of victimisation of the officials on flimsy grounds after the election is over, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday said States and Union Territories will need its approval before initiating disciplinary action against the chief electoral officers and other officers up to the joint chief electoral officer during their tenure and also up to one year from its expiry.

In a letter addressed to the cabinet secretary, DoPT secretary, chief secretaries and chief electoral officers of all States and Union Territories on Thursday, the EC said it has noted some incidents of "victimisation" of CEOs and additional, joint, deputy and assistant CEOs in the post-election period. The preparations for the Assembly polls in five States—Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Puducherry and Assam are on. The terms of the assemblies in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Puducherry and Assam will end on May 24, 2021, June 1, 2021, May 30, 2021, June 8, 2021 and May 31, 2021 respectively.

In its direction, the EC said not reduce facilities such as vehicle, security and other facilities/amenities provided to the office of the Chief Electoral



Officer for proper discharge of his/her duties.

The Commission has noted some incidents of victimisation of CEOs, Addl/Joint/Deputy/Assistant CEO in the post-election period. Many a times they are targeted for political vendetta by charging them with disciplinary cases on flimsy grounds for their earlier tenures in the State Government after the completion of their tenure. An environment of fear is created to convey that the upright, steadfast and sincere officers can be taken to task at any time, on the flimsiest of the grounds," the EC noted. It said in such a scenario, these officers are not only "demotivated but also their morale is greatly reduced, which severely affect their efforts to ensure free and fair elections." "Left to go on unfettered, it causes a situation where officials are reluctant to join as CEOs and those who are inducted face the uncertainty of fair treatment in post-election phase," it observed.

"Commission is sanguine in the expectation that all concerned shall strictly adhere to this regimen in letter as well as in spirit," EC said in a communication sent to Cabinet secretary, all state/UT chief

secretaries, DoPT secretary and state chief electoral officers. The letter states that EC is of the considered view that positive protection to election officials from motivated harassment is essential to enable the electoral officials in carrying out the electoral functions in free, fair, impartial and fearless manner. The letter pointed out that the matter of taking action against any officer on election duty was subjected to the scrutiny of the Supreme Court. In 2000, the apex court had upheld that neither any action can be initiated against the officers on election duty by the state government nor can the government refuse to act on its advice to initiate action against errant officials. The Commission designates a CEO for state and union territories in consultation with the respective governments. Chief electoral officers are essentially an extension of the Commission in the states and union territories to carry out multifarious election related functions of the Commission. Once appointed, the CEO comes under direct control, superintendence and discipline of the Election Commission and remains on deputation to Election Commission.

LAC crisis: No one should test patience of India, says Army chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sounding a note of warning to China, Army Chief General MM Naravane on Friday said no one should test the patience of India. He, however, reiterated that the nation is committed to resolve the current impasse through dialogues.

He also said a "befitting" response was given to China when it tried to change the status quo at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Addressing the Army Day parade, Naravane said a "befitting response" was given to the "conspiracy" to make unilateral changes on the border and that the sacrifice of the Galwan heroes in eastern Ladakh will not go waste.

"We are committed to resolve disputes through talks and political efforts but no one should make any mistake of testing our patience," he said.

"I want to assure the country that the sacrifice of the Galwan heroes will not go waste. Indian Army will not allow any harm to the country's sovereignty and security," the Chief said.

Twenty Indian Army personnel including the commanding officer were killed in a brawl with the Chinese troops on June 15 last year in the Galwan valley. It marked the most serious military conflicts between the two sides in decades.

Though it suffered casualties in the hand-to-hand combat that day, China is yet to disclose the number of its soldiers killed and injured. Reports indicate that more

than 35 Chinese soldiers were also killed in the clash.

Stressing the point that India favoured talks to resolve the dispute leading to disengagement and de-escalation at the LAC now on for the last nine months, Naravane said eight rounds of military talks were held between India and China to bring the situation under control.

"Our efforts will continue to find a solution to the current situation on the basis of mutual and equal security, basis of mutual and equal security," he said.

Referring to cross-border terrorism from Pakistan, the Chief said the neighbouring country continues to provide a safe haven to terrorists.

More than 300-400 terrorists are ready to infiltrate, he said.

"There was an increase of 40 per cent in the ceasefire violations last year which is the proof of Pakistan's sinister plans. There were also attempts to smuggle weapons using drones, he added. Naravane said more than 200 terrorists were killed by the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir in different operations last year.

On the issue of modernization, he said the army is taking concrete steps. Outlining some of the procurements undertaken in the last few months in the backdrop of the stand-off at the LAC, Naravane said under emergency and fast-track schemes, the Army procured equipment worth about ₹5,000 crores and signed contracts worth ₹13,000 crores in the last year under capital procurement.

Covid vaccines only for those above 18, says Health Ministry



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Contrary to the approval given by the country's top drug regulator which said that Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech's Covaxin could be administered to those above 12 years of age, the Union Health Ministry, in a recent communique, has said that both shots are recommended and approved for people above 18 years of age.

Sources said that the Ministry, in a letter issued on January 14, provided comparative details of the two vaccines - Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and University of Oxford - AstraZeneca's Covishield which is being manufactured by Serum Institute of India - approved by Drug Controller General of India (DCGI).

The factsheet has details of the vaccines, which will be distributed to cold chain points and vaccination centres for ready reference.

However, in the letter, the Ministry says that both vaccines are recommended and approved for people above 18 years of age. This contradicts the earlier DCGI approval which said that Bharat Biotech's Covaxin could be administered to those above 12 years of age.

The Health Ministry's letter - under the subhead 'Precautions and contraindications for COVID-19 vaccination' reads: "1. Authorised age group: Under the EUA, COVID-19 vaccination is indicated only for 18 years and above. 2. Co-administration of vaccines: If required, COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines should be separated by an interval of at least 14 days. 3. Interchangeability of COVID-19 vaccines is not permitted: Second dose should also be of the same COVID-19 vaccine which was administered as the first dose."

EC ready to share voters' list with Govt for job plan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) will extend "full assistance" to the Government in identifying targeted beneficiaries at the polling station level for the Covid-19 vaccination drive, but wants health authorities to delete the data once the inoculation exercise is over.

The EC after detailed deliberations, wrote back to the home secretary on January 4, saying it has decided to render "full assistance" in the vaccination drive. But asked the government to ensure that the data is strictly used for the limited purpose for which it has been sought, the sources said.

On December 31 last year, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora requesting the commission's help in identifying people above 50 years of age at the polling station level. On the issue of data security, the home secretary wrote that the Government is complying with the current best practices for ensuring cyber security. He has assured the poll panel that the data will be used only for the purpose of vaccination, the sources said.

The commission also said that the data should be deleted by health authorities once

the vaccination exercise concludes, they said. Some senior EC officials will be in touch with nodal officers of the Union home ministry and the Union health ministry to settle day-to-day issues, the sources said.

Last month, officials of the Union health ministry and the Niti Aayog had met the EC top brass seeking their help in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine given the poll panel's robust network at the booth level. The letter by the home secretary is a follow up to the meeting, the sources said.

According to guidelines for the COVID-19 vaccination drive, the latest electoral roll for Lok Sabha and assembly elections will be used to identify the priority population over the age of 50 years. Twelve identity documents, such as Voter ID, Aadhaar card, driving licence, passport and pension document, will be required for beneficiary identification.

According to the government, the shots will be offered first to an estimated one crore healthcare workers, and around two crore frontline workers, and then to persons above 50 years of age, followed by persons younger than 50 years of age with associated comorbidities.

According to the officials, 95 per cent of the 1.1 crore doses of Covishield vaccine purchased by the Government have been delivered and shipped to nearly 60 consignee points across India in last two days. Similarly, of the 55 lakh doses of indigenously developed Covaxin of Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech ordered by the Centre, the first tranche of 2.4 lakh doses have been dispatched to 12 States.

Construction work of new Parl building starts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The construction work of the new Parliament building started on Friday, a day after 'Makar Sankranti', considered auspicious.

"Excavation work has started at the site where a sufficient number of labourers have been engaged to ensure that the project is completed on time", officials said. The site of the construction is adjacent to the existing Parliament, which was completed in 1927.

The new building is being constructed by Tata Projects Ltd. The project is estimated to cost Rs 971 crore. Tata Projects Ltd. said despite the 35-day delay in the commencement of the construction work, it is confident that it will be able to deliver the project on or before time.

The project was scheduled to start in December last, but construction and demolition at the site was put on hold while legal challenges to the project were pending with the apex court. On December 7, the Supreme Court allowed the ground-breaking ceremony to take place after the government submitted an affidavit that it



would not start construction, demolition and tree transplantation until the court gave its judgment. With the judgment clearing the project on January 5, the Central Public Works Department moved the HCC for approval, which was granted on Monday, according to HUA Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra.

The new Parliament building will have a triangular shape and is expected to be completed by the 75th anniversary of India's independence in 2022. The government plans to hold the monsoon session of Parliament in 2022 in the new building. PM Modi had laid the foundation stone for the new

Parliament building on December 10 last year.

Earlier this week, a 14-member heritage panel gave its approval to the new Parliament building while also giving the go-ahead to the Central Vista redevelopment project. The Supreme Court had asked the Centre to seek prior approval from the panel and other relevant authorities before starting the construction of the new building. The construction work could not start earlier as the government had assured the Supreme Court that no construction or demolition work would commence till the apex court decided the pending pleas on the issue.

CBI conducts searches in ₹340-cr bank scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday conducted searches in connection with investigation of two separate cases related to bank fraud involving an amount of about ₹340 crore.

The agency has registered a case on a complaint from State Bank of India (SBI) against a private company Naftogaz India Private Limited based at Delhi/Noida and others including its CMD and unknown public servants/persons for causing an alleged loss of about ₹219.81 crore to SBI.

"It was alleged in the complaint that the said accused firm has cheated the SBI by way of diversion of bank funds, fraudulent transactions, criminal misappropriation, submission of false stock / debt statements etc.," the CBI said in a statement.

In the complaint, the SBI alleged that the company was incorporated in 2005 starting as EPC contractor for exploration, drilling, extraction and production of mineral oils,

natural gas and petroleum products. The alleged fraud came to light when Forensic Auditors submitted a report on February 18, 2020 for the period April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2014.

Searches were conducted at three locations including Delhi / NCR at the office and residential premises of the borrower company and other accused persons, it said.

The other case was registered on a complaint from Punjab National Bank (PNB) against a private company Hari Har Overseas Private Ltd, Narsing, Karnal (Haryana) engaged in rice milling activities at Karnal and others including its directors/guarantor and unknown public servants/persons for causing an alleged loss of about ₹121.75 crore to the bank.

It was alleged that the said accused had fraudulently sold its stock as well as machinery, which was hypothecated to the bank. It was further alleged that the accused had not deposited the sale proceeds with the bank.

SC seeks reply from Centre, 61 firms on PIL duty evasion in iron ore exports to China

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought responses from the Centre and 61 iron exporting firms including Essar Steel and Jindal Steel & Power on a PIL seeking a direction to the CBI to register an FIR and probe the alleged duty evasion by them in exporting iron ore to China since 2015.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde took note of the submissions of lawyer and PIL petitioner M L Sharma that the companies be prosecuted for alleged evasion of export duty by declaring wrong tariff code to export the iron ore under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

"Issue notice," said the bench which also comprised Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian.

The bench, which permitted the petitioner lawyer to argue in person the PIL, was told that iron



ore "smuggling to China" has been taking place as these companies have been exporting them without paying 30 per cent export duty.

The PIL said the ministries of commerce and finance control and regulate the export policies and decide as to under which Harmonized System (HS) Codes each good will be exported.

It said the government had set up a firm with the name of KIOCL to use low grade iron ore and export them under the "duty free Tariff HS

code 26011210 which is exclusively prescribed for KIOCL". The PIL said under Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992, "tariff HS CODE NO. 26011100 was prescribed to export "all other kind of iron ore" subject to payment of export duty at the rate of 30 per cent."

The firms were wrongly allowed to export iron ore using the tariff code being used by KIOCL and as a result crores of rupees have been cheated by them, it said.

Won't relent until farm laws are repealed: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi led the party's countrywide protests, billed Kisan Adhikar Divas in support of the agitating farmers and said the grand old party will not relent till the new farm laws are repealed which invited sharp reactions from Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

On the day when yet another round of talks between the Government and farmers unions remained inconclusive, Rahul alleged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi does not respect farmers and wants to tire out those protesting against the new agriculture laws.

Tomar hit back at Rahul for his remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said even the leaders of his

own party do not take the Gandhi scion seriously and laugh at his remarks. Addressing the media after the meeting with the farmers, Tomar said Gandhi's statements and actions are laughed at even within his own party.

"The Congress manifesto in 2019 itself had promised these reforms and therefore, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi should tell us whether they were lying then or are lying now," said the Agriculture Minister.

Sitting at Jantar Mantar protest site, Rahul along with his sibling and party general secretary Priyanka said farmers will not relent till the laws are repealed. The duo was joined by party MPs in their demonstration against the legislations. "The talks are being held only

to delay. PM Modi thinks he has the power and will tire the farmers out, but he is mistaken," Rahul Gandhi said talking to media.

Congress has been demanding a repeal of the farm laws, alleging that they are against the interests of farmers and farming and are aimed at helping only the "corporate friends" of the BJP. The three farm laws, enacted in September last year, have been projected by the government as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell anywhere in the country.

The party on Friday demonstrated protest at State capitals cross the country and at places like Lucknow protestors were also detained. Massive protests were also reported from Kolkata, Jaipur.

Climate change-induced temp behind low diet quality, malnutrition among children: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

More than traditional causes such as poverty, inadequate sanitation and poor education, it is the climate change-induced higher temperatures which is majorly contributing to low diet quality and malnutrition among young children in many parts of the world, researchers have found after assessing diet diversity among one lakh kids under five in 19 countries.

"Certainly, future climate changes have been predicted to affect malnutrition, but it surprised us that higher temperatures are already showing an impact," said lead author Meredith Niles, an assistant professor of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Vermont and a fellow at the university's Gund Institute for Environment.

The study published in journal Environmental Research Letters, found that the negative effects of climate — especially higher temperature — on diet diversity are greater in some regions than the positive effects of education, water

and sanitation and poverty alleviation — all common global development tactics.

Of the six regions examined — Asia; Central and South America; North, West, and Southeast Africa, five had significant reductions in diet diversity associated with higher temperatures.

Researchers focused on diet diversity, a metric developed by the United Nations to measure diet quality and micronutrient intake.

Micronutrients, such as iron, folic acid, zinc, and vitamins A and D, are critical for child development. A lack of micronutrients is a cause of malnutrition, which affects one out of every three children under the age of five. Diet diversity is measured by counting the number of food groups eaten over a given time period, as per the study.

The researchers found that on an average, children had eaten food from 3.2 food groups (out of 10) — including meat and fish, legumes, dark leafy greens and cereal greens — in the previous 24 hours. By contrast, diet diversity in

emerging economies or more affluent countries such as China have been more than double this average (6.8 for children 6 and under).

"Higher rainfall in the future may provide important diet quality benefits in multiple ways, but it also depends on how that rain comes," said co-author Molly Brown of the University of Maryland. "If it's more erratic and intense, as is predicted with climate change, this may not hold true."

"Diet diversity was already low for this group," said UVM co-author Brendan Fisher. "These results suggest that, if we don't adapt, climate change could further erode a diet that already isn't meeting adequate child micronutrient levels."

The researchers had used 30 years of geo-coded temperature and precipitation data, and socioeconomic, ecological, and geographic data.

The disturbing findings does not bode well for the future generation with a UNICEF report already pointing out that some 144 million children worldwide are stunted by malnutrition.

SCBA ex-president urges SC to resume normal functioning

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior advocate and former SCBA president Vikas Singh has requested Chief Justice of India (CJI) S A Bobde that the Supreme Court, which has been hearing cases virtually in view of Covid-19 for past several months, resume "normal functioning" at the earliest.

"Recent turn of events have created a situation whereby the interests of the Bar are being neglected and the Bench is taking unilateral decisions with regard to the functioning of the institution," he said.

Bar and Bench are the two main pillars on which the system of justice stood, the for-

mer Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president said in a letter to the CJI on Thursday.

Singh said: "In my view when the entire country is opening up, of course with sufficient safeguards, I see no reason why the Supreme Court which is the foundation of our democratic polity should not resume full normal functioning by putting in place sufficient safeguards for the said opening."

"While the judges and the court staff are completely protected being away from the areas where the lawyers, litigants and media come, till date no effort has been made to even think of a method where-

by the number of people entering the Court is restricted and normal functioning of courts starts on that basis."

He added that the largest stakeholders in the functioning of the Supreme Court were the litigants for whose benefit this entire institution had been created and while the issue of the pandemic was looming large in this country, the litigants could not be ignored by the non-functioning of the SC in a proper manner.

While pointing out the band-width issues for allowing mentioning, he also said that any technological shortcoming could not be an impediment in this vital activity.

Privacy matters

You wouldn't want anyone else seeing what you do online, would you? But they already do



WhatsApp's new privacy policy is in essence providing Facebook a way to monetise messages on the messaging app. At one level, it makes sense since users of the messaging app are getting a free service, and Facebook's algorithms go through your messages just like Google's algorithms go through every email you send and receive on Gmail. And most of us do use Google's service for email and the tech giant's search for everything and we post about our lives on Facebook and Twitter, so to suddenly cry 'wolf' about the new privacy policy does little but to expose our hypocrisy. Could Facebook and WhatsApp have handled it any better? Yes, they should have; many Indians will migrate

to other messaging platforms and apps over the coming weeks and some of them, at least for now, assure privacy. But with applications like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, there is something called the 'network' effect; it is difficult to use a service that few of your friends and relatives use, so while many people will download Signal and maybe even use it for some discussions that they'd rather nobody else sees, WhatsApp is unlikely to suffer much in the long term other than a bruised ego. It is more than likely that many groups, after discussing the new privacy policy threadbare with huge doses of misinformation, have gone back to their regularly scheduled "Good Morning" and "Good Evening" messages.

At a level, this comes down to our understanding of privacy as a people. In such a crowded country, the concept of personal privacy as understood in the western world does not simply exist. If one is really concerned about privacy, they should probably use better hardware devices, the iPhone for example, instead of Chinese-brand Android devices and pay for better messaging and email services. There has to be a realisation that there is a price for 'free services' because, as the saying goes, "You can't have your cake and eat it too". There is a cost to privacy when it comes to technology and when notions of personal privacy are so limited to begin with, teaching Indians about the need to keep things private is a difficult task. In many western countries, for example, it is a given that without the permission of a guardian, the pictures of children cannot be published; in India we do not think twice before doing such a thing. Remember, Indian cricket player Virat Kohli and his actor wife Anushka — among the most photographed couples in the country — had to very recently make an appeal to the paparazzi to refrain from taking pictures of their newborn daughter. The simple issue was the pesky photographers who often cross the fine line between the demands of the "profession" and intrusion of privacy. On the other hand, citing the case of the western world, is the instance of Hollywood actor George Clooney, who sued a member of the paparazzi brigade and his publication for climbing over the walls of the actor's villa and clicking photos of his child. Privacy is a luxury in a crowded nation and if we want it, we have to pay for it, such as living in a large house with a boundary wall. If we want luxury on the internet, we have to be willing to pay!

Anatomy of Uttarayana

Makar Sankranti is an event of the sidereal solar calendar while Uttarayana is a matter of tropical solar reckoning



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Makar Sankranti marks the Sun's entry into Makar raashi, identified with the sign of Capricorn. The reference here is merely to the apparent motion of the Sun resulting from Earth's yearly revolution. Annually, there would be a dozen such Sankrantis, because of the Sun's transit across 12 signs of the celestial zodiac. No other Sankranti enjoys religious significance, though each of them marks the beginning of a new month in the sidereal solar calendar. In India, several States like Tripura, Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab, Haryana and so on follow a sidereal solar calendar. Several other States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh-Telangana in addition to the Hindi-speaking belt follow the luni-solar calendar.

In the luni-solar calendar, the months are based upon a lunar cycle of 29-1/2 days, resulting in a year length of 354 days. Therefore, it has to be adjusted against the solar year by insertion of intercalary month (*Adhimasa*) every three years. The luni-solar calendar, besides being expressly followed in several parts of India, is also implicit to the solar calendar because of its religious significance. All Hindu religious festivals including *vrats*, *parvas* and most *jayantis* are determined as per the 354-day lunar calendar. This results in a drift of dates for religious festivities and austerities (within a bracket of 25 days) *vis-a-vis* the Gregorian calendar.

Why is Makar Sankranti celebrated with such great fanfare even in parts of India where the writ of solar calendar does not run? This is due to a belief that Makar Sankranti marks Uttarayana (literally meaning sun turning north). Uttarayana is a function of a tropical solar calendar like the Gregorian calendar. Tropical calendar has zero connection with zodiac background. It stands on four pillars — Vernal Equinox (March 21), Summer Solstice (June 21), Autumn Equinox (September 21) and Winter Solstice (December 21). In the two equinoxes, the day and night are of equal length all over the world. In June solstice, the day is longest across the northern hemisphere, shortest in the southern. In December solstice, the day is shortest in the northern hemisphere and longest in the southern. This interplay of 'light and shadow' is due to the fact that the axis of Earth's rotation is inclined to the plane of Earth's revolution at 23.5°. As a



result, different zones of the globe receive direct light whereas others pass into shadow. This, in the extreme, results in six months of day and six months of night between one equinox to the other in alternating polar zones — the Arctic and Antarctic.

In winter, the sun travels low across the sky in the northern hemisphere. On December 21, the declination is the least and the Sun is directly overhead the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5° S) at the local noon. The trend is, however, reversed on the morning of Solstice. The Sun, figuratively speaking, turns northwards. Thus, as per one belief, December 22 should be the real Uttarayana. A common factor, coincidental at first sight, is the name Capricorn. On December 21, the Sun is overhead the Tropic of Capricorn, an imaginary line; and on January 14 it enters the Sign of Capricorn. However, we realise that it is more than mere coincidence when the same thing is repeated in the summer. While on June 21 the Sun is directly overhead at the Tropic of Cancer, it enters the Sign of Cancer on July 16. The gap is 24 days.

Now, 24 days seems to be the new common factor. What explains this 24 days' time lag that links the name of a tropic (an imaginary line) with a constellation? The secret might lie in the factor called "precession of equinoxes" or "axial precession" called *ayana-chalan* in Sanskrit. The axis of the Earth is not exactly stable but describes a conical motion. This motion, similar to the wobble of a spinning top, results from the Sun's

“ WE GET THE SEASONS FROM THE SUN, NOT FROM THE ZODIACAL BACKGROUND. THUS, MEASURING SEASONS FROM THE ZODIAC SIGNS BY IGNORING THE EFFECT OF PRECESSION (THE NIRAYANA CALENDAR) IS NOT THE BEST WAY. ”

gravitational pull acting differently at the equator from the poles. The conical motion would be complete in 28,500 years during which the North Pole would point at several different stars — like Thuban, Polaris and Vega. During the same interval the point of the equinox, where the plane of revolution intersects the plane of

rotation, goes round the entire zodiac. The amount of precession is 50" (less than 1/60th of one degree, when one segment of zodiac is of 30 degrees).

We get the seasons from the Sun, not from the zodiacal background. Thus, measuring seasons from the zodiac signs by ignoring the effect of precession (the Nirayana calendar) is not the best way. The sidereal or Nirayana year (365 d 06 hrs 09 m 10 s) is 21 minutes longer than tropical year (365 d 05 h 48 m 46 s). A sidereal year, therefore, would disengage from the seasons twice as fast as Julian calendar (which assumed year length to be flat 365 d and 6 hrs) did before being reformed by Pope Gregorian XIII in 1582.

"The difference between the sidereal and the tropical year is 20.4 minutes," says Bal Gangadhar Tilak, "which causes the seasons to fall back nearly one lunar month in about 2,000 years, if the sidereal solar year is to be taken as the standard of measurement" (*The Orion*, P.19). This would explain the mystery of the lost 24 days. Possibly two millennia ago, the Sun went overhead in the southernmost tropic when it entered the sign of Capricorn. In the ancient times, Uttarayana and Sun's entry into Capricorn would have coincided. That is no longer true.

Tilak (1856-1920), however, hinted at a different possibility on Uttarayana. Known as a tough politician, he was also a noted Sanskrit scholar who found time to delve deep into Hindu astronomy to reconstruct Vedic history. It is reflect-

ed in his books like *The Orion, or, Researches Into The Antiquity of the Vedas* (1893) and *Arctic Home in the Vedas* (1903). In his book, viz., *The Orion*, the author says that Uttarayana is susceptible to two meanings. Tilak states: "It might mean 'turning towards the north from the southernmost point' or it may indicate 'the passage of the Sun into the northern hemisphere, i.e. to the north of the equator'. If we adopt the first meaning, Uttarayana and the year must be held to commence from the winter solstice while, if the second interpretation is correct, Uttarayana and the year must have commenced with the vernal equinox." Citing the *Rig Veda*, Tilak says: "The facts that the central day of annual *satra* was called *vishuvan*, the Vasant or spring was considered the first of the seasons and the *agrayaneshtis* or the half-year sacrifices were required to be performed every Vasant (Spring) and Sharad (autumn) clearly show that the second interpretation is more likely to be correct (*The Orion*, P.22)."

Tilak, thus, maintained that Uttarayana was the vernal equinox (March 21). He further believed that the six-month period from vernal equinox to autumn equinox, when the Sun moves along the northern latitude, is *Devayana* (way of the gods) in the *Rig Veda* and from autumn equinox to vernal equinox *Pitriyana* (way of the dead ancestors) as mentioned in the *Rig Veda*.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher. The opinions expressed are personal.)

Virus shadow over R-Day

No chief guest at this year's parade; the number of attendees as well as pageantry scaled down, too



The devastating Coronavirus pandemic has upended all our lives and nothing is the same again. Not the global economy, nor the way we socialise, nor the education and the healthcare systems nor the way we work, conduct business or even celebrate. If there has been a major disruptive force in living memory, it is the outbreak of the accursed virus. And now, in a historical first since 1966, India will celebrate its Republic Day without a Head of State as the chief guest to showcase its military prowess to. The pesky virus has ensured that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was supposed to attend the iconic Republic Day parade, had to bow out after he announced a fresh lockdown in the UK over the

new strain of the Coronavirus that has affected thousands of people there and reared its ugly head in India, too. The complete lockdown for England's 56 million people could last until mid-February, hence the Prime Minister was needed back home. This was supposed to be Johnson's first bilateral outing after the UK's departure from the European Union in December. But the contingency back home needed his urgent attention, so he had no choice but to cancel his visit that was expected to bind the Indo-UK relations even closer. The trip to New Delhi was being seen in the diplomatic circles as the UK's post-Brexit tilt towards the Indo-Pacific region, in which India is an important player. In fact, on December 15, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who visited New Delhi as a prelude to Johnson's trip, announced a closer collaboration with India on an enhanced trade partnership, and he also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss a 10-year roadmap for a new era in the UK-India ties. Apart from trade, the two democracies are also seeking closer collaboration on tackling the Coronavirus pandemic, climate change, enhancing defence cooperation so that they can better address key issues like terrorism and maritime security.

A disappointed India, which had been "looking forward to Johnson's visit", tried to fill the gap on the dignitary podium by approaching leaders in neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and Bhutan, but lockdowns and various COVID-related issues made it impossible for others to step in. As it is, the parade this time had been restricted to a limited few from the masses instead of the thousands who used to throng it earlier. Even the marching contingents will be fewer and they will sport face masks and face shields, and the general distance between members in each of the contingents has been expanded from two to three feet. Even the number of dignitaries will be less and only a limited number of people will be invited; and they too will be seated far apart in order to maintain social distance. The highlight of the parade this year is expected to be the felicitation of the "Corona warriors". A few hundred people who have been in the frontline from the field of medicine — such as staff nurses, paramedics, doctors and sanitation staff — have been selected and they will be given certificates of appreciation on the occasion to show the nation's appreciation for the work they have been doing in battling the virus. This whittling down of the pomp and show that is usually associated with the R-Day parade makes one wonder why we never thought of this before? Each year, India spends hundreds of crores in organising the mega event. So this begs the question: Where is the justification in a poor country like India spending so much money on impressing the world's leaders when millions are dying of malnutrition and living below the poverty line in the nation? Would this money not be better spent on ramping up our healthcare and educational infrastructure? Or skilling the nation's *beti* and fighting crimes against women? If we can decrease our disease and hunger burden and increase our per capita income, it would really be something to showcase to the world. Else, we should adopt the Gandhian principle of leading a simple life.

SOUNDBITE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not respect the farmers. The Congress is with farmers and will support them till these laws are withdrawn.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

United States so far, at least the current administration, is doing all it can to hamper any chance for dialogue between Iran and the Persian Gulf countries.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

I think every film mattered, right from my first film, because that is what gave me my first step into the film industry. My entire journey has been special.



Actor Kiara Advani

It is great to be coaching the young players of the West Indies and trying to guide them as we prepare for the World Cup at home.



West Indies Under-19 coach Floyd Reifer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ensure accountability

Sir — The Government must frame stringent laws to hold politicians accountable for corruption in the country. It is often seen in cases of corruption or malpractices in any Government department that the officials are usually taken to task by agencies like the CBI and ED while politicians belonging to the ruling dispensation, who are no less involved in the fraud, walk away scot-free. Our politicians, with their unchecked involvement in corrupt practices, have tarnished the reputation of our country. Over the past four decades or so, we have seen many cases of corruption. It will not be an exaggeration to say that most of the politicians are corrupt to the core and are involved in the dirty game of power and money. They have unaccounted money stocked in foreign banks or assets disproportionate to their income. It is high time for all political parties to think about this serious issue and join hands for making legislations that are more effective in curbing corruption by the politicians.

Seetharam B Telangana

India should provide vaccines to poor nations

As India is all set to launch the world's biggest vaccination drive on Saturday, many countries look towards it with hope. Apart from inoculating millions of countrymen, India should also provide the COVID vaccine vials to its neighbours and poor countries across the globe, either free of cost or on concessional rates. India's commitment to serve humanity is second to none and we, as a nation, have always helped those in need. It's beyond doubt that the chariot of self-reliant India is touching new heights everyday and the days are not far when we will become the torch-bearer of humanity and development. The manufacturers of the vaccines — Bharat Biotech (Covaxin) and Serum Institute of India (Covishield) — should take the lead and work out a plan with the Centre for exporting the vaccine to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and so on. This will go beyond their realm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and be a true service to the mankind. We, as a nation, cannot fail those who look towards us for help during the COVID crisis. India must tread cautiously and care about its global image. If the



immunisation drive turns out to be successful, India will set an unprecedented example in the world's history. It will emerge as the world leader and its reputation will increase manifold.

The Opposition parties and leaders, who have unequivocally criticised the Modi Government during the initial phase of vaccine development, should also rise above politics.

Aman Jaiswal Delhi

Accept demands in toto

Sir — The Modi Government must immediately repeal the three farm laws that are the bone of contention between the Centre and the farmers. Although the Supreme Court has put a stay on these legislations but the farmers are not contented and the situation can turn volatile anytime.

The cultivators are not ready to settle for anything less than revocation of the laws and a legal guarantee on the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The NDA Government must realise that 70 per cent of the rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood. They also constitute a large proportion of the BJP's vote bank and if they

turn against it in the next elections, it will severely mar the party's prospects of making it to the power corridors. Farmers are a peace-loving community and their leaders have clarified that the tractor rally on January 26 will take place only at the Haryana-Delhi border.

Bhagwan Thadani Mumbai

Army is our pride

Sir — On Army Day, we must remember those who choose to die for the nation. The sad part is that today's youth doesn't know about the stories of courage and valour that have shaped India's destiny saved us from enemies. Those who are ignorant about their past cannot shape their future.

It's time to remember our heroes like Field Marshal KM Cariappa, who was the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army and all the Param Vir Chakra (PVC) awardees like Major Somnath Sharma (first winner of the PVC), Naik Jadunath Singh, Lt Rama Raghoba Rane, Company Havildar Major Puru Singh and many others who made the supreme sacrifice for the nation. India's history is incomplete without its military history and our soldiers are our real heroes. We are safe because they are guarding our borders and fighting our enemies. We must pay our tribute to them on such occasions.

N Soumik Bhubaneswar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A shot at halting the virus' march

Vaccines take over six weeks to provide immunity. So it will be vital to continue with COVID protocols during the vaccination period and beyond



RAJINDER DHAMIJA

India begins its first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination drive from today. History is being created as it marks an important milestone in the pandemic's trajectory which began almost a year ago when three students returning from Wuhan were found to be COVID positive in Kerala. Since then, we have lost more than 1.51 lakh people and over 1.05 crore individuals have tested positive in India. The year 2020 was indeed a long one as lives were lost and livelihoods vanished as business closures, job losses and salary cuts became the norm. Politics overlooked science in many countries and they eventually paid the price in terms of preventable deaths and sickness just because of a delay in instituting Corona protocols like masking, social distancing, hand hygiene and restriction of movement. As I had highlighted previously in these columns, the cold and pollution resulted in a surge in Coronavirus cases in India and globally, too. However, many mathematical models have been proved wrong in terms of hypothetical projections of the number of cases as well as the timelines of the pandemic's trajectory. Experimental therapies were tried in order to save lives, some of which failed to generate scientific evidence while others were withdrawn fearing more risk than benefit through their use. The learning curve continues as the contagion rages on and new mutations are being reported from different parts of the globe, keeping science and scientists on their toes. Consequently, physical distancing has led to social isolation for many, especially the elderly and vulnerable populations like people with disabilities and comorbidities. This has resulted in significant mental health issues. Social isolation is indeed a major risk factor not only for the psychological repercussions it has but also for those suffering from ailments. The approval of two Coronavirus vaccines and their rollout from today is a major step towards combating the pandemic in India and may be the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 outbreak. Covaxin and Covishield will be used during the initial phase of the inoculation drive and a priority group of three crore people will get the shots. The vaccination programme will use Co-WIN, an online digital platform developed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which will facilitate real time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualised tracking of beneficiaries for the shot. This digital platform will assist programme managers across all levels while conducting inoculation sessions.

This drive is a welcome step in the right direction and the Coronavirus shot is indeed a gift for mankind in the midst of this humanitarian crisis. Vaccines have historically saved lives from many deadly diseases in the past. A vaccine for the Coronavirus becoming available in less than a year seemed impossible at one time. However, it has become possible because of global efforts and collaborations by scientists and nations. Consequently, these shots have been developed in record time and have shown remarkable efficacy with safety. But India's vaccine campaign poses a major challenge in getting a substantial number of the population inoculated in view of scepticism and the undercurrent of vaccine hesitancy. So far these jobs have protected people from getting the virus, thereby preventing morbidity, hospitalisation and subsequent mortality. This is important not only for countries like ours with an inadequate and inequitable public health system but also for nations with a robust health infrastructure.

It is widely understood that a person protected by a vaccine or a natural COVID-19 infection acts as a dead end for the virus' transmission and an unprotected person who has not been inoculated or had the infection becomes a facilitator. We need most of the population to be vaccinated to break the chain of transmission. The shot will prevent the disease for sure in most of the vaccinated people but whether it will prevent the spread of the virus is still unclear. There is evidence, though not strong, that some of these shots do prevent the spread of the virus. Epidemiological methods reveal that we need at least 60 to 70 per cent of the population to be immunised either through jabs or natural infection to halt the transmission of the virus and develop "herd immunity." So how do we tackle these challenges with the vaccine rollout now becoming a reality? First we need to vaccinate as many people as possible by allaying fears and convincing citizens about the benefit of the vaccine not only for them but also for the community. The vaccine needs to be made as easily available as possible, keeping priorities in place. Plus, the importance of concise communication to the masses cannot be underestimated as is highlighting and stressing scientific facts over misinformation and myths prevalent on social media. It must also be anticipated that people may become complacent during the vaccination drive or after getting the shot. All vaccines take at least six weeks to provide immunity. So it will be critical to continue with all COVID protocols like before during the vaccination period and months or years after completing the two dosages of the shot. We will need to continue the new normal with all public health measures in place along with lasting change in our behaviour. The shot is here but we will have to live with the virus even after this. Vaccines will save lives and livelihoods but the virus is here to stay.

(The writer is Head of Neurology Department, Lady Hardinge Medical College and SSK Hospital. The views expressed are personal.)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

MAY GOD GIVE OWASI STRENGTH. HE HELPED US IN BIHAR AND WILL HELP US IN UP PANCHAYAT AND ASSEMBLY POLLS AND ALSO IN WEST BENGAL.

—BJP MP

SAKSHI MAHARAJ



PEOPLE OF UP AND WEST BENGAL HAVE ALSO SEEN THROUGH THIS NEXUS AND WILL NOT LET THIS MATCH-FIXING GO THROUGH.

—CONGRESS LEADER

JITIN PRASADA

Curb regulatory overreach

Neither the legislature nor the judiciary should be allowed to frame and pronounce punishment disproportionate to the crime as compared to other contextual offences



ABHAY RAJ MISHRA

Since time immemorial, human civilisation has maintained social order by framing rules and regulations which are implemented through various mechanism of imparting justice to people. Justice by its very nature represents something that is just and right. What is just may depend on the context but being fair, impartial and right is essential to the idea of justice. Professor Henry Sidgwick, a 19th century British jurist known for his ethical theory had opined that the best indicator of a nation's political success is to see how it administers justice.

In primitive societies punishment was targeted to evoke fear by subjecting offenders to brutality. This was supposed to act as a lesson and deterrent for others. However, with development and social evolution, punishment is now a subject of human rights with greater focus on reforming the wrongdoers, instead of tormenting them.

India as a welfare State has also adopted a reformative approach where the primary aim is to rehabilitate the offender. For instance, then IG (Prisons) Kiran Bedi took her reformist vision to Tihar Jail in 1993 and initiated a programme for the welfare of the inmates in the notorious prison, totally transforming the conditions inside Tihar. The reform policy had several aspects like changing prisoners' attitudes through education, meditation and yoga; imparting vocational skills; making the prison administration accountable; involving prisoners through mobile petition boxes, various panchayats and daily mass *sabhas*; providing a better diet and improving living conditions; assisting addicts through drug de addiction centres and undertrials through legal aid cells. Similarly, the introduction of the Model Prison reforms by the Government in 2016 was a major step which brought uniformity in laws, rules and regulations governing prisoners.

However, there remains a major gap when it comes to the structure and uniformity of sentencing guidelines. Despite this being raised by various committees from time to time, neither the legislature nor the judiciary has issued any structured sentencing norms. The Malimath Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System that was set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs, in its report submitted in 2003, emphasised the need to introduce sentencing guidelines in order to minimise uncertainty in awarding sentences. A few years later the Madhav Menon Committee, too, reasserted the need for a sentencing policy in India. In 2010, the then Law Minister stated that India was planning to establish a "uniform sentencing policy" on the lines of the guidelines followed in the US and the UK. However, no progress has been made in this direction till date. Instead, the recent amendments proposed in the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2020 (COTPA 2020) signal a movement in the reverse direction.

COTPA 2020 amendments prescribe new excessive penalisation for petty street vendors or hawkers selling tobacco products. Exemplifying this is a seven-year imprisonment or a fine of ₹1 lakh for violations which involve immense subjectivity. Further, these violations are proposed to be made cognisable offences, which means police officers have the unilateral power to arrest these vendors, without a warrant or permission of a court and a bail will require appearance in front of a Magistrate.

These violations include selling tobacco products to a person below 21 years of age and selling

“WHILE THERE IS NO DEBATE ON THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TOBACCO AND AN ONGOING REDUCTION IN ITS USE SHOULD BE PURSUED, SHOCKINGLY DISPROPORTIONATE DRAFT RULES MAKE A MOCKERY OF THE SYSTEM AND CREATE A LEGAL PARADOX, THEREBY RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LAW-MAKING PROCEDURE IN THE COUNTRY”



tobacco within 100 meters of an educational institute. Even selling loose cigarettes, which has been an age-old system, is going to abruptly become a crime attracting a jail term.

In a country where an 18-year-old is a legal adult with the right to vote or marry, this is regulatory overreach. A section of these petty retailers sell their goods on foot and we don't have a fixed definition of educational institutes which can vary, from a school to a private tuition centre. This proposal makes petty retailers look like heinous criminals who will be subjected to the whims and fancies of local police officers, many of whom can be compulsively corrupt.

Compared to other sentences and imprisonments prescribed under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), these are disproportionate and excessive. For instance the law prescribes a maximum punishment of six months' jail for sale of adulterated drugs (IPC 275); up to six months in prison for rash or dangerous driving (IPC 279); maximum two years for rioting (IPC 147); three years for extortion (IPC 384); three years for voluntarily causing hurt with a dangerous weapon (IPC 324); five years for voluntarily throwing acid (IPC 326B) and seven years for kidnapping (IPC 363).

This move has rightfully caused widespread consternation among small retailers who are being made to look like criminals. The potential social harm caused by the sale of a *bidi* or a cigarette to an 18-year-old adult with fundamental rights to make informed choices, does not equal to the acts of kidnapping or throwing acid or even sale of adulterated drugs which can kill or maim. If tobacco is a legal product with the Government earning hefty revenues, how can selling it to lawful adults become a

crime? This raises pointed questions on the process behind the framing of such rules. Is it the poor quality of research by bureaucrats drafting such proposals where they did not compare this with other existing provisions? Or is there an emotional overdrive to control tobacco consumption too fast? These retailers also sell other items of daily consumption like tea, water, juices, soft drinks, biscuits, savoury items and confectionary besides tobacco products. Their presence on every street corner forms the very character of India's urban retail activity and is a sign of self-reliance and micro-entrepreneurship among people at the bottom of the pyramid.

The critics of the Government might draw controversial conclusions and say this is a larger move to attack unorganised retailers and kill micro retail activity to benefit large business groups or networks seeking organised retail activity. NGOs might even term it a bid by foreign firms to push more international tobacco into India through smuggled and illicit products at the cost of Indian tobacco farmers. However, this is a clear case of loss of balance that legislators and the judiciary need to maintain while framing sentencing guidelines. Neither the legislature nor the judiciary should be allowed to frame and pronounce punishment, which is disproportionate to the crime as compared to other contextual offences. Otherwise the belief of the people in the rule of law will erode.

In the past there have been instances of disproportionate sentencing being overturned by the judiciary. In the *Soman vs. State of Kerala* case, 2012, the Supreme Court reversed the imprisonment sentence imposed on the accused by the High Court, who was a liquor retailer charged with selling spurious

alcohol which eventually led to the death of six people. Here the Supreme Court observed that: "Giving punishment to the wrongdoer is at the heart of the criminal justice delivery, but in our country, it is the weakest part of the administration of criminal justice." The court cited the need to consider a combination of three factors while directing the quantum of sentence: Proportionality, deterrence and rehabilitation, among which the principle of proportionality assumes highest prominence. A sentence must be commensurate with the seriousness or gravity of the crime. Here, the seller was the last and the weakest link in the supply chain of adulterated liquor comprising of an illicit manufacturer, the distributor and finally the retailer. Hence the court felt that reduction of the sentence from five years of imprisonment to three years was a fair decision.

While there is no debate on the harmful effects of tobacco and an ongoing reduction in its use should be pursued, shockingly disproportionate draft rules make a mockery of the system and create a legal paradox, thereby raising questions about the law-making procedure in the country. Such rules, affecting the livelihoods of many, need more debate and should be reviewed by expert committees comprising of judicial experts, socialists and industry representatives, before being put up for public review. If allowed, these will adversely affect the sense and sensibilities of judges who will have a dilemma while pronouncing sentences, given their disproportionate nature as compared to other crimes.

(The writer is president, not-for-profit organisation PRAHAR. The views expressed are personal.)

Biden holds promise for US-Taiwan relations

At the diplomatic level, Taiwan works as a major bargaining chip for the US to deal with an increasingly aggressive China



SUDHIR SINGH **SUMIT KUMAR**

Just days before the US Congress certified President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lifted the long-standing restrictions on dealing with Taiwan. These "self-imposed restrictions", which were introduced decades ago to appease the mainland Chinese Government were declared "null and void" by Pompeo on January 9.

This allows US officials to engage with their Taiwanese counterparts on the same footing with

which they deal with functionaries of other countries.

While the latest development has elevated US-Taiwan relations to a new height, it is still to be seen whether Biden follows the trend or reverses the trajectory of bilateral engagement that has been achieved under the Donald Trump era.

Some experts, diplomats and commoners are speculative that the Biden Administration could backpedal US-Taiwan relations and instead favour China. Their apprehensions are not without a reason, as they cite a statement made by Biden in the US Senate in 2001 when he said that "Washington is not willing to go to war over Taiwan's unilateral declaration of independence."

However, it would be unfair to form an opinion about his foreign policies just based on some isolated statement. It is pertinent to recall that Biden had supported the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. Even in 2020 he was among the first global leaders to congratulate Taiwanese

President Tsai Ing-wen on her reelection and said: "You are stronger because of your free and open society. The United States should continue strengthening our ties with Taiwan and other like-minded democracies." Biden has also supported US legislations providing arms and defence equipment to Taiwan under the outgoing President Donald Trump's Administration.

We should also keep it in mind that Biden had used strong words against China during his election campaign. He termed the communist nation a "thug" and even accused Trump of being too soft on China. Further, in an article published in a journal, Biden said: "We're a Pacific power, and we'll stand with friends and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region," and "that includes deepening our ties with Taiwan." This, in turn, makes it aptly clear that Biden is fully conscious of the changing geostrategic, security and econom-

ic environment largely due to China's expansionist tendency.

Furthermore, some appointments made by Biden should indeed be viewed as a good signal for the East Asian nation. For instance, Antony Blinken, the Secretary of State-designate, has held talks with Taiwanese diplomats and in a tweet, Blinken mentioned that "stronger economic relations between the US and Taiwan will support our shared democratic values and our common commitment to regional peace and stability."

At the same time, the existence of Taiwan as an independent and vibrant democracy is also in the interest of the US for various reasons. First, Taiwan's geo-strategic location in the South China Sea (SCS) prevents Beijing from dominating sea trade routes. China controlling Taiwan would embolden Beijing to establish its dominance over the SCS and eventually it would pose a serious threat to East, Southeast Asia and the US. China can further assert its territorial

claim more aggressively against the Philippines, Vietnam and some other countries in the region.

Second, Taiwan is one of the leading export-based economies in the world. Taiwan succumbing to China would only accentuate Beijing's imperialist tendency. Third, at the diplomatic level, Taiwan works as a major bargaining chip for the US to deal with China. Fourth, while the recent attack on the Capitol Hill in Washington has bemused several countries across the world, the disappearance of Taiwan as an independent country would prove to be a big blow to the idea of democracy.

Taiwan can contribute significantly towards promoting the emergence of a strong supply chain free from the clutches of China. While Taiwan runs leadership training courses for the officials of the Pacific islands, its timely medical support to the rest of the world and its success in controlling the spread of COVID-19 have won the hearts of the international community.

But Taiwan could have certainly helped immensely had it been a member of the World Health Organisation.

The global perception about China has changed significantly in recent years as Beijing has become more repressive internally and aggressive internationally. China's repressive measures against peaceful protesters in Hong Kong and its attempt to cover up the outbreak of the contagion have finally ended the delusions about China's peaceful rise. It is all because of these factors that there exists a strong bipartisan understanding among US leaders about strengthening ties with Taiwan.

Now, the time has come when not only the independent existence of Taiwan should be a global concern, but efforts should also be undertaken to enable it to contribute to world affairs in an effective manner. For its pursuance, the US should take initiatives to sign the Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan, which in turn would propel other

countries to institutionalise their economic ties with it. The process will eventually not only reduce Taiwan's economic dependence on China, it would also integrate Taiwan into the regional and global economic groups.

The US should also take initiatives to include Taiwan into the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). Since the East Asian country has fostered a strong relationship with India, Japan has already expressed its concern for the independence of Taiwan and Australia is facing an assertive China, Washington can explore the means of providing a role to Taiwan in this QUAD grouping.

While it becomes logical for the Biden Administration to sustain the momentum of the bilateral relationship, only time will tell if this transition leads to anticipated transformation. *(Singh is Professor at Delhi University while Kumar is former fellow at National Chengchi University, Taipei.)*

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC & ITS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

India took 'very decisive' steps: IMF MD

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has praised India for taking "very decisive" steps to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and its economic consequences and asked the country to do more this year to support an accelerated transformation of the economy.



At the same time, she said that one of India's reforms that are still lagging is on gender equality

Participating in a global media roundtable on Thursday, the chief of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted a less bad outlook for India in the upcoming World Economic Update due to the steps taken by it.

release its World Economic Update on January 26. Talking about India, she said it was a very dramatic lockdown for a country of this size of the population with people clustered so closely together.

"When I called on everybody to stay tuned for January 26, that applies very much to India. You would see a picture in our update that is less bad. Why? Because the country actually has taken very decisive action, very decisive steps to deal with the pandemic and to deal with the economic consequences of it," Georgieva said.

"Then India moved to more targeted restrictions and lockdowns. What we see is that that transition, combined with policy support, seems to have worked well. Why? Because if you look at mobility indicators, we are almost where we were before Covid in India, meaning that economic activities have been revitalised quite significantly," she said.

"What the government has done on the monetary policy and the fiscal policy side is

commendable. It is actually slightly above the average for emerging markets. Emerging markets on average have provided six per cent of the GDP. In India, this is slightly above that. Good for India is that there is still space to do more.... If you can do more, please do," Georgieva said.

According to the IMF Managing Director, 2021 is the year to use that space.

"But use it wisely in a more targeted manner and to support an accelerated transformation of the economy. Because what we see is amazing how much faster structural change takes place. And policymakers ought to be leaning forward in this environment to support this structural

transformation and to cushion the impact it has on those that are on the losing side of it," she said. Georgieva said that she is impressed by the appetite for structural reforms that India is retaining.

"We welcome that. No question those reforms, and actually that applies very much to South Africa... Will determine competitiveness in the future. We need higher productivity. We need more vibrant and inclusive economies. And they are not going to fall from the sky. There have to be reforms that support them," she said.

Welcoming the fact that India does not give up on structural reforms, she said: "And I'm saying, yes, do it! Because the world change is accelerating and economies have to be agile and adaptable to change... We have to be constantly leaning forward."

At the same time, she said that one of the aspects of India's reforms that are still lagging is on gender equality.

"I want to just stress it is scary to see how we are losing ground on gender equality over these months so fast. Women are front line workers, but they are also, by and large, in the contact intensive

industries hit. They are often in the informal economy, help cannot easily reach them, so they are hit."

"...Once people start losing jobs, who is to lose jobs first? [Again] women are on the front line. Labour market participation in India for women has been low. It is shrinking...I know the government is paying attention, it is moving in that [direction], but there is so much space to tap into the productive potential of women and the entrepreneurial potential of women," Georgieva said.

The IMF in its October outlook projected India to contract by a massive 10.3 per cent in 2020.

However, India is likely to bounce back with an impressive 8.8 per cent growth rate in 2021, it had said.

Sensex slumps 549 points on profit-taking; posts weekly gain

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices sank deep into the red on Friday as concerns over stretched valuations and a bearish trend in global markets triggered across-the-board selling.

Investors preferred to book profits at higher levels despite a good start to the earnings season, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 549.49 points or 1.11 per cent to finish at 49,034.67. The broader NSE Nifty tumbled 161.90 points or 1.11 per cent to 14,433.70.

Tech Mahindra was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 4.35 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, ONGC, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, HDFC and HUL.

Only four Sensex components closed with gains — Bharti Airtel, ITC, Bajaj Auto and Bajaj Finance, spurring up

to 3.84 per cent. During the week, the Sensex advanced 252.16 points or 0.51 per cent while the Nifty rose 86.45 points or 0.60 per cent.

Global equities were on the backfoot on Friday even as US President-elect Joe Biden unveiled his widely-anticipated USD 1.9 trillion stimulus package as investors fretted over possible tax hikes and higher interest rates.

"Markets began circumspect amidst weak job data in the US even as Joe Biden unveiled details of the \$1.9 trillion rescue package. Friday's afternoon trade saw profit taking in IT stocks despite the big gains putting out positive commentary with large deal wins at MCAP to GDP crossed 100 per cent, leading to volatility," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities.

Sector-wise, BSE oil and gas, IT, realty, capital goods,

utilities, energy, power and consumer durables indices fell up to 2.43 per cent, while telecom rallied 3.68 per cent.

In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and smallcap indices skidded up to 1.25 per cent. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong ended on a positive note, while Seoul and Tokyo were in the red.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading in the negative territory in early deals.

Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.77 per cent lower at \$55.42 per barrel.

The rupee snapped its three-session winning streak and closed 3 paise lower at 73.07 against the US dollar.

Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market, purchasing shares worth Rs 1,076.62 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Exports enter positive zone after 2 months, up marginally to \$27.15 bn in December

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's exports grew marginally to \$27.15 billion in December while imports surged 7.56 per cent, increasing the trade deficit to \$15.44

billion, official data showed on Friday.

Imports during the month were estimated at \$42.59 billion, with inbound shipments of gold rising sharply by 81.82 per cent to \$4.48 billion.

"The trade deficit for December 2020 was estimated at \$15.44 billion as against the deficit of \$12.49 billion in December 2019, which is an increase of 23.66 per cent," as per the government data.

Exports growth was in the negative territory in October and November.

The data revealed that exports of petroleum products contracted 35.35 per cent to \$2.34 billion in December,

while that of readymade garments shrank 15.05 per cent to \$1.19 billion. However, exports of electronic goods rose by 16.51 per cent to \$1.25 billion and of chemicals by 10.79 per cent to nearly \$2 billion.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is likely to contract in the range of 5-7.5 per cent this fiscal but will see a growth of 9 to 11 per cent in FY 2021-22, former chief economic adviser Arvind Virmani said on Friday. Addressing a virtual event organised by industry body PHDCCI, Virmani said

in the upcoming Budget, the government should come up with policies to accelerate India's economic growth. "In the post pandemic Budget, policy reforms (are) needed for accelerating India's economic growth..." he said adding that the economy is likely to contract to 5 per cent to 7.5 per cent in FY2020-21 and grow 9-11 per cent in the next fiscal," he said.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY50	14594.35	14617.45	14357.85	14433.70	-161.9
TATAMOTORS	246	264.65	242.6	261.6	16.5
BHARTIARTL	609.55	610.65	593.8	605.5	22.95
UPL	511.95	527.9	511.4	522.35	12.95
ITC	214.9	218.5	211.2	217.9	3.75
GRASIM	1015.10	1039.30	1001.60	1033.70	13.45
BAJAJ-AUTO	3588.00	3623.00	3541.00	3581.00	4.95
TATASTEEL	712	721.5	697.65	707	0.65
BAIFINANCE	4877.00	4927.00	4842.40	4877.05	-0.3
HDFCBANK	1469.10	1471.65	1445.00	1467.00	-1.75
AXISBANK	677.6	682.95	669.6	674.75	-1.25
HDFCLIFE	708.4	717	702.2	705.2	-1.7
INDUSINDBK	974	983	953.45	967.25	-2.45
SUNPHARMA	609	616.8	598.1	604	-3.05
JSWSTEEL	398	402.55	391.2	394.3	-2.1
TCS	3235.00	3274.00	3210.00	3229.95	-20.75
TITAN	1489.95	1509.00	1471.30	1478.50	-11.45
POWERGRID	203.95	205.75	202.5	203	-2.1
SBIN	306.8	310.9	301.3	303.95	-3.3
M&M	828	838	815.35	820.3	-9.6
RELIANCE	1960.60	1973.80	1920.05	1937.90	-22.7
KOTAKBANK	1894.20	1904.00	1854.05	1868.00	-24.65
BICHERMOT	2280.00	2302.00	2284.00	2288.00	-3.86
BAJAJFINSV	8754.80	8826.20	8610.00	8630.00	-117.35
IT	1376.70	1384.50	1345.05	1357.20	-19.4
NESTLEIND	18110.05	18249.00	17800.00	17855.00	-277.6
BRITANNIA	3680.00	3685.00	3571.00	3600.00	-59.45
IOC	103.35	103.9	100.5	101.5	-1.7
SBILIFE	925.15	929.8	903.4	909.8	-15.35
NTPC	102.5	103.6	99.9	100.5	-1.7
ADANIPOWER	536.8	541	524	528	-8.95
MARUTI	8157.15	8219.50	8000.05	8011.00	-138.45
DREDDY	5315.00	5315.00	5195.60	5212.00	-96.8
HDFC	2661.00	2688.45	2615.60	2635.00	-49.05
CIPLA	839	847.9	821	824.45	-16.45
HINDUNILVR	2392.50	2407.00	2342.80	2351.00	-47.55
INFY	1360.00	1364.45	1340.00	1343.40	-27.1
SHRECEM	2427.00	2484.70	2421.25	2431.50	-49.1
ICICIBANK	590	591	541.5	541.95	-11.35
HEROMOTOCO	3250.00	3270.85	3174.00	3199.00	-67.6
COALINDIA	146.8	147.6	142.35	143.55	-3.1
DIVISLAB	3760.00	3762.80	3633.00	3644.00	-8.07
ULTRACEMCO	5587.00	5656.75	5425.75	5447.00	-135.35
BPL	429.4	429.5	411.3	414.2	-12.3
ASIANPAINT	2660.90	2661.85	2580.55	2585.70	-78.2
HINDALCO	262	263.3	251.1	253.5	-7.9
ONGC	1025.25	1030.95	1001.18	1018	-3.25
GAIL	144.45	146.2	136.55	139.2	-4.8
WIPRO	454.75	459.4	436.8	437.8	-16.55
HCLTECH	1047.65	1052.85	984	989	-38.7
TECHM	1049.50	1062.80	1002.65	1011.00	-41.6

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	Change
TATAMOTORS	246.35	264.6	242.5	260.4	367.4
IDEA	12.35	13.8	12.3	13.62	3167.4
RELIANCE	1960	1973.15	1920.15	1937.6	5674.5
INFY	1370	1370	1341.75	1345.1	3573.05
SAIL	68.05	72.15	68.05	70.2	3688.05
HCLTECH	1046	1052	984.2	989.4	3698.55
BHARTIARTL	608.15	610	594.3	602.5	3673.05
TATASTEEL	710	721.45	698	705.55	3673.05
WIPRO	453	459.5	436.25	438.4	3673.05
SBIN	307.4	310.8	301.5	303.8	3673.05
TCS	3244.35	3273.85	3210.1	3233.6	3673.05
INDUSTALSTEL	295.7	303.9	293.3	299.1	3673.05
ITC	215	218.5	211.3	217.9	3673.05
BANFINANCE	376.75	377.85	362.1	368.5	3673.05
DECFIRSTB	46.35	49.5	45.8	48.45	3673.05
GAIL	144.3	146.2	136.6	138.5	3673.05
KOTAKBANK	1892.85	1904.3	1854	1863.6	3673.05
UPL	510.25	522.75	509.25	522.6	3673.05
BAIFINANCE	4879.9	5075	4843.1	4881.55	3673.05
ZEELE	228.5	233.45	221.6	224.85	3673.05
TATAELXSI	2458	2529	2285	2367.65	3673.05
PNB	37	37.5	35.5	35.95	3673.05
VEDL	176.3	178.9	173.4	175.65	3673.05
INDUSINDBK	972.5	983.3	953.8	966.8	3673.05
HDFCBANK	1474	1474	1445.5	1466.35	3673.05
ICICIBANK	550.75	551.1	541.85	542.8	3673.05
MUTHOOTFIN	1255.1	1256	1193.05	1203.1	3673.05
HDFC	2667	2687.95	2616.35	2631.95	3673.05
CANBK	143.2	144.95	135.4	137.35	3673.05
SUNPHARMA	610.8	616.5	598.05	604	3673.05
HINDUNILVR	2398	2406	2342.25	2351.9	3673.05
BAJAJFINSV	8817.95	8820	8614	8631.9	3673.05
TATAMETALI	755	866.25	753.2	766.15	3673.05
SATRAPOWER	86.4	87.95	84.35	85.5	3673.05
SRTANSFIN	1215	1251.95	1190.9	1203.9	3673.05
DLF	280.1	286.75	274.9	279.4	3673.05
KFNINDIA	1836.15	1836.7	1823	1829.15	3673.05
BANKBARODA	76.5	77.8	72.9	75.2	3673.05
PEL	1593	1640.5	1563.65	1624.45	3673.05
RLT	1378	1384.8	1345	1354.8	3673.05
IRUBHSGFIN	254	259.15	251.25	253.85	3673.05
AXISBANK	676.3	682.65	669.7	674.9	3673.05
DIVISLAB	3750	3760	3626.3	3647.2	3673.05
PVR	1435	1485	1428.8	1473.4	3673.05
TECHM	1052.5	1062.85	1003	1007.1	3673.05
DIXON	14721.45	15600	14721.45	14891.6	3673.05
MRF	89310	89896.1	86404.8	87563.1	3673.05
PIDLITIND	1789	1793.05	1743	1749.1	3673.05
MARUTI	8150	8219.75	8000	8021.2	3673.05
SUZLON	6.14	6.78	6.14	6.78	3673.05
NAM-INDIA	313.9	341.2	312.3	323.3	3673.05
ANUPHARMA	957.85	957.85	924.35	936.3	3673.05
BHEL	40.2	40.5	38.85	39.4	3673.05
TATAMTRDVR	97.2	104.4	96.35	101.6	3673.05
HFLCL	33.95	34.75	30.4	31.85	3673.05
ASHOKLEY	119.05	121.5	117.3	119.5	3673.05
ASIANPAINT	2619.9	2663.9	2581.35	2590	3673.05
APOLLOHOSP	255.85	261.45	2510.85	2591.55	3673.05
L&T	107.7	108.6	103.7	105.1	3673.05
HINDALCO	262	263.45	251.5	25	

Capitol rioters included highly trained ex-military and cops

Washington: As President Donald Trump's supporters massed outside the Capitol last week and sang the national anthem, a line of men wearing olive-drab helmets and body armor trudged purposefully up the marble stairs in a single-file line, each man holding the jacket collar of the one ahead.

The formation, known as "Ranger File," is standard operating procedure for a combat team that is "stacking up" to breach a building — instantly recognizable to any U.S. Soldier or Marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a chilling sign that many at the vanguard of the mob that stormed the seat of American democracy either had military training or were trained by those who did.

An Associated Press review of public records, social media

posts and videos shows at least 21 current or former members of the U.S. Military or law enforcement have been identified as being at or near the Capitol riot, with more than a dozen others under investigation but not yet named. In many cases, those who stormed the Capitol appeared to employ tactics, body armor and technology such as two-way radio headsets that were similar to those of the very police they were confronting.

Experts in homegrown extremism have warned for years about efforts by far-right militants and white-supremacist groups to radicalize and recruit people with military and law enforcement training, and they say the Jan. 6 insurrection that left five people dead saw some of their worst fears realized.

"ISIS and al-Qaida would

drool over having someone with the training and experience of a U.S. Military officer," said Michael German, a former FBI agent and fellow with the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. "These people have training and capabilities that far exceed what any foreign terrorist group can do. Foreign terrorist groups don't have any members who have badges." Among the most prominent to emerge is a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and decorated combat veteran from Texas who was arrested after he was photographed wearing a helmet and body armor on the floor of the Senate, holding a pair of zip-tie handcuffs. Another Air Force veteran from San Diego was shot and killed by a Capitol Police officer as she tried to leap through a barricade near the House chamber. **AP**

Amid cacophony since Capitol siege, key officer stays silent

Washington: In the week since a mob laid siege to the U.S. Capitol, the House has impeached President Donald Trump.

Dozens of people have been arrested nationwide over participation in the riots. Politicians and business leaders are loudly condemning the violence.

Twitter and other social media sites have banned Trump and thousands of other accounts.

Yet amid all the noise, a Capitol Police officer hailed as a hero for confronting the insurrectionists and leading them away from Senate chambers has remained silent.

Officer Eugene Goodman isn't saying whether he thinks he saved the Senate, as many of the millions

who've viewed the video believe.

In fact, Goodman isn't saying anything at all publicly — not to reporters, not on social media. And he's asked the force's union, bosses, family and friends to help him maintain his privacy and not publicly discuss the events of January 6.

But the video speaks volumes.

Goodman, a Black man facing an overwhelmingly white mob, is the only officer seen for a full minute of the footage, shot by reporter Igor Bobic of HuffPost.

Goodman stands in front of the rioters, walks backward until he reaches a collapsible baton lying on the floor, and picks it up.

"Back up ... Back it up!" he yells, keeping his eyes on the mob. **AP**

More than 100 individuals arrested for Capitol Hill riots, says FBI

Washington: US security agencies have arrested more than 100 individuals for their criminal activities in last week's siege of the Capitol and are monitoring "an extensive amount of concerning online chatter" ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20, FBI Director Christopher Wray said.

The violence on January 6 by outgoing President Donald Trump's supporters temporarily halted the counting of Electoral College votes and resulted in the deaths of five individuals, including a police officer.

"We and our partners have already arrested more than 100 individuals for their criminal activities in last week's siege of the Capitol and continue to pursue countless other related investigations," Wray said during a meeting with Vice President Mike Pence.

"And those help not only prevent those

individuals from any effort to repeat that kind of activity but also should serve as a very stern warning to anybody else who might be inclined to try to engage in that activity," he said.

Wray also said that law enforcement was aware of and monitoring "an extensive amount of concerning online chatter" ahead of President-elect Biden's inauguration next week, but added that authorities were having to sift through "what's aspirational versus what's intentional."

The FBI, he said, is looking at individuals who may have an eye toward repeating that same kind of violence that was seen at the Capitol Hill last week.

"I mean, from January 6 alone, we've already identified over 200 suspects. So we know who you are, if you're out there, and FBI agents are coming to find you," he said. **PTI**

Rare sedition charge gains interest after Capitol attack

New York: A Civil War-era sedition law being dusted off for potential use in the mob attack on the US Capitol was last successfully deployed a quarter-century ago in the prosecution of Islamic militants who plotted to bomb New York City landmarks.

An Egyptian cleric, Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, and nine followers were convicted in 1995 of seditious conspiracy and other charges in a plot to blow up the United Nations, the FBI's building, and two tunnels and a bridge linking New York and New Jersey.

Applications of the law making it a crime to conspire to overthrow or forcefully destroy the government of the United States have been scant. But its use is being considered against the mob that killed a police officer and rampaged through the

US Capitol last week. Michael Sherwin, acting US attorney for DC, has said "all options are on the table," including sedition charges, against the Capitol invaders. **AP**

GOP senators in spotlight as 2nd impeachment trial looms

Washington: For a second time, Republican senators face the choice of whether to convict President Donald Trump in an impeachment trial. While only one GOP senator, Utah's Mitt Romney, voted to convict Trump last year, that number could increase as lawmakers consider whether to punish Trump for his role in inciting a deadly insurrection at the Capitol.

Whatever they decide, Trump is likely to be gone from the White House when the verdict comes in. An impeachment trial is likely to start next week,

as early as Inauguration Day, raising the specter of the Senate trying the previous president even as it moves to confirm the incoming president's Cabinet.

GOP leader Mitch McConnell, who says he's undecided, is one of several key senators to watch, along with Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, who is set to take the Senate reins as his party reclaims the Senate majority.

Others to watch include GOP senators up for reelection in 2022 and several Republicans who have publicly backed impeachment. **AP**

Biden announces \$1.9 trillion Covid stimulus plan to revive US economy

Washington: US President-elect Joe Biden has announced a USD 1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package to tackle the economic fallout from the pandemic, including direct financial aid to average Americans, support to businesses and to provide a boost to the national vaccination programme.

The relief package, announced on Thursday, includes USD 415 billion focused on combating the COVID-19 pandemic, over USD 1 trillion in direct aid to individuals and families and USD 440 billion in assistance to businesses.

It includes USD 1,400 in additional stimulus cheques to Americans, an extension for key unemployment programmes from mid-March to the end of September and an increase in weekly additional unemployment assistance from USD 300 to USD 400 and increasing the federal minimum wage to USD 15 an hour over time.

Biden's proposal also sets aside USD 20 billion for a national vaccination programme and USD 50 billion to scale up coronavirus testing.

"It's not hard to see that we are in the middle of a once-in-several generation economic crisis within a once-in-several generation public health crisis. A crisis of deep human suffering in plain sight. And there is no time to wait," Biden, who is set to be sworn in as the 46th President of the US on January 20, said in a televised address from his hometown, Wilmington in Delaware.

"We have to act and act now. This is what the economists are telling us. More importantly, it is what the values we hold in our hearts as Americans are telling us. A growing chorus of top economists agree that, in this moment of crisis, with interest rates at historic lows, we cannot afford inaction," he said. **PTI**

Indonesian divers find parts of crashed plane's black box

Jakarta: Divers found parts of the cockpit voice recorder on Friday as more personnel joined the search for wreckage and victims from an Indonesian plane that crashed last weekend in the Java Sea with 62 people on board.

The aerial search for the crashed Sriwijaya Air jet was being expanded as well, said National Search and Rescue Agency mission coordinator Rasman, who uses one name.

More than 4,000 search and rescue personnel are supported by 14 airplanes, 62 ships and 21 inflatable boats. They are using an underwater metal detector and remotely operated vehicle to search for human remains, the cockpit voice recorder and more wreckage. **AP**

Biden picks familiar faces for top roles at FEMA, CIA

Washington: President-elect Joe Biden is nominating New York emergency department commissioner Deanne Criswell to serve as the Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator and has tapped former CIA deputy director David Cohen to return to the agency in the same role he served during the Obama administration.

The picks, along with a trio of other new nominations confirmed to The Associated Press by the Biden team, come as the president-elect is putting a premium on experience, and perhaps familiarity, as he looks to fill out top positions at federal agencies with less than a week to go before his inauguration.

Criswell, who also spent more than five years in top posts at FEMA during the Obama administration, is the first woman nominated to head the agency, whose primary responsibility is to coordinate responses to major disasters inside the United States that require federal attention. Nancy Ward served as the agency's acting administrator in the early months of the Obama administration before his pick, Craig Fugate, could be confirmed.

Cohen, who was deputy CIA director from 2015 to 2017, has traveled the world for years tracking money flowing to terror groups, such as the Islamic State group, and other bad actors on the international stage. **AP**

North Korea holds huge military parade as Kim vows nuclear might

Seoul: North Korea rolled out developmental ballistic missiles designed to be launched from submarines and other military hardware in a parade that punctuated leader Kim Jong Un's defiant calls to expand his nuclear weapons programme.

State media said Kim took center stage in Thursday night's parade celebrating a major ruling party meeting where Kim vowed maximum efforts to bolster his nuclear and missile program that threatens Asian rivals and the American homeland to counter what he described as U.S. Hostility.

During the eight-day Workers' Party congress that ended Tuesday, Kim also revealed plans to salvage the nation's economy amid U.S.-led sanctions over his nuclear ambitions, pandemic-related border closures and natural disasters that wiped out crops. **AP**

Iran's Guard holds ballistic missile drill amid tensions

Tehran (Iran): Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard forces on Friday held a military exercise involving ballistic missiles and drones in the country's central desert, state TV reported, amid heightened tensions over Tehran's nuclear program and a U.S. Pressure campaign against the Islamic Republic. In the first phase of the drill Friday morning, the Guard's aerospace division launched several surface-to-surface ballistic missiles against simulated enemy bases, state TV reported. **AP**

At least 34 dead as Indonesia quake topples homes, buildings

Mamuju (Indonesia): A strong, shallow earthquake shook Indonesia's Sulawesi island just after midnight, toppling homes and buildings, triggering landslides and killing at least 34 people.

More than 600 people were injured during the magnitude 6.2 quake, which sent people fleeing their homes in the darkness on Friday. Authorities were still collecting information about the full scale of casualties and damage in the affected areas.

There were reports of many people trapped in the rubble of col-

At least 34 dead as Indonesia quake topples homes, buildings

lapsed homes and buildings.

In a video released by the National Disaster Mitigation Agency, a girl stuck in the wreckage of a house cried out for help and said she heard the sound of other family members also trapped. "Please help me, it hurts," the girl told rescuers, who replied that they desperately wanted to help her.

The rescuers said an excavator was needed to save the girl and others trapped in collapsed buildings. Other images showed a severed bridge and damaged and flattened houses. TV stations report-

ed the earthquake damaged part of a hospital and patients were moved to an emergency tent outside.

Another video showed a father crying, asking for help to save his children buried under their toppled house.

"They are trapped inside, please help," he cried. Thousands of displaced people were evacuated to temporary shelters.

The quake was centred 36 kilometres (22 miles) south of West Sulawesi province Mamuju district, at a depth of 18 kilometres (11 miles), the US Geological Survey said.

Nepal approves AstraZeneca's India-made Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use

Kathmandu: Nepal has granted emergency approval for AstraZeneca's India-made Covishield vaccine against the novel coronavirus that has claimed nearly 1,950 lives in the country. The decision to grant the approval for the vaccine was taken on Friday, Nepal's Department of Drug Administration (DDA) said in a statement. "Conditional permission has been granted for emergency use authorisation of Covishield vaccine against COVID-19 in Nepal," the statement said. **PTI**

Nepal approves AstraZeneca's India-made Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use

malwares to illegally capture personal data of unsuspecting people for illegitimate purposes. They also created mega social media influencers in a clandestine manner, by promising cash incentive for 'Follows' and 'Likes', on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The origin and ownership of majority of these Facebook, YouTube and Instagram accounts is unknown.

"These profiles can be used in future by external elements to manipulate and influence Indian users who follow these accounts," Roy added.

The DCP advised: "Never download and install any app through links sent over WhatsApp with promises of quick money. These apps are not verified and listed by genuine app store/Play Store and may undertake malicious activities. If any such app has been downloaded, the same may be got uninstalled at the earliest." **PTI**

FROM PAGE 1

FARMERS-GOVT TALKS INCONCLUSIVE AGAIN

He further said the Government is hopeful of discussions reaching some decisive stage at the tenth round of talks on January 19.

Tomar said he had no problem with the farmers preferring to continue talks with the Government even as the Supreme Court has appointed a panel. "Unions want to continue the dialogue with the Government and we have no problem with that. The SC-appointed panel will also work for the welfare of farmers," he said.

The Minister also said the Government will present its side before the committee panel when invited.

According to sources, Tomar told the farmers during the meeting that while the Government has accepted most of their demands, it is the farmers who are stuck and are not moving ahead to break the deadlock between the two over farm laws.

Tomar said, "I did not want to say it but the farmers have been telling media persons that they are firm on farm laws but we have accepted most of your demands but the farmers are stuck on their stand. Farmers are not even taking a step forward."

Farmer leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan said the unions urged the Government to repeal the three laws, but the Centre was unwilling to do so. After the meeting, Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait said farmers have made it clear that they would not talk to the Supreme Court's appointed committee and will talk to Government only. Farmer leader Darshan Pal said there was a good discussion on all three laws. "There is a possibility of some resolution. We are positive," he added.

Farmers unions said they are committed to continuing holding direct talks to resolve the over-one-month-long deadlock over three agri laws, even as a committee has been formed by the Supreme Court to resolve the deadlock. At the meeting, both the government and farmers' unions reaffirmed their commitment to continue with the direct dialogue process.

On the direct talks between the Government and farmers continuing despite the Supreme Court appointing a panel, Tomar said everyone is fully committed to the apex court and the government will also present its side before the committee panel when invited. "Unions want to continue the dialogue with the Government and we have no problem with that. The SC-appointed panel will also work for the welfare of farmers," he said. The Minister said solution can emerge from the Government-farmers talks as well as from the SC-appointed panel's deliberations.

Besides Tomar, Railways, Commerce and Food Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash were part of the Government side talking with representatives of

around 40 farmer unions at the Vigyan Bhawan

TMC REBEL MP SHATABDI TO FLY TO DELHI TO MEET SHAH TODAY

Former party MP and spokesperson Kunal Ghosh met her for more than two hours at her residence.

"It was a casual meeting though we talked some politics," Ghosh said adding she might go to Delhi but I am not sure about that."

Shatabdi Roy episode apart, there is more to the ongoing battle of attrition between Trinamool Congress and challenger BJP. North Bengal Development Minister Gautam Deb too is now speaking in a dissenting voice about the state of affairs in his party.

And he is joined by another rebel Minister Rajib Banerjee who has not attended Cabinet meeting on occasions consecutively. Banerjee, a powerful Minister, has already said that he will give some live performance on the Facebook on Saturday noon, incidentally when Roy will take her "decision."

The TMC is already tormented by a number of desertions that started from Ministers Suvendu Adhikari, Laxmi Ratan Shukla, MP Sunil Mandal MLAs Mihir Goswami, Silbhadra Dutta and others.

PREZ DONATES ₹5L FOR RAM TEMPLE

The trust estimates the total cost of constructing the temple complex at Ayodhya will be about Rs 1,100 crore, including about Rs 300-400 crore to be spent on the temple itself.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also handed over a cheque of Rs 1 lakh to VHP as a contribution to the construction of Ram temple. Former Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi also led a fund drive cause in Patna.

J&K CALM BUT CAN BURST WITH RAGE ANY TIME: N COMMAND

Referring to the situation in the Eastern Ladakh sector, Lt-Gen Joshi said the situation on ground zero has been further complicated by vagaries of weather and terrain.

"The Indian Army has displayed immense grit and determination to match the Chinese belligerence and give them a befitting reply. The Army Commander said that we at the Northern Command are now perched at a position of operational advantage and are negotiating with the PLA from a position of equivalence," he said.

Punjab CM writes to PM, seeks free Covid jab for poor

Chandigarh: Even as he prepared to kickstart the process of vaccination of 1.74 lakh health workers, with 40,000 to be covered every day over the next five days in the first phase, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking free vaccine delivery to the poor population of the state.

The Chief Minister, while acknowledging the receipt of 204,500 doses of Covishield vaccine, thanked the Prime Minister for making it available on priority to the healthcare workers of the state and Central governments in Punjab.

At the same time, he earnestly requested the Prime Minister "to consider providing free vaccine to the poor population with a view to lessen the disease burden and also ensuring a check on the further spread of transmission thereby allowing more economic activity". Referring to reports citing some Central government sources that, apart from the healthcare workers and frontline workers, the remaining population may not be provided free vaccine, Amarinder Singh pointed out in his letter that "the people of the state have gone through a very difficult time due to Covid wherein economic activities have nosedived and the economy has still not recovered from this shock".

"It would be difficult for the poorer sections of society to pay for the vaccination," he said.

The Chief Minister said in his letter that all steps are in place to ensure vaccination of healthcare workers on priority, with frontline workers to follow in the next phase.

The state has adequate capacity for storing as well as transportation of the vaccine, he wrote, adding that sufficient number of vaccination sites have been identified and all logistics tied up.

Adequate number of vaccinators have been identified, and trained and sufficient number of teams have been mobilised and trained to manage the vaccination sessions.

Pointing out that "the Covid has been an unparalleled disaster in living memory, and heavy expenditure had to be incurred in our Covid response," the Chief Minister noted that his government had already requested the Centre that the accumulated balances with the state in the state disaster relief fund may be permitted to be used as necessary for Covid response. **IAN S**

Malware and fraud syndicate busted, 2 Chinese among 12 held

New Delhi: The Delhi Police's Cyber Cell has busted a transnational malware and fraud syndicate, cheating unsuspecting people with offers of lucrative returns on an online multi-level marketing campaign, and arrested 12 including two Chinese and a Tibetan national, police said on Friday.

Police said that the accused were installing malwares in devices of people in the garb of an MLM app.

In a series of raids that started on January 13, a total of 12 persons have been arrested, including two women Chinese nationals -- Chaohong Deng Daoyong, 27, and Wu Jiashi, 54.

Around 40,000 confirmed victims have been identified who have been cheated of crores in 2 months. An amount of Rs 4.75 crore of cheated money has been blocked in various accounts and more than Rs 25 lakh recovered in cash from arrested Chinese nationals.

"The malicious app was also making millions of Indian users follow thousands of social media accounts of unknown origin and ownership, with huge potential of future misuse of this following by a foreign entity," DCP, Crime Crime, Anshay Roy said.

The arrested Indian accused have disclosed that two Chinese nationals -- Yangyang Zhang and Bao Peng -- are the main kingpins of this huge criminal conspiracy to cheat and defraud Indian citizens and hack into their devices through malicious mobile apps.

These two are likely to be operating from a foreign location outside India. They launched this 'online scheme' to induce and cheat maximum number of people by promising lucrative returns based on multi-level marketing model.

In the garb of this scheme, they designed and circulated

malwares to illegally capture personal data of unsuspecting people for illegitimate purposes. They also created mega social media influencers in a clandestine manner, by promising cash incentive for 'Follows' and 'Likes', on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The origin and ownership of majority of these Facebook, YouTube and Instagram accounts is unknown.

"These profiles can be used in future by external elements to manipulate and influence Indian users who follow these accounts," Roy added.

The DCP advised: "Never download and install any app through links sent over WhatsApp with promises of quick money. These apps are not verified and listed by genuine app store/Play Store and may undertake malicious activities. If any such app has been downloaded, the same may be got uninstalled at the earliest." **PTI**

Kid among three killed in Delhi fire at scrap shop

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three people, including a child, were killed in a fire at a scrap shop in west Delhi's Kirti Nagar area, police said on Friday. The blaze was reported around 10:50 pm on Thursday and seven fire tenders were rushed to the spot, according to the fire department.

Small rooms built on top of the shop were also engulfed by the fire, it said, adding that some

people living there suffered injuries. Three bodies were recovered after the fire was doused. Two of the victims were in their 20s and the third was a child below the age of 10 years, a senior police officer said.

One of the deceased has been identified as 20-year-old Rohit, a resident of Kamla Nehru Camp in Kirti Nagar.

Police said that initial probe shows that Rohit got trapped in the flames when he attempted to

douse the fire and his body was found in a drain.

The scrap shop is owned by 50-year-old Tony Mehto, who is at large after the incident, they said. The injured have been admitted to a hospital, the police officer said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Deepak Purohit said it is suspected that a short-circuit could have led to the fire, but the exact cause will be known after investigation is completed.

SHORT CIRCUITS



RANDEEP HOODA

Portraying a super cop like Avinash Mishra in my debut web series *Inspector Avinash* is exciting as well as challenging at the same time. I am thrilled to start the year with this series, a cop-thriller based on real events. I am looking forward to present a thorough entertainer to the audience with this one.



MAANVI GAGROO

Third season of web series *Four More Shots Please* is feeling extremely positive. After receiving so much love for season two, it almost feels like we owe this season to our fans. Apart from that, having lived through lockdown and not seen each other for so long, there's been a beautiful sense of togetherness that's crept in.



YASH TONK

It feels great to be back shooting for a television show again. Set in the traumatic backdrop of pre-Partition, *Kyun Utthe Dil Chod Aaye* narrates the story of three young women who dared to dream the impossible in the 1940s. My character Lala Brij Kishore is an innocent yet aggressive person, who is at odds with everyone.



SIDHARRTH SIPANI

If you are disciplined with your work, everything eventually falls in place and you are happier. You need to follow your passion and do whatever makes you happy. Everything gets easier with time. There are days when your body gives up, you have sleepless nights but you need to keep going on. Don't ever give up, that is the only way.

SELENA GOMEZ

My Spanish single titled *De Una Vez* is the beginning of something I've wanted to explore for long. I hope you love it as much as I do.



CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES



THE DEEP DIVE

Marine biologist NAYANTARA JAIN feels that shows like *Blue Planet Revisited* are needed to dispel myths around animals and help people explore marine life. By TEAM VIVA

The increasingly unsustainable use of marine resources for economic activities, fishing, boating, tourism etc, has hurt the health of our oceans, seas and coasts. However, the wake of Coronavirus and the lockdown has turned out to be an opportunity to revive the marine ecosystem. To throw light on the varied and vast marine ecology, Sony BBC Earth has brought a show called *Blue Planet Revisited*. The two-part series celebrates marine life from all corners of the globe, exploring the challenges facing the ecosystems and wildlife in two key locations — Australia's Great Barrier Reef and the Bahamas. As the breeding season gets underway, the series focusses on the action following whales and their calves, turtles and their hatchlings and the scientists who know our oceans best. It is packed with insight and spectacle. Incredible shark dives in the Bahamas. The underwater dawn chorus of the Great Barrier Reef, home to 600 different kinds of coral and more than 1500 species of fish.

To build relevance around the show through her expertise, the channel reached out and on-boarded Nayantara Jain, Executive Director of Reef Watch Marine Conservation — one of India's oldest and only organisations committed to protecting India's coasts and oceans. Excerpts:

Can you tell us about your journey as a marine biologist and what led to resource marine conservation India?

I learned how to scuba dive when I was 16. I think a lot of what drove me towards learning diving was the incredible nature documentaries that I've watched before, like the original *Blue Planet* and *Oceans* and all the BBC documentaries, narrated by Sir David Attenborough. Watching them really inspired me to learn how to dive. And once I started diving, because I was very passionate about it that I became a scuba diving instructor. After working as a scuba instructor for a few years, I realised how our life on lands were impacting the ocean and especially coral reef ecosystems. That's when I became very passionate about conservation, and that's what led me to study marine biology and then work with Reef Watch.



Tell us about the various initiatives undertaken by Reef Watch Marine Conservation India?

We have two sort of key field placements. One is in the Andaman Islands, and the other on the coast of Karnataka, to the West coast of India. In the Andaman, we work a lot with coral reef restoration and conservation. So, we have various ongoing projects where we are looking at different ways to regrow and repair the damaged reef areas. In another mainland, on the West coast, the work that we're doing is to do with injured and stranded marine megafauna, like sea turtles, dolphins and even whales. We have a lot of them on our ports, even on the mainland, and a lot of them often get stranded on land, either dead or sometimes alive and injured. So, we have a project where we look after the injured or ill megafauna that come up to our coast and study the ones that was

wash up dead.

What is your take on the show *Blue Planet Revisited*? Do you think shows like these help people understand oceans and its life better?

Yes, and this is one of the main reasons I am associated with the channel, to talk about this show, because my own journey began very much with shows like these. A lot of what I knew before I did my masters on the subject, a lot of what I knew about the ocean and the animals that live in it came from shows like this. Such shows also help dispel a lot of myths and bring things into the right perspective for a lot of people. One of the episodes of the show is about sharks. I believe they are one of the most misunderstood animals on our planet today... so many people are terrified of sharks. I was just telling somebody earlier that when I worked as a full time

instructor, the question I was asked most frequently was, 'are there sharks in these waters and are they going to attack me?'

Shows like this and nature documentaries teach people a lot about these animals. They teach them which animals are dangerous and which ones are not. They create a lot of excitement and curiosity, leading to more people exploring these spaces in real life. It's wonderful to have such shows. One of my greatest dreams is to make a documentary about India's coast specifically.

Can you tell us about some of the astonishing encounters in your journey underwater? What keeps you going in this field?

One of my most memorable diving experience ever, was when I got to do something very similar to what they have shown on this show about the sharks in the Bahamas. A few years ago I got to dive in Galapagos Islands, which is another sort of shark sanctuary we have on our planet today. So, I got to dive with hundreds of different species of sharks. And, I could see these really powerful, magnificent beings swimming around me — I can never forget that moment in my life. So, it was really cool to see something similar like that on a particular episode of the show.

What is the future of our islands

and marine world, especially in India?

I've been working as a diver and then as a conservationist for the past 10 years. Over the years, I have seen a lot of damage to our oceans. Areas that boasted of a lot of sharks are completely fished out of it now. I've seen a lot of coral reefs being degraded over the years. There's an increasing amount of litter and plastics on our coastline and waters. It is very concerning, but the silver lining here is that I've seen a surge of young children concerned about the environment. They get in touch with me, wanting to be marine biologists or wanting to come and volunteer with the organisation or know how they can organise a beach clean-up in their city. Indians are coming in to learn how to dive and surf and just interact with the ocean more. This is really encouraging. Right now, the interest of youth in all of this is rising and if more people connect with the ocean and want to preserve it, things can change for good. We still have coral reefs in the Andaman. We still have sharks in our ocean, we still have whales in the sea, and we can have sea turtles along the coastline. So, this is really the time for us to act. If we as a society realise the importance of a healthy ocean and come together we can bring about a change.

(The show airs on January 23, 9 pm on Sony BBC Earth.)

STUDIO TALK 30 MINUTES



THE GREY STORY

The investigative documentary, *What Killed Maradona?*, is a celebration of the astonishing talent of a flawed football icon and the influences that led to his demise

Genius, legend, addict. A lifetime of highs and lows. For decades it was drugs that kept him playing but wrecked his life off the pitch. Diego Maradona rose from street urchin to become a footballing god. But he was never to see out his later years, dying at just 60 years old. The cause of death was given as a heart failure, but what really killed Maradona?

After his untimely death, *What Killed Maradona?* pieces together the extraordinary life of a man who was addicted to drugs off the pitch, but who also relied on a cocktail of pharmaceuticals to maintain his world-beating performance on the pitch. It also reveals how this lethal lifestyle, that began when Maradona was just a child, eventually became the perfect prescription for his death.

Maradona's story is one of genius and trauma, from the humblest of beginnings in a Buenos Aires shanty town where he would play football with his friends for hours on end, to becoming a football superstar known and feted around the world.

But his poverty-stricken childhood left him at a disadvantage and despite his prodigious talent on the pitch throughout his junior playing career, Maradona received treatments to build up his physique, which had been hampered due to his impoverished background. His younger years were filled with constant medical intervention.

As a foretaste of the controversy that would later engulf his life, Maradona's infamous 'hand of God' goal came against England, as he led his country to victory at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, as well as to a place in the final, four years later. He broke the world transfer record joining Italian club Napoli for £6.9m but as Maradona's income rose, so did the pressure to support a growing number of dependents off the pitch, as well as the intense fame and adulation of his fans. He started to show the signs of addiction to alcohol and cocaine, as well as prescription medicines.

A preliminary autopsy, widely reported by Argentine

media, reveals pulmonary oedema caused by heart failure, but the lifetime of pressure, addiction and abuse of his body have all helped lead him there.

Issac John, Digital Head, APAC - Discovery, said, "It's been our constant endeavour to make the sports fan experience immersive sports stories that showcase both, the hardships and glories of being at the pinnacle as well as the not-so-often talked about aspects of stardom. The show is one of those stories that presents the greyer shades of a legend whose game inspired the dreams of many of today's superstars in the world's favourite sport of football."

With testimonies from those who knew him best including Jon Smith football's original 'super-agent', who represented Maradona; Fernando Signorini Maradona's former trainer, and Giuseppe Bruscolotti, former captain of Napoli and teammate of Maradona, the show reveals how this lifestyle led to his untimely demise.

(The show is streaming on discovery+.)

CELEB TALK 15 MINUTES

My journey has been special: Kiara

Actor Kiara Advani made her Bollywood debut in 2014 with *Fugly*, which was a no-show at the box office. However, she was later seen in hits such as *M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story*, *Lust Stories*, *Kabir Singh* and *Good Newwz*. The actor cannot name a particular role as gamechanger in her career, but credits all her work for the success she enjoys today.

"For me, I think every film mattered, right from my first because that is what gave me my first step into the film industry. People also say *Kabir Singh* and *Lust Stories* but every film has been a turning point in my life. So, I can't think of just one film, my entire journey has been special," Kiara said.

The actor, whose latest release is *Indoo Ki Jawaani*, has a string of releases coming up. She will be seen in the Sidharrth Malhotra-starrer *Shershaah*, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 with Kartik Aaryan and the star-studded *Jug Jug Jeeto*. —IANS



IMMERSIVE 45 MINUTES

Just keep going

Actor JAVICIA LESLIE talks about carrying the mantle as the new Batwoman, the importance of the character being a lesbian and having a conversation with her mother about her sexual orientation

When Javicia Leslie moved to Los Angeles, she frequently rode down the popular Sunset Boulevard to view the row of erected TV and film billboards for inspiration. As an aspiring actor, she often parked underneath her favourite ones to study before an audition.

For years, Leslie made this her routine in hopes of one day seeing her image on full display in Hollywood. Her dreams ultimately became reality when the 33-year-old actor — who starred on CBS's *God Friended Me* and Carl Weber's *The Family Business* on BET+ — recently saw a billboard of herself donning the black-and-red Batwoman suit.

Leslie will star as the caped crusader on CW's *Batwoman*, which premieres its second season on January 17. She succeeds Ruby Rose, becoming the franchise's first Black actress to portray the superhero, and will be featured as an avowed LGBTQ+ central character.

In *Batwoman*, Leslie plays the role of Ryan Wilder, who spent years as a drug runner while dodging Gotham police. Her character has lethal hand-combat skills but is viewed as a kindhearted person who lives in a van with a plant. In a recent interview, Leslie spoke about carrying the mantle as the new Batwoman, the importance of the character being a lesbian and having a conversation with her mother about her sexual orientation.

◆ **What compelled you to study for your roles under billboards?**

I needed that visual to remind myself of what the end goal was and what I really wanted. It just motivated me. It was fun. Sometimes, I'd study until I fell asleep. Like I had to wake up and drive back home.

◆ **So this is something you manifested?**
I feel like everything I'm living right now, I've spoken into existence. From the

very beginning to the detail. Even with *Batwoman*, I did an interview in May and was asked what role I wanted to do next, and I said, "I want to play a superhero." ... The following month, I got the audition. I didn't even know they were looking to cast a new Batwoman. So, I truly believe in manifestation.

◆ **What does being DC's first Black female lead superhero mean to you?**

I always just remind myself that my purpose isn't for me. My purpose is to empower other people. God brought me here for a reason. He put me in this position for a reason. With that, it's nothing to fear because I know this will empower someone to see a Black female superhero. You don't get to see it often. It's so epic. I grew up on Batman and Catwoman and the Joker and Penguin. Now, to see blackness in that, I think it's very inclusive and empowering.

◆ **What's the importance of this character to be a lesbian?**

It's important to have representation in general. Fans of DC represent everyone, whether it's about race, whether it's LGBTQ+. I think what I love so much about my show is that every character is really a great representation of every-

◆ **Before telling your mom about landing the Batwoman role, you informed her about your sexual orientation as a bisexual. How was that conversation?**

I never had a fear of talking to my mom about anything. It's to the point where I don't have to talk about a lot of things. She already gets it. She already knows. So when we had a conversation, she was like "I am your mother. There's nothing you can tell me that I didn't already know." She's my best friend, very supportive.

◆ **How did your character Ryan endure being homeless?**

That may seem like the bottom to some people, but that was the top of what she's been through. To even have her own van and take care of herself, that meant something to

her. She comes from foster care and abusive foster homes and people not caring for her. The one person that cared about her was murdered in front of her. I think what may seem like nothing to someone else is a lot to her. She holds onto and cherishes it.

◆ **How did your character's circumstances mold them?**

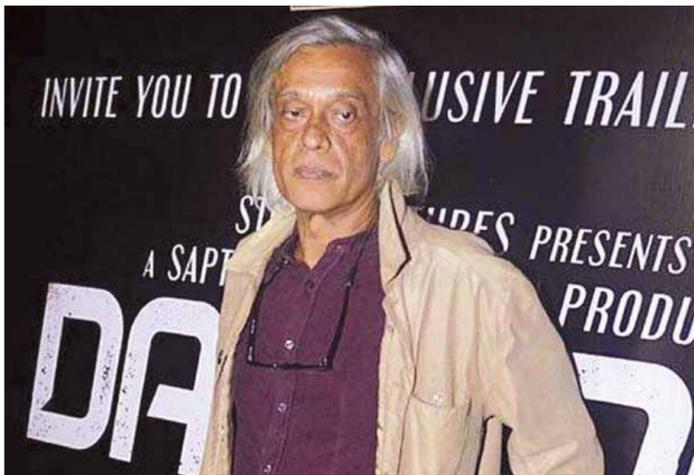
I think that if there is anything that roots the darkness in her, it's probably a little bit of revenge. The vengeance she has for the ones that killed her mother. That is enough. How can you truly fight for what's good if you can't forgive? How can you truly be on the right side if vengeance is what empowers you?

◆ **What do you want people to take away from your career so far?**

There's so many times where I could have said "This is hard" and walked away. But you must keep going. One of the things I live by is that if you follow your passion, you'll find your purpose. I think God puts passions in us for a reason. ... You must find your purpose in anything you want and speak it into existence. Then you need to have the work ethic to support it.



ENCOUNTER 15 MINUTES



Value it more

Filmmaker SUDHIR MISHRA feels that films these days are judged like political essays with no regard to the craft of storytelling

Filmmaker Sudhir Mishra feels films these days are judged like political essays with no regard to the craft of storytelling.

"There is a lack of political understanding yet everything is about politics. Films are judged like political essays. Cinema has no place. Craft has no place. What is happening?," Mishra tweeted on Friday.

"Cinema is, plucking an idea out of the air, about apparently nothing but then it becomes about so much more. About your life and mine. About your world and mine," he added.

Mishra entered Bollywood as a director with *Yeh Woh Manzil To Nahin* in 1987. He added strokes of diverse stories on the cinematic canvas, with *Hazaaron Khwaishain Aisi*, *Chameli*, *Inkaar*, *Khoya Khoya Chand* and *Calcutta Mail*,

over the years, besides the OTT-released film *Serious Men* and the web series *Hostages*.

His most recent project *Serious Men* was an adaptation of Manu Joseph's eponymous book. The film featured Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and narrated the story of a father who wants to create a bright future for his son.

Meanwhile, the filmmaker had shared that the pandemic has left an everlasting impact on his life. "I don't know this whole experience of the pandemic. I've lost a bit of my swag. When I saw myself terrified, holding my father in my arms and running towards an ICU, and then watching him die, that has done something. I don't know what exactly. It will show in my next (project)," he said earlier.

—IANS

DIALOGUE 30 MINUTES

Amit salutes soldiers on Army Day

Actor Amit Sadh, who plays Kargil war hero Major Deependra Singh Sengar in a forthcoming web series *Jeet Ki Zid*, offered his best wishes to the brave officers of the Indian Army on the occasion of Army Day on Friday.

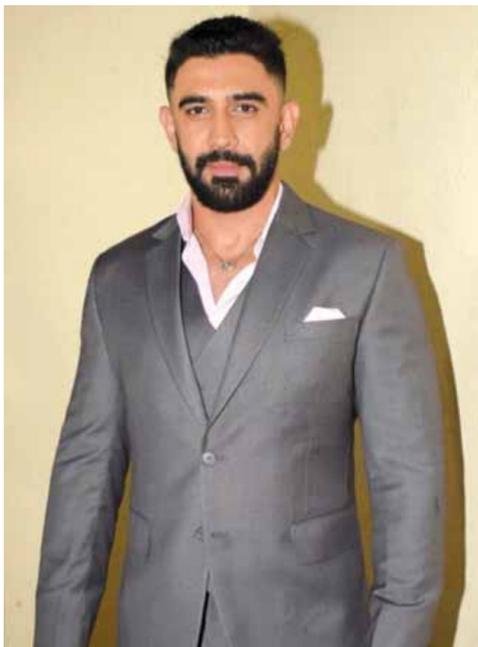
"Every Indian soldier is a shining example of valour and courage. They are the sole reason that every Indian citizen can sleep peacefully. There is nothing that can even come close to the selfless work our Indian Army does to protect us. I offer my best wishes and salute the brave officers of the Indian army. I feel honoured to have essayed the role of Major Deependra," said Amit.

The series, which also features Amrita Puri and Sushant Singh, is directed by Vishal Mangalorkar and produced by Boney Kapoor, Arunava Joy Sengupta and Akash Chawla.

The makers of the show got expert help from Special Forces consultants and mission choreographers Colonel Ashok Galoth and Major Arjun Galoth on the show.

"I am a part of a project which shows the dedication and sheer will of the Indian Army. I am glad that the makers reached out to us and took our suggestions to help create this show. It was indeed a fulfilling experience," said Colonel Ashok Galoth.

Major Galoth shared that Major Deependra's story is not



only an "inspiration for us, but for the entire world." He added, "We have helped the team in our own little way with the basics of our routine, but the actual credit goes to the ones

who thought of creating an entire web series on such an inspirational story."

(The series is slated to premiere on January 22 on Zee5.)

—IANS

Important to pick varied roles: Swara

Actor Swara Bhasker says picking roles that span across genres has always been important to her.

"Picking roles that span across genres and varied character graphs has always been important to me. Whether it was as the sultry Shanoo (*Rashhahi*), the amiable Beanie (*Bhaag Beanie Bhaag*) or now the freespirted Mausam in the horror comedy *Aapkey Kamrey Mein Koi Rehta Hai*, I've enjoyed portraying all," Swara said.

The actor will soon be seen in the horror comedy which also stars Sumeet Vyas, Naveen Kasturia, Amol Parashar and Ashish Verma.

"I think this show will hit the right notes of laughter and unexpected drama," Swara said about the series, the trailer of which released on Friday.

Her co-star Sumeet said, "Horror comedy is a genre that I've really come to enjoy — be it as an actor who is playing a role in the narrative or for that matter — even watching such stories. It was fun to work with such great artists for this project and I believe that the comedy of errors for these four friends and their newly acquired, unexpected roommate who is a ghost will make for a fun watch."

Naveen feels the "bite-sized series is a melange of fun, comedy, horror, and entertainment. In the midst of content that is heavy on crime and drama, this will leave you with goosebumps and a healthy dose of laughter."

The series shows the journey of four friends in their newly-rented apartment that is haunted. The show, directed by Gaurav Sinha, will release on MX Player on January 22.

—IANS



Inexperienced attack keeps Oz in check

Debutants Natarajan, Washington shine as Australia score 274/5 courtesy Labuschagne ton

PTI ■ BRISBANE

The incredible underdog fairytale of Thangarasu Natarajan got better with his twin strikes on debut headlining a commendable effort from an inexperienced Indian bowling attack, which reduced Australia to 274 for 5 despite a stylish hundred from Marnus Labuschagne on the opening day of the final Test here.

The Indian attack, with a collective experience of 3 Tests and 10 balls and 11 wickets in its kitty, was pitted against a batting lineup with 59 hundreds.

After 87 overs, the two Tamil Nadu rookies Natarajan (20-2-63-2) and Washington Sundar (2-4-63-1) could hold their heads high for a lion-hearted effort on a good batting pitch in the absence of the injured Ravichandran Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah.

If tall off-spinner Washington set up a nice little trap to get rid of Steve Smith (36 off 77 balls), Natarajan forced centurion Labuschagne (108 off 204 balls) and Matthew Wade (47 off 85 balls) to miscue their pullshots after a 113-run stand which threatened to put India in a spot.

At stumps, Tim Paine (38) and Cameron Green (28) had added 61 runs for the sixth wicket and the visitors would need a few quick wickets to keep the first innings total within a manageable range.

The distance between Palayampatti, a non-descript village in Tamil Nadu's Salem, to Australia's modern city Brisbane is 9035 km on a google map.

But add the hardships of a daily wage mother trying to put



Shardul Thakur hugs Washington Sundar after he dismisses Australian opener Marcus Harris on Day 1 of fourth Test at Gabba

food on table, being called for suspect action early in his career, not being privileged enough to get a paternity leave (his daughter is already three months old), it's a million miles emotionally that Team India's favourite Nattu has traversed.

Getting Labuschagne, who was on a rampage, with a short delivery ensured that Australia didn't finish the day with a score close to 350.

For someone, who was supposed to be a net bowler, India's Test Cap No 300, did well enough

on the first day despite not exactly being a natural. He also knows that he doesn't have the express pace to trouble batsmen (his average speed is 130 pph).

He bowled full during his first two spells and made the length shorter when the ball got old and that's how he induced Wade and Labuschagne to go for those pull shots.

Nobody would have blamed a Natarajan or a Shardul or "leader of the attack" Mohammed Siraj (19-8-51-1), all of whom toiled manfully

throughout their multiple spells in a battle of unequals.

The inexperience was palpable as Thakur (18-5-67-1) bowled a lot of full pitched deliveries which Labuschagne pounced on in the second and third sessions during an innings that had nine boundaries.

If all the injuries weren't enough, Navdeep Saini (7.5 overs) now seems to be in trouble as he has sustained a groin niggle moments after his skipper Ajinkya Rahane dropped a dolly at gully when Labuschagne was

on 37.

By far, Australia's most consistent batsman in the series, Labuschagne batted in two gears during the day.

In the first session, he faced 82 balls and sedately moved to 19 but in the next 113 balls, scored another 82 runs to reach his fifth hundred in 195 balls.

4th Test, Day 2
Live from 5:00am IST
SONY TEN 1, 3 & SIX

He trusted the bounce, hit some lovely drives and was also ready to pull anything that was short.

During his partnership with Smith, the former Australian skipper was the aggressor but Washington, a specialist batsman till 2016 and now a frontline off-spinner, with the help of his seniors — skipper Rahane and his deputy Rohit Sharma — laid a beautiful trap.

Washington had bowled three maiden overs prior to lunch and the fidgety Smith, who is always looking to get a move on, fell for the leg trap that was

Saini complains of groin pain



Brisbane: The injury-plagued Indian team took another hit on Friday when pacer Navdeep Saini was forced off the field during the fourth and final Test due to groin pain and taken for

scans. The 28-year-old Saini had bowled five balls of his eighth, and the innings 36th, over during the second session when he had to walk off the field because of the pain. With this, his further participation in the match, which began this morning, has been thrown into serious doubt.

"Navdeep Saini has complained of pain in his groin. He is currently being monitored by the BCCI medical team," read a short statement from the BCCI on the one-Test-old bowler's condition. "Navdeep Saini has now gone for scans," added a brief update that came after the initial note. PTI

set for him. Rohit stationed himself at short mid-wicket for a whip that Smith plays on the on-side.

They were banking on the extra bounce that they had seen

Washington generate with the white ball.

The plan worked as Smith flicked one straight into Rohit's hands just few minutes after the lunch.

Labuschagne disappointed at not getting 'big score'

PTI ■ BRISBANE

A fifth Test hundred in his kitty against a "very disciplined" bowling attack but Australia's Marnus Labuschagne was still a disappointed man on the opening day of the fourth Test here as the knock was not enough for him.

Australia ended the day 274/5, thanks largely to Labuschagne's 108 off 204 balls. The 26-year-old said he should have done more.

"...I think, I am definitely disappointed not going on and getting a really big score, which would have put us in a better position as a team," Labuschagne said at the virtual post-play press-conference.

"Any Test century, it doesn't matter who it is against or against what opposition, you want to make sure you are scoring hundreds and probably for me (it was) today it was disappointing that (I) did not

end up making that a really big hundred," he stressed.

However, he credited the Indian bowlers for being disciplined early on and hardly giving away any scoring opportunities.

"...Indian bowling attacks, they are very disciplined and doesn't matter who is bowling, they are very planned, they are very strategic and we saw that today with their bowling attack.

"They were disciplined early and did not give us many of those scoring opportunities in the first session," the right-handed batsman said.

Siraj abused by Gabba crowd, called grub

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj was targeted for abuse by a section of the crowd on the opening day of the fourth Test, a newspaper here reported, claiming that he was called a "grub" by some spectators.

The reported incident happened a few days after Siraj was racially abused by spectators at the Sydney Cricket Ground on the third and fourth day of the drawn third Test. That had led to an expulsion of six people from the stands and an unreserved apology from Cricket Australia to the visiting team.

On Friday, a report in the Sydney Morning Herald quoted a spectator as saying that a

section of the crowd at the Gabba targeted Siraj.

"The guys behind me have been calling — shouting — both Washington and Siraj grubs," a spectator named Kate was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

"It started targeted at Siraj and it was a chant similar to the SCG one (in which fans sung to the tune of Que Sera, Sera but substituted the lyrics with Que Shiraz, Shiraz).

"But this time it was Siraj. I suspect it's not a coincidence that it's Siraj being targeted post the SCG stuff."

According to the newspaper, at one point, a man in the crowd was heard yelling, "Siraj, give us a wave, give us a wave, give us a wave. Siraj, you bloody grub."



Injured Hanuma Vihari on Friday left for India after being ruled out of the ongoing fourth Test in Brisbane. Vihari has sustained a grade 2 injury during the final day of his match-saving 23 and will now require rest, followed by intense rehabilitation which rules him out of England series. BCCI/Twitter

Sundar ready to bowl 40-50 overs

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Washington Sundar, prior to his unexpected Test debut on Friday against Australia, had bowled over 285 overs in first-class cricket and after dismissing Steve Smith, the Tamil Nadu off-spinner is ready to bowl 50 in an innings if that's what the side wants of him.

India's T20 specialist off-spinner was asked to stay back by the team management after the white-ball series to help as a net bowler but injuries to key players, including senior pro Ravichandran Ashwin, landed him in a mouth-watering duel with Smith which he won hands down.

"I have always felt that my skills are very good with red ball. I have bowled a lot of overs in first class cricket and first division league in Chennai as well.



Washington Sundar celebrates after he dismisses Steve Smith

I was just waiting for this opportunity and last couple of months, we were here, I did get to bowl a lot of overs and improve upon my skills," the shy bowler said after first day's play.

But does he have the stamina to bowl long spells that a team expects from its spinners

considering that he hasn't played first-class cricket since 2017?

His answer is 'bring it on'. "Like any bowler, I love bowling a lot of overs. It's just so much fun to bowl a lot of overs. Give me 20, 30, 40 or 50 overs. We had some plans going for Steve Smith and (Marnus)

Labuschagne and I am very glad they worked. The first wicket definitely felt good."

Washington kept Smith quiet for two overs and in the 13th delivery got him caught at short mid-wicket.

Did Ashwin versus Smith set a template for him?

"We did have some plans for Smith and it's a different game altogether. Last game was different, conditions were different and I had to bowl good balls over and over again. It happened (the dismissal) and it's great."

The former India U-19 World Cupper feels the wicket was good for batting and it was great effort to reduce to the hosts to 274 for 5.

"There was a little bit of spongy bounce till lunch and the wicket was good and bowlers did a good job to restrict Australia to 5 for 274."

Arjun Tendulkar makes debut for Mumbai senior team

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Budding left-arm pacer Arjun Tendulkar, who is the son of iconic former batsman Sachin Tendulkar, made his Mumbai senior team debut on Friday in a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match against Haryana, which the hosts lost by eight wickets here.

In the Elite E League group clash played at the suburban BKC ground, Mumbai made 143 after opting to bat first, a target which Haryana overhauled in 17.4 overs.

Arjun had an off day with

the ball as he returned with rather unimpressive figures of 1/34 in the three overs that he bowled.

He dismissed Haryana opener Chaitanya Bishnoi (4) cheaply after he edged a delivery to wicket-keeper Aditya Tare to claim his maiden wicket for the Mumbai senior team.

Incidentally, his legendary father's last Ranji Trophy game was against Haryana back in 2013.

Arjun didn't get the chance to face a single delivery when Mumbai batted as the team was bundled out in

19.3 overs.

Haryana then rode on one-down Himanshu Rana's blazing unbeaten 75 off 53 balls to chase down the target with consummate ease.

The 21-year-old Arjun has now qualified for the IPL auctions, as he has made his debut for the Mumbai team.

Tendulkar junior was added to the Mumbai squad, along with another pacer Krutik Hanagavadi, by the Salil Ankola-led selection committee, after the BCCI permitted a total of 22 players to be selected.

Captain Root's 168* puts England ahead

AFF ■ GALLE

England captain Joe Root hit an unbeaten 168 as his side built up a lead of 185 over Sri Lanka on a rain-hit second day of the opening Test.

England were 320/4 when rain halted play in Galle. Root and Dan Lawrence, who scored 73 on his Test debut, built a 173-run partnership after the tourists resumed the day on 127/2.

Root, who is batting with Jos Buttler (7), hit his 18th Test ton and kept up the pressure on the home bowlers despite losing overnight partner Jonny Bairstow for 47 early in the day.

"I think the things could happen very quickly as the game moves forward, generally does here. It is really important that we make the most of this first innings lead that we have got now," Root told reporters.

"We will be really ruthless. I have spoken about this ahead of the series and make it count and put them under pressure. That way try and bat just once."

After a full opening day in the empty stadium in Galle, rain started falling just before the start of the second day and wiped out the final session.

Root started the day on 66 and passed 100 soon after lunch with a single off Dilruwan Perera. He raised his bat and hugged Lawrence. It was the star batsman's highest Test score in more than a year after going through 2020 without a century and said he felt "good" to make it count.

"Generally when I get a



hundred I make it really count," Root, who has a Test best of 254 in 98 Tests, said. "I have got a good record past 100. Tomorrow I will try to make another really big one and drive the game forward from there."

He added, "I felt I really got in a good mindset throughout this game so far. Will try and take that forward into the rest of this winter tour and beyond."

England will tour India for a full series including four Tests after the two matches in Sri Lanka as part of a hectic cricket calendar in 2021.

Arsenal remain in midtable after draw

AFF ■ LONDON

Mikel Arteta admitted Arsenal were suffering from fatigue after their recent revival ground to a halt in a scrappy 0-0 draw against Crystal Palace on Thursday.

Arteta's side had won their previous four matches in all competitions, but they were not fortunate enough to extend their unbeaten run to five games.

Palace were unable to convert several first half chances at the Emirates Stadium and, although Arsenal improved after the interval, they missed a chance to climb into the top half of the Premier League.

"I wanted to see a win and a few goals but we were fatigued. I cannot fault the spirit but it wasn't enough," Arteta said.

"We created a lot of situations against the low block but there was a period when we gave the ball away too much. We are playing a lot of games and you can see fatigue. Many players aren't fresh. We lacked the qual-

ity in the final third to win the game."

Arsenal sit in 11th place, eight points adrift of the Champions League places as they continue to pay the price for their worst start to a season since 1974-75.

Just before Christmas, Arsenal were only four points above the relegation zone, so their current position 12 points away from the bottom three affords Arteta some much-needed breathing space.

But this disjointed display underlined the attacking flaws that have stopped Arsenal building on last season's FA Cup triumph. Palace have only won one of their past eight matches in all competitions and are one point behind Arsenal in 13th.

Emile Smith-Rowe, Arsenal's promising young midfielder, started after scoring against Newcastle as a substitute last weekend.

But Kiernan Tierney was absent with muscle tightness and the Gunners missed the

Scotland left-back's busy presence.

Aubameyang has endured a difficult season and, once again, Arsenal's captain was a difficult figure.

The Gabon forward briefly sparked into life and tested Vicente Guaita with a fierce strike that was parried by the Palace keeper.

But Palace were finding their feet on a wet evening and Granit Xhaka had to make a perfectly timed sliding tackle to stop Wilfried Zaha getting a shot away after the forward slalommed into the penalty area.

Palace broke through the Arsenal defence again when Christian Benteke scooped his shot wastefully over from 10 yards after good work by Tyrick Mitchell.

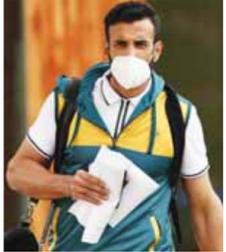
James Tomkins was inches away from giving Roy Hodgson's men the lead as the Palace defender got above Rob Holding to glance his header against the bar from Eberechi Eze's free-kick.

Pak drop Masood, Haris for SA Tests

Karachi: Six players, including Shan Masood, Haris Sohail and Imam-ul-Haq, from the recent New Zealand series were axed as Pakistan's new chief selector Mohammad Wasim on Friday announced a massively overhauled 20-member squad for the two-Test home series against South Africa.

Wasim rewarded several top performers of the domestic season and included nine uncapped players in the squad, which will be trimmed to 16 players ahead of the first Test.

Top scoring batsmen Saud Shakeel, Kamran Ghulam, all-rounder Agha Salman, left-arm spinner Nauman Ali, off-spinner Sajid Khan and fast bowlers Hasan Ali and Tabish Khan — all got call-ups for the series beginning on January 26 at the National Stadium here.



The selectors also upgraded young batsman Abdullah Shafique to the Test squad although he was selected for the New Zealand tour as a specialist T20 player. Similarly, the selectors have also called up pacer Haris Rauf, another T20 specialist for the two-Test series.

The selectors also dropped six players from the dismal tour

of New Zealand with Wasim insisting that fast bowler Naseem Shah was not in the Test squad because he had an injury.

Other players dropped from NZ tour include experienced pacers, Mohammad Abbas and Sohail Khan.

Wasim, insisted that selectors would follow a horses for courses policy now and the squad had been picked keeping in mind the conditions in Pakistan for the SA series.

Test squad: Babar Azam (C), Mohammad Rizwan (VC), Imran Butt, Abdullah Shafique, Abid Ali, Azhar Ali, Fawad Alam, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Kamran Ghulam, Agha Salman, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Tabish Khan, Haris Rauf, Sajid Khan, Nauman Ali, Yasir Shah, Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Nawaz. PTI



The medal winners of the State Athletics Championship, held at Meerut, are being felicitated at NR Stadium on Friday. Sports officer (NR) Kirti Mishra and sports officer (NER) BR Arun honoured the athletes.