

OPINION 8
TRENDS TO
LOOK OUT FOR**WORLD 11**
GUNMEN KILL TWO WOMEN
JUDGES IN AFGHAN CAPITAL**SPORT 14**
AXELSEN, MARIN
WIN THAI TITLES

LUCKNOW, MONDAY JANUARY 18, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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447 adverse jab events, mostly minor

Of 3 needing post-vaccination care, 2 released, 1 stable in hospital; on 2nd day of drive, 17,072 vaccinated against Covid, total rises to 2.24L; side effects like fever, headache minor, says Govt

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 2.24 lakh people received Covid-19 vaccine in the first two days of the countrywide vaccination drive that saw 447 cases of adverse events following immunisation (AEFI), the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday.

The Government also pointed out that the number of inoculations on day one in India on Saturday was the highest in the world, higher than the developed countries like the US, the UK and France.

"A total of 447 AEFI have been reported on January 16 and 17, out of which only three required hospitalisation. Most of the AEFI reported so far are minor like fever, headache, nausea," the Ministry's Additional Secretary Manohar Agnani said while addressing a Press briefing here.

"One of the hospitalised beneficiaries is under observation at AIIMS Rishikesh and is stable. Two others have been discharged from Delhi's Northern Railway hospital and AIIMS Delhi," he said. Agnani said a total of 2,24,301 beneficiaries have been vaccinated till January 17 as per provisional reports, adding that 2,07,229 of them received the jabs on day one of the drive.

Though the official did not share the State-wise dis-



tribution of the AEFI cases, according to various reports on Saturday evening AEFI were reported in Delhi (52), Maharashtra (22), West Bengal (14), Rajasthan (21), and Telangana (11). Some reports also said 13 cases were from Haryana.

The adverse reactions which are being closely tracked through the Government's surveillance framework, are defined by the WHO as "any untoward medical occurrence which follows immunisation and which doesn't necessarily

have a causal relationship with the usage of the vaccine. The adverse event may be any unfavourable or unintended sign, abnormal laboratory finding, symptom or disease".

Agnani said today being Sunday, only six States conducted vaccination drives and in 553 sessions a total of 17,072 beneficiaries were vaccinated. The six States were Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur and Tamil Nadu.

He said a meeting was held with all States and Union

Territories on Sunday to review the progress of the drive, identify bottlenecks and plan corrective actions in the backdrop of technical glitches reported from some session sites like the failure of CO-WIN platform to function.

The Government said 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.

Doctors fear irregularity in approval, urge Govt to make vaccine data public

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A network of doctors from across the country has alleged that emergency urgent authorisation (EUA) approval given to the vaccines — Covishield and Covaxin — is beset with "several irregularities" and asked the Government to make public all the relevant vaccine data.

"This would enable scientists and health workers to make informed choices regarding administration of vaccines for self and community in general," said the medical professionals under the banner of the Progressive Medicos and Scientists Forum (PMSF).

The doctors have demanded the rollback of approvals for EUA and choice be given to the healthcare workers (HCWs) to choose the vaccine without any fear or riders such as linking vaccinations with travel advisory restrictions.

"Better approach will be to have an option strategy rather

than opt out strategy. The continuation or eligibility for working as HCWs should not have any precondition of Covid vaccination, as is being done in a few countries," said PMSF president Dr Harjit Singh Bhatti in a memorandum to the Government.

Also, the forum said the clinical trials phase-3 data should be evaluated in transparent manner as and when available for India for both vaccines and the decision to grant EUA may be revisited once the phase 3 trials are completed.

The DCGI had early this month gave EUA to the two vaccines developed respectively by Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech following which vaccination drive has been launched in the country from January 16.

However, the forum alleged that the whole process of vaccine authorisation has been highly opaque and apparently unscientific.

Continued on Page 6

Farmers' tractor march intact, but won't hit R-Day



Farmers raise slogans during their protest against the new farm laws at Ghazipur border in New Delhi on Sunday

Protest rally on Outer Ring road; plea in SC against scheduled march

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Reiterating their demand for repealing new agriculture laws, the farmers' union on Sunday said they will go ahead with their proposed tractor parade in Delhi on Republic Day. The rally will be held on the Outer Ring Road and will be peaceful. They also alleged that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is filing cases against those who are part of the protest or supporting it.

Meanwhile, the authorities had moved the Supreme Court seeking an injunction against the proposed tractor march or any other kind of protest by farmers which seeks to disrupt the gathering and celebrations of the Republic Day on January 26. The matter is pending in court.

"We have decided that we will carry out a tractor parade on the Outer Ring Road in Delhi on the Republic Day. The parade will be very peaceful. There will be no disruption of the Republic Day parade. The farmers will put up the national flag on their tractors," said Yogendra Yadav, farmers' union leader at

the Press conference at Singhu Border on Sunday evening. Another farmers' union leader, Darshan Pal Singh, alleged that the NIA is filing cases against protesters and its supporters. "All farmer unions condemn this," Pal said, referring to the NIA summons reportedly issued to a farmer union leader in a case related to the banned Sikhs For Justice outfit.

Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been protesting at various border points of Delhi for over a month now demanding repeal of the three laws — the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act.

Continued on Page 6

SC-appointed panel on farm laws to hold first meeting on Jan 19

New Delhi: The Supreme Court-appointed committee on the three new farm laws is scheduled to hold its first meeting on January 19 at Pusa campus here, its member Anil Ghanwat said on Sunday.

CAPSULE

VETERAN MUSICIAN USTAD GHULAM DIES



Mumbai: Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passed away on Sunday afternoon at his residence here. He was 89. Khan's daughter-in-law Namrata Gupta Khan told PTI that the veteran breathed his last at 12.37 pm at his Bandra home.

SPAT OVER RENAMING AURANGABAD IN MAHA

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena and the Congress, which are ruling allies in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, on Sunday sparred over renaming Aurangabad city, with the Uddhav Thackeray-led party saying it is not "secular" behaviour if one finds "cruel and religiously blind" Mughal emperor Aurangzeb "dear".

SENA TO FIGHT POLLS IN WEST BENGAL: RAUT

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena has decided to contest the upcoming Assembly elections in West Bengal, party MP Sanjay Raut said on Sunday. He said the decision to contest the polls has been taken after holding discussions with Maharashtra Chief Minister and Sena president Uddhav Thackeray.

UK invites Modi to G-7 summit, Boris may visit India before June

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Britain has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the high-profile G-7 summit there in June and indicated that Prime Minister Boris Johnson may visit India before the conclave. Johnson was supposed to be the chief guest at this year's Republic Day but cancelled the visit due to the situation created in his country due to a new strain of coronavirus.

The summit, which has leading countries like the US, UK, Italy, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and the European Union as members, is likely to discuss the current raging pandemic, climate change and open trade. Apart from India, Australia and South Korea are the other countries invited to take part in the G-7 summit as guests. It is scheduled to take place in Cornwall.

Giving details of the invitation, an official statement by the British High Commission here on Sunday said, "Prime Minister Johnson will use the first in-person G7 summit in almost two years to ask leaders, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to seize the opportunity to build back better from coronavirus, uniting to make the future fairer, greener and more prosperous."

Continued on Page 6

TMC placates Shatabdi with key party post

After being appointed party V-P in Bengal, Roy vows to ensure BJP's defeat in polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after she threatened rebellion, three-time Trinamool Congress MP Shatabdi Roy was appointed Vice President of the party's Bengal unit on Sunday.

On Friday, Roy indicated she was ready to cross over to the BJP, but after a meeting with fellow MP Abhishek

Banerjee, who is Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew, she cancelled her Delhi trip. Roy had indicated she could meet Home minister Amit Shah during her Delhi stay, triggering speculation that she was ready to ditch the TMC.

Roy said she "welcomed the decision" and that she would work hard to ensure the defeat of the BJP in the forthcoming election. "If you take up the matter concerning the party with the top leadership, it is addressed. This development proves that," she was quoted by news agency PTI.

On Friday the TMC bat-



tled to persuade Roy — who retained Birbhum in the 2019 election despite colleagues losing neighbouring seats to the BJP by huge margins — to remain in the party.

Meanwhile, the BJP has decided to continue "carpet-

bombing" on the TMC till this year's Assembly elections are over, party insiders said adding the saffron outfit is lining up a number of "parivartan rallies" led by some senior national leader or the other in February.

Party sources said Shah who was scheduled to come to Bengal on January 30-31 when he will hold organisation-level meetings as well as rallies.

Party president JP Nadda too will lead a number of rallies in February and efforts are on to rope in Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for an intensified campaign.

Continued on Page 6

Biden-Kamala inauguration event kicks off with Kolam

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Kolam, a traditional Indian art form of drawing geometric patterns on the floors as a sign of welcome, was part of the virtual kick-off ceremony of the inauguration of President-elect Joe



Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris, who traces her origin to Tamil Nadu where these auspicious designs adorn almost every household. In Tamil Nadu, where Harris has roots, women draw Kolams on the ground to invite health and prosperity into houses where they are displayed.

Pictures of thousands of Kolam tiles were on Saturday woven into a video to welcome Biden and Harris in the spirit of Presidency for All and to showcase the multi-cultural heritage of America.

More than 1,800 individuals from across the US and many from India participated in the online initiative to create thousands of Kolam designs to celebrate the historic event.

Many believe Kolams symbolise positive energy and new beginnings.

(Detailed report on P11)

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CM: Strawberry cultivation to give a new identity to Bundelkhand

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stating that strawberry cultivation would be nothing short of a miracle for Bundelkhand, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said that this initiative of the farmers would give a new identity to the region.

The chief minister, who virtually inaugurated the month-long Strawberry Festival of Jhansi, said the diligent farmers of this region had changed the image of Bundelkhand, considered to be infertile land in the past.

"This endeavour has given a new meaning to the region and it is set to write a new history," he added.

"Like Jhansi, products of other districts of the state also have their unique identities and such festivals can help in giving them a new platform," the chief minister said, adding that the Kala Namak rice of Siddharthnagar, the black rice of Chandauli, the guavas of Prayagraj and Kaushambi were to name a few.

The chief minister said that there was a general belief that the soil of the Bundelkhand region was not suitable for such fruits. He said this belief had been proved wrong as strawberry could be an additional mode of earning for the farmers of the region.

"The region has an ample amount of surface water and by using techniques like drip and sprinkle irrigation for farming, the farmers can definitely reduce the input cost," the chief minister said.

He said both the Central and state governments were providing facilities to the farmers from seeds to markets.



"During the coronavirus pandemic, while the government ensured that all the 119 sugar mills did not stop production, the farmers also main-

tained the supply of sugarcane. We are committed to the welfare of the farmers," he said.

Yogi Adityanath advised the Agriculture and

Horticulture departments to organise such festivals in other districts also so that their products could get a platform.

"The government has also

been trying to create new facilities for irrigation. The Bansagar project, which was pending since 1977, has been completed and the Madhya Ganga Project, Saryu Nahar Rashtriya Pariyojana and the Arjun Sahayak Pariyojana will be completed this year," the chief minister said.

"Workshops will also be organised during the festival to encourage farmers to go for strawberry cultivation. A work plan has also been prepared to encourage strawberry farming in Jhansi and other districts of the region. The district administration will be providing strawberry plants to the people," said Jhansi district magistrate Andra Vamsi.

CM stresses on strict compliance with road safety rules

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to ensure strict compliance with road safety rules in view of fog during the inclement weather in the winters.

He also directed all the district magistrates and district police chiefs to ensure all necessary arrangements for the safe movement of vehicles in accident-prone areas in their respective districts.

The chief minister was reviewing the works of various departments in a review meeting held at his official residence here on Sunday. He also asked the officials to increase the number of common service centres (CSC) in the state.

The chief minister said that with the installation of CSC, government services would be easily accessible to the

citizens near their place of residence and their time and money would also be saved.

"Once the new common service centres start operating, a large number of employment opportunities will be available from urban, semi-urban areas to remote gram panchayats of the state," he said.

The chief minister said that sugarcane was an important cash crop of UP and currently sugarcane was being cultivated by over 45 lakh farmers. Sugarcane production has increased due to the continuous efforts of the state government, he pointed out while directing the officials concerned to ensure high-yielding crops are provided to sugarcane farmers for sowing.

The chief minister instructed officials to take swift action for the construction of Uttar

Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority building. He said this would help the State Disaster Management Authority to improve its functioning. He said that the areas affected by various disasters should be identified by the State Disaster Management Authority and the residents of the identified areas should be made aware of the precautions to be taken at the time of disaster and imparted training on disaster prevention measures.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary RK Tiwari, Agriculture Production Commissioner Alok Sinha, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Director General of Police Hitesh C Awasthi, Additional Chief Secretary (MSME and Information)

Navneet Sehgal, Additional Chief Secretary (Finance) Sanjeev Mittal, Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister, SP Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad, Additional Chief Secretary (Medical Education) Dr. Rajneesh Dube, Additional Chief Secretary (Panchayati Raj and Rural Development) Manoj Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary (Industrial Development) Alok Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary (Agriculture) Devesh Chaturvedi, Principal Secretary (Health) Alok Kumar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister and Information, Sanjay Prasad, Principal Secretary (Animal Husbandry) Bhuvnesh Kumar, Secretary to Chief Minister, Alok Kumar, and other senior officers.

ATS busts gang selling pre-activated SIMs to open bank accounts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the arrest of 14 persons on Sunday, the Anti-Terrorists Squad (ATS) claimed to have busted a gang selling pre-activated SIM cards for opening online bank accounts for transaction of money gained from unscrupulous activities/unknown sources.

Nine of the accused were arrested from different districts in west Uttar Pradesh while five were nabbed by the Noida unit of the ATS.

Nine of the arrested accused were identified as Mohammed Fahim, Samul Hasan, Hariom Arora, Chandra Kishore, Tarun Surya and Piyyush Varshney, all of Sambhal, Prem Singh of Moradabad, Anshul Kumar Saxena of Amroha and Prashant Gupta of Chandausi.

As per an official communiqué, the ATS was tipped-off about a gang which was operating different bank accounts opened with fake names and addresses and was using ill-gotten money in criminal activities.

The ATS developed the input and it surfaced that the accused persons got the money transferred to fake bank accounts from unknown sources and used cardless payment mode to withdraw the money.

It also came to light that the accused persons used SIMs acquired from different distributors/retailers.

It also surfaced that the distributors/retailers misused the ID proofs and photos of different customers for obtaining SIM cards and activated them.

They used to sell such pre-activated SIM cards for Rs 260

each in place of Rs 20, which is the cost of a SIM card.

The prime accused, Prem Singh, had sold 1,500 pre-activated SIM cards to different persons in New Delhi.

These pre-activated SIM cards were used by the miscreants, including those of foreign countries also, and they used these SIM cards for opening online bank accounts and securing money transfer from unknown

sources.

The sleuths said the accused arrested by Noida ATS unit would be brought to Lucknow while look-out notices would be issued against the miscreants of foreign origin.

The accused arrested will be produced in a court and will be taken on police custody remand for interrogation to find out the names of other members of the gang.

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पत्रांक: 94/पीपीओएल/महाप्रबन्धक-7/ई-टेंडर दिनांक: 14.01.2021

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

जनपद बाराबंकी में घाघरा नदी पर स्थित चेहलारी-गनेशपुर तटबंध की बाढ़ से सुरक्षा हेतु किमी. 30.00 एवं 34.50 पर हाइड्रोलिक एक्जेंक्टर द्वारा चैनैलाइजेशन कार्य हेतु इस कार्यालय की अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना-32/UPPCL/GM-7/E-TENDER/2020-21 दिनांक 13.01.2021 द्वारा ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी है। यह निविदा वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in> के पोर्टल पर दिनांक 19.01.2021 से दिनांक 27.01.2021 तक डाउनलोड/अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसे दिनांक 27.01.2021 को अपराह्न 1.00 बजे तक सबमिट/जमा किया जा सकता है। टेंडरिनक विल उसी दिन अपराह्न 2.00 बजे से अधोहस्ताक्षरी के उपरोक्त कार्यालय में खोली जानी प्रस्तावित है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित अन्य विवरण एवं शर्तें इत्यादि कारपोरेशन की वेबसाइट www.upprojects.org पर देखी जा सकती है।

महाप्रबन्धक जेन-7
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कार्यालय प्रधानाचार्य, राजकीय स्वीस इंटर कालेज-वाराणसी।

यू०सं०/ 601-02/ 2020-21 दिनांक : 16.01.2021

प्रेस विज्ञापित

जिला विद्यालय निरीक्षक, वाराणसी के पत्रांक : शिविर/8084/2020-21 दिनांक : 16.01.2021 के अनुपालन में सहायक निबन्धन फर्माई सोसाइटी एवं विट्स वाराणसी द्वारा सी०एम०एल० बंगाली इंटर कालेज, वाराणसी की प्रबन्ध समिति के सदस्यों की उपलब्ध करायी गयी सूची में मातृ संस्था के पदाधिकारियों, सदस्यों एवं 1983 या उसके पूर्व के साधारण सभा के यदि कोई जीवित सदस्य हो तो प्रमाणिक के साथ अधोहस्ताक्षरी कार्यालय में 15 कार्य दिवस में उपस्थित होवे या पंजीकृत डाक से अधोहस्ताक्षरी कार्यालय को साक्ष्यों सहित सदस्य होने के सम्बन्ध में अभिलेख उपलब्ध कराये।

प्राधिकृत नियन्त्रक/प्रधानाचार्य
सी०एम०एल० बंगाली इंकांलेज/
राजकीय स्वीस इंटर कालेज, वाराणसी।

CITYBRIEFS

ITM-LUCKNOW GETS OVERWHELMING RESPONSE

The B2B travel & tourism showcase & conclave, India Travel Mart (ITM-Lucknow) this year received overwhelming response from Lucknow, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Aligarh, Bareilly, Jhansi, Mathura, Agra and nearby cities. An exclusive B2B meeting between officials of Uttar Pradesh Tourism, Gujarat Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism, Himachal Pradesh Tourism, Uttarakhand Tourism, travel agents, tour operators from pan-India was held in order to discuss and promote their products and destinations. The basic purpose was to boost tourism awareness worldwide. On the occasion, Travel Promotion Award was presented to all the state tourism departments and mementos to hoteliers, resorts and other participants. Gujarat Tourism was given the 'Best Decorative Stall Award' while Jammu & Kashmir Tourism the 'Best Stall Award' for tourist communication, literature and short film on tourist destination. Himachal Pradesh Tourism got the 'Best Stall Display Award' while Uttarakhand Tourism the 'Best Stall Award' for promoting wellness tourism. Uttar Pradesh Tourism was given the 'Best Stall Award' for promoting religious circuit.



NATIONAL YOUNG SCIENCE EXPLORER CONTEST

City International School (Balaganj) introduced its first online 'National Young Science Explorer Contest' in which students presented static and working models and showcased their talents on creativity and innovation. The aim was to infuse the spirit of discovery in schoolchildren, increase their interest in science and technology, and build a robust scientific temper in them. The event was addressed by CMS founder-director Bharti Gandhi, who is also the advisor of City International School. Prof Naveen Khare of Lucknow University was the guest of honour. The competition was organised for students of classes I-IX and 150 were selected for live presentation. They were divided into four categories and the competition was held in two days. The level of enthusiasm was high among participants from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Odisha, New Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

DEPUTY CM TO INAUGURATE IEO

Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma will inaugurate the 3-day International Environment Olympiad (IEO-2021), organised by City Montessori School virtually on Tuesday evening. The event is being organised online by CMS, Gomti Nagar Campus II, from January 19 to 21. Students from various counties across the globe will be participating in the international olympiad in which a series of interesting contests will be organised for the participants of India and abroad. IEO is a platform to instill and spread the firm resolve of preserving and protecting nature for a prosperous and peaceful world. It is a celebration of the symbiotic bond between humans and nature.



NOTICE

My name is Babulal Shah. But in service record of my wife my name has changed as Babu Lal Gupta. My correct name is Babulal Shah residence Gahilgarh old Tahsil dist Singrauli MP.

NOTICE

I Army No. T.J5822F Sub. Ravi Nath Pal S/o Kedarnath Vill- Hawaspur Post-Hetarpur, Jhansi Prayagraj an apply for correction of my son name & DOB which is wrongly written as Alok Singh & DOB 28/1/2001 in my service record of Army his correct name is Alok Singh Pal and correct DOB is 28.10.2001.

Fresh assignments to 15 IAS officers

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government, on Saturday, transferred 15 IAS officers, including divisional commissioners and district magistrates.

As per official sources, Shiva Kant Dwivedi, who was on the waiting list, has been posted as Special Secretary, Minority Welfare, while Special Secretary, AYUSH department, Rajkamal Yadav, has been shifted as DM of Baghpur, replacing Shakuntala Gautam, who has been transferred as Director, Local Bodies.

UP Backward Class Finance Development Corporation Managing Director Vandana Sharma has been posted as Director in Backward Classes Welfare department while Director, Local Bodies, Kajal has been shifted as Special Secretary, Basic Education, replacing Manish Kumar Verma who has been sent to Jaunpur as DM.

Vindhyachal Divisional Commissioner Preeti Shukla has been shifted as Secretary, Food

and Civil Supplies. Yogeshwar Ram Mishra, who was on the waiting list, has been posted as Commissioner of Vindhyachal Division while Sanjay Kumar, also on the waiting list, has been made Secretary, Finance.

Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam Managing Director Vikas Gothwal has been shifted as Secretary, Infrastructure and Industrial Development Department, while Anil Kumar, Commissioner of Agra Division, has been posted as Managing Director of Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam. Secretary, Medical Education, Amit Gupta will be the new Commissioner of Agra Division. District Magistrate of Jaunpur, Dinesh Singh, has been shifted as Commissioner of Chitrakoot Dham Division, replacing Gaurav Dayal, who has been sent to Aligarh Division in same capacity, replacing Gauri Shankar Priyadarshi, who has been shifted as Secretary of Medical Education department.

शिक्षा व्यवस्था में बढ़ते कदम

वर्चुअल स्कूल

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

18.01.2021 से 22.01.2021 तक ई-लर्निंग प्रसारण का बाइसप्तां चरण

दूरदर्शन, उत्तर प्रदेश (DD UP) चैनल पर यू.पी. बोर्ड की कक्षा-10 एवं 12 हेतु शैक्षणिक प्रसारण की समय-सारिणी								
दिनांक तथा समय	कक्षा-10				कक्षा-12			
	अपराह्न 1:00 से अपराह्न 1:30 बजे तक	अपराह्न 2:30 से अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक	अपराह्न 4:00 से अपराह्न 4:30 बजे तक	सायं 5:30 से सायं 6:00 बजे तक	अपराह्न 1:30 से अपराह्न 2:00 बजे तक	अपराह्न 3:30 से अपराह्न 4:00 बजे तक	अपराह्न 4:30 से सायं 5:00 बजे तक	सायं 6:00 से सायं 6:30 बजे तक
18-01-2021 सोमवार	मिशन शक्ति महिला सशक्तिकरण आत्मरक्षा प्रशिक्षण भाग-2	सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-7 लोकतंत्र के परिणाम भाग-2	संस्कृत अध्याय-1 महात्मनः संस्मरणानि भाग-1	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-B-Grammar Helping or Auxiliary Verbs, भाग-1	गणित अध्याय-9 अवकल समीकरण भाग-5	हिन्दी अध्याय-2 रस की परिभाषा भाग-1	हिन्दी अध्याय-2 रस की परिभाषा भाग-1	हिन्दी अध्याय-2 अलंकार की परिभाषा भाग-1
19-01-2021 मंगलवार	मिशन शक्ति महिला सशक्तिकरण आत्मरक्षा प्रशिक्षण भाग-3	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-4 Socrates भाग-1	संस्कृत अध्याय-10 कविकुलगुरुः कालिदास भाग-1	संस्कृत अध्याय-10 कविकुलगुरुः कालिदास भाग-2	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-11 एल्कोहोल, फेनोल एवं ईथर भाग-1	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-11 एल्कोहोल, फेनोल एवं ईथर भाग-2	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-11 एल्कोहोल, फेनोल एवं ईथर भाग-3	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-11 एल्कोहोल, फेनोल एवं ईथर भाग-4
21-01-2021 गुरुवार	मिशन शक्ति महिला सशक्तिकरण आत्मरक्षा प्रशिक्षण भाग-4	गणित अध्याय-14 सांख्यिकी भाग-1	हिन्दी अध्याय-13 हल्दी घाटी भाग-1	विज्ञान अध्याय-15 हमारा पर्यावरण भाग-1	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4 रासायनिक बलगतिकी भाग-1	अर्थशास्त्र अध्याय-2 उपभोक्ता के व्यवहार के सिद्धांत, भाग-1	हिन्दी अध्याय-8 सुभाषितरत्नानि भाग-1	नागरिक शास्त्र अध्याय-1 सत्ता के वैकल्पिक केन्द्र, भाग-1
22-01-2021 शुक्रवार	हिन्दी अध्याय-4 मेवाड़ मुकुट भाग-1	गणित अध्याय-14 सांख्यिकी भाग-2	हिन्दी अध्याय-6 अजन्ता भाग-1	हिन्दी अध्याय-13 हल्दी घाटी भाग-2	अर्थशास्त्र अध्याय-2 उपभोक्ता के व्यवहार के सिद्धांत, भाग-2	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4 रासायनिक बलगतिकी, भाग-2	रसायन विज्ञान अध्याय-4 सत्ता के वैकल्पिक केन्द्र, भाग-2	अर्थशास्त्र अध्याय-2 उपभोक्ता के व्यवहार के सिद्धांत, भाग-3

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

चैनल e vidya-9 पर कक्षा-9 एवं चैनल e vidya-11 पर कक्षा-11 यू.पी. बोर्ड हेतु शैक्षणिक प्रसारण की समय-सारिणी				
दिनांक तथा समय	कक्षा-9		कक्षा-11	
	प्रातः 8:30 से प्रातः 9:00 बजे तक	प्रातः 9:00 से प्रातः 9:30 बजे तक	सायं 6:30 से सायं 7:00 बजे तक	सायं 7:00 से सायं 7:30 बजे तक
18-01-2021 सोमवार	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-3 Primary Auxiliaries (Words and Expressions-1 Workbook) भाग-1/2	हिन्दी अध्याय-4 महादेवी वर्मा- (हिन्दी गद्य) गिल्लू भाग-1/3	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-1 (Reading skills) The Portrait of a Lady (Hornbill Textbook) भाग-3/3	भौतिक विज्ञान अध्याय-6 कार्य, ऊर्जा एवं शक्ति (भौतिक भाग-1) भाग-1/4
19-01-2021 मंगलवार	सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-5-खण्ड-2 आधुनिक विश्व में चरवाहे (इतिहास-भारत और समकालीन विश्व) भाग-1/2	गृह विज्ञान अध्याय-20 (प्राथमिक-चिकित्सा और गृह परिचर्या) गृह परिचर्या तथा परिचर्या के गुण भाग-1/1	अर्थशास्त्र अध्याय-2 ऑफ़रों का संगठन, संग्रहण, व्यवस्थीकरण (अर्थशास्त्र में सांख्यिकी) भाग-1/1	भौतिक विज्ञान अध्याय-6 कार्य, ऊर्जा एवं शक्ति (भौतिक भाग-1) भाग-2/4
21-01-2021 गुरुवार	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-3 Primary Auxiliaries (Words and Expressions-1 Workbook) भाग-2/2	हिन्दी अध्याय-4 महादेवी वर्मा- (हिन्दी गद्य) गिल्लू भाग-2/3	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 (Reading skills) We're Not Afraid to Die...if We Can All Be Together (Hornbill Textbook) भाग-1/2	भौतिक विज्ञान अध्याय-6 कार्य, ऊर्जा एवं शक्ति (भौतिक भाग-1) भाग-3/4
22-01-2021 शुक्रवार	सामाजिक विज्ञान अध्याय-5-खण्ड-2 आधुनिक विश्व में चरवाहे (इतिहास-भारत और समकालीन विश्व) भाग-2/2	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-3 Comprehension Exercises (Words and Expressions-1 Workbook) भाग-1/1	अंग्रेजी अध्याय-2 (Reading skills) We're Not Afraid to Die...if We Can All Be Together (Hornbill Textbook) भाग-2/2	भौतिक विज्ञान अध्याय-6 कार्य, ऊर्जा एवं शक्ति (भौतिक भाग-1) भाग-4/4

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

माध्यमिक शिक्षा विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश की एक पहल

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Covid vaccination at 62 centres soon

Woman found murdered

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Covid vaccine shots will be administered to people at all 62 centres in Lucknow shortly, according to district immunisation officer MK Singh, who said they were waiting for government guidelines. Whenever the date is announced, vaccines will be sent to all the cold chain points a day in advance.

Singh said they have already prepared micro-plans for vaccinations at all the centres. "All the safety measures have been taken into consideration and there is no further addition required at this stage," he said while talking about scope of improvement when the exercise is expanded. The drive will be carried out on Mondays and Fridays and will be followed by a mop-up session. "All the teams of vaccinators have already been apprised of their duties from the Integrated Control and Command Centre and when the date is finalised, they will be intimidated again," Singh said.

"The bigger hospitals will have more teams as compared to the smaller ones. KGMU, SGPGI and RMLIMS will have more teams than other centres. At KGMU, 33 teams will be deployed for the 34 booths set up there. That there will be 200 vaccination sessions across the district at 62 centres consisting of 200 booths.

He pointed out that as no major side-effects were reported during the first phase of vaccination on Saturday, it would help people shed apprehensions, if any. Regarding the 30 per cent of health workers who did not turn up for vaccination on Saturday, Singh said they will get vaccinated in the future sessions. Those who did not reach the vaccination centres included some pregnant women and others who had taken a day off," he added. In the next session, Covishield vaccine will be supplied to all the 62 centres in the district.

About inquiries from people above 50 years of age, he said that the registration portal will soon be launched by the Central government. "All those who get themselves registered will be vaccinated and even those below 50 years will be vaccinated if they have comorbidities," he said. He added that the registration of police personnel and LMC workers is underway for the second phase of vaccination. The last date for the registration of this category is January 25.

A senior health official said that a Covid anthem was launched on the first day of vaccination drive jointly by the state government, UNICEF and other partner agencies. "The video commemorates the hard work of Covid warriors from diverse fields. Singer Kailash Kher has lent his voice to the anthem," he said.

Meanwhile, head of KGMU's Microbiology department Dr Amita Jain said that four units in the state would start functioning from January 31 for carrying out gene sequencing of coronavirus samples. KGMU, CDRI, NBRI and BHU will start functioning and will be used whenever the need for gene sequencing arises.

Meanwhile, 92 more tested positive for coronavirus in city on Sunday while 109 patients recovered. In the state, 404 persons tested positive. There were six deaths in the state, including one each in Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Rampur, Jaunpur, Farrukhabad and Amethi.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 45-year-old woman was murdered and her body dumped in a mango grove under Gosainganj police station area on Sunday. She was identified as Rekha Awasthi of Shahzadpur locality in the area. Her brother said Rekha was murdered over a money dispute between him and brother duo Khurshed and Salman. The body was sent for autopsy and the police launched a manhunt for the accused.

As per reports, Rekha was found lying in a pool of blood in the mango grove owned by one Shrawan. Her throat was slit and there were injury marks on the body hinting that she offered resistance.

As the news spread, Rekha's brother Pradeep reached the scene and identified the body. Pradeep alleged the role of brother duo Khurshed and Salman of the same village. He said he had sold his parental land in Gudamba on December 6 last year for Rs 84 lakh. "I had given the money to Khurshed and Salman to invest in real estate business. On Saturday, I went to their house to get the money back as I started having trust issued with them in due course," Pradeep said. He alleged that Khurshed and Salman threatened him with dire consequences and also hurled expletives on him. He said the brother duo might have killed Rekha over the dispute. He told the police that he found Rekha missing when he woke up around 3 am on Sunday and later her body was recovered from the mango grove. Sources said the police found the claims made by Pradeep unconvincing and he was on police radar.

"Who will give such a huge amount to others? The reason could be something else and the same is being probed," they said. The police said the body was sent for autopsy, report of which was awaited. Rekha was staying along with her brothers Pradeep and Anshu.

Dense fog, absence of sun add to chill; relief in store

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Dense fog with sun playing truant added to the cold weather conditions on Sunday, which recorded the maximum temperature at 19 degree Celsius while the minimum at 10 degree Celsius. City denizens woke to dense fog and the sky cleared only by 2 pm, albeit for a brief period.

MeT director JP Gupta said the mercury is likely to increase on Monday because of the easterlies. However, cold conditions will make a comeback after a couple of days," he said. The forecast for Monday is moderate to dense fog in the morning and clear sky thereafter. The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to be around 21 degree Celsius and 10 degree Celsius, respectively.

Weather is most likely to be dry over the state. There is a warning for cold day conditions at isolated places over the state and dense to very dense fog at a few places over the state in the morning on Monday. In the state, the lowest minimum was recorded in Churk (4.6 degree Celsius).

A doctor said one should avoid prolonged exposure to cold in these conditions. "Wear layers of woollens and cover your head, neck, hands and toes as majority of heat loss occurs through these body parts. Wear insulated and waterproof shoes and moisturise your skin regularly with oil, petroleum jelly or body cream. Eat healthy fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C. Also, drink lots of water to keep hydrated. Limit the outdoor activities and try to keep dry. If wet, change clothes immediately to prevent loss of body heat. Maintain ventilation while using heaters to avoid inhaling toxic fumes and take safety measures while using heating devices. Don't drink alcohol because it reduces your body temperature," he said.



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Govt set to take over mgmt, control of Jauhar University

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is all set to take over the management and control of Jauhar University in Rampur owned by Samajwadi party parliamentarian Mohammad Azam Khan. The district revenue authority/district magistrate of Rampur has already ordered the transfer of the title ownership of 1,400 acres of land in possession of the university in favour of the UP government. The district revenue court, after hearing the case against the university, also ordered the take-over of the land excess of 12 acre owned by the university. With the order of the district revenue authority, the land left with the university is only 12.5 acres.

Besides Azam Khan, his son, a former SP MLA, is in jail since February last year in a forged birth certificate case. Azam Khan's wife Tazeen Fatma, a SP MLA, was also in jail but she was released on bail recently. The UP Revenue Board in January 2019 had cancelled its earlier order allowing Rampur's Jauhar University to integrate 1,400 acres of land belonging to village gram sabha. It has also ordered the divisional commissioner to probe the allegation of encroachment levelled against the university.

In 2017, the district magistrate of Rampur had sent a report against Azam Khan to the state government in a matter of land-grabbing. In his affidavit to the Board of Revenue, the district magistrate had said that Jauhar University was a completely commercial institute, run by Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar Trust owned by Azam Khan. The district magistrate had categorically stated that even though the institute was built on government land, it was not doing any charitable work and the land given to the university belonged to the gram samaj, and was supposed to be used for developmental works. The district magistrate contended that the land was illegally transferred in 2012-13 to Jauhar Trust. Jauhar University was the dream project of Azam Khan, which was mooted in 2004 by the then Samajwadi party government headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Psychology dept organises declamation competition

Lucknow (PNS): The department of Psychology, Lucknow University, organised a declamation competition as a part of the 'Mission Shakti' programme series under which different departments of the university are organising different activities to promote women empowerment and spread awareness about issues related to gender-based discrimination. The topic of the declamation competition was 'female foeticide'.

The participants elaborated upon several dimensions of this social evil and ways to eradicate it. Prof Sheela Mishra, coordinator of the university's Mission Shakti programme, was also present on the occasion. Head of the department of Psychology Prof Madhurima Pradhan said: "Such kinds of competitions encourage students to look around and think about the problem while they scribble their speeches, and this is why we want them to look at the problem and recognise it."

The department of Psychology also organised an online panel discussion on 'Fighting female foeticide: Issues and challenges'. Former principal and head of the department of Psychology (Kanpur University) Dr Nutan

Vohra, who was one of the panelists, said: "Youths can bring the change and psychologists can play an important role."

Director of community empowerment lab Aarti Kumar said: "Female foeticide is an outcome of a deeper problems prevalent in the society and we need to work on that problem."

LMC identifies land for water treatment plant



Lucknow (PNS): Municipal Commissioner Ajay Kumar Dwivedi visited Kukrail Bandha to choose the site for purification of water through phytoremediation measures and identified an area of 500 metres where all the nullahs fall. A senior official said the LMC is making preparations for treating polluted water with phytoremediation measures.

"With this method, the polluted

water will move through a sedimentation tank, then through a screen mesh, a wall of stone boulders and then through special plant saplings so that its pollution level comes down to the standards of water bodies and oxygen levels also increase," he said. The official said this technique is currently being used in Delhi. Before starting this project, the LMC team also had a discussion with Prof Dr CR Babu of Delhi University.

ABI centre of CISH supported 15 entrepreneurs since inception

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Agri-Business Incubation Centre of Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) has promoted and supported 15 entrepreneurs since its inception in 2019. CISH director Shailendra Rajan said its the first ICAR-aided ABI centre in the city and its aim is to support and promote the horti-preneurs comprehensively. The centre incubates the prospective entrepreneurs in horticulture technologies developed at CISH and also provides them a platform for their own novel start-up ideas. In the last one year, the ABI incubators established start-up entrepreneurship.

"Solar power-operated insect traps have been developed and tested, and are in the process of commercialisation. Youths are interested in developing a start-up for the production of immunised banana tissue culture plants," he pointed out. CISH also conducted a panel discussion on 'Challenges and approaches for boosting horti-preneurship in India', which was attended by 104 participants, including incubators, founders, innovators, investors, entrepreneurs, scientists, academicians, stakeholders, enterprises and students from across the country.

The participants showed keen interest in the programme and discussed problems arising in establishing start-ups. Several experts expressed their views in the panel discussion. Scientist Dr Damodaran elucidated R&D and innovation in the journey of technology transfer for building horti-entrepreneurship. Ravi Pandey from IIT-Kanpur discussed the importance of IPR in entrepreneurship.



School of Management Sciences distributed blankets to orphans and leprosy patients in Mohanlalganj on Sunday

Elderly, unwell Divyangs to get ration at home

Lucknow (PNS): Helpless, elderly, medically unwell and Divyang people will no longer have to go to the government ration shops to get ration as the Yogi Adityanath government has now made arrangements to provide rations at their homes.

A special initiative has been launched in UP, the first state in the country to do so, for people who hold a ration card but cannot go to the fair price shops for various reasons.

Under the initiative, the operators of the government ration shops will go to the homes of such card holders and deliver the ration.

The officials of the Food and Civil Supplies department and the district administrative officers will monitor the entire scheme. The scheme has been started in many districts of the state and as many as 8,577 people have been identified in the state and ration is being provided to them at their homes.

Along with this, a campaign is also going on to identify such people and connect them with the scheme.

The shop operators will also be regularly interacting with the beneficiaries so that they can provide help in case of any requirement.

Class XI student commits suicide

Lucknow (PNS): A class XI student ended his life at his house in Gudamba on Saturday evening. Police did not recover any suicide note and the police are trying to find out the reason. The body was sent for autopsy.

As per reports, Akash (18) of Kalyanpur locality in the area was depressed for the last few months. On Saturday evening when the family was busy in some work, Akash hanged himself in a room. His mother found the door of his room bolted from inside and raised an alarm. Later, his kin broke open the door, only to find Akash hanging from the ceiling with a dupatta tied around his neck. On being informed, police reached the scene and sent the body for autopsy.

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कच्चा सूचना (अचल सम्पत्तियों हेतु)		
[Rule-8(1)]		
जैसा कि अयोध्यास्थानीय वित्तीय आयोगों का प्रतिभूतिकरण एवं पुनर्गठन और प्रतिभूति हित प्रवर्तन अधिनियम 2002 के तहत यूनियन बैंक आफ इंडिया का प्राधिकृत अधिकारी होते हुये और उक्त अधिनियम की धारा-13 (12) संपटित प्रतिभूति हित (प्रवर्तन) नियम 2002 का नियम-3 में प्रदत्त शक्तियों का प्रयोग करते हुए मांग सूचना अन्तर्गत धारा 13 (2) निम्न खाता धारकों आदि को जारी किया गया था, जिसमें नोटिफ प्राप्ति के 60 दिवस के भीतर देय राशि के अद्ययों की अपेक्षा की गयी थी।		
अश्ली उद्योगोन्मुख अद्ययों में विभक्त रहे हैं फलस्वरूप अश्ली एवं सर्वसाधारण को एतद्द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि अयोध्यास्थानीय में उक्त अधिनियम की उपधारा (4) धारा 13 संपटित नियम -8 के तहत प्रतिभूति हित (प्रवर्तन) अधिनियम 2002, में प्रदत्त शक्तियों का प्रयोग करते हुए निम्नलिखित बंधक संपत्ति/सम्पत्तियों पर निम्नलिखित दिनांक को कब्जा ले लिया गया है। अश्ली एवं सर्वसाधारण को एतद्द्वारा सावधान किया जाता है कि, बंधक संपत्ति/सम्पत्तियों से किसी प्रकार का समव्यवहार न करें। कोई भी समव्यवहार यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया, के अश्ली रूपये एवं उस पर अनुबंधित दर पर लागू ब्याज आदि के भार के अधीन होगा।		
अश्ली का ब्याज बंधक संपत्ति/सम्पत्तियों को मुक्त करने हेतु उपलब्ध निषाद के संदर्भ में अधिनियम की उपधारा (8) धारा-13 की ओर भी आकर्षित किया जाता है।		
क्र.सं.	बकायेदार/जमानतदार का नाम/पता व बंधक सम्पत्ति/सम्पत्ति मालिक एवं मांग सूचना तिथि/प्रलक्षित कच्चा तिथि/बकाया धनराशि	
1.	बकायेदार : मेसर्स मॉ शीतला मेटल्स, रजि. ऑफिस : 52/43-सी, नई दाम मण्डी, कानपुर एवं युनिट पता : एफ-65, यू.पी.एस. आई.डी.सी., इण्डस्ट्रीयल एरिया, मलवौ, फतेहपुर, प्रोपराइट्टर : श्री विमल कुमार दुबे पुत्र श्री रमाशंकर दुबे, निवासी : ग्राम-कटेरवा, पोस्ट-अहेवा, जिला फतेहपुर। मांग सूचना तिथि : 10.01.2020, प्रलक्षित कच्चा लेने की तिथि : 12.01.2021	
	बंधक सम्पत्ति का विवरण : इण्डस्ट्रीयल प्लाट सं. एफ-65, यू.पी.एस.आई.डी.सी., इण्डस्ट्रीयल एरिया, मलवौ, फतेहपुर। सम्पत्ति मालिक : श्री विमल कुमार दुबे पुत्र श्री रमाशंकर दुबे, क्षेत्रफल : 800 वर्गमीटर, चौहद्दी: उत्तर : 18 मीटर चौड़ी रोड संख्या 14, दक्षिण : प्लाट सं. एफ-62, पूरब : प्लाट संख्या एफ-66, पश्चिम : प्लाट संख्या एफ-64	
	मांग सूचना तिथि में बकाया धनराशि : रु. 67,67,051.09 + ब्याज + अन्य खर्च	
2.	बकायेदार : मेसर्स श्री हरि ब्रॉस बेगल्स, पता : एल-36, इण्डस्ट्रीयल एरिया, मलवौ, फतेहपुर, प्रोपराइट्टर : श्री कमलाकान्त दुबे पुत्र श्री रमाशंकर दुबे, निवासी : पोस्ट-अहेवा, (हुसैनगंज) जिला फतेहपुर। जमानतदार : श्री विमल कुमार दुबे पुत्र श्री रमाशंकर दुबे, निवासी : पोस्ट-अहेवा, (हुसैनगंज) जिला फतेहपुर।	
	मांग सूचना तिथि : 02.12.2019, प्रलक्षित कच्चा लेने की तिथि : 12.01.2021	
	बंधक सम्पत्ति का विवरण : परिसर स्थित एफ-69, इण्डस्ट्रीयल एरिया यू.पी.एस.आई.डी.सी., मलवौ, जिला-फतेहपुर। सम्पत्ति मालिक : श्री कमलाकान्त दुबे पुत्र श्री रमाशंकर दुबे, क्षेत्रफल : 800 वर्गमीटर, चौहद्दी: उत्तर : प्लाट सं. एफ-70, दक्षिण : प्लाट सं. एफ-68, पूरब : प्लाट संख्या एफ-58, पश्चिम : 18 मीटर चौड़ी रोड संख्या 14	
	मांग सूचना तिथि में बकाया धनराशि : रु. 96,79,918.83 + ब्याज + अन्य खर्च	
3.	बकायेदार : मेसर्स बेसिल आर्थोपेडिक इण्डस्ट्रीज, पता : एल-36, इण्डस्ट्रीयल एरिया, जैनपुर, अकबरपुर, कानपुर देहात। पार्टनर्स : (1) श्रीमती सविता जैन पत्नी श्री प्रवेश कुमार जैन, निवासी : प्लेट सं. 101 त्रिवेणी अपार्टमेंट, प्लाट सं. 6, वेस्ट इन्क्लेव, प्रीतमपुरा, सरस्वती विहार, उत्तर पश्चिम दिल्ली। (2) श्री हेमन्त कुमार मन्वन्वा पुत्र श्री अर्जुन दास मन्वन्वा, निवासी : 3/120, ब्लाक-एच, पॉकेट-3, सेक्टर-11, रोहिणी, नई दिल्ली। (3) श्री प्रवीण सिंह पुत्र श्री देवेन्द्र सिंह, निवासी : 538/के/577, त्रिवेणी नगर-03, निराला नगर, जिला-सखनऊ। (4) श्री देवेश कुमार चौहान पुत्र श्री कोशलदेव सिंह चौहान, निवासी : 430-431, पॉकेट-04, सेक्टर-22, रोहिणी, निकट जी.डी. गोयनका स्कूल, नई दिल्ली। जमानतदार : श्री संगीता सिंह चौहान पत्नी श्री देवेश कुमार चौहान, निवासी : 28/20, गली सं. 23, लिबासपुर, दिल्ली। मांग सूचना तिथि : 07.06.2019, प्रलक्षित कच्चा लेने की तिथि : 14.01.2021	
	बंधक सम्पत्ति का विवरण : इण्डस्ट्रीयल प्लाट सं. प्ल-36, इण्डस्ट्रीयल एरिया, जैनपुर, सहसील-अकबरपुर, जिला-कानपुर देहात। सम्पत्ति मालिक : श्री देवेश कुमार चौहान पुत्र श्री कोशलदेव सिंह चौहान, क्षेत्रफल : 800 वर्गमीटर, चौहद्दी: उत्तर : 18 मीटर चौड़ी रोड संख्या 13, दक्षिण : प्लाट सं. के-35, पूरब : प्लाट संख्या एल-37, पश्चिम : प्लाट संख्या एल-35	
	मांग सूचना तिथि में बकाया धनराशि : रु. 52,93,536.60 + ब्याज + अन्य खर्च	
प्राधिकृत अधिकारी, यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया		

सेन्ट्रल बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Central Bank of India		POSSESSION NOTICE
Regional Office: Raghubir Niwas, Civil Lines, Ayodhya		
[Under Rules-8 (1) POSSESSION NOTICE (For Movable/Immovable Property)]		
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Central Bank of India at Chandermukhi, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021 under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed herein below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general, that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules.		
The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Indian Central Bank of India.		
Sl. No.	Name of the Borrowers/Guarantor & Address	Description of the Immovable/ Movable property
Branch:- SGJS AKBARPUR		
1.	Borrower:- (1) M/s Ram Awadh Chawal Udyog Address:- Kurki Bazar, Akbarpur, Ambedkar Nagar.(2) Ram Sakal Rajbhar S/o Ram Awadh.Address:- Kayamuddinpur,Rukanuddinpur Ambedkar Nagar. Guarantor:- Suresh Kumar Singh Address:- Vill Sonava Post- Sonava Ambedkar Nagar	Equitable Mortgage of Properties: Plot No.1361, Area : 1.288 Hectare Situated at Village Dawoodpur, Tehsil- Akbarpur Distt, Ambedkar Nagar. Boundries: East- Plot of Rajdeo and others, West- Plot of Raj Bahadur and others, North- Chak road, South- Chak road.
Place: Ayodhya, Date- 18.01.2021		Authorised Officer, Central Bank Of India

इंडियन बैंक

(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)

इलाहाबाद

Indian Bank

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

ALLAHABAD

Branch: Orai Dist. Jalaun (U.P.) Phone No. 05162-252226, 250313

Under [RULE - 8 (1)] of Security Interest(Enforcement) Rules, 2002

POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)

securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement (Security) Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under 13 (12) read with [ment] Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer issued a demand notice on the date against the borrower as mentioned hereinafter, calling them to repay the amount [eipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the under noted borrowers and the public in general that the of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules on the unt. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property /ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject ALLAHABAD BANK) for the amounts and interests thereon mentioned herein below.

ailed hereunder is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower/Mortgager (owner of the Property)	Description of the Charged/Mortgaged Property	Date of Demand Notice, Possession Notice & Amount outstanding
td. Smt. Sandhya Yadav W/o Sri Shailendra Yadav	Land and Building situated at Naya Patel Nagar, Pargana & tehsil - Orai, District Jalaun Area: 298 Sq. Mtr. vide sale deed No. 1279, dated-17.03.2008, registered in Bahr No. 1, jild No. 2436. Pages from 25 to 40 Sub-Registrar Orai Boundaries: East: Plot & House of Sri Ramesh Babu West: Road 20 Feet North: Araj of Sri Omkar Das Maheshwari South: Araj of Sri Omkar Das Maheshwari	10.07.2020 15.01.2021 1,14,82,114.00 + int. & Others charges

2021

Authorised Officer Indian Bank



After virtual flag off by PM Narendra Modi, train leaving for Kevadia (Gujarat) from Varanasi Junction station on Sunday

Pioneer

PM flags off Varanasi-Kevadia train

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi flagged off Varanasi (BSB)-Kevadia (KDCY) Mahamana Inaugural Spl SF Express (09130) from Platform number 1 of Varanasi Junction (Cantt) railway station here on Sunday through virtual platform. The function was watched by hundreds of Railway and district officers apart from senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders including ministers, MLAs and others. They watched the PM on a big LED screen, installed there, flagging off eight trains from different parts of the country including from his own parliamentary constituency, along with inaugurating some Railway projects. The BJP used this inaugural run of train as an occasion as the entire decorated station premises were flooded with BJP flags.

In his address, PM said that earlier the development of Indian Railways remained lim-

ited to increasing the budget, correcting the faults and starting of new trains but now the focus is being given on overall improvement of infrastructure which includes laying of new tracks, electrification and technological improvement. According to him, these changes have helped us to start some semi-high speed train and works are going on to start some high speed trains. Even before the starting of Kevadia station, thrust was given on environment issues as the station has already certified as a green building.

The function began with Shanknaad amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras and Scouts and Guides of Northern Railway (Lucknow Division) staged street play mobilising the commuters and road users on the risks involved while crossing the level crossings. This special train would not only help the people of this region visit 'Statue of Unity', the world's tallest statue of former union minister Sardar

Vallabhbhai Patel located near Sardar Sarovar Dam, but it would also link the two important rivers, Ganga and Narmada. The entire train was decorated with flowers and balloons apart from platform and in most of the compartments the seats were full. Though the booking were started just a couple of days, most of the berths in Sleeper and AC III coaches were reserved within a few hours. The train will run between the two destinations thrice a week.

The compartments of the train are equipped with all the latest and modernised facilities. 'With state-of-art facilities and key focus on passenger safety, the train is a symbol of geographical integration and enhanced passenger comfort,' said the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Northern Railway (Lucknow Division) Sanjay Tripathi. In First AC coach, very early smoke detection apparatus (VESDA) system has been installed which in case of fire would give audio-

visual alarm and apply brakes automatically. Besides, GPS enabled destination alarm system has also been installed. In coaches, CCTV cameras have been installed and in Pantry coach several features including two heat detectors and five smoke sensors apart from others have been added which would also start fire extinguishers automatically in case of any fire incident. For drinking water, even the passengers of sleeper and other classes, purifiers have been installed.

The passengers of this inaugural run train were seen in jubilant mood. The function was attended by UP ministers Neelkanth Tiwari and Ravindra Jaiswal, Mayor Mridula Jaiswal, MLAs Awadesh Singh and Neel Ratna Patel, MLC Ashok Dhawan, District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma, ADRM (NR) RP Chaturvedi, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Ajit Sinha and many other senior district and Railway officers and BJP leaders.

NEP-2020 to help in developing ability of schoolchildren

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Asserting that there are some problems in implementing any new policy at initial stage but after the implementation everything becomes well and in order, the Secretary, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Anurag Tripathi said, the New Education Policy (NEP-2020) will help in developing the internal ability of schoolchildren.

As if the schools will face some problems in implementing the new education policy but it will enhance the capacity of students and also furnish their future, Tripathi said while speaking as chief guest in the closing session of a two-day CBSE Schools Managers Conference held at Om Vilas Resort, here by jointly CBSE School Managers Association,



Convention of CBSE School Managers' Association being held in Varanasi on Saturday

Pioneer

UP and Purvanchal School Welfare Association. The new education policy will help the schoolchildren in developing their internal quality and ability so as they will be self-employed and self-reliant, he

added.

The new education policy will help the schoolchildren in developing their skill and they will get their primary education in regional languages, the regional officer of CBSE Sweta

Arora said while throwing lights in NEP-2020. The secretary of CIS Rahul Kesharvani said, it is very difficult to run school in the present times and added, to ascertain to take the students from classes IX to XII to school and implement the COVID-19 guidelines is a big challenge. Kulbhushan Sharma said, the COVID-19 taught us to run classes even in adverse situations.

In the beginning, the patron of association Dr Deepak Madhok, president Shyam Pachauri, vice-president Shivmurti Mishra, additional secretary Parag Bose, secretaries Anup Khate & Rahul Singh and other office-bearers welcomed the chief guest.

The joint secretary of association Sumit Dutta offered a formal vote of thanks at last.

10 new Covid cases in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 10 new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Sunday, increasing the total number to 21,760. No casualty has been reported during the day and the death toll remained at 374. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 39 and all of them have been recovered from home isolation, increasing the number to 18,307. As no patient has been discharged from any hospital, the number remained at 2,955. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 21,162, leaving 324 active cases. The recovery rate is 97.25 per cent, while the mortality rate is 1.71 per cent.

In the first report of the day, six positive patients were found out of 2,361 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 5,62,086 and the results of 3,475 are awaited. Out of them, 5,40,330 were negative while 21,756 were positive. The total number of samples collected was

5,88,472. Earlier, with the addition of four red zones, the total number of hotspots has increased to 2,679 with 200 red zones. Nine green zones have been converted into the red zones again. There are 2,479 green zones with nine new ones. Meanwhile, mass / group corona antigen tests continued and all the 165 tests were found negative at SSPG Hospital Kabirchaura apart from 28 at CHC Shiyapur, 42 at Vivekanand Hospital Belupur, 95 at LBS Hospital Ramnagar and 164 at SSH BHU. Along with this, samples of 148 from SSPG, 50 from LBS Hospital Ramnagar, 26 from Vivekanand Hospital and 140 from SSH BHU have been sent for RTPCR investigation.

Besides, under the 'Mission Shakti' campaign, a total of 5,013 women / girls were mobilised at 197 places and 1,409 leaflets were distributed. A total of 1,834 women / girls were sensitised by the Anti-Romeo Squads at 180 places. As many as 102 eve teasers were warned and action was taken against three under 151

CrPC. Apart from this, the police arrested 33 persons under Section 151 of CrPC, while challaned under Section 188 and took action under Section 51 of Disaster Management Act against 12 persons.

During checking at various points, 791 vehicles were challaned and six seized. Apart from this, ₹ 98,300 were realised from 123 vehicles while ₹ 10,200 from 289 persons for moving on the roads without wearing masks.

MINISTER PRAISES SOCIAL WORKS DONE BY STREET VENDORS: The street vendors will be benefited with the eight schemes of the Central Government including Shramyogi Yojana, Awas Yojana, Jeevan Jyoti Yojana, Bandhan Suraksha Bima Yojana, Ayushman Bharat Yojana, etc and the process has also begun in this direction.

The Varanasi Municipal Corporation (VMC) has started the process to benefit the street vendors with the above

mentioned schemes of the Central Government, the UP Minister of State for Tourism, Culture & Religious Affairs (Independent Charge) Dr Neelkanth Tiwari on Sunday said and praised the social works done by the street vendors during the lockdown clamped by the government in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking in a programme organised at Jawahar Market in Englishline, here by Pheri, Patri avam Thela Vyawasayee Samiti, Varanasi on the fourth death anniversary of its founder secretary Pramod Kumar Nigam, the minister said, the street vendors showed an example by making the vegetables and fruits available to the dwellers by visiting door to door during the lockdown even making their life at stake. The Central Government provided an assistance of ₹10000 to the vendors under Swanidhi Yojana and the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also interacted with a local vendor while launching the scheme, the minister added.

Man killed, many hurt in clash

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

In a shocking incident, a 55-year-old man was brutally killed while dozen others sustained grievous injuries when the two sides clashed over some trivial issues under the Kheri police station of Yamunapar in Prayagraj district here on Sunday.

Both the parties indulged in fighting using iron rods sticks and logs over land dispute. One person died in the fight, while half a dozen people were injured. On receipt

of information police reached the spot and admitted the injured to the hospital for treatment.

On Sunday, Indradev Mishra son of late Ram Naresh Mishra in village Sirhir under the Kheri police station was getting a piece of land dug through machine for construction of a building. It is alleged that while claiming their rights on the same land, the other side reached there with many people and stopped the excavation. When Indradev objected to this, a

dispute ensued between them.

When the matter escalated, people gathered from Indradev's side too. Then both sides indulged in fighting. During this, along with lathi, iron rods were also used. In the fight, along with Indradev, his 18-year-old daughter Savita Kumari, Urmila Devi, 50 wife of late Ramji Mishra, Dinesh alias Bablu Mishra 20, Annu Devi wife of Vinod 22, Neelima Devi 22 wife of Ritej were critically injured.

The Kheri police, who

arrived there, admitted all the injured to a local hospital for treatment. Indradev's condition was critical due to being attacked with an iron rod. So he was referred by the doctors to the city hospital for treatment. He died on the way while being taken there. The other party's accused are absconding. A complaint has been given against the accused in the police station from the victim side. Police are raiding at places to get hold of the accused who are on the run.

Nandi donates ₹ 1.25 crore for Ram temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Cabinet Minister of Uttar Pradesh Government Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi donated ₹ 1.25 crore for Ram Jannabhoomi Temple construction in Ayodhya. This contribution was made from the Nandi Sewa Sansthan account and Ramesh RSS Pracharak of the Kashi Prant, and the Vibhag Pracharak Krishna Chandra received this cheque of ₹1,25,00,000.

The minister said on the occasion, 'Hum Ramji Ke, Ramji Hamare'. Abhilasha

Gupta Nandi, the Mayor of Prayagraj, was also present on the occasion.

NCZCC DIRECTOR'S TENURE EXTENDED: Tenure of the Director, North Central Zone Cultural Centre Indrajit Singh Grovar has been extended for two years. On the directions of the Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (Independent Charge), the undersecretary Government of India Rajesh Saha issued a letter in this regard to the Additional Chief Secretary to the Uttar Pradesh Governor. Now Grover will

serve as the NCZCC director till December 17, 2022.

Grover, after getting extension, geared up his activities and organised a five-day painting workshop / exhibition on the occasion of Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti 'Prakash Parva'. Grover, who himself is a celebrated artist, took with him the head of the Fine Arts department, Allahabad University, Prof Ajay Jaitley for conducting this painting workshop on the different aspects of Guru Gobind Singh's life within the premises of Gurudwara Khuldabad.

The valedictory session of this workshop will be marked by Sabad-Kirtan, to be organised by the NCZCC on January 19. The trainers and the learners are doing wonders with their brush strokes to depict different episodes that happened in Guru Gobind Singh's life.

NCZCC is known for preserving the fading folk arts of the region, and the director took an initiative to organise Kala Chaupal in urban as well as rural areas to take feedback from the artistes, and to trace out the hidden talents.

AU's semester exams postponed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The proposed semester examinations of the Allahabad University have also been postponed in January due to Covid pandemic. However, the first and third semester exams of MSc Cognitive Science will be conducted according to its predetermined schedule, as the number of students is very less. At the same time, the back paper examinations of the graduation session 2019-20 have already been postponed.

On January 8, the AU administration released the schedule of back paper examinations for the graduation session 2019-20 and semester examinations for the session

2020-21. All examinations were prepared to be made offline. Back paper examinations are usually held in August, but this time due to Covid, the examinations could not be conducted on time.

The exams were going to be delayed by five months and were proposed from January 21, but in the meantime, the AU administration had to postpone the back paper examinations after two Corona infected in the AN Jha hostel and one Corona infected in AU's FCI building were found.

It has now been decided to postpone the semester examinations. The MBA third semester examinations were proposed from January 22 to

28 and the BA.LLB ninth semester examinations from January 23 to 30.

Both these exams have now been postponed. However, from January 15 to 22, the proposed MSc Cognitive Science third semester and from January 25 to February 1, the proposed MSc Cognitive Science first semester examinations will be conducted according to its predetermined schedule.

The students of MBA third semester and LLB ninth semester also sought to postpone the examinations by giving memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor. Students want the examinations to be conducted in online mode. The students said that the students

staying out for the examination will have to come to Prayagraj. No permission to stay in hostels in this case where will the students stay.

Also, there is a possibility of their corona getting infected. In this regard, Exam Controller Prof Ramendra Kumar Singh said that there are only 15 students in the Cognitive Science exam. Therefore, the examination is being conducted. All the candidates have been asked for the same.

The exams for the MBA third semester and LLB ninth semester have been postponed along with the back paper examinations. It will be decided by meeting soon what to do next.

One held for taking ₹ 20 lakh in name of providing job in rlys

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

An FIR has been lodged against the general secretary of the Railway Men's Union and his son for grabbing ₹ 20 lakh in the name of getting a job in the railway. Khuldabad police have arrested Ankit Pandey, son of the accused railway worker while the search for his father is on.

Jitendra Kumar, originally from Saini of Kaushambi, stays in the city with his younger brother and prepares for competitive examinations and works in a private company. It is alleged that one day

he met Ankit Kumar Pandey, resident of Ghanshyam Nagar Railway Colony, Khuldabad. He informed him that his father Manoj Kumar Pandey, who works as a technician in Railways, is also the general secretary of Railway Men's Union. He has recruited many people from DRM, GM quota. Currently, four quota posts are still vacant.

He will get him a job in railway in turn of ₹10 lakh. Out of which ₹5 lakh will be taken in advance and the remaining ₹5 lakh will have to be given after getting the job. After which he met Ankit's

father Manoj along with his brother and his cousins. Supporting his son's talk, his father assured them for a job in railway. After which a total of ₹20 lakh was given both in cash and in the account. Thereafter, both of them also gave them appointment letters. But upon reaching the concerned department, the appointment letter turned out to be fake.

On the complaint of which the accused gave them two cheques. But even after three months they did not receive their money back. At the same time, accused were

also reluctant to pay their money back after asking for money.

The victims reported the case to SSP Sarvashresth Tripathi. Following his instructions the Khuldabad police filed an FIR against the duo. Also, the cops arrested accused Ankit Pandey on Saturday. Khuldabad Inspector Virendra Yadav said that Ankit is claiming himself an advocate. His father and another accused in the case, Manoj Pandey, are being searched and would soon be booked and sent behind the bars, he added.

37 more test positive in Prayagraj

ALLAHABAD (PNS): As many as 4,927 people were tested for COVID-19 in the district. And of them, the report of 37 people came positive in 24 hours. About 35 people beat the infection on the same day. No infected died on the same day.

According to CMO Dr Prabhakar Rai, out of the 35 people who have overcome the infection, seven people were discharged from Covid hospitals. At the same time, 28 people completed home isolation. So far 20,882 people have been healthy by staying in home isolation.

The prevalence of corona infection in the district is decreasing.

On Saturday, the number of active patients has come down to 387, the same figures which stood six months ago. At the same time, the number of people who lost their lives from Corona has increased to 378. At present, 42 Covid infected patients are admitted to L3 SRN Hospital, 16 in Beli Hospital, nine in United Medicity and four in Kalindipuram Covid Care Centre.

Nodal officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai said that the infected included a primary school teacher in Handia and Inter College teacher at Rasulabad. The Covid report has come positive for many people, including a constable of RPF Prayagraj, a homeguard posted at Handia police station, an assistant in the Georgetown-based cooperative department.

Meanwhile, the corona infection has knocked in the Magh Mela area, but preparations of the Health department are still incomplete. Covid testing centres and general hospitals have not been established here.

The risk of infection has increased after the covid report of five homeguards of the Mela Police Line arrived positive. In such a situation, it is currently difficult to follow the Corona Protocol and the mandate in the fair area.

On Sunday, Health department teams conducted a Covid check of jawans and home guards in the Police Line located in Magh Mela area. There was a stir when the report of five homeguards came positive. The order of the corona testing

will continue in the Police Line. Devotees will start coming to Magh Mela area from far flung areas right from Purnima. A large number of people including devotees, Kalpavasis will visit the Mela area.

According to the government's guide line, the covid testing report has to be shown before entering the fair area. The Mela administration had said to make Covid Hospital and Testing Centre in every sector, but this has not been done at the moment. The responsibility of testing, setting up of hospitals in the fair area and following the covid protocol, has been entrusted to the Health department, but hospitals have not been prepared in any sector.

SEMINAR: Without the active participation of the teacher, the present and future of the nation is in danger. The responsibility of teachers has always been important in the creation of individual, society and nation. The discharge of responsibility of teachers has been very challenging during the corona period.

All India National Educational Federation,

national co-organisation minister Ompal expressed these views during a programme. He was speaking as a keynote speaker at the seminar on 'Kartavya Bodh Divas' on the special occasion to celebrate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda in the auditorium of Jawaladevi Inter College on Sunday. He emphasised the enhancement of self-pride, self-reliance and self-confidence in the sense of duty and described the commercialisation of education as the biggest challenge of the present.

In the presidential address, the Vice-Chancellor of Dr. Shakuntala Mishra National Rehabilitation University, Prof Rana Krishna Pal Singh said that teachers have an important role in building a healthy society. In a changing environment both sides of spiritual and temporal life have to be given equal importance. As a distinguished guest, state general secretary Rishidev Tripathi defined the loyalty of duty as a teacher, describing him as the best craftsman of the society. The symposium was inaugurated by the chief guest with lighting of the ceremonial lamp.

Covid 1st phase vaccination over, signal for 2nd round awaited

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Mishra, on Sunday, said that the first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination had come to an end and the second phase would be launched as per the government guidelines. He said as there was no directive yet from the government, the second phase would begin only after getting the green light. He added that as an when the vaccine was available, the priority would be health front line workers. He said the data of the first phase of the vaccination, both in public and private sector hospitals, had been forwarded to the government.

He added that as and when the second phase takes off, the information will be sent on the registered mobile phones. The CMO said that all those who had taken the first dose of the vaccine had to mandatorily take the second dose after 28 days and added that the repeat dose of the vaccine had been kept in reserve in the cold chambers. He said the Centre would review the data collected from all the states of the country and then issue the new guidelines for the rest of the people. The CMO said all those who took the first vaccine dose on January 16 would have to report for the second dose in February as declared by the

government. He said the government had especially assigned two days for the vaccination — Monday and Friday. He said there was a possibility that some people may have missed the first vaccine dose and for them a mop up round would be carried out on the two given days. The CMO said the community health centre at Sarsaul had excelled in the first phase vaccination drive as out of 100 people who had been registered, 92 had reached the CHC for their vaccination. He said the lowest vaccination was recorded from GSVM Medical College centre where only 40 registered indi-

viduals turned up for the first dose of the vaccine. He said a few minor problems were reported after taking the vaccine when at Ursula Hospital centre a pharmacist after being given the vaccine shot felt nervousness and was rushed to the Emergency where she was attended to and kept under observation and allowed to go home after she became normal. The CMO said some of those vaccinated felt minor giddiness but became normal in a few minutes. He said apart from this the rest of the drive was carried out smoothly and no adverse effect was reported from any centre.

Traffic police to hold awareness camp from today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Basant Lal said the Kanpur traffic police had decided to hold awareness camp from January 18 to February 17, 2021, especially focusing on schools and students. Addressing a meeting at the traffic police lines on Sunday, Lal said students were the best medium to spread awareness among parents and family about traffic rules and regulations. He said an elaborate educational programme on road safety had been chalked out. The SP (Traffic) said under the campaign, schools would be targeted for awareness and the traffic education programme would be undertaken in various city schools to promote safe commuting. He said the traffic police would first sensitise school-children and teachers, who in turn would be educating others and this way one could jointly minimise road mishaps. The SP (Traffic) said adolescents were handed over two-wheelers by their parents but unfortunately the parents hardly made the children aware of the safe traffic rules and their duty to follow the traffic rules which were meant for their safety only.

He said all schools, including private ones, would be advised to appoint nodal road safety teachers to educate and inform students about traffic rules and road safety measures. He said the objective was to educate not just the students but also their parents, through the children, who would remind parents to wear seat belts and discourage drunken driving. He said the two key tools used to improve the safety of teenage drivers was driver education and the legal structure of testing and licensure. Lal said the goals for driver education were generally straightforward and meant just to teach youth the rules of the road, the basic skills they needed to control the car, and safe driving practices, such as defensive driving and risk assessment. He said driver education was not viewed as a lost cause by safety experts, but suggestions had been made that these programmes could address safety skills in new ways, by addressing teenagers' tendency toward risk-taking and overconfidence and by increasing parental involvement. The SP (Traffic) said motorised two-wheelers comprised over 70 per cent of all motor vehicles in India and motorcyclists along with pedestrians were among the most vulnerable road users. He said speeding and risk-taking among young motorcyclists posed a major public health challenge. He added that the problem of excessive speed and the factors associated with it were crucial for road safety promotion while traffic regulations and law-enforcement were major concerns, understanding the subjective perception of the two-wheeler rider from a psychological perspective was very important. He appealed to schools to extend all possible support in this campaign.

Goods worth lakhs stolen from shop

KANPUR (PNS): Goods worth lakhs were stolen from a tyre shop on GT road near Makanpur town turn in Billaaur Kotwali police area on Saturday night. Mohd Zafar of Bhagat Singh Nagar in Makanpur, said he had opened the tyre-tube shop in Sachin Market about two months ago and as usual, he had closed the shop at 7 pm on Saturday and gone to house. Late in the night, the robbers broke open the shutter and removed around 250 tyres, tubes and puncture material. After seeing some of the tyres out of his shop, the neighbours informed Zafar about it on Sunday morning. He said goods worth around Rs.3 lakh were stolen from the shop. Inspector PN Bajpai said investigations were on.

Vindhyachal ED flags off fly ash rake

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Vindhyachal Executive Director Munish Johri flagged off the dry fly ash loaded rail rake in the presence of GM (Operations & Maintenance) SC Nayak and other General Managers. The NTPC Vindhyachal as part of a new initiative for the first time sent dry fly ash loaded rail rake to M/s



Star Cement Company, North East, recently. The M/s Star Cement, Assam, carried 2,700 tonnes of fly ash in jumbo bags in an environmentally-friendly manner at its own cost. This is a historic moment of pride for NTPC and in Northern Region for NTPC Vindhyachal. It will prove to be a milestone for NTPC Vindhyachal.

LTT-Manduadih special extended

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of passengers is extending the 02167 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT)-Manduadih daily special at present running till January 31 and 02168 Manduadih-LTT special at present running till February 1 until further notice. Apart from this, it has been decided to extend the following special trains. All coaches will be of reserved category and passengers will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines. Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) PK Singh said. **PUNE-DARBHANGA SPL:** The 01033 Pune-Darbhang weekly special running every Wednesday till January 27 is being extended from February 3 to March 31. The 01034 Darbhanga-Pune weekly special train being run on every Friday till January 29 is being extended from February 5 to April 2. **PUNE-GORAKHPUR SPECIAL:** The 01115 Pune-Gorakhpur weekly special run-

ning every Thursday till January 28 is being extended from February 4 to March 25. The 01116 Gorakhpur-Pune weekly special train being run on every Saturday till January 30 is being from February 6 to March 31. **PUNE-LUCKNOW JN SPECIAL:** The 01407 Pune-Lucknow Jn special being run every Tuesday till January 26 is being extended from February 9 to March 30. Likewise the 01408 Lucknow Jn - Pune weekly special train running every Thursday till January 28 is being extended from February 4 to April 1. **PUNE-MANDUADIH SPECIAL:** The 02135 Pune-Manduadih weekly special train running every Monday till January 25 is being extended from February 1 to March 31. The 02136 Manduadih-Pune weekly special train running every Wednesday till January 27 is being extended from February 3 to March 31. **LTT - GORAKHPUR SPECIAL:** The 02165 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus - Gorakhpur bi-weekly special train running every Thursday and Monday till February 1 is being extended from February 4 to April 1.

LTT - GORAKHPUR WEEKLY SPECIAL: The 01079 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus-Gorakhpur weekly special train running every Thursday till January 28 is being extended from February 4 to March 25. On the other hand, the 01080 Gorakhpur-Lokmanya Tilak Terminus weekly special train running every Saturday till January 30 is being extended from February 6 to March 27.

Trains to be cancelled, diverted

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Due to the farmers' agitation going on in Punjab, the railway administration will cancel and divert the following trains, CPRO PK Singh said. **CANCELLATION:** The 05211 Darbhanga-Amritsar special to run from Darbhanga

on January 18 will remain canceled. The 05212 Amritsar-Darbhang special to run from Amritsar on January 20 will remain canceled. **DIVERSION:** The 04650 Amritsar-Jaynagar special to run from Amritsar on January 18 will in place of running on its scheduled route i.e.

Amritsar-Jandiala-Vyas will be diverted via Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Vyas route. The 04673 Jaynagar-Amritsar special to run from Jaynagar on January 18 will instead of running on its scheduled route i.e Vyas-Jandiala-Amritsar will be diverted via Beas-Tarn Taran-Amritsar.

Students honoured

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The annual function of NE Railway Senior Secondary School here was organised on Saturday during which AGM NER Amit Kumar Agarwal was the chief guest. The programme was inaugurated by AGM Amit Kumar Agarwal and vice-president of North Eastern Railway Women's Welfare Organisation (NERWVO) Vidhi Agrawal, by lighting the lamp and garlanding the picture of Ma Saraswati. Earlier the AGM and vice-president of NERWVO inaugurated a science exhibition. In his address the AGM said that the talent of students was reflected in the science exhibition. He said that it was the responsibility of parents to give good education to children. The achievements of the school are very impressive, in which the hard work of the principal, teachers and students of the school is reflected, he said. On the occasion vice-president, NERWVO, Nidhi Agarwal, honoured the outstanding students of the school by presenting them medals, citations and prizes. The Best Student of School Award student was presented to Vinay Kumar Dubey while the Best Girl Student Award to Jyoti Sharma. Meanwhile principal Arun Kumar Saxena presented school's annual report, excellent works done and a detailed report of the facilities available to provide excellent education to the students besides the achievements. Later the vote of thanks was proposed by Executive Officer of the school and Deputy Chief Engineer /Gorakhpur region Ravinder Mehra.



Rajya Sabha MP Shiv Pratap Shukla handing over a cheque of ₹2.50 lakh to RSS Vibhag Karyavaah Atma in Gorakhpur as a contribution for the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya

Bodies identified

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The Ahraura police has identified the two bodies which were found in a burnt condition at Chhaton hillock under Ahraura police station on Friday. During investigation police found that a case of two youths going missing had been registered in Varanasi. The case regarding Shubham Keshari (26), a resident of 64/48 Gola Deenanath, going missing was registered in the Kotwali there on January 5 and the second case was regarding Ravi Pandey (24), a resident of plot No 36, flat No 402, Gopal Vihar Colony, Mahmoorganj, going missing was registered at Belhupur police station on December 23, 2020. On clues when their families were contacted they were identified as Ravi and Shubham Keshari. As per the police records, Shubham Keshari was a historysheeter and an accused in around one dozen cases. After the identification of bodies police have started further investigation in the matter. **TAKES CHARGE:** Newly-appointed Joint Development Commissioner (JDC) Suresh Chandra Mishra took over charge on Saturday. Prior to it he paid obeisance to Goddess Vindhyavasini. A PDS officer of 1989 batch he was working as PD DRDA at Mainpuri prior to his present posting. PD DRDA, Rishimuni Upadhyay, DIO OP Upadhyay and staff of the office, including Rahul Tiwari, were present on the occasion.

Safety test conducted

PNS ■ VARANASI

For upgradation of passenger amenities and operational ease the railway administration is doing the work of expansion of basic structure on a priority basis. Between Chhapra-Masharkh the safety test of newly-electrified 42-km-long Duraundha-Maharajganj-Masharkh section was conducted by Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), NE Circle, Mohammad Latif Khan, on Saturday. During the inspection North Eastern Railway (NER)'s Chief Administrative Office (CAO), Construction, RK Yadav, DRM Varanasi Vijay Kumar Panjari, CEE Anil Kumar Shukla, CEDE RK Gupta, DCSO BK Sharma along with senior officers of headquarter and Varanasi Division were present. Reaching Duraundha by inspection special train, CRS first inspected the Duraundha railway station along with duly inspecting the power sub-station at Maharajganj end, taking cognizance of power supply distribution system and control room earthing and feeder isolation etc. At Maharajganj station the CRS inspected various works developed as per the electrification and took cognizance of the changes in the station working rule and found all works to be in accordance with the standard. Finally the CRS conducted speed trial from Masrakh to Duraundha by electric locomotive which was completed at an average speed of 65 km per hour.

Governor felicitates LIC's 'Insurance Warriors'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel felicitated the Life Insurance Corporation of India's 'Insurance Warriors' at a grand function held at Raj Bhawan in the state capital on Sunday. The LIC as an organisation praised the efforts of its agents who not only created awareness but helped clients to choose life insurance as per their needs in times of crisis as well. "Today, the nation recognised the importance of LIC and this could be materialised on account of the efforts of the support of the common people as well," it said. "The new business increase points out at the 'Karmaveer Insurance Warriors' who had done a commendable job in furthering awareness regarding LIC," it added. The Governor felicitated



Governor Anandiben Patel felicitates LIC agents at Raj Bhawan for their commendable performance.

Pioneer

the agents at Raj Bhawan and expressed hope that they would continue to work similarly in future as well. Prominent

among those present in the felicitation ceremony were LIC Regional Manager AK Sharma, Pradeshik Prabandhak

(Marketing) Kuldip Tikkoo and Senior Development Manager (Lucknow) Raj Vir Singh.

Doc: Medical nutrition therapy a key component of diabetes management

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Noted diabetologist and ex-president of Indian Medical Association, Dr AC Agarwal, while addressing a CME organised by Kanpur Urology Nephrology Association on Sunday, said the biggest factor overlooked by people was their dietary patterns and food frequencies, especially those with type 2 diabetes. He said awareness about diabetes complications and consequent improvement in dietary knowledge, attitude and practices led to better control of the disease. He said medical nutrition therapy (MNT) was a key component of diabetes education and management and was defined as a nutrition-based treatment provided by a registered dietician nutritionist. He said MNT included a nutrition diagnosis as well as

therapeutic and counselling services to help manage diabetes. He added that consuming excess sugars and fats found in foods could contribute to weight gain and this excess weight was associated with diabetes. He said one of the top risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes was being overweight. Dr Agarwal said dietary habits and sedentary lifestyle were the major factors for rapidly rising incidence of DM (diabetes mellitus) in developing countries. He said in type 2 diabetes, recently, elevated HbA1c level had also been considered as one of the leading risk factors for developing microvascular and macrovascular complications. He said improvement in the elevated HbA1c level could be achieved through diet management and thus the patients could be prevented from devel-

oping the diabetes complications. He said evidence suggested a link between the intake of soft drinks with obesity and diabetes, resulting from large amounts of high fructose corn syrup used in the manufacturing of soft drinks, which raised blood glucose levels and BMI to dangerous levels. He said soft drinks contained glycated chemicals that markedly augmented insulin resistance. He said food intake had been strongly linked with obesity, not only related to the volume of food but also in terms of the composition and quality of diet. He said high intake of red meat, sweets and fried foods contributed to the increased risk of insulin resistance. Dr Agarwal said consumption of fruits and vegetables could protect the development of T2DM, as they were rich in nutrients, fibre and

antioxidants which were considered as protective barrier against the diseases. He added that the success of dietary management required that the health professionals should have an orientation about the cultural beliefs, thoughts, family, and communal networks of the patients. He said as diabetes was a disease which continued for the lifetime, proper therapy methods with special emphasis on diet should be given by the healthcare providers in a way to control the disease, reduce the symptoms, and prevent the appearance of the complications. The patients should also have good knowledge about the disease and diet and for this purpose, the healthcare providers must inform the patients to make changes in their nutritional habits and food preparations, he added.

EWCC foundation day function on Jan 24

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The grand foundation day function of Employees Welfare Coordination Committee (EWCC), a joint forum of Central and state government employees, officers and employees of bank, insurance, development authorities, nagar nigams, teachers and labourers, would be organised at Gahoi Bhavan in Saket Nagar on January 24. Regional Provident Fund Commissioner, Agra, Rajiv Pal will be the chief guest at this function. Addressing media persons, EWCC general secretary Sharad Prakash Agarwal said there would be discussions on various demands and based on resolutions passed in the convention, a memorandum would be sent to the state and Central governments for early settlement of the demands. Some of their demands include restoration of the old pension scheme, cancellation of corporatisation and privatisation of public sector organisa-



EWCC General Secretary Sharad Prakash Agarwal addressing mediapersons on Sunday.

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tions including railway and defence organisations, recruitment of regular employees on vacant posts instead of contract workforce, employment on compassionate grounds to all in place of five per cent dependants and new recruitment in all the sectors. Agarwal said it was not justified to withhold the payment of dearness allowance to

salaried class employees during pandemic period. Besides, he said, when the public representatives (MPs and MLAs) were paid pension under the old pension scheme, it was not justified to pay this to all officers/employees under the new pension scheme. On this occasion, founder and life members would also be felicitated, he said.

Other committee leaders present at the press conference were Dr Suresh Chandra Gupta (president), acting president Raghvendra Singh, senior vice-president Arvind Trivedi, vice-president Rajnish Gupta, Rajiv Nigam, secretary SK Sahu, AN Dwivedi, Rama Kant Gupta, SK Singh, Prashant Shukla, Pradip Yadav, Rajendra Awasthi and Arvind Dwivedi.

Sena to contest Assembly polls in West Bengal: Raut

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena has decided to contest the upcoming Assembly elections in West Bengal, party MP Sanjay Raut said on Sunday.

He said the decision to contest the polls has been taken after holding discussions with Maharashtra Chief Minister and Sena president Uddhav Thackeray.

“So, here is the much-awaited update. After discussions with Party Chief Shri Uddhav Thackeray, Shiv Sena has decided to contest the West Bengal Assembly Elections. We are reaching Kolkata soon...!! Jai Hind, Jai Bangla!” Raut tweeted.

He said the decision to contest the polls has been taken after holding discussions with Maharashtra CM and Sena president Uddhav Thackeray

He, however, didn't specify the number of seats the Sena will contest in West Bengal.

Elections to the 294-member WB assembly are due in April-May this year.

The Sena is in power in Maharashtra along with the NCP and Congress under the aegis of Maha Vikas Aghadi.

Maha: After 2-day suspension, vaccination to resume tomorrow

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 vaccination drive, which came to be suspended in Maharashtra late on Saturday night owing the glitches in the CoWin software, will resume on Tuesday.

In a late Saturday night tweet, Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal announced that the Vaccination drive would remain suspended on January 17 and 18.

The CoWIN application, which was used to tally the vaccine beneficiaries, was erratic throughout the first day on Saturday, thus delaying the entire vaccination drive at several locations.

Chahal said it was mandatory for all to register themselves on the CoWin app before they could be called for the vaccine jab. Informed official sources said that efforts were on to rectify the problems in the CoWin app after which registration will begin and the Vaccination drive will resume by Tuesday.

CPM activist alleges electoral frauds by party in Kerala’s local body polls

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A prominent CPI(M) activist has come out in the open alleging that massive fraud was committed by the party leaders and cadre during the recently held local body elections in the State.

Prof K M Sreekumar, a CPI(M) activist who was posted as the presiding officer of a polling station in Kasaragod district during the local body election, alleged in a complaint to the State election Commission that K Kunhiraman MLA from Uduma threatened him with dire consequences when the former objected to electoral fraud being committed by party cadre.

“People who had cast their votes were turning up again and again to cast votes in the name of other voters. There was large scale bogus voting and when I objected to it, the local CPI(M) leader asked me not to intervene. When I stood my ground, the MLA turned up and asked me to look after what was happening inside the polling booth and not to create problems.

When I insisted in checking the identity of the voters, the MLA threatened to chop off my legs,” said Prof Sreekumar in his social media posting.

Prof Sreekumar, who heads the CPI(M) controlled teachers’ union of the Agricultural University, said that the entire polling staff on duty was from the party itself. “This is to facilitate bogus voting and this has been the precedence in this part of the State,” said the professor.

Northern Kerala, especially the districts of Kannur, Kasaragod and the northern region of Kozhikode are infamous for the “party villages” which are controlled and administered by the CPI(M) irrespective of who rules from Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city. The panchayats in all party villages are under the control of the CPI(M) which decides who should file nomination papers.

“These villages are out of bound for persons belonging to other parties. It is the writ of local party commissars which run in these villages,” said Kunhikannan, author and political

commentator belonging to one of the villages.

Dr T P Senkumar, former chief of Kerala Police who retired as recently as 2017 from the Indian Police Service has written about the frauds committed by the CPI(M) in elections. “Young IPS officers who were put on election duty in these regions have told me about massive bogus voting by certain people in all elections. When they questioned the propriety behind these malpractices, the officers were threatened with dire consequences by the CPI(M) leaders,” Dr Senkumar wrote in his memoirs.

The bogus voting in party villages by CPI(M) activists have been mentioned by Balakrishnan Chammancherry, a retired government official, in his autobiographical novel “Elegy by Village Goddesses”. “Both men and women compete with each other in casting maximum number of bogus votes. It has become a ritual in this part of the world,” says the novel based on the political murders committed in the party villages.

6 killed as bus comes in contact with live wire in Rajasthan

Seven of the injured were rushed to Jalore district hospital while the other injured were sent home after preliminary treatment

Jaipur: A total of six persons were killed and seven injured in Rajasthan's Jalore district when a bus caught fire after coming in contact with a high tension wire of 11,000 volts, police said on Sunday.

The bus was on its way to Ajmer (and Beowar situated near it) from Nakoda pilgrimage on Saturday late night when the incident happened. The bus apparently lost its way while following the google map and reached a small village.

While making its way through the narrow lanes of the village, the bus came into contact with the high tension wire.

The conductor tried to remove the high tension wire, however the current soon passed into the bus through him, leaving six persons dead as the bus caught fire.

The deceased include the driver and the conductor

Seven of the injured were rushed to Jalore district hospital while the other injured were sent home after preliminary treatment.

Police officials told IANS that Jain families were on their way back to Ajmer and Beowar after offering prayers in the Nakoda temple.

However, while following the Google map, the bus reached the Maheshpura village, seven kilometers from Jalore and was followed by another bus.

While one bus caught fire, the other bus following it stopped and passengers from this bus rushed to help after seeing the tragic accident.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot expressed their grief over the accident. **IANS**

Central Rly to run Mumbai-Delhi Rajdhani daily from tomorrow

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what comes as a new year gift to the passengers, the Central Railway will run Rajdhani Express (No 22221/22222) daily between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in Mumbai and Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station in Delhi, from Tuesday (January 19).

The Rajdhani Express is one of the most prestigious trains run by Indian Railways, connecting the national capital with other important cities of the country. Fully air-conditioned, these trains are super-fast and halt only at prominent stations.

Rajdhani Express, which had its inaugural run on January 19, 2019, was a bi-weekly train earlier with one First AC, three AC 2-Tier, 8 AC 3-Tier and one pantry car. It used to depart from CSMT every Wednesday and Saturday at 14.50 hrs and reached Hazrat Nizamuddin at 10.20 hrs next day, halting at Kalyan, Nasik Road, Jalgaon, Bhopal, Jhansi

and Agra Cantt.

The demand for this train increased to such an extent that from twice a week, the frequency of the train was increased to 4 times a week from 13.9.2019. This train was also flagged off on September 14, 2019 from CSMT. The train used to run with One First AC, 5 AC-2 Tier and 11 AC-3 Tier and one pantry car.

The year 2020 threw another big challenge in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic and in the better interests of the passengers and employees, the Central Railway suspended mail / express and suburban trains in its efforts to minimise the spread of corona infection.

Post the lockdown and in course of the unlock period has once again for the benefit of its passengers, the Central Railway started the Rajdhani Express service as a special train from December 30, 2020. This special train with revised numbers 01221 / 01222 ran 4 days a week with the same composition and halts and from 9.1.2021, it was



given halt at Gwalior also.

The Central Railway began the year 2021 on a positive note and on the second anniversary of Rajdhani express, it has decided to extend the run of this train from 4 days a week to daily. This will surely benefit lakhs of passengers travelling to the Capital

city as well as the halt stations of this prestigious train.

Currently, this train leaves Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Mumbai at 16.00 hrs daily and arrives Hazrat Nizamuddin at 09.55 hrs next day. In the return direction, it leaves Hazrat Nizamuddin at

16.55 hrs daily and arrives at CSMT, Mumbai at 11.15 hrs the next day.

According to a CR statement, bookings can be made at all computerised reservation centres and on website www.irctc.co.in. For detailed timings at halts of the above

Rajdhani superfast special train, passengers can visit www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or download NTES App.

“Only passengers having confirmed tickets will be permitted to board this special train. Passengers are advised to adhere to all norms, SOPs

related to COVID19 during the boarding, travel and at destination,” the statement added.

Rajdhani Express became India's first train to run on Push-Pull technology empowering the Government's “Mission Raftar” thus achieving another milestone in Railway history.

CRs expressed its appreciation to art when in December-2019, the pantry coach of Rajdhani Express became a canvas-on -wheels, displaying beautiful, hand-painted art of historical sites in route of the train, adorning the sides of the coach.

This was followed by theme based WAP-7 locomotives- a unique initiative to promote new, improved and latest Push-Pull technology by sketching various World Heritage sites like The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj terminus, The Taj Mahal, The Red Fort etc, on the electric locomotives. All these creations were painted by artistes and employees of Central Railway.



Animal lovers with their pets participate in a rally for a better world for animals in Kolkata on Sunday

PTI

Another spell of snow, rain likely in J&K from Jan 22

Srinagar: Weather office said on Sunday that light to moderate snowfall in the higher reaches and rain in the plains of Jammu and Kashmir is likely to occur from the evening of January 22 to January 25.

An official of the local meteorological (MeT) department said, “A western disturbance is most likely to affect J&K and Ladakh from the evening of January 23 to the forenoon of January 25.

“This will result in fairly widespread to widespread light to moderate snowfall/rain in the plains of J&K during the above mentioned dates with the main activity on January 24.”

The official added that the new system would be much weaker than the previous one. “So we expect precipitation of lower intensity compared to the previous one”, he said.

The 40-day long period of harsh winter cold known local-

ly as the 'Chillai Kalan' will end on January 31.

Srinagar had minus 7.6, Pahalgam minus 8.7 and Gulmarg minus 4.2 as the minimum temperature.

Leh town of Ladakh had minus 15.1, Kargil minus 17.4 and Drass minus 25.6 as the night's lowest temperature.

Jammu city had 8.4, Katra 4.7, Batote 6.1, Bannihal 4.2 and Bhaderwah 1.5 as the minimum temperature. **IANS**

Now, robots to deliver medicines to Covid patients in Assam hospital

Guwahati: Now robots would deliver medicines and essential services to Covid-19 patients at a hospital in Assam, officials said here on Sunday.

The robots designed by the Guwahati-based Yantrabot Technologies Pvt Limited with remote controllable robotic vehicles would deliver food, medicines and other essential services to Covid-19 patients as well as patients with other extremely contagious diseases inside the isolation chambers of the quarantine facilities.

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday handed over two robots to the Principal of Dibrugarh-based Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH), Sanjib Kakati, to use them for delivering food, medicines and essential services to Covid patients.

An official release said it is part of the Covid-19 infrastructure equipment grant sponsored by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, Rotary Club of Dibrugarh and Bangladesh's Rotary Club of Dhaka Royal under the support of “Global Grant”.

Sonowal thanked co-founder Arunijyoti Borgohain of Yantrabot

Technologies Pvt Limited for designing the robot. The Chief Minister said the two robots would have a huge role in rendering care to patients in the hospitals.

Meanwhile, in a first-of-its-kind in northeast India, a robot developed by young scientist Harjeet Nath from Tripura University was deployed in a government Covid Care Centre in May 2020 to deal with Covid patients.

Nath has made the robot from locally available material, including scrap. He has named it as ‘WAR-BOT’ to fight the war against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nath's aim was to assist the frontline health workers, including doctors, in taking care of the coronavirus patients from a distant place. The young scientist in July 2020 donated the robot to the Tripura Medical College and Dr B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Teaching Hospital. The medical college had used the robot at the 250-bed Covid Care Centre in Hapania, on the outskirts of the capital city Agartala. Tripura Medical College Professor and in-charge of the Hapania Covid Care Centre, Shib Sekhar Datta, said the robot was useful to some extent. **IANS**

BJP to ‘carpet-bomb’ TMC with ‘parivartan’ rallies in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The BJP's has decided to continue “carpet-bombing” on the Trinamool Congress till this year's Assembly elections are over, party insiders said adding the saffron outfit is lining up a number of “parivartan rallies” led by senior national leaders in the month of February.

According to party sources, Home Minister Amit Shah who was scheduled to come to Bengal on January 18 would now visit the State on January 30-31 whence he will hold organisation-level meetings as well as rallies.

Party president JP Nadda too will lead a number of rallies in February and efforts are on to rope in the likes of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath too for an intensified campaign.

The BJP may bring in Prime Narendra Modi as early as in March to intensify its campaign in Bengal, sources said adding Shah, Nadda, Bengal BJP observer Kailash Vijaybargiya, party vice-president Mukul Roy, Shiv Prakash and Amitavo Chakraborty and others met the Home Minister's residence last week to assess the so-called tide in favour of the BJP and it was decided that the party should apart from continuing its attack on the Trinamool Congress strengthen the booth-level organisations particularly in the areas where it did not fare well in the 2019 general elections.

The BJP surprised the critics in the parliamentary polls winning 18 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats wrestling 16 from the ruling out-

fit.

Meanwhile, in a bid to continue its pressure on the TMC the BJP on attacked it for indulging in “vaccine theft” with Vijaybargiya on Sunday accusing the State Government of vaccinating its own leaders and workers instead of the medical staff for which corona vaccines have been procured.

“Like in post Amphan situation when the TMC men stole relief materials now they are stealing vaccine,” Vijaybargiya said showing how the Trinamool leaders were getting themselves vaccinated in place of the health workers.

The BJP leader said so after reports that TMC's North Dinaipur MLA M Singha and Barrackpore municipal chairman Uttam Das had got themselves vaccinated bypassing the corona warriors. “We got ourselves vaccinated because we wanted to allay fears about the vaccine among the people,” the TMC leaders said.

Taking a dig at Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for allowing such irregularities to take place Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh on Sunday said that “Didi is crying hoarse against so-called shortage of vaccine whereas her own leaders and party men are looting them from hospitals ... as if they want to survive without considering for the others.”

Reacting to his remarks Bengal Minister Firhad Hakim said “vaccine belongs to the people and has been prepared by tax payers money it isnot anyone's paternal property... everyone has right to get vaccine.”

Corrupt officials, leaders involved in IndiGo manager’s murder: Bihar MP

Patna: Four-time Lok Sabha MP and Jan Adhikar Party (Loktantrik) President Pappu Yadav has levelled sensational allegations on the nexus of corrupt officials, politicians and mafia in Bihar who may be involved in the murder of IndiGo Airlines manager Rupesh Kumar Singh.

“Five days since the incident, there is no headway into the investigation of Rupesh Singh's murder and it indicates a nexus of corrupt officials, leaders and land, sand and liquor mafia,” Yadav said.

“As per our information, Rupesh Singh was reportedly involved in tenders of Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) and electricity departments. He was part of a company which man-

aged to obtain a licence for a canal in Darbhanga. These could be the reasons behind his murder on the orders of unknown nexus in Bihar,” Yadav added.

“The matter needs to be investigated thoroughly by an independent agency monitored by a sitting judge of the high court,” Yadav said.

He said if the Bihar government wants to make the state crime-free, it should identify persons involved in land, sand and liquor mafia and their properties should be recommended for investigation by the Enforcement Directorate.

“They are by and large involved in criminal incidents in Bihar and are shielded by political leaders and officials,” he said. **IANS**

UK INVITES MODI...

Terming India as the “pharmacy of the world,” while underlining the growing ties between the two countries, the statement said. India already supplies more than 50% of the world's vaccines, and the UK and India have worked closely together throughout the pandemic. “Our Prime Ministers speak regularly and Prime Minister Johnson has said he will visit India ahead of the G7,” it said. “Coronavirus is doubtless the most destructive force we have seen for generations and the greatest test of the modern world order we have experienced. It is only right that we approach the challenge of building back better by uniting with a spirit of openness to create a better future,” the statement quoted Johnson as saying.

The communique said British Prime Minister's ambition is to use the G7 to intensify cooperation between the

world's democratic and technologically advanced nations. Between them the 10 leaders represent over 60% of the people living in democracies around the world.

The invitation to India, Australia and South Korea is testament to the UK's commitment to ensuring multilateral institutions better reflect today's world. The UK was the first P-5(permanent member) member to support a permanent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) seat for India and the first G-7 member to invite India to a G-7 Summit in 2005. As current Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) President and G-20 President in 2023, India will play a key role driving in multilateral cooperation helping to build back better around the world. The UK will also host a number of meetings throughout the year between Government Ministers from the G7, both vir-

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tually and in different locations across the UK. These ministerial summits will cover economic, environmental, health, trade, technology, development, and foreign policy issues.

DOCTORS FEAR...

“The unethical manner in which the clinical trials for Covid vaccine have been conducted in India has cast a shadow on the whole scientific research and innovation in the country. The blatant violations of nearly all procedures of trial have now been well documented but still, the Government went ahead with approval of the vaccines,” it said. “The HCWs should have the option of choosing between the two vaccines (or from amongst more as and when they come) as the efficacy profile and also safety profile of the two vaccines

currently on offer differ widely. “In case of any Severe Adverse Effect (SAE), the cost of healthcare and indemnity should be covered and a transparent mechanism for same to be established,” it added even as it questioned the inclusion of all HCWs and also all individuals above 50 years of age for priority group of vaccination. “Current evidence warrants inclusion of only HCW engaged in high-risk procedures and individuals above 65 years age. The ambit of priority groups seems to have been expanded under market dynamics and not based on risk assessments,” said the doctors.

FARMERS' TRACTOR...

Meanwhile, the Delhi Traffic Police on Sunday advised commuters to take alternative routes for coming to

Delhi from Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur and other borders.

In a series of tweets the traffic police said that Singhu, Auchandi, Piau Maniyari, Saboli and Mangesh borders closed. Please take alternate route via Lampur Safiabad, Palla and Singhu school toll tax borders. Traffic has been diverted from Mukarba and GTK Road. Please avoid Outer Ring Road, GTK Road and NH-44. “The Chilla and Ghazipur Borders are closed for traffic coming from Noida and Ghaziabad to Delhi because of farmer protests. Please take alternate route for coming to Delhi via Anand Vihar, DND, Apsara, Bhopra & Loni Borders,” it tweeted. “Available Open Borders to Haryana are following- Jharoda (Only Single Carriageway/Road), Daurala, Kapashera, Badusarai, Rajokri

NH-8, Bijwasan/Bajghera, Palam Vihar and Dundaheha Borders,” it tweeted.

TMC PLACATES...

The BJP may bring in Prime Narendra Modi as early as in March to intensify its campaign in Bengal, sources said adding Shah, Nadda, Bengal BJP observer Kailash Vijaybargiya, party vice-president Mukul Roy, Shiv Prakash and Amitavo Chakraborty and others met the Home Minister's residence last week to assess the so-called tide in favour of the BJP and it was decided that the party should apart from continuing its attack on the Trinamool Congress strengthen the booth-level organisations particularly in the areas where it did not fare well in the 2019 general elections. The BJP surprised the critics in the parliamentary polls winning 18 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats wrestling 16 from the ruling outfit.

AHEAD OF 10TH ROUND OF TALKS Discuss farm laws clause by clause: Tomar to kisan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the 10th round of talks, scheduled on January 19, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Sunday again urged the agitating farmers to give up their "stubborn" stand on the new farm laws and come for a clause by clause discussion. Tomar said most farmers are in favour of the farm laws and the Government will hold the next round of discussion on this on Tuesday.

The farm laws were put on hold by the Supreme Court earlier this week amid a 53-day protest by farmers at the borders of Delhi. Saying it was "extremely disappointed" by the Government's handling of the crisis, the court had also formed a committee of agricultural experts to deal with the issue, which has, however, been rejected by the farmers.

Tomar, who left for his constituency by Hazur Sahib Nanded-Amritsar Superfast Express, was seen sharing langar from co-passengers of Sikh community -- a gesture which comes amid the ongoing protests by farmers from Punjab against the agri laws.

"Most of the farmers and experts are in favour of farm



SC-APPOINTED COMMITTEE TO HOLD MEET ON JAN 19

The Supreme Court appointed committee over farm laws is likely to hold its first meeting on January 19. According to Anil Ghanwat, one of the four members has backed out of the committee." If the apex court does not appoint a new member, the existing members will continue," he said.

laws. After the Supreme Court's order, the laws can't be implemented," he said.

"Now we expect that the farmers discuss the laws clause-wise on January 19 and tell the Government what they want other than the repeal of the

"MOST OF THE FARMERS AND EXPERTS ARE IN FAVOUR OF FARM LAWS. AFTER THE SUPREME COURT'S ORDER, THE LAWS CAN'T BE IMPLEMENTED," HE SAID

laws," he added, reiterating the Government's demands for a clause-by-clause discussion.

The Government had sent a proposal to the farmers "in which we agreed to address their apprehensions regarding mandis, traders' registration and other things". The Government had also agreed to discuss the laws on stubble burning and electricity "but the farmers' unions only want repeal of the laws," Tomar said.

Cong questions Centre's vaccination policy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday posed four questions to the Centre over its vaccine policy and pointed out that vaccinations are an "important public service and not a political or business opportunity".

The grand old party questioned the pricing of the vaccination and alleged that it's costly as compared to the rest part of world where the same vaccination is being administered.

Among the four questions were issues regarding the prices of the Covishield and Covaxin doses and the Centre's decision to allow the exports of one of the vaccines before immunising everyone in the country.

"Vaccine Development & Mass Immunization were neither events' or publicity stunts but important milestones in the service of the people'. While the country stands united in providing immunization against Corona virus to our Frontline Corona Warriors' i.e. doctors, health workers, police personnel & others, let us remember that vaccinations are an important public service and not a political or business opportunity," Congress chief spokesperson Randee Singh Surjewala said at AICC Press conference.

Surjewala said the PM and his Government need to answer important questions.

"Who will get free Corona vaccine? How many people will get free Corona vaccine? Where will you get free Corona vaccine?" he asked as he pointed out the Government's order for the vaccine doses will be inadequate.

The Congress general secretary also asked why should the Government pay ₹95 more to Bharat Biotech for a vaccine that has been "developed with the expertise & experience of scientists of Govt owned ICMR".

"Why should Modi Govt pay more for a vaccine that has only been tested on 755 individuals & is yet to be cleared after Phase II trials. Should the price of such a vaccine not be cheaper than the AstraZeneca-Serum Institute?" he questioned.

Surjewala then came to the price of Serum Institute's vaccine in the open market as he cited the chief executive of the Pune-based company Adar Poonawalla saying that they will sell Covishield for ₹1,000/dose in the open market or "2,000/dose for 2 doses required for every individual." "Isn't Modi Govt duty bound to ensure purchase of all "Covishield Doses" at 200/dose and enable the people to purchase at this price rather than 1,000/dose?"

When AstraZeneca has promised supply of vaccine 'at no profit', why is Serum Institute being

permitted to charge 1,000/dose, when they are supplying to Govt at 200/dose? he asked further.

The last question was on the government's permission to SII to allow the export of its vaccine "without immunisation of India's population". "Corona Vaccine For All should be the stated policy of Modi Govt.

However, Modi Govt's approach on Free Vaccination or alternatively Cost of Vaccination', Cost to Exchequer', Profit Margins of Companies' etc for India's remaining 135 Crore people is completely opaque and shrouded in secrecy," Surjewala said.

"Time for Prime Minister. Shri Narendra Modi & his Govt to come forward and answer," he added.

The opposition party has been critical of the government with senior Congress leader Manish Tewari and Union health minister Harsh Vardhan sparring on Twitter on Saturday, the day Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the country's mammoth inoculation drive. Tewari had raised questions over the emergency use approval given to the indigenously-developed vaccine Covaxin and Vardhan hitting back alleging that the Congress leader was only passionate about spreading rumours.

COVID VACCINES Indian scientists, doctors did miracle: BJP chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president JP Nadda on Sunday appreciated the country's research scientists and doctors for beating timeline for preparing 'made in India' anti-coronavirus vaccines and start 'world's biggest' vaccination drive.

"Usually it takes years to develop a vaccine. But Indian scientists and doctors have done a miracle by developing two 'Made in India' vaccines for the world's biggest vaccination drive", the BJP Chief said a day after vaccination of frontline health workers was kicked off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said several countries are in talks with Indian Government and Corona vaccine manufacturers to get the Corona vaccine at the earliest in order to "save their citizens."

"The fact that Covid vaccine was successfully developed and manufactured in India and we successfully started the world's biggest Corona vaccination drive is the solid proof of the prowess, great capabilities and scientific genius of our

doctors and scientists who have all the capabilities and knowledge to be at the top in the world", he said.

BJP Chief said the last assault on Coronavirus has begun with the start of the massive vaccination drive under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

Nadda who is also a former union health Minister said the emergency use of the vaccine was started "only when scientists and health experts were very sure about the efficacy and safety of the 'Made in India' vaccine".

He sought people "not to listen to any false propaganda, fake news and rumors about the vaccine."

"Today the entire world is looking towards India with hope and aspiration of getting Corona vaccine soon.

"India, which manufactures and supplies more than 60 % of vaccines to the world, is fast emerging as a hub of Corona vaccine. It is a matter of great pride and satisfaction for every Indian that India will play a decisive role in saving humankind from the Corona pandemic", he said.

Record 534 kms NHs constructed in last week

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) has created a record by constructing 534 km of National Highways (NHs) in the last week commencing 8 January.

The Ministry has constructed 8,169 km of National Highways (NHs) from April 2020 to 15 January 2021 in the current financial year 2020-21, i.e. with a speed of about 28.16 km per day. During the same period in the last fiscal, 7,573 km roads were constructed, with a speed of 26.11 km per day, according to a statement by MoRTH.

The Ministry is hopeful that with such pace it should be able to cross construction target of 11,000 km by 31 March.

The Ministry also awarded



NH projects of 7,597 km during this period (April 2020 to 15 January 2021). In 2019-20, projects of 3,474 km were awarded during the same period. Thus, the pace of award has also more than doubled this fiscal. In total, projects of 8,948 km of roads were awarded in 2019-20 while 10,237 km of roads were constructed.

The achievement assumes significance given the fact that the first two months of the current fiscal were lost due to nationwide lockdown in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry has taken several initiatives to increase the pace of construction. The pace of construction is expected to increase further in the remaining months of the current financial year, which are conducive for construction activities.

Use of regional languages increased during 2018-2020 in Upper House

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The use of regional languages in the proceedings of Rajya Sabha increased manifold during 2018-2020 with Sanskrit emerging as the fifth widely used language among the 22 scheduled languages after Hindi, Telugu, Urdu and Tamil.

Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu has been regularly urging the members of the House on the use of regional languages during the proceedings.

According to research done by the Rajya Sabha secretariat, while Hindi and English are the widely used languages during the proceedings of the House, the use of 21 other scheduled Indian languages (other than Hindi) has increased to over five times (512 percent) per sitting in 2020 over that of the 14-year period between 2004 and 2017.

During this period, four languages - Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani and Sonthali - have been used for the first time since the Rajya Sabha came into being in 1952 and another six languages - Assamese, Bodo, Gujarati, Maithili, Manipuri and Nepali - have been used after a long gap.

Rajya Sabha members spoke in 10 scheduled languages (other than Hindi) in the House on 269 occasions during 923 sittings between 2004 and 2017 at the rate of 0.291 per sitting, the Rajya



From 2013 to 2017 spanning over 329 sittings, members spoke only in 10 regional languages (other than Hindi) on 96 times, all limited to debates

Sabha secretariat said.

In 2020, 49 interventions in regional languages were made during 33 sittings at the rate of 1.49 per sitting, marking an increase to 512 per cent.

From 2013 to 2017 spanning over 329 sittings, members spoke only in 10 regional languages (other than Hindi) on 96 times, all limited to debates. However, during 2018-20 with 163 sittings, regional languages were used 135 times

including 66 interventions in debates, 62 Zero Hour and seven special mentions.

After becoming the Chairman of Rajya Sabha in August 2017, Naidu has been urging the members of the House to speak in their respective mother tongue in the spirit of the federal nature of the House.

While announcing the availability of simultaneous interpretation facilities in all the 22 scheduled languages in July 2018, he himself spoke in 10 languages in the House.

The number of times the regional languages (other than Hindi) were used during 2013-17 (329 sittings) and 2018-20 (163 sittings) respectively were - Tamil (32 and 18), Telugu (19 and 33), Urdu (19 and 24), Bengali (6 and 17), Sanskrit (0 and 12), Marathi (3 and 6), Odia (5 and 6), Kannada (2 and 5), Punjabi (2 and 3), Malayalam (2 and 0) and Assamese (0 and 2).

ITBP launches smart classes for schoolchildren in Naxal areas



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In probably the first such initiative by a paramilitary, the ITBP has started 'smart' classes for local schoolchildren in Naxal-affected Hadeli village under Kondagaon, Chhattisgarh to impart Internet-based education through audio-visual medium.

"The classes have been started for remotely located village children in Naxalism-infested area Hadeli and adjoining peripheral villages in district Kondagaon, Chhattisgarh. These classes are organised by ITBP jawans of 41st Battalion of the Force only to enhance the student's knowledge taking the help of online audio-visuals. The classes are also taken with the help of electronic equipment such as computers and projectors,"

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) spokesperson Vivek Pandey said.

These evening classes are taken by ITBP personnel who are graduates and have experience and knowledge to organise such classes. Apart from this, various online learning videos on YouTube and other such platforms, help of e-learning websites are also taken to teach the students by giving them enough opportunities to learn and practice, Pandey said.

"It is envisaged that the value addition in learning of one and a half hours capsule course on a daily basis would in future enable the students to pursue higher studies and would help children to understand the methods of e-learning and virtual online classes. Some 50 students are being

benefited from the initiative," he said.

All these classes are organised through Internet connections of the jawans. As the mobile signal is weak, jawans put their mobile phones on height through bamboo/ tree trunk/ tree where it receives a network and it is connected through Wi-Fi hotspot to the laptop used for smart classes which is projected on a big screen through the projector. Sound is delivered through 'bluetooth' speakers, he said.

In the course of imparting education to the local children; the jawans, in turn, are gradually learning the local Halbi language from the school-children. Knowledge of the local language would be handy for the jawans in operational tasks in the area, officials added.

Centre confirms avian influenza in MP, Chhattisgarh, U'khand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday said Avian Influenza has been confirmed in crows at Panna, Sanchi, Raisen, Balaghat, and in birds at Sheopur (crow, owl) and Mandsaur (swan, pigeon) districts of Madhya Pradesh; Bastar (crow, pigeon) and Dantewada (crow) districts of Chhattisgarh; and in crow samples from Haridwar and Lansdowne forest range of Uttarakhand.

Additionally, in Delhi, Heron sample in Rohini have been tested positive for avian influenza. The Ministry of Animal Husbandry said that culling of poultry birds is underway in Maharashtra and Haryana, while fresh cases of bird flu have been confirmed in poultry in Mumbai as well as in the Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh. The samples have been sent to the designated laboratory for testing.

According to the ministry, samples tested from Rajasthan and Gujarat have been found negative for avian influenza.

In Maharashtra, deaths of



836 different birds were reported on January 16 across the state and samples have been sent for bird flu tests in laboratories in Pune and Madhya Pradesh's Bhopal. In Beed in Marathwada and Gondia in Vidarbha, 50 poultry birds each died while 32 other birds like herons, sparrows and parrots, as well as 59 crows, including 33 from neighbouring Thane, also died in the state on Saturday.

The Maharashtra Animal Husbandry Department have started a toll-free helpline for farmers to report any unusual mortality of birds. The state government has put requisite information about the disease in line with the revised Avian Influenza Action Plan 2021, it added.

The culling operation of poultry is continuing in the epi-

centers of Haryana. Further, the ministry said rapid response teams (RRPs) have been deployed in Madhya Pradesh.

The ministry in its latest report on Bird Flu, requested state governments to 'rethink' their decisions to impose a ban on the sale of poultry products and urged them to allow sale of poultry items sourced from the non-infected areas/states. "It is reiterated that the consumption of well-cooked chicken and eggs is safe for humans. Consumers should not heed to baseless rumours that are unscientific and often lead to confusion," it said. The Centre, in its report, mentioned that poultry meat cooked at more than 70 degree Celsius for 30 minutes inactivated the virus and is absolutely safe to consume properly cooked poultry meat and eggs.

So far, bird flu has been confirmed in 11 states -- Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat.

COVID-19 A, O blood groups appear to be protective: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Use of private transport, lower-exposure occupations, smoking, vegetarianism and 'A' or 'O' blood groups appeared to be protective, according to a pan-India sero-survey conducted by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in its nearly 40 institutes in the country.

The survey found that those with blood group with 'B' and 'AB' blood groups and those using public transport were at a higher risk of catching the infection.

For its study, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) took samples of 10,427 adult individuals working in its laboratories or institutions and their family members, based on voluntary participation, to assess the presence of antibodies to SARS-CoV-2.

The study which was piloted by CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), Delhi said of the 10,427 individuals, 1,058 (10.14 per cent) had antibodies against SARS-CoV-2.

A follow up on 346



seropositive individuals among the samples after three months revealed 'stable' to 'higher' antibody levels against SARS-CoV-2, but declining plasma activity for neutralizing the virus, Shantanu Sengupta, senior scientist at IGIB and one of the co-authors of the paper said.

A repeat sampling of 35 individuals, at six months, revealed declining antibody levels while the neutralising antibody remained stable compared to three months.

However, both the normal antibody as well as the neutralising antibody were much above the required threshold, he said.

"Our finding that smokers are less likely to be seropositive is the first report from the general population and part of growing evidence that despite COVID-19 being a respiratory disease, smoking may be protective," the study said.

The paper also cites two studies from France and similar reports from Italy, New York and China, which reported lower infection rates among smokers.

Along with demographic information, possible risk factors were evaluated through self-filled online forms with data acquired on blood group type, occupation type, habits including smoking and alcohol,

FOR ITS STUDY, THE COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR) TOOK SAMPLES OF 10,427 ADULT INDIVIDUALS WORKING IN ITS LABORATORIES OR INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, BASED ON VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION, TO ASSESS THE PRESENCE OF ANTIBODIES TO SARS-COV-2

diet preferences, medical history and transport type utilised. "The study found that higher seropositivity was found for those using public transport and with occupational responsibilities such as security, housekeeping personnel, non-smokers and non-vegetarians," Sengupta said.

"The presence of such antibodies is a reliable marker of infection and recovery. However, some infected people may not develop antibodies," Anurag Agrawal, IGIB director, and one of the co-authors of the paper said.

"Use of private transport, lower-exposure occupations, smoking, vegetarianism and

'A' or 'O' blood groups appeared to be protective, using seropositivity as a surrogate for infection," the paper added.

Sengupta said this is for the first time that a study has been done in India wherein individuals have been monitored for three months (35 individuals) to six months (346 individuals) for antibodies including those with probable neutralising activity. This is the first such cohort survey, he said.

"We conducted both the normal antibody test and neutralising antibody test to understand the prevalence and duration of antibodies," he said.

It's here!

India kick-starts the world's biggest inoculation drive to beat Coronavirus but we must still follow the protocol



Time: A little after 11 am on Saturday. The nationwide anti-COVID vaccination drive began with a sanitation worker at Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), who became the first person in the country to receive a shot. "I was not reluctant (to get the vaccine shot)... people should not be afraid," Manish Kumar said. It was thus that nearly a year after reporting its first case of Coronavirus, India kicked off the world's largest immunisation drive against COVID-19 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the offensive at the click of a button through video conferencing. As part of its plan to bring the pandemic under control with two locally-produced vaccines, Covishield and

Covaxin, the Government inoculated lakhs of healthcare and frontline workers, such as sanitation and security workers, to a collective sigh of relief that this could finally be the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 trauma. The next in line are Indians above the age of 50 or those considered as high-risk individuals due to pre-existing medical conditions. Around 100 persons received a vaccine at each of the 3,006 sites across India on the first day. As feared, there were some glitches but it's nothing considering the vast topography of the nation. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan visited the vaccination sites at Sir Gangaram Hospital and AIIMS, Delhi, and described the COVID-19 vaccines as "sanjivani" in the fight against the accursed virus as he urged people not to heed hearsay and, instead, put their faith in experts and scientists. "It's a historic day. We have been blessed by the Prime Minister all through our fight against COVID-19. It's the largest Coronavirus vaccination programme in the world," Vardhan said. "We have been able to put up a valiant fight against the disease during the past year. Adopting a pre-emptive and proactive strategy has resulted in a good performance. We have probably the lowest fatality rate in the world," he said. In a message to the nation's population, he said that nobody should indulge in spreading or believing rumours pertaining to the efficacy of either vaccine.

In the national Capital, the vaccination exercise was carried out at 81 sites across 11 districts. Six Central Government hospitals — AIIMS, Safdarjung, RML, Kalawati Saran Children Hospital and two ESI hospitals — had been chosen as sites for the drive. Besides these, Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, the Delhi Government-run GTB Hospital, Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital, DDU Hospital, BSA Hospital, Delhi State Cancer Institute and the ILBS Hospital are among the vaccination sites. Then there are private facilities — Max Hospital, Fortis Hospital, Apollo Hospital and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital — which have also been chosen as sites for the exercise. However, many people at the RML Hospital were apprehensive, with some of them reluctant to go for the shot, and then there were others with mixed feelings. Dr Sharmila (name changed) of the hospital, who has been working in the COVID department, said: "I am scared as the vaccine's efficacy is not yet proved but this is my best bet. It is my leap of faith... I will take the plunge. Dr (Randeep) Guleria (AIIMS director) has also taken the shot; I believe in him." The day was also not bereft of politics — with Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari training the guns at the Government and referring to the Norway incident where 23 deaths occurred after taking the anti-COVID jab manufactured by Pfizer — but we, as a people, strongly believe that such bumps would not be able to derail the massive campaign that aims at achieving health for all its citizens.

Recasting Delhi

Narendra Modi wants to leave his imprint on central Delhi; the new Central Vista will be quite a mark



On the auspicious day of Makar Sankranti, the day millions of Indians worship the Ganga, construction began on India's new Parliament building, the first of several projects that will define New Delhi in the latter half of the 21st century. Many individuals and organisations have questioned as to why such an expensive infrastructure undertaking is being started now, as India's economy limps back into action following the pandemic. The fact is that large infrastructure projects have always been used by nations, whether it was Germany or Japan following the World War 2 or the United States during the Great Depression, to turbo-charge economic recovery as these projects provide large volumes of

employment and leave behind a considerable legacy. Delhiites themselves have never denied heritage its place — Rajput, Islamic, European or Colonial — and made it a part of their living history, one where Lutyens' Delhi is a key chapter. The cluster of offices would undoubtedly change the skyline as we know it and their ramped-up security would rob us of an indulgent spread in the heart of the city. But was this particular infrastructure project needed?

There is a simple answer to this, asking anyone who has either worked or has visited any major Government office in New Delhi. While the buildings of Lutyens' yore are amazing pieces of architecture, structures like the North and South Block are awfully dilapidated and the post-Independence buildings such as Shastri Bhawan and Udyog Bhawan are downright awful. They are inefficient as modern working spaces and, worse still, environmentally unfriendly in terms of energy consumption. These buildings needed a thorough revamp at the very least and one could argue that they needed to be broken down and rebuilt. And it is the latter path that this Government is undertaking. However, as the Supreme Court has pointed out, this has to be done thoughtfully so as not to destroy the history and heritage dating back over a century when the colonialists rebuilt the Capital in the 1900s. But to argue that India does not need this, because it is Narendra Modi and his Government who are undertaking such a project, is nothing more than petty jealousy. The same people would have made completely different arguments had a Congress-led administration carried out the rebuild. India's Parliament too needs an urgent makeover. The Central Vista revamp is massive as it envisages a new triangular Parliament building with a seating capacity for 900 to 1,200 MPs and synergised administrative blocks, to be completed by August 2022. On its part, the Government had been arguing for a makeover of this part of Lutyens' Delhi for its functionality and efficiency, claiming that it would create spaces for a more streamlined operation of Ministry offices and free up more citizen-friendly spaces. It is the Modi regime's attempt to overwrite our Colonial past and redesign an institution as wholly Indian, as representative of its people and epoch-making simply because no Government had thought of this before. While the existing building, based on the 9-12th century CE circular Yogini temples, is a tremendous structure and a temple in its own right, if India is to have a larger Parliament that is representative of her population, a new building is essential. It was vital that this rebuild happens and while the public relations could have been better, this reconstruction of Delhi was needed. And it will leave Narendra Modi's mark on Delhi for years to come, whether some people like it or not.

BINDU DALMIA

A cautious and forced optimism pervades the start of 2021. As Lenin aptly said: "There are decades when nothing happens, and then there are weeks when decades happen." The year 2020 was one such when the velocity in medical science and tech adaptation crammed a decade's evolution into a single year.

That the vaccine would be the panacea for the economic woes of 2020 is not certitude, given the emergence of the mutating COVID-II strain. A second cycle of virulence could further burden healthcare systems, severely reversing the economic recovery. Confronted with multiple challenges, recovery even in the developed world is not anticipated before 2021 end despite their Governments' sustained stimuli on all three fronts: fiscal, monetary and credit. This is because the COVID-induced hysteresis will keep the growth rates suppressed much after the crisis recedes, as it did during the 2008 financial meltdown.

Set against the grim spectre of job and income losses and the inequality exacerbated by the crisis, there have been only two gainers during the lockdown of 2020: China as a country, and the American big tech oligarchs as a business class. Today, Apple, Amazon, Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Netflix and Twitter's combined market capitalisation is \$8 trillion, which is more than double the size of India's national GDP. This is attributed to big tech's stakes in the online world of contactless social media and e-commerce which helped them increase their net worth by a whopping 30 per cent, to touch \$4 trillion.

And China's export-led economy rebounded the fastest due to being able to fill the void in global supply-chain disruptions as the country remained on a manufacturing overdrive while the rest of the world was in lockdown mode.

Broadly, the predictive global contours of change in 2022 will be seen in the spiralling of sovereign debt to GDP ratios; a partial revival of globalisation and a return to multilateralism with the advent of Joe Biden; a high rise in manufacturing productivity levels, yet conversely, a shrinkage in job creation due to digitisation and AI-led automation; and permanent changes in consumer behaviour.

Another dominant concern at the start of the year is with the surreal valuations of global stock

Trends to look out for

China will remain saboteur number one of global recovery in 2021 even though the new decade brings optimism and new vaccines



markets due to surplus liquidity infused by the Central bank's quantitative easing. This will likely fuel the next asset bubble and lead to a repeat of the 2008 phenomenon once stimulus measures are withdrawn toward the end of the year.

There are other anticipated trends that are likely to play out in the economy with the consumer and with corporates in 2021. For one, there are fears that the very country that unleashed the virus could sabotage global recovery by covertly unleashing another virulent strain so that the offender nation retains its economic heft.

And, sadly, the optimism is further watered down due to the lack of a unified action plan amongst like-minded coalition partners or allies to rein in an expansionist China. A multilateral and punitive response is needed to hold China accountable for subverting a rules-based economic international order and calls for an international backlash for its abuses on maritime and territorial incursions as also for the grotesque human rights abuses on Uighurs, or for the Chinese Communist Party's crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong and Tibet.

China's treatment of business magnate Jack Ma being browbeaten to "embrace supervision" (the Chinese synonym for detention) should have sent shock waves to the global

investor community. But, to the contrary, the West is hesitant to decouple from China. While the Biden Administration will persist with Trumpian-era tariffs and technology restrictions on China, the attraction of the Chinese market for the US and the EU investors is too strong to cut the cords of economic activity on grounds of geopolitical aberrations alone. The EU, which is the largest trading bloc, has recently approved a comprehensive investment agreement while American fund houses continue to solicit Chinese savers retirement funds.

When the strongest democracies are in descent and disarray, it has the propensity to embolden rogue dictators. More so after the theatre of the absurd that played out at Capitol Hill with Trump's "Be there, be wild" melee that pushed lawmakers to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove a sitting President from office. A weakened US then portends ominous signals in being able to contain an aggressive China, which does not augur well for free market economies.

And if the Capitol Hill was under siege, a similar kind of anarchy is being played out on the borders of the Capital of the largest democracy in the world, with the non-negotiable stance of the farmers' protest nearing two months. Anarchist trends in democracies are now a symptom of a deeper underlying

malaise, with a thin line demarcating excessive freedom of expression or the right to dissent from chaos, vandalism and lawlessness.

Dominant India-centric themes expected to play out

Coming to India, while the economists predict a strong rebound, it is important not to confuse rebound with growth in "absolute" terms. The World Bank estimates the growth in India to recover to 5.5 per cent in FY22, so the recovery from a lower base naturally quantifies as a higher rise. Herein, the speed of the vaccines' rollout and their efficacy will of course increase economic activity due to increased mobility, which will drive recovery in the non-farm sectors with the exclusion of the contact-intensive services sectors.

According to a McKinsey report, "Indian businesses have the potential to create economic value of about \$635 billion by 2030 if they can tap into the shifting preferences of Indians aspiring to a higher standard of living". The areas identified for quantum leaps are in businesses that provide higher-quality urban environments, cleaner air and water and more convenience-based services in the new ideas-based economy which can potentially create millions of productive jobs.

Another dominant trend is one of growing indignation against the "privately owned,

unelected, unaccountable American tech companies, who can unilaterally exclude anyone on Earth out of the internet". The other countries must unite to regulate these monopolistic internet giants who evade taxes in host countries, have a predatory, buy-out strategy towards startups which pose a threat to them in order to curb competition and have now self-appropriated the right to restrict freedom of expression at will.

Lastly, mainstreaming Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) will be one of the enduring hallmark business trends of post-pandemic prioritisation. The ESG verticals can vary from supporting sustainable natural materials, water conservation and CO2 reductions or espousing social causes such as human rights and poverty alleviation. We have to recognise that zoonotic diseases will continue to rise till the time we do not shift to sustainable production and consumption patterns.

Peering through the fog of uncertainty, it is impossible to conjure what the post-vaccine world will look like. But, for sure, what we will encounter on the other side of the tunnel will in no way resemble the pre-COVID world order.

(The writer is an author, columnist and Chairperson, NCFL, at Niti Aayog. The views expressed are personal).

SOUNDBITE

Mild infection after vaccination is a good sign because it shows the immune system of the body is reacting to the vaccine.



AIIMS Director
Dr Randeep Guleria

The world must act with far greater solidarity. Sadly, the impact of the pandemic has been made worse by the absence of a global coordinated effort.



UN Secretary-General
Antonio Guterres

Salt is a very sweet story about a woman who is an artist and her husband who is an engineer. Their relationship is sweet but comes with a pinch of salt.



Actor
Rituparna Sengupta

That's an irresponsible shot from Rohit Sharma. You've just hit a boundary a couple of deliveries earlier, why would you play that?



Former Indian captain
Sunil Gavaskar

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Low-profile R-Day is good

Sir — This refers to the editorial 'Virus shadow over R-Day' (January 16). The Modi Government had committed a mistake by extending an invitation to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson in November last year, when both the countries were struggling hard with the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government should have concentrated more on dealing with the contagion rather than inviting dignitaries for the R-Day. Finally, Johnson declined the invitation and expressed regrets for his inability to visit Delhi due to the mounting COVID-19 cases at home.

There were days when people would walk and paddle with their children at the India Gate to witness the parade. Instead of organising the R-Day parade this year, the PM should have paid tributes to the martyrs at the National War Memorial and Amar Jawan Jyoti at India Gate. At a time when the pandemic has wreaked havoc, key celebrations should be observed on a subdued note.

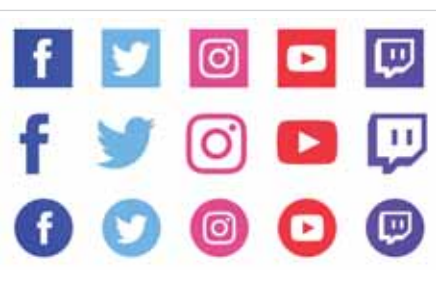
N Subramanian
Delhi

Privacy is the price for social media freedom

This refers to the editorial 'Privacy Matters' (January 16). On privacy and freedom, I would like to say that "When anything is free, your freedom is the price". Anti-apartheid and human rights activist Desmond Tutu had said: "When the missionaries came to Africa, they had Bible and we had land. They said 'let us pray'. We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had a Bible and they had land."

Likewise, when social networking giants came, they had WhatsApp and Facebook and we had our freedom. They said it's free and we closed our eyes. But when we opened it, we had WhatsApp and Facebook and they had our freedom. Our attempts to save our privacy and freedom by switching over to other platforms like Signal and Telegram will not be of much help. The majority of people, including the very old and young, have become addicted to these social media platforms and happily share their personal details; thus compromising their privacy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the scenario, but for worse. Online classes for students have now become the norm but it is a setback to the privacy of



teachers. The teachers are asked by the school authorities to share their personal details like email and phone number with parents of all students, thus putting them at grave risk of breach of privacy. The breach is not only through WhatsApp; even video conferencing platforms are not safe. The Government and private sector must do something to safeguard the privacy and freedom of every individual before it gets too late.

N Nagarajan
Secunderabad

Puducherry suffers

Sir — The people of Puducherry are fed up of the tussle between the Government, led by Chief Minister V Narayanasamy, and Lt Governor Kiran Bedi. Ever since the former IPS officer took charge as Puducherry's L-G in 2016, the tussle between Narayanasamy and her has done no good to the

administration or the people.

The ego war between them has no precedence in the history of the Union Territory. The duo has clashed over major as well as trivial issues. Narayanasamy would have been a much relieved man if the Centre had recalled Bedi. The 'obstructionist' in Bedi is an extension of her police career and the AAP stint. The L-

G should know she merely shares power with the CM and his cabinet and she is not the 'power'. Bedi has tried to usurp the domain of the Government by picking holes in the Government's ambitious rice scheme. Amid the power tussle, the UT and its people are suffering.

Ganapathi Bhat
Akola

Need to be reasonable

Sir — The ninth round of talks between the farmers and the Government remained inconclusive due to the adamant attitude of both. Farmers are rigid on their demands whereas Centre is ready for only some changes in the laws but not their revocation.

There seems no chance of any form of settlement in the future, too. Farmers need to be wary of self-styled intellectual activists who have wormed their way into the dispute. Farmers are unreasonable in not accepting the Supreme Court-appointed panel.

They seem to be motivated more by their animus against the Government rather than the welfare of the farmers. Thousands of farmers are protesting due to apprehensions that with the introduction of the new laws, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) would get abolished and there will be no mandi system. The Government should allay their fears and convince them that they would not be left at the mercy of the big corporates.

Yash Pal Ralhan
Jalandhar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A new medium of expression

When the pandemic struck the world, it took several months to realise how dramatically the nature of communication would change



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The most common topics on which training programmes are held are leadership, communication, management of self and so on. In a programme on communication one of the essential topics is to explore the relationship between the message and the medium. One of the commonest statements is: "The message is the medium and the medium is the message." Typically, if a notice board is a medium and the message conveys affection or is proposing a marriage, no one uses a notice board for such a communication. The softer messages are usually more appropriate to convey with a flourish or a card, note, in person and in today's world on a personal chat. This would add a certain degree of gentility.

In the choice of the medium, too, there are at times flourishes that are used. Typically the use of calligraphy with a thick nib goes well with certain sentiments. There was a time in courts where after writing a death sentence, the judge would break the nib to underscore that he considered the task distasteful and did not want to write another such verdict. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on such approaches or sentiments. Messaging online has become a universal medium demanding some appreciation of technology and some familiarity with the computer keyboard and smartphone keypads. Those with a receding vision or limited understanding of the workings of the keyboard and smartphone increasingly face less tolerance.

Technology itself is a recent phenomenon in public spaces in India. In the early '70s even a photocopier was unknown in most public spaces of learning institutions. A microfilm reader was the acme of technology in an archival space which couldn't cope with heavy binding or with pages that were getting too brittle for regular use. Five decades down the line, even the storage disc has undergone multiple changes in size, density and machine.

Similarly, recording instruments have evolved, too. Those who could not detect how totally extinct an extant technology of storage could become, lost much data. That is a story which has often unravelled silently, with very little to evoke even a small interest in the theme of a technology which gets outdated with time. Indeed there were disc manufacturing enterprises enjoying a flourishing business, that were almost wiped out before they realised what hit them. New chapters on return on investment had to be written and the short, half-life of technology was difficult to keep pace with for most businesses. As a result, the impact was huge on Information Technology-related businesses and many suffered losses.

When the COVID pandemic struck the world it took several months to realise how dramatically the nature of communication would change. There was something rolling out which had no space in conventional learning, skilling or training. There was a mass exodus to online processes. Those who got left out belonged to a bygone era or were on the fringes of society.

Online learning, skilling, training were not all that new but never was it such a "no-choice" situation. I was a member of a policy group of educational governance dealing with management education, about 30 years ago. The role demanded me to become the chairman of a sub-committee on technology in management education. One of the recommendations was that online technology in management education would be a matter of bandwidth availability. Nearly 30 years later, many of the semi-baked management professionals were discovering that "online teaching is quickly becoming bandwidth intensive." It was also being discovered that reliable connectivity to the internet and multiplicity of web servers would be needed for prompt "net response and reliable service." The message was simple: The lack of a clear sense of direction when it could have happened led to a crash crescendo. Responding to this crash crescendo became fanciful and *avant-garde*. The truth was, it was a response to a miserable learning situation which no one was expecting or was prepared for.

Hence, what was often projected as a modernisation of the learning process had strong possibilities of becoming a learning disaster. Skilling was equally affected. What can be shared in skilling on the online medium would not be adequate for "operational skilling", simply because of the need to focus on competencies.

Similarly, the process of training landed in the deep end. Any person in the profession of training would know that there is very little substitute to personalised interaction, particularly in a short learning event like training. More problematic fallouts of such a situation can be flagged. For the present, suffice it to say that even the need to limit the losses in such sudden shifts — voluntary or otherwise — is slow to be registered or be acted upon. Hopefully some in the profession will awaken to this need, sooner than others.

(The writer is an internationally acclaimed management consultant. The views expressed are personal.)

MANISH TEWARI AND THE CONGRESS ARE ONLY PASSIONATE ABOUT SPREADING DISTRUST AND RUMOURS (ABOUT THE COVID VACCINE).
—UNION HEALTH MINISTER
HARSH VARDHAN



IT'S NOT FEAR-MONGERING. SEE WHAT HAPPENED IN NORWAY. IT MAY BE A DIFFERENT SHOT BUT DO NOT HIDE BEHIND VACCINE NATIONALISM.
—CONGRESS LEADER
MANISH TEWARI

Mobile money is new cash

The Coronavirus pandemic has shown that the trend towards greater digitalisation of financial services in the country is here to stay



MOIN QAZI

Mobile finance finds itself at an inflection point as the world continues to tackle the socio-economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis. In these critical times, mobile money has helped governments in navigating the financial dystopia and addressing the practical challenge of delivering affordable and efficient financial services. Mobile currency is as an effective and physical distance friendly option to avoid cash, which can act as a carrier of the Coronavirus. Contactless digital payments at the point of sale with the help of facial recognition, Quick Response (QR) codes or near-field communications (NFC), drastically reduce the possibility of the spread of the contagion.

Digitisation has turned a smartphone into a wallet, a chequebook, a bank branch and an accounting ledger. The ubiquity of the mobile phone has made it possible to deliver financial services to people for whom a bank account is a distant dream. Frictionless, real-time payment through smartphones is already ensuring that the financially excluded section is thinning fast. Mobile transactions can create the next wave of financial inclusion if we prudently address the concerns of consumers.

For instance, people in far-flung areas of the country and remote villages are now able to make payments, deposit money, transfer funds, receive social benefits and wages and buy rations — affordably and reliably without the hassle associated with the opening of a bank account. In emerging and developing economies, millions have cellular phones but no bank accounts, credit cards or debit cards. For them, mobile money has begun filling the gaps in financial services. It serves as a lifeline, bringing those who currently lack access to banking into the financial mainstream.

Further, the penetration of cellular phones puts developing countries in an advantageous position where making a quantum leap in financial inclusion is concerned. For communities with low literacy levels and sporadic incomes, digital money can transform the socio-economic landscape. Mobile banking is enabling women to overcome common barriers. It reduces the need to travel long distances to access banking facilities and also ensures a level of privacy and security.

In reality, despite the best of intentions banks cannot afford to set up branches in every nook and corner of the country as there are logistical, economic and security constraints. The high cost of building infrastructure for bank branches has been a major obstacle in extending financial services to the poor and the underserved in remote locations. Cellular phone banking eliminates the problem of geographical inaccessibility and high set-up cost of bank branches.

Banks, mobile operators and third-party providers are all leveraging technologies on mobile phones to offer basic financial services at a lower cost than traditional banking allows. Several new types of delivery channels are emerging such as managers, agent networks, payment aggregators and others who are helping in building a more far-reaching and efficient digital financial ecosystem.

Digital mobile finance offers at least three major advantages over traditional financial

“THE ONGOING CRISIS IS CERTAINLY GOING TO TEST THE WAY VARIOUS PLAYERS IN THE DIGITAL AND FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEMS RESPOND. GOVERNMENTS MUST CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE TO REAP THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL FINANCIAL SERVICES”



models. First, digital transactions are essentially free. In-person services and cash transactions account for a majority of routine banking expenses but mobile finance clients keep their money in digital form. They can send and receive money without incurring transaction costs from their banks or mobile service providers.

Second, mobile communication generates copious amounts of data which banks and other providers can use for developing more profitable services. It even acts as a substitute for the traditional credit scores.

Third, mobile platforms link banks to their clients in real time. This means that banks can instantly relay account information or send reminders and clients can quickly sign up for services on their own.

Further, digital footprints and transaction data can be of great help to assess individual creditworthiness. Mobile network operators are teaming up with banks, financial-tech companies and data analytics specialists to use the customer information to gauge their credit risk and offer microfinance products to some who would otherwise lack any proof of their capacity to repay a loan.

If the customer is a regular user of a digital money transfer service, the operator may also be able to assess how much disposable income they have.

In fact, mobile operators' data can be good enough to lower the lender's risk significantly, enabling interest rates to fall and making microfinance a more attractive proposition for small businesses and individuals.

But such success stories do not

happen in a vacuum. To begin with, everyone needs a cellular phone with an affordable data plan. It is entrusted upon governments and non-governmental organisations to extend mobile networks to remote areas. Governments must also ensure that networks between banks and telecommunications companies are interoperable otherwise, widespread use of mobile phones for financial services and payments would be impossible.

Mobile money transactions will also have to address the limitations which prevent countrywide adoption of the channel. Exchanging mobile money for cash can still be expensive. And digital and financial illiteracy are known to hinder adoption of digital mobile services. People in rural and remote areas may lack network coverage, easy access to money agents, or simply electricity. A robust identification system, widespread, consistent internet access and trustworthy ways to get money into digital formats could be important for digital payments to thrive.

Women's access to mobile finance is affected by the fact that fewer females possess a mobile phone as compared to men. The promises of mobile finance are certainly very seductive. However, the reality is much harder than we can imagine. It is easier to spread technology than to bring about extensive change in social and individual attitude.

Although mobile telephony might entail initial fixed costs, the variable costs associated with their use are significantly lower, enabling an overall reduction in transactions costs. Mobile

banking can be a strong income stream for telecom operators, helping them to counter slowing subscription growth and growing competition in traditional niches. The key is information technology spending in annual fixed costs for a mobile banking system. Again, that spending is significant for small providers, but is minimal for large players. This means financial firms looking to expand into emerging markets via mobile banking would require good financial stamina.

Since success is in everyone's best interest, mobile and financial industries and regulators should work collaboratively with each other to unlock the transformative social impact of cell phone money. It is only then that we will be able to deliver life-changing mobile financial services to millions of people across the world, who still have no access to traditional banking.

The pandemic has shown that the trend towards greater digitalisation of financial services in India is here to stay. The ongoing crisis is certainly going to test the way various players in the digital and financial ecosystems respond. Governments must close the digital divide to reap the benefits of digital financial services. This means finding the right balance between enabling financial innovation and addressing several risks: Lack of financial and digital literacy, insufficient consumer protection and unequal access to digital infrastructure and data bases.

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

To boycott, or not to boycott polls, that is the question

Radicals feel that shunning elections is vital to delegitimise a regime and claim the polls to be bogus. But evidence indicates that the cons outweigh the benefits



NADEEM PARACHA

On January 1, the multiparty Opposition alliance, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) announced that it would participate in the forthcoming by-elections and did not rule out taking part in the Senate polls, too.

After completing the first phase of its protest movement with a flurry of large rallies against the Imran Khan Government, the PDM is now entering the second phase of its initiative to oust the Prime Minister. The PDM has been claiming that Khan's Government was installed through a rigged election in 2018 by the military establishment. The alliance sees Khan as a willing marionette of the establishment that, it claims, is pulling his strings.

The PDM's decision to contest the by-polls and then possibly the Senate elections is being looked at with suspicion by some analysts. Some of them are not very fond of Khan's regime (and vice versa). Yet, they haven't held back in explaining the possible move by the PDM as an attempt to strike a deal with the establishment to oust Khan without having to resort to more extreme measures. They see a clash emerging within the PDM between the Zardari doctrine and the Nawaz doctrine.

It was the Pakistani Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif who initially set into motion the PDM's startling anti-establishment agenda, which has clearly unnerved the regime and its non-civilian backers. Asif Zardari, the chief of the PDM's second-largest party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), has advised a more gradualist approach. It was on this advice that the PDM agreed to contest the by-elections. But certain observers believe that the PPP, which is heading the provincial Government in Sindh, is hoping to come to some sort of an understanding with the establishment.

The PDM's more radical sympathisers were expecting a clear boycott of the by-polls and the Senate elections. It has been a long-established understanding within the PPP that election boycotts do not work. In her 1988 biography *'Daughter of the East'*, former chairperson of the PPP, the late Benazir Bhutto, wrote that one of the biggest mistakes of her political career was the boycott of the 1985 elections held during the Zia-ul-Haq dictatorship.

At the time, her party was heading an alliance of anti-Zia parties, the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). According to Benazir, MRD's boycott allowed easy access to pro-Zia elements to the corridors of power. Ironically, one of these elements was Nawaz Sharif.

In 2007, when an anti-Musharraf multiparty alliance, the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), decided to boycott the 2008 general elections, Benazir disagreed with the decision. She insisted that the boycott would facilitate General Musharraf to continue ruling the country as a dictator, with the help of parties that were already supporting him in the Parliament.

For Benazir, a boycott would have aided these parties to retain their hold on the Assemblies and continue to legitimise the Musharraf regime. Benazir was able to convince Sharif's PML-N to contest. Both the parties not only went on to win the majority of seats in the elections, but were also able to gather enough clout to force Musharraf to resign.

In a 2017 essay for the *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, G Buttorff and Douglas Dion wrote that the decision to take part in elections organised by an authoritarian set-up often poses a dilemma for parties opposed to such a set-up. The question is, will their participation in elections, which are likely to be engineered, legitimise the polls, or will a complete boycott of the elections fortify the possibility of the boycotting parties gaining political influence? Benazir believed that MRD's 1985 boycott relinquished its political influence to those who were handpicked by Zia to strengthen his position.

According to Dion and Buttorff, one of the main reasons that parties boycott elections is to expose "the bogusness" of a tampered electoral process. This is the reason being put

forward by those who want the PDM to boycott the by-elections and Senate polls. They believe no elections in Pakistan can be trusted to deliver a fair verdict if they continue to be "engineered" by the establishment and held by a "hybrid regime" like the one headed by Khan. But Dion and Buttorff add that the other reason parties sometimes boycott elections is that they fear "devastating electoral losses."

This reason can be understood on two levels. First, parties can tactically boycott elections if they believe that their vote-bank has weakened. Instead of confessing to this, they announce that they are not taking part in the polls because they fear it will not be fair. The Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) boycotted the 1997 elections because, as exhibited by the rout the party suffered in the 1993 polls, its vote-bank had shrunk considerably.

The party felt that another rout could plunge the outfit into a serious existential crisis. The JI also boycotted the 2008 elections. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), too, boycotted the same elections because, at the time, it was a tiny outfit with no electoral influence —

even though, along with the JI, the PTI claimed that it was boycotting the polls because they were being held by a dictatorship. However, in 2002, both the JI and the PTI had taken part in elections held during the same dictatorship. Second, even parties with strong vote banks can withdraw from elections because they believe that their defeat, engineered by fraudulent polls, can dent their reputation. The PML-N harboured this fear in 2007. Benazir helped Nawaz overcome this fear, despite the fact that the PPP could have easily won Punjab had the PML-N not participated in the 2008 polls. The goal was to continue having at least some influence and presence, even in an engineered Parliament headed by a common foe.

To Dion and Buttorff, an elections boycott aims to disrupt a set-up that Opposition parties do not trust. The boycotting parties believe that once the electoral process is proven as bogus, those engineering it would be forced to back down. But this is rarely the case.

A study by Matthew Frankel of elections boycotts in various authoritarian set-ups from 1990 onwards,

shows that boycotts were unable to trigger any serious disruption, and many parties that had boycotted elections returned to contest them despite the polls being held by the same regimes they claimed were undemocratic.

According to Frankel, many boycotts lead to neither reform nor regime change, and leave Opposition parties worse off than they would have been had they participated. In a 2010 policy paper for the Brookings Institute, Frankel writes, "The boycotting party often becomes completely detached from the organs of power, setting itself up for further setbacks."

In her book *'Faith in Moderation'*, the political scientist Jillian Schwedler writes that, if the holding of elections offers a way for authoritarian regimes to maintain power, it also opens up a host of new opportunities for the regime's opponents. Once in, the Opposition has a better chance of utilising non-electoral options to push out a regime, than it has after completely shutting itself out through a boycott.

(The views expressed are personal. Courtesy: Dawn)

‘Economy may contract 25% in current fiscal’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is not recovering as fast as the Government claims and the country's economy may contract 25 per cent in the current financial year, noted economist Arun Kumar said on Sunday.

Kumar further said that due to a big decline in the GDP during the current financial year, the budget estimates have gone completely out of gear and, therefore, there is a need to correct the Budget.

"India's economic growth is not recovering as fast as the government is showing because the unorganised sector has not started recovering and some major components of the services sector have not recovered. "My analysis shows that the rate of growth will be (-)25 per cent in the current financial year because during lockdown (during April-May), only essential production was taking place and even in agriculture, there was no growth," he told PTI in an interview.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected the Indian economy to contract 7.5 per cent in the current financial year, while the National



Statistical Office (NSO) estimates a contraction of 7.7 per cent.

Also, according to the NSO, the Indian economy contracted by 23.9 per cent during the April-June 2020 quarter and recovered faster than expected in the July-September 2020 quarter as a pick-up in manufacturing helped GDP clock a lower contraction of 7.5 per cent. Kumar, a former professor of economics at JNU, said the government's own document that provided April-June and July-September quarters GDP (gross domestic product) figures said there will be a revision in the data later on.

He predicted that India's fiscal deficit will be higher than it was last year and the state's fiscal deficit will also be much higher.

"Disinvestment revenue will also be short. Tax and non-tax revenues will be short," Kumar said.

He said India's economic recovery will depend on several factors including how quickly vaccination can be done, how quickly people can go back to their work.

"We are not going back to the 2019 level of output in 2021. Maybe in 2022, after the vaccination is done, we will recover back to the 2019 level of output in 2022," Kumar said.

He added that the growth rate in the coming years will be good because of low base effect, but the output will be less than 2019.

Asked whether the government should relax the fiscal deficit target in the upcoming Budget, Kumar said, "It has been argued since July that the government should allow the fiscal deficit to rise and spend more and give money to the unorganised sector and in rural areas."

On India recently imposing fresh restrictions on foreign direct investment (FDI) from countries that share land border with India, he said, "It is a knee-jerk reaction". If you look at the past three-four years, all the start-ups had big investments from China, Kumar added.

US business advocacy group urges Nirmala to lower tariff in Budget

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A top India-centric American business advocacy group has suggested Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to lower tariff in the Union Budget if the country wants to compete with China-backed mega free trade agreement Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

China and 14 other countries in November last year established the world's largest trading bloc that represents roughly 30 per cent of the world's GDP and population.

India walked out of the mega free trade agreement as negotiations failed to address New Delhi's outstanding issues and concerns.

The members of RCEP are 10-nation bloc ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia), China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

"If India can focus on a much more predictable environment from a policy framework it will give more confidence to the investors. Bringing a sense of transparency in policy making also sends a very



positive signal. And if India is going to be competing, especially with the RCEP, then it has to look at lowering its tariff," Mukesh Agni, president of US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) told PTI.

Pointing that in the last 12 months tariffs in India have been going up and up, he said, "What it does is yes, it protects a local industry, but it doesn't make them competitive. So, it is important to protect the local industry, but at the same time, it is important to make them more competent intervals. Lowering of tariff is important."

In a recent submission to the Union Finance Minister, USISPF recommended specific measures to improve direct and indirect tax collection, which will promote private

investment and ensure fiscal and monetary stability.

"On the direct taxation side, we recommend specific amendments to facilitate activity in the digital economy, reduce tax and depreciation rates to boost investment, clarify carry-forward and loss-off-set rules, and streamline regulations related to withholding tax, indirect transfer, and dispute resolution," USISPF said.

"For indirect taxes, we recommend amendments to address challenges with deferred duty payments, simplify various processes and procedures, and align customs regulations more closely with actual industry practices. Together, these changes will free up much-needed investment capital, make it easier for companies to manage their tax liabilities, and provide a needed boost to the economic activity during the next fiscal year," it added.

To increase MSME access to finance in India, USISPF has recommended specific steps to promote supply-chain financing, subsidise the insurance of MSME loans, improve the assessment of MSME credit risk and loan disbursement, and facilitate faster settlement of claims between healthcare providers and insurers.

Luxury car makers seek reduction in taxes on automobiles in next Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Luxury car makers Mercedes-Benz, Audi and Lamborghini expect the government to lower taxes on automobiles in the upcoming Budget, saying the premium segment of the auto industry has not been able to grow due to high taxation besides being hit hard by coronavirus.

Any hike in taxes on luxury cars will hit demand and prevent recovery from the disruptions witnessed last year, according to senior officials of the companies.

"Anything which is a deterrent to the demand in the sector we should stay away because at the end that will cause problem," Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director & CEO Martin Schwenk told PTI.

He was responding to a query on the company's expectations on the tax front from the government in the upcoming budget.

Seeking a reduction on taxes on the auto sector, Schwenk said,

"Already the auto industry is highly taxed...From the import duties to GST and cess which is 22 per cent (on luxury cars). I think the target



should actually be to support the growth of the sector and reduce tax. We should try find an avenue."

Expressing similar sentiments, Audi India head Balbir Singh Dhillon said the challenges for the luxury car segment, which is recovering from the Covid-19 induced disruptions, in 2021 are "more or less the constants from the past".

"One is of course the high taxation on luxury cars, including cess. That remains a challenge because what it has done is that it has not let luxury cars grow beyond 1 per cent (of the total automobile markets in India). It is just hovering around 1 per cent and in last year 2020 it could have dropped probably 0.7-0.8 per cent. That (high tax) remains the 'biggest challenge,' he added.

Demand to rationalise GST on food delivery business to 5%

Kolkata: The restaurants and food Delivery sector has demanded that goods and services tax (GST) on home delivery of food be reduced to five per cent from 18 per cent now to boost the \$3 billion segment, industry officials said.

Customers taking food delivery at their home or office are paying 13 per cent higher price on the same food and beverages compared to customers who are walking down to restaurants as the dine-in tax rate is 5 per cent, they claimed.

"The online food delivery sector in India has been growing by leaps and bounds. It is currently worth \$2.94 billion and is growing at a CAGR of 22 per cent. However, the tax complications arising due to the GST is likely to pose a roadblock to this growth," Fooza Foods founder and managing director, Dibyendu Banerjee told PTI.

"The high GST rate of 18 per cent on online food delivery service providers and ineligibility of credit of such GST charged to the restaurants have an adverse impact on the growth of the sector. A reduc-

tion in GST rates will keep food costs affordable and create more jobs in the sector while furthering the government's initiatives," he said.

However, restaurateurs said a high commission of 23-24 per cent by food delivery platforms have turned out to be a pain point even for several months of reopening after lockdown, footfall for dine-in had not normalised.

"For us, post Covid lockdown our home delivery sales got reverved to 60 per cent which was 40 per cent earlier. With inability to raise prices, our bottomline is getting hit for higher commission fees despite sales had reached closer to pre-covid levels," Platter Hospitality director Shiladitya Chaudhury said.

However, he remained optimistic that after a few months once vaccination reaches the mass, the dine-in customers will return.

"Scalability of business will be most impacted. Growth plans via new franchise outlets for marquee restaurants will be less feasible. PTI

Real estate sector seeks input tax credit on development of leased commercial assets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government should allow commercial real estate developers to set off GST paid on inputs like cement from the tax liability on rental income to avoid double taxation and give a boost to the office market to help India maintain its advantage in various sectors like IT and start-ups, realty firms and consultants said on Sunday.

In its Budget recommendation for the 2021-22 fiscal year, industry body CII has demanded that Section 16 read with Section 17(5) of the CGST Act should be amended to enable the real estate players to avail ITC (input tax credit) on procurement of goods and services during the construction phase where the said immovable property is intended for commercial leasing or renting.

The denial of ITC, leads to blockage of funds for a real estate player, it said.

"In case of commercial leasing of properties and outlets at malls, the renting of such premises attracts 18 per cent which is available as credit to the client. Disallowance of credit during the construction



phase leads to the increased cost of construction, working capital loss, increased financing costs impacting the entire supply chain," CII said.

Tata Realty & Infrastructure Ltd MD & CEO Sanjay Dutt mentioned that as per current GST provisions, input GST credit during the construction phase (for commercial properties) is not available for set-off against output GST liability from earning of rental income.

"In other words, the GST charged on input services (like procurement of cement, steel, works contract services, etc) is required to be capitalised to the cost of construction. Since the

input GST rates on this score are significantly high (in the range of 18% to 28% for cement, steel and other big-ticket items), the developers are losing/foregoing substantial cash flows on this score," Dutt told PTI. He demanded that input tax credit should be allowed in commercial real estate properties meant for leasing purposes.

"It would immensely help the commercial real estate developers in conserving significant cash flows and help developers to sustain themselves...If such input GST is permitted to be utilised to be off-set against the output GST liability," Dutt said.

FinMin looks at BIC model after RBI raises concern over zero coupon bonds for PSB recap

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry is looking at other avenues for affordable capital infusion, including setting up of a Bank Investment Company (BIC), as the RBI has raised concern over the issuance of zero coupon bonds for recapitalisation of public sector banks (PSBs), sources said.

Setting up BIC as a holding company or a core investment company was suggested by the PJ Nayak Committee in its report on "Governance of Boards of Banks in India".

The report recommended transferring shares of the government in the banks to the BIC which would become the parent holding company of all these banks, as a result of this, all the PSBs would become 'limited' banks. BIC will be autonomous and it will have the power to appoint the board of directors and make other policy decisions about subsidiaries.

The idea of BIC, which will serve as a super holding company, was also discussed at the first Gyan Sangam bankers' retreat organised in 2014, the sources said. They added that

it was proposed that the holding company would look into the capital needs of banks and arrange funds for them without Government support.

It would also look at alternative ways of raising capital such as the sale of non-voting shares in a bid to garner affordable capital.

With this in place, the dependence of PSBs on government support would also come down and ease fiscal pressure.

To save interest burden and ease the fiscal pressure, the Government decided to issue zero coupon bonds for meeting the capital needs of the banks.

The first test case of the new mechanism was a capital infusion of ₹5,500 crore into Punjab & Sind Bank and the Finance Ministry will take a call on the remaining ₹14,500 crore during this quarter.

With mounting capital requirement owing to rising NPAs, the government resorted to recapitalisation bonds with a coupon rate for capital infusion into PSBs during 2017-18 and interest payment to banks for holding such bonds started from the next financial year.

Parliament had in September 2020 approved ₹20,000 crore to be made available for the recapitalisation of PSBs. Of this, ₹5,500 crore was issued to Punjab & Sind Bank and the Finance Ministry will take a call on the remaining ₹14,500 crore during this quarter.

With mounting capital requirement owing to rising NPAs, the government resorted to recapitalisation bonds with a coupon rate for capital infusion into PSBs during 2017-18 and interest payment to banks for holding such bonds started from the next financial year.

Newsprint cost up 20% in 3 months

Publishers seek waiver in customs duty

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cost of paper used to publish newspapers and magazines has jumped 20 per cent in the past three months due to demand-supply imbalance following the pandemic, prompting news publishers to rush to the government seeking waiver of 5 per cent import duty to help cut cost.

An industry that was facing headwinds from a slowing economy even before the pandemic, was hit hard when most readers stopped buying news-

papers and magazines on fears of them being carriers of viruses. While there are no medical studies that have established the virus transmission theories, sales did not pick up even after lockdown restrictions were relaxed, industry leaders said.

Now, the rising cost of newsprint — created due to a drastic fall in supplies after 3 million tonnes of manufacturing capacities were either closed or converted to brown paper grades worldwide — has dealt a second blow that is threatening the survival of the industry.

Indian Newspaper Society (INS) President L Adimoolam said most newspapers have stopped sending the hard copies to the rural areas with readership of less than 50

copies, to reduce the distribution cost.

In a representation to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, INS has suggested cutting customs on import of newsprints.

They also want a fiscal stimulus package for the industry or raising tariffs of government advertisements by 50 per cent.

"If working out a stimulus package for print media is difficult at this juncture, DAVP (Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity) may please consider releasing advertisement for all its departments to all publications with an increased tariff of 50 per cent, which would be highly helpful for the industry as a whole," the INS representation said.

It has also sought extension of the validity of RNI (Registrar of Newspapers for India) Circulation Certificates up to March 31, 2022, which will enable DAVP rates to remain the same till next year.

It is estimated that the print media would take two-three years to recover from the current situation, the INS added.

Adimoolam told PTI, "The government helped a few industries (during the pandemic) with stimulus packages. We are (also) expecting some stimulus."

Several newspapers have responded to the situation by cutting costs that included shutting down editions, reducing the number of pages and laying off staff.

Excise duty collection jump 48% this fiscal on record hike in taxes on petrol, diesel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

While the pandemic pummeled tax collection across the board, excise duty mop-up jumped 48 per cent in the current fiscal on the back of a record increase in taxes on petrol and diesel, that more than made up for the below normal fuel sales.

Excise duty collection during April-November 2020, was at ₹1,96,342 crore, up from Rs 1,32,899 crore mop-up during the same period in 2019, according to data from the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

This despite the fact that over 10 million tonnes less diesel — the most used fuel in

the country — was sold during the eight months period.

Diesel sales during April-November 2020, stood at 44.9 million tonnes as compared to 55.4 million tonnes a year back, according to data from the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC).

Petrol consumption too was lower at 17.4 million tonnes, compared to 20.4 million tonnes during April-November 2019.

While Goods and Services Tax (GST) apply on most products since its introduction in 2017, oil products and natural gas has been kept out of its preview. Excise duty, which accrues to the centre, and VAT

that goes to the state government, are levied on their sale.

Industry sources said the jump in excise duty was primarily because of a record increase in taxes on petrol and diesel during March and May last year.

The government had raised excise duty on petrol by ₹13 per litre and that on diesel by ₹16 a litre in two tranches to mop up gains arising from international crude oil prices falling to a two-decade low.

With this, the total incidence of excise duty on petrol rose to ₹32.98 per litre and that on diesel to ₹31.83 a litre.

Petrol costs ₹84.70 a litre in Delhi and a litre of diesel comes for ₹74.88.

Quarterly earnings, vaccine rollout key factors for market this week: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic equity market will be largely guided by the ongoing quarterly earnings as well as global cues in the coming week and indices may witness volatility in the run-up to the Budget, according to analysts.

Besides, investors will keep tracking latest developments and trends on the COVID-19 pandemic front, especially the vaccine rollout in the country.

"Going ahead, the market could be volatile given the ongoing earning season and the weak global cues. Run-up to

the Budget would also add to the volatility," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head — Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Market experts said there will be stock-specific action as the earnings season unfolds.

Some of the major earnings announcement this week are from Bank of Maharashtra, Bajaj Finance, Federal Bank, Asian Paints, Bajaj Auto and Reliance Industries Limited.

Meanwhile, the country's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank on Saturday reported a 14.36 per cent jump

in consolidated net profit to ₹8,760 crore for the December quarter.

"Along with the weak global market, this week, the domestic market will shift its focus on the banking and finance sector as major banks and NBFCs are to release their quarterly results. Markets can be volatile going forward including concerns over how will the Union Budget be?," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Traders said as the vaccine rollout begins, there may be plenty of swings in stock prices.

FPIs invest ₹14,886 cr in first half of Jan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) put in ₹14,866 crore in Indian markets in the first half of January with participants expecting strong third-quarter results by companies.

As per depositories data, FPIs invested a net ₹18,490 crore into equities but pulled out ₹3,624 crore from debt segment between January 1-15.

This translated into a total net investment of ₹14,866 crore during the period under review.

The strong flows are on account of the positive bias towards emerging markets and because of strong third-quarter

earnings thus far besides decreasing domestic Covid-19 cases, said Rusmik Oza, executive vice president, head of fundamental research at Kotak Securities.

The forthcoming US stimulus could be another trigger for positive FPI bias towards emerging markets and India, he added.

"The earnings season is expected to be very strong going forward which along with budget expectations could keep sentiment alive and FPI flows also positive," Oza said.

Giving an overview of emerging markets, Oza said that the "start of calendar year has been mixed for emerging

markets".

Countries apart from India that are witnessing positive FPI flows are Taiwan, Thailand, Brazil and South Africa, while favourites of FPIs like South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines have seen outflows since the start of this year, he noted.

Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww, said that earlier, investors were putting money in a few select bluechip stocks but as their valuations climbed, more investors are now looking towards smaller companies and even outside the large-cap category to invest in.

Going forward, focus of

FPIs on domestic front would continue to be on the active covid case count coming further down and the economy getting back on growth trajectory, said Himanshu Srivastava, associate director — manager research, Morningstar India.

There has been improvement in the macro economic environment which has so far ensured that FPI flows remain intact, he added.

He further said that worries about rising covid infections in several parts of Europe and US could play spoil sport as this could lead to investors turning risk averse if the situation deteriorates.

BharatPe raises ₹139 cr debt from Alteria Capital, ICICI Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fintech company BharatPe on Sunday said it has raised ₹139 crore (about \$20 million) in debt from venture debt firm Alteria Capital and ICICI Bank that will be used to strengthen its lending business and provide credit to merchants.

Founded by Ashneer Grover and Shashvat Nakrani in 2018, BharatPe offers merchants a single interface for all UPI apps like Paytm, PhonePe, Google Pay, BHIM, Mobikwik, Freecharge and others. It also facilitates loan facility for its merchant partners. Speaking to PTI, BharatPe co-founder and CEO Ashneer Grover said ₹90 crore in debt came from Alteria Capital, while the remaining ₹49 crore was from ICICI Bank.

"We have raised funds from ICICI Bank at a competitive interest rate of less than 9 per cent. We are aggressively building our lending vertical and our loan book is currently at ₹400 crore."

"With this infusion, we can double down on our efforts and we expect the loan book to grow to ₹700-750 crore by the end of March 2021," he added.

Grover said BharatPe had set a target of disbursing ₹1,000 crore of loans in 2020-21, of which ₹800 crore has already been disbursed.

"The latest tranche of debt raised will help further build the lending business and enable credit for millions of businesses, across the length and breadth of India," Grover said.

Biden-Harris inauguration event kicks off with Kolam drawings

Washington: Kolam, a traditional Indian art form of drawing geometric patterns on the floors as a sign of welcome, was part of the virtual kick-off ceremony of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris, who traces her origin to Tamil Nadu where these auspicious designs adore almost every household.

In Tamil Nadu, where Harris has roots, women draw Kolams on the ground to invite health and prosperity into houses where they are displayed.

Pictures of thousands of Kolam tiles were on Saturday woven into a video to welcome Biden and Harris in the spirit of 'Presidency for All' and to showcase the multi-cultural heritage of America.

More than 1,800 individuals from across the US and many from India participated in the online initiative to create thousands of Kolam designs to celebrate the historic event.

"Many believe Kolams symbolise positive energy and new beginnings. People of all ages from various communities collaborated from their homes to create tiles with eco-friendly materials. What started out as a local project spread way beyond our expectations," said Shanthi Chandrasekar, an award-winning multimedia and multidisciplinary artist from Maryland who took the initiative along with several others.

The initial idea was to have these Kolam patterns from across the country in



front of the White House as a symbol of good beginning to the new administration.

The Washington DC police gave permission to the organisers to have it near the Capitol Hill around the inauguration venue. However, due to the unprecedented security measures that have been enforced in Washington DC, the permission was cancelled.

Pictures of thousands of Kolam tiles were on Saturday woven into a video to welcome Biden and Harris in the spirit of 'Presidency for All' and to showcase the multi-cultural heritage of America.

A date for the installation after the inauguration will be set up after a go-ahead from the

local security, said Sowmya Somnath who is part of the Inauguration Kolam 2021 organising team in her volunteer capacity.

Washington DC Public Schools arts director Mary Lambert and visual arts manager Lindsey Vance joined Chandrasekar to combine thousands of Kolam drawings made by people from many different backgrounds to welcome Biden when he takes office in a few days.

Hundreds of artists, citizens and students from across the country collaborated online to combine thousands of local pieces.

"This is what we wanted when we planned to have thou-

sands of Kolam tiles in front of the White House," said Somnath.

Students from 10 public schools in Washington DC participated in making the art.

Lambert said the District of Columbia Public School arts curriculum focuses on equity and believes cultural representation is an important part of that effort.

"This project provided an opportunity for our students to learn about another culture and the math skills needed for creation in the arts. As well, an opportunity to express their identity through visual arts and to see that united with others from around the country," said Lambert. **PTI**

Kamala Harris to be sworn in as US VP by Justice Sonia Sotomayor

Washington: Kamala Harris, who will script history as the first female, first Black and first South Asian US vice president on Wednesday, will be sworn in by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic justice in the US Supreme Court.

The 58-year-old vice president-elect was inspired by Justice Sotomayor's background, ABC News reported, ahead of the presidential inauguration event on January 20.

They have both previously served as former prosecutors - Harris in California, Sotomayor in New York. Sotomayor, 66, is third female justice in US Supreme Court history.

During her victory speech Harris weaved in an adage from her mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, who often told her she would be the first to do many things, but urged her to open doors for others.

"While I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last," said Harris in November.

For the historic day, Harris has chosen to be sworn in using two Bibles. One previously belonged to Regina Shelton, who was like a second mother to Harris and her sister Maya.

Harris and Maya often visited Shelton's house after school while their mother was still at work as a breast cancer researcher. Shelton lived two doors down from Harris' home. Harris used Shelton's Bible to take the oath of office to be attorney general of California and later to become a United States senator, CNN reported. **PTI**

Gunmen kill two women judges in Afghan capital

Kabul: Gunmen fired on a car in northern Kabul on Sunday, killing two women judges who worked for Afghanistan's high court and wounding the driver, a court official said.

It was the latest attack in the Afghan capital during peace talks between Taliban and Afghan government officials in Qatar.

Supreme Court of Afghanistan spokesman Ahmad Fahim Qawim, said the women were judges who worked for the high court but he did not identify them by name.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack and Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the insurgent group wasn't responsible.

The Afghan government has repeatedly blamed the Taliban for targeted killings in recent months and the insurgent group accuses the government of staging the killings to spoil the peace process.

The Islamic State group has



An Afghan journalist films the site where gunmen fired in Kabul, Afghanistan on Sunday **AP**

claimed responsibility for multiple attacks in the capital in recent months, including on educational institutions that killed 50 people, most of them students. IS has also claimed responsibility for rocket attacks in December targeting the major US base in Afghanistan. There were no casualties.

The Taliban and the Afghan government earlier this month resumed peace talks in Qatar. Negotiations were off to a slow start as the insurgent group continues attacks on Afghan government forces while keeping their promise not to attack US and NATO troops. **AP**

Kremlin critic Navalny departs Berlin on Moscow-bound flight

Berlin: Leading Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny departed from Germany on Sunday to return to Russia, where he faces the threat of arrest, after recovering from his poisoning in August with a nerve agent.

Navalny, who announced on Wednesday that he planned to return, said he was "very happy" as he boarded a plane in Berlin bound for Moscow's Vnukovo Airport.

It remains to be seen what reception awaits him in Moscow. On Thursday, Russia's prison service said that he faces immediate arrest once he returns.

Navalny, who has blamed his poisoning on the Kremlin, charged that Russian President Vladimir Putin was now trying to deter him from coming home with new legal motions. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied a role in the opposition leaders



Alexei Navalny and his wife Yulia onboard a flight to Moscow, at the Airport Berlin Brandenburg (BER) in Schoenefeld, near Berlin, Germany on Sunday **AP**

poisoning.

At the end of December, the Federal Penitentiary Service, or FSIN, warned Navalny that he faced time in prison if he fails to immediately report to its office in line with the terms of a suspended sentence and pro-

bation he received for a 2014 conviction on charges of embezzlement and money laundering that he rejected as politically motivated. The European Court for Human Rights had ruled that his conviction was unlawful. **AP**

Iran asks watchdog not to publish 'unnecessary' Tehran nuke details

AP ■ TEHRAN

In urged the United Nations' nuclear watchdog to avoid publishing "unnecessary" details on Tehran's nuclear programme, state TV reported Sunday, a day after Germany, France and Britain said Tehran has "no credible civilian use" for its development of uranium metal.

The report quoted a statement from Iran's nuclear department that asked the International Atomic Energy Agency to avoid publishing details on Iran's nuclear program that may cause confusion. "It is expected the international atomic energy agency avoid providing unnecessary details and prevent paving ground for misunderstanding in the international community, the statement said. It did not elaborate.

On Saturday, Germany,

France and Britain pressed Iran to back off its plan to develop uranium metal, calling it "the latest planned violation" of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The goal of the deal is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, something Iran insists it does not want to do.

"Iran has no credible civilian use for uranium metal," they said in a joint statement. "The production of uranium metal has potentially grave military implications."

On Thursday, the IAEA said Iran had informed it that it had begun installing equipment for the production of uranium metal.

It said Tehran maintains its plans to conduct research and development on uranium metal production are part of its "declared aim to design an improved type of fuel."

Guatemala tries blocking caravan of 9,000 Honduran migrants

Guatemala City: Guatemalan soldiers blocked part of a caravan of as many as 9,000 Honduran migrants on Saturday at a point not far from where they entered the country seeking to reach the US border.

The soldiers, many wearing helmets and wielding shields and sticks, formed ranks across a highway in Chiquimula, near the Honduras border, to block the procession of migrants. Guatemalas immigration

agency distributed a video showing a couple of hundred men scuffling with soldiers, pushing and running through their lines, even as troops held hundreds more back.

Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei issued a statement calling on Honduran authorities "to contain the mass exit of its inhabitants."

On Friday, the migrants entered Guatemala by pushing past about 2,000 police and sol-

diers posted at the border; most entered without showing the negative coronavirus test that Guatemala requires.

"The government of Guatemala regrets this violation of national sovereignty and calls on the governments of Central America to take measures to avoid putting their inhabitants at risk amid the health emergency due to the pandemic," Giammatteis statement continued. **AP**

Cargo ship sinks in the Black Sea; 3 dead, 6 rescued

AP ■ ISTANBUL

A cargo ship sank off Turkey's Black Sea coast on Sunday, leaving at least three people dead, Turkish authorities said. Six others were rescued.

The transport ministry said the Palau-flagged ship named Arvin had anchored off the port of Bartin in northern Turkey due to bad weather, before breaking into two pieces and sinking.

Emergency workers saved at least six crew members and reached the bodies of two others, the ministry's naval branch said on Twitter.

Violent youth protests hit Tunisia amid economic turmoil

AP ■ TUNIS

Police used tear gas to disperse violent protests led by disgruntled youths in several Tunisian cities overnight, including in the capital of Tunis and in the seaside city of Sousse.

Tunisians in general are angry that the North African country is on the verge of bankruptcy and has dire public services. And many feel disappointed that on the 10-year anniversary of the revolution that ousted autocratic President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali there is little to show in terms of improve-

ment. Police swooped in as shops and banks were looted and vandalised, arresting "dozens" of youths, according to state news agency TAP.

Protesters blocked roads by burning tires and threw stones and other objects at police and businesses, according to the Interior Ministry, which said the situation was now "calm" across the country on Sunday.

Videos circulating on social media showed dramatic chases down alleys between groups of young people and the police who used tear gas to disperse them.

Deaths, self-immolation draw scrutiny on China tech giants

Hong Kong: E-commerce workers who kept China fed during the coronavirus pandemic, making their billionaire bosses even richer, are so unhappy with their pay and treatment that one just set himself on fire in protest.

China's internet industries already were known for long, demanding days.

With millions of families confined at home, demand surged and employees delivered tons of vegetables, rice, meat, diapers and other supplies, often aboard scooters that exposed them to sub-freezing winter cold.

For white-collar workers in the technology industry, pay is

better than in some industries but employees are often expected to work 12 hours a day or more.

The human cost caught public attention after the deaths of two employees from e-commerce platform Pinduoduo, known for selling fresh produce at low prices.

Their deaths prompted suggestions they were overworked. In an indication of high-level concern, the official Xinhua News Agency called for shorter work hours, describing long hours of overtime at the expense of employees' health as an "illegal" operation.

Renewed concerns over dire working conditions for

delivery drivers also came to the forefront when a video circulated on Chinese social media showing what it said was a driver for Ele.Me, part of e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, setting himself on fire to protest unpaid wages.

The controversy is a blow to the image of internet industries that are transforming China's economy and generating new jobs.

They have made some of the founders among the world's wealthiest entrepreneurs.

During the heights of the pandemic, the fortunes of the biggest, including Alibaba founder Jack Ma and Pinduoduo founder Colin

Huang, swelled as online consumer spending boomed.

In a video widely circulated on Chinese social media, 45-year-old delivery driver Liu Jin poured gasoline and set himself on fire outside a distribution station for Eleme in the eastern city of Taizhou, shouting that he wanted his money.

Others snuffed the flames and rushed him to a hospital, where he is being treated for third-degree burns on his body.

Details of Liu's complaint could not be verified and Eleme did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Separately, a 43-year-old delivery driver collapsed on the

job and died last week while delivering food for Eleme.

The company said in a statement that it will give 600,000 yuan (\$92,700) to the driver's family and raised its insurance coverage for drivers to that level.

Its statement said Eleme "had not done enough in terms of accidental death insurance, and needs to do more."

The issue was highlighted again after a Pinduoduo employee surnamed Tan committed suicide after taking leave from the firm to return to his hometown, less than two weeks after a 22-year-old employee surnamed Zhang in Urumqi collapsed while walk-

ing home from work with colleagues, and later passed away.

Pinduoduo, China's third-largest e-commerce firm, released statements saying it was providing assistance and support to the families of the two employees who died. Shanghai authorities also are reviewing working hours, contracts and other conditions at the company.

The deaths raised an outcry on social media, with many people suspecting that they were a result of overwork.

Chinese social media users blasted the country's technology sector, criticizing not just Pinduoduo for a culture of long hours but pointing out that this

was an industry-wide problem, with similar company cultures seen at most of China's large technology companies.

They also revived a national debate over the tech sector's so-called "996" working culture, in which employees often work from 9 am to 9 pm six days a week.

Companies sometimes pay huge bonuses to some employees, enticing them to work more overtime.

"We must strive to succeed in pursuit of dreams, but the legitimate rights and interests of workers cannot be ignored or even violated," said state-owned Xinhua News Agency in a post on microblogging site

Weibo.

The issue has also cast a spotlight on the working conditions of delivery drivers, who are under heavy pressure to get orders to customers quickly and at times make less than 10 yuan (\$1.55) per delivery.

If they fail to meet deadlines, fines imposed can range from as little as 1 yuan (\$0.15) to as much as 500 yuan (\$77.30) if a customer lodges a complaint.

As part of the gig economy, such delivery workers often do not get the benefits provided to full-time employees, such as social or medical insurance. **AP**

Trend Slazer

Kajol cherishes her bond with mother

KAJOL cherishes her special bond with her mother, veteran actor **Tanuja**, and says she truly understood her only after she had a daughter.

"I only understood my mother after I had my daughter. I always loved my mother, always admired her and thought she was amazing. But after I had my daughter, I remember calling up my mother and having this whole crying conversation with her, and telling her that 'I know how much you love me today'," Kajol said.

Recalling the conversation, Kajol continued, "I told her, 'Today, I understand what all you gave up for me, how you felt about everything in life just because you had me in it and how everything changed for you'."



'It's not that I didn't get offers at the national level. I did some films, too, but I didn't want

to neglect my regional language. I always felt that my language is so beautiful and we make such great films, and that I come from the land of Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Bimal Roy, and Aparna Sen, who are already recognised globally. That's where I also carved my niche.'

—Rituparna Sengupta

AMIT SADH plays the protagonist in the forthcoming web series *Jeet Ki Zidd*. The actor says the story, set against the backdrop of the Indian Army Special Task Force and based on a true story, is more than just about valour. It is a story of hope and passion, he points out.



"It is the story of one of our Kargil war heroes, Major Deependra Singh Sengar, and how he followed his dream to be part of the Special Task Force since childhood. There comes a time in his journey where he and his wife goes through the darkest phase — he lost his physical strength — and yet he did not give up," Amit said.

I am anything but political: Drew

Actor **DREW BARRYMORE** feels she is finding her voice on Instagram, but only regarding things that are not related to politics.

"At my very core belief, I am anything but political and then 2020 happened and the whole world changed and we did have something that united all of us, a pandemic,

which wasn't political until it absolutely was political," Barrymore said. "I've been finding my voice on Instagram for years, but usually about pretty tame things, beauty, love and fun, positivity and joy but let's face it, social media is now the most powerful thing we have," she added.



A women-first social networking app reveals how single Indians are planning on dating in 2021 now that India has unlocked and lifted restrictions across states. Basis a nationwide survey conducted by Bumble, there are some interesting data and insights regarding the dating preferences.

Virtual dating is the new norm

The recent nationwide survey found that after connecting with people virtually, 83 per cent of single Indians are comfortable to meet up with their connections in-person. The study also reveals that 40 per cent of single Indians will opt for virtual dating in 2021.

Indians now going on pre-dates more than ever

Single Indians now go on 'pre-dates' where they explore virtual dating for the first time

The social network

A dating app reveals how single Indians are planning to find companionship during the year



and use video dates to get to know one another before meeting in-person. The app's internal research found out that 78 per cent of single Indians feel the

need to build trust before meeting in-person, which has given rise to 'slow dating' that means people are taking more time to get to know each other better.

Ideal first IRL dates in 2021

For those who are meeting in person, the pandemic has changed the way they approach dating with a majority (47 per cent) preferring more low-key first IRL dates as staying indoors (at their home, their partner's or a friend's place) is the top choice for first in-person dates. Once comfortable to step out, going on a long drive remains a favourite among single Indians (43 per cent) along with meeting at a local cafe/tea shop. Dinner dates at a restaurant (41 per cent) is the next favourite for a great first IRL date choice.

Dating choices and preferences

When it comes to making a connection online, education and career choices top the list of preferences that matter most to single Indians, followed by dating intentions. However, the top most deciding factor when meet-

ing someone in-person is compatibility (23 per cent).

Making boundaries and comfort levels clear

To help navigate new rules of dating in 2021, the app's new badges give its community the opportunity to communicate what kind of dates people are looking for: virtual, socially-distanced or socially-distanced with masks. This helps with the potentially awkward conversation by allowing the community to search for people who are dating in the same way as them. Globally, more than one million people have used the app's new feature on their profile. People who share what kind of dates they are comfortable with through the app's new dating badges see a 43 per cent increase in the average number of monthly matches than those who don't.

Samarpita Samaddar, Bumble India PR Director, said,

"Single Indians are now feeling a strong desire to build trust online before meeting in real life with virtual dating becoming the new norm in India. In fact, over 540 million messages have been sent on the app in India between January and November, 2020. We saw a 38 per cent rise in the use of video chats and voice calls with people spending roughly 20 mins on average on video and voice calls.

As India continues to unlock, we're seeing an emerging trend of people getting excited about the prospect of dating in real life again in 2021. At the same time, there's still nervousness about what the future holds. We will continue to support our community in India to write their own stories and take charge of their dating journeys."

(The research was conducted by YouGov between December 2 to 10, 2020 in India.)

LIGHTS AND MIRRORS

Want a clutter-free home decor setup within a budget? Here's how

Re-modelling your home is a strenuous task and can take months to complete, especially if you have a nine to six job. But with ingenuity and without buying expensive things, your home can get a perfect makeover just by adding lights and mirrors to give it more sophisticated appearance.

Heena Jain, Head Design Consultant, WoodenStreet explains the ways and positions, where you can place the mirrors to give your space a luxury makeover.

MIRRORS

Mirrors can never be enough in a house if you want to create something fascinating in a low budget. There are various rooms in the house that can be changed with a tinge of mirrors and lights.

Living room: Buy a mirror that is large in size and has bulky border line. Choose a bright colour or according to your home decor theme. A living room has many places to accommodate a large mirror but find a place where, the window is in the center. Position the mirror carefully and remove everything that is excess on the eyes. It will expand the symmetry of the room and will create an illusion of a hall.

Dining room: Dining rooms generally do not entertain mirrors but if you have made your mind on it, then bring a square shaped designer mirror that goes well with the kitchen. If you have a dining table in or close to your kitchen, then it will be more appropriate to use a mirror on the side end of the table or a cabinet would be perfect. The mirror creates an effect of more people while you dine.

Bedroom: The bedroom is the most suited place for a hanging a mirror. Now, it depends on the room dimensions and space available to choose what type of mirror suits your bedroom. If the room is spacious then, you can opt for flowered shaped circular mirror on the back wall of your bed. If your room size is small then bring an average sized mirror and place it near the window, which will scatter the light throughout the room.

Hallway: It is reasonable to hang a mirror in the hallway or lobby but in an artistic manner. Go for a small set of mirrors in symmetrical shapes and it will instantly compliment your hallway.

LIGHTS

The functionality of a light is far more crucial than we think, because whatever decor you decide to implement in your home, until there is alleviated lighting, your interiors will not be up to the mark. Therefore, lights play a major role in



highlighting what's behind the door.

Living room: The usual ceiling lights in your home only highlight the furniture with a faded sparkle, while if you go for an ambient lighting, such as, a table lamp, wall mounted lamp or a hanging lamp then it acts like a spot light and highlights the perfections of your decor. The major reason behind choosing perfect lighting is that it doesn't light up every corner of the house rather it creates an effect of organised space for any outsider. For living room, choose some hanging lights like chandelier or fancy lamps, right around the corners of ceiling fan. It will reimburse the light on the furniture with yellow and orange shades, so your space look akin to a luxury boutique hotel.

Dining room: This is the place where the light is required the most, and people do quite the opposite because they think it is an unnecessary expenditure. But it is not true at all, as light brighten up the entire dining area, and makes it convenient to relish the drinks and food. If you have a separate dining room area then go for wall mounted lights, which deliver an opulent vibe to the area. If you have interconnected

kitchen and dining table then choose some floor lamps that compliment the kitchen cabinets and dining table. You will see for yourself, the difference in organisation before and after the makeover. It is the added advantage of proper and smart lighting, that percolates the lights through reflective surfaces and builds an apparition that classifies the space.

Bedroom: The lights in bedroom should be selected very carefully as it marks personal territory. Try and keep your bedroom organised so that lights will impose a kinetic effect on the decor of the space, which in turn demarcate organised and unorganised area. It is very important to keep the light source adjacent to the walls, in order for the light to scatter. There is already a source of ambient lighting in your bedroom — the side table lamp. But you have to bring in some hanging lights for low lighting and tidy space.

Hallway: The hallway is the most visited space of the home, as it connects every room in the house. Yet, we put the most terrible lighting in the hallway, because it is hardly occupied in terms of possessions, but it shouldn't be like that.



Purchase some fancy and designer wall mounted lights that will transform the place.

Every house has its particulars, but it doesn't mean you have to remain unorganised and untidy all the time. The lights

and mirrors do have the capacity to present your home in more chic way. Eventually, rooms need to be organised with various furniture like cabinets and chest of drawers or wardrobes as well.

—IANS

WEBBED



DAUGHTER FROM ANOTHER MOTHER

After realising their babies were exchanged at birth, two women develop a plan to adjust to their new lives: creating a single — and peculiar — family. Starring Ludwika Paleta, Paulina Goto and Martin Altomaro, the show releases on January 20 on Netflix.

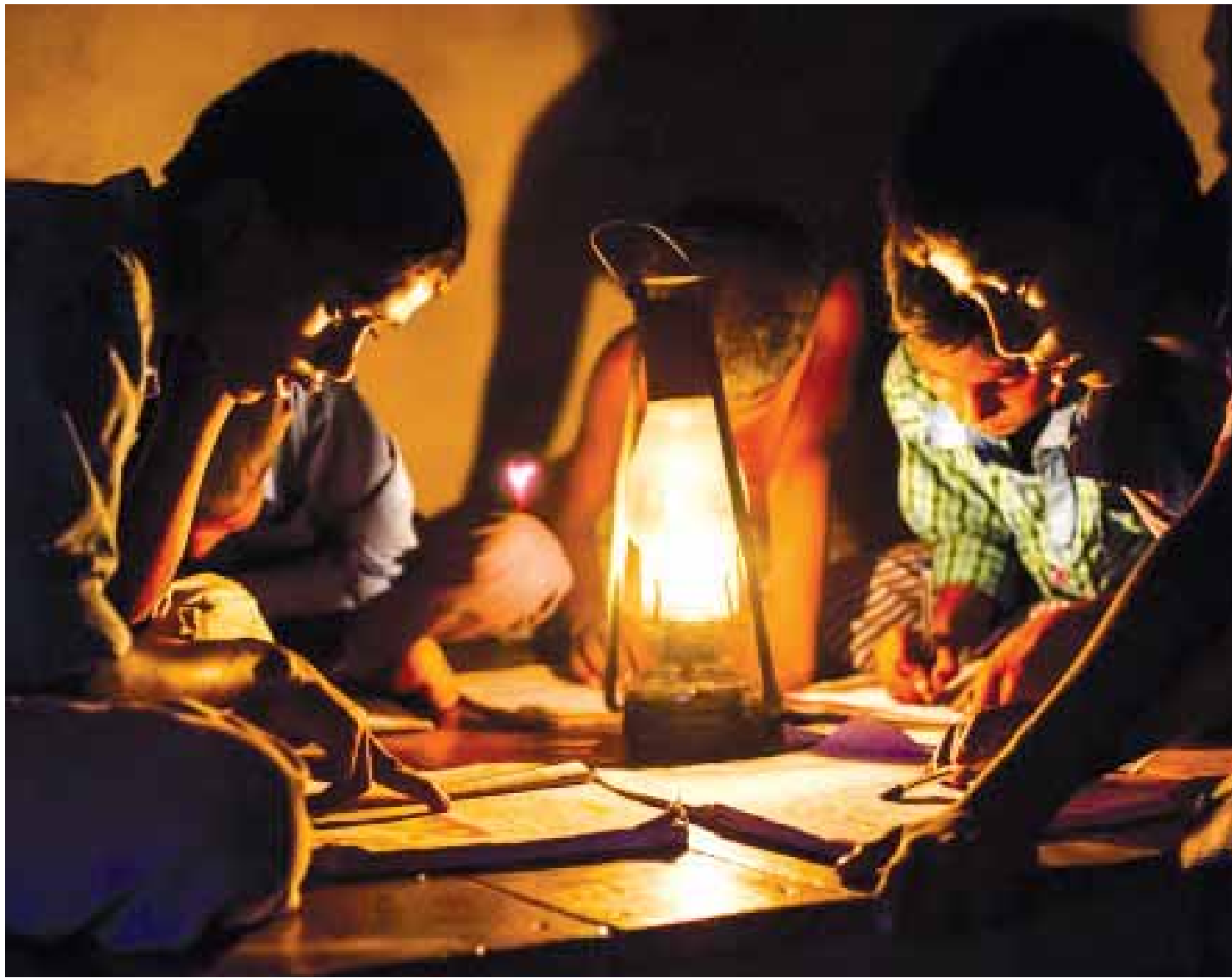
SPYCRAFT

The spy game is a serious business, and throughout history, the tools and technologies developed for it have mattered as much as the spies themselves. The show releases on January 20 on Netflix.



CALL MY AGENT!: SEASON 4

At a top Paris talent firm, agents scramble to keep their star clients happy — and their business afloat — after an unexpected crisis. Created by Fanny Herrero, the fourth season releases on January 21 on Netflix.



Did you know that Jammu and Kashmir have a very important place in power generation? Well, the estimated hydro power potential of the UTs are around 20,000 Megawatts (MW), of which about 16,475 MW have been identified. This comprises 11,283 MW in Chenab basin, 3,084 MW in Jhelum basin, 500 MW in Ravi basin and 1,608 MW in Indus basin. One can pretty much imagine how many benefits it can bring along with it. Undoubtedly, an increase in demand for power suggests growth of the economy i.e. industrialisation, modernisation and improvement in basic amenities, further creating countless opportunities for the people of the region.

But, even today, there are so many areas where the power supply conditions are worse and need to be

A CAUSE OF CONCERN

Jammu and Kashmir face crippling power cuts, especially during winters. While there might be some progress, electricity shortage continues to haunt the region and is a major constraint in the development of the economy, shares HENA RANI

improved soon. The Valley faces crippling power cuts, especially during winters. If we talk about the Samba village of Pampore tehsil, located in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, the power supply lines in Alamdar colony and Akram Dar mohalla have been tied with the

branches of trees. In such a scenario, the life-giving trees become the agents of death. The worn-out wooden poles and stranded conductors pose grave threat to the lives of residents. The locals alleged that they are living under constant fear due to these conditions. They have persuad-

ed the concerned department to install proper electricity poles in the area so that the power supply can be restored in all seasons without any obstruction and can be escaped from any incident that could occur in the present distorted and dilapidated condition of the power supply.

However, not surprisingly, the concerned department did not pay any attention.

The Samba village is located on the banks of river Jhelum at a distance of 22 km from Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, and 12 km from Pulwama. However, the villages there, are still deprived of the electricity poles, which open the truth of claims of so-called development in this advanced age. Abdul Rehman, an 80-year-old resident of the colony, said, "We have been requesting the power department to replace the dangling and damaged electric wires, but our pleas were not heard and the problems persist. We have even bought the electricity wires with our own money since there have been many incidents of people getting injured after coming in contact with these power lines."

"Another hard reality is that these wooden poles were installed ages ago and now, they are decayed and rotten. Whenever the wires break, we, the locals, fix it ourselves. The condition of the wires have become very critical, which is no less dangerous," Rehman added.

A resident of the same colony, Bashir Ahmed Dar, shared, "Every month we get electricity bills but whenever the weather changes, the power lines usually get damaged and the concerned department doesn't seem to care about it. We had also submitted a request letter in February 2020 complaining about both - the electricity wires and poles but till date, we have not received any response from the team."

The locals of the region fear that power lines may lead to a catastrophe at any time. The ground situation is grim and the reality looks quite different than the claims of the power department. Sohail Ahmad Dar, also a resident of the village, expressed his concern that the electric lines touch roofs of houses and trees on roads, endangering people's lives as well as their property.

Another local, Nargis Jozi, said, "While there might be some progress, power shortage continues to haunt the region and is a major constraint in the development of the economy."

The administration has assured the residents many times for proper arrangement of power supply but so far, the promise has not been fulfilled. The locals are eagerly waiting for their demands to be met. Well, it's high time that the concerned department wakes up from its slumber before one more precious life gets lost due to these improper and dilapidated power supply lines.

—Charkha Features



Teachings from the past

The world depends upon dharma to maintain order and will be on your side if you live righteously, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

According to *Mahabharata*, in the beginning, there was neither the ruler nor were the people who need to be governed. Instead, it was 'dharma' that protected one man from the other. Hence, in earlier days of civilisation, there was neither the king nor the kingdom nor any penal code, for people lived and grew together in Dharma. It is generally found that certain words in these stanzas are not rendered correctly into English or Hindi. For example, when the Mahabharata says that, in that age, there was neither any king nor any kingdom or state or governance, it has not to be taken literally. So in order to arrive at the correct meanings of these, we should understand that, in that age, there wasn't any multiplicity of ethnic, cultural, religious or political groups. So, there were no boundaries and no demarcations of territories nor were there any kind of divisions. Whereas, in today's time, we have many states, based on the principle of 'one language one state', or 'one religion one state' or one geographical territory one state, etc. But, in earlier times, there was a small population and people used one language and one religion. So, there was no 'state' in the modern sense of the term. Instead, the whole world was one State.

Similarly, when the Mahabharata says that it was 'Dharma' which protected one from the other or that it was dharma which worked as a factor for coherence and growth, it means that, in that age, people had benign nature, noble intentions, good behaviour and high character. Their mindset, their proclivities and their dealings ensued from their satvic and gentle nature. Their thoughts, words and behaviour were practically such as did not generate any friction, problems or crime. So, the word 'Dharma' used in the present text is not to be interpreted in the sense it is interpreted today, because there were, then, neither any priests or scriptures nor any acts of worship or rituals but rather people lived with a practical sense of good behaviour, for they had innate goodness. Since, people lived with the feelings of love, amity and peacefulness, there was no need of any penal laws, for there was no crime.

The Mahabharata further says that, after a period of time, there arose confusion among the people in regard to obligation of one person towards the other, which led to vices like greed, anger and revenge. Slowly, people now thought of possessing what did not belong to them or what was not owned by them. This Greed manifested in the form of unrestrained desires so much so that people lost all sense of limit to satisfying their lust or greed. This clouded their judgement so that they now could not dis-



criminate between what is right and what is wrong or what may be said and what must not be said. All these trends, in course of time, led to a state of anarchy where the powerful oppressed the weak and the rich and the forward classes harassed the poor and the backward. It was in these ages that there arose the necessity, of kings, recognition of territories of kingdoms, penal laws, armies, weapons, etc.

Now, the present age where we all are living, is at its peak or better it would be to say that we are now at the fag end of Kaliyuga, also called The Iron Age when millions of able-bodied people form armies and many other millions prepare weapons for them. Trillions of rupees are, today, spent over maintenance of these armies and manufacture of arms and ammunition. There is so much greed at the individual, interpersonal, national and international level! The unfulfilled greed has taken the form of anger, tension, hatred, jealousy, etc.. As a result of these vices, today every powerful country is planning an attack on a weaker country and threaten their sovereignty.

The Mahabharata clearly says that it is mutual trust and truth that sustains a society. Hence, if the people do not have trust in the head of state / country and vice-versa, then the kingdom soon perishes. Trust according to Mahabharata is sustained by dharma and dharma is another name for truthfulness. So, if people or the king do not speak the truth and are not trustworthy, then that society does not last long. We see both these characteristics in the present-day society. The government thinks that people, in general are cunning, liars and unfit for trust and the people have a deep-rooted feeling that the government is unreliable, undependable and unworthy of trust and the whole machinery is corrupt.

EMBRACE GREEN SPACES

Being outdoors can improve mental health by lowering levels of depression and anxiety, keeping lockdown blues at bay, say researchers

If you want to beat lockdown and social distancing blues, head to green spaces and switch off TV, computer and smartphone as this will dramatically improve your mental health, say researchers, including one of Indian-origin, as several countries including the UK impose fresh restrictions amid surge in COVID numbers.

Being outdoors, particularly in green spaces, can improve mental health by promoting more positive body image, and lowering levels of depression and anxiety.

A new study, published in the Journal of Happiness Studies, said that spending time outdoors and switching off our devices is associated with higher levels of happiness during a period of COVID-19 restrictions.

"Our results are important in this context because they show that being able to spend time outdoors under conditions of lockdown has a beneficial impact on psychological well-being," said co-lead author



Viren Swami, Professor of Social Psychology at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU).

"Being outdoors provides opportunities to escape from the stresses of being confined at home, maintain social relationships with others, and engage in physical activity - all

of which can improve mental health."

Jointly led by academics from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) in the UK, the Karl Landsteiner University of Health Sciences in Austria, and Perdana University in Malaysia, new research exam-

ined how levels of happiness during a national lockdown were affected by being outdoors, the amount of daily screen time and feelings of loneliness.

Using an experience sampling method (ESM), the researchers measured levels of

happiness amongst a group of 286 adults three times a day, at random intervals, over a 21-day period.

This allowed the participants to provide data in real-time rather than retrospectively, helping to avoid recall biases.

The team found that levels of happiness were higher when participants were outdoors rather than indoors.

In addition, more daily screen time and higher levels of loneliness were both associated with lower levels of happiness.

The impact of loneliness on happiness was also weaker when participants were outdoors.

"While lockdowns can help slow down the transmission of Covid-19, research has also shown that prolonged periods of lockdown take their toll on mental health," Swami said.

"Our findings have practical health policy implications. Given that further lockdown restrictions have now become necessary in the UK, public health messages that promote getting some fresh air instead of staying indoors and staring at our screens could really help to lift people's mood this winter," Swami elaborated.

—IANS

Do something today that your future self will thank you for.
—Sean Patrick Flanery

SMOKING LINKED TO SUBARACHNOID HEMORRHAGE

Adults who smoke or who are genetically predisposed to smoking behaviours are more likely to experience a serious type of stroke called subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH), researchers say.

The study, published in the journal 'Stroke', indicates that those who smoked half a pack to 20 packs of cigarettes a year have a 27 per cent increased risk of SAH.

SAH is a type of stroke that occurs when a blood vessel on the surface of the brain ruptures and bleeds into the space between the brain and the skull. It mainly affects middle-aged adults and has high rates of complications and death.

"Previous studies have shown that smoking is associated with higher risks of SAH, yet it has been unclear if smoking or another confounding condition such as high blood pressure is a cause for stroke," said researcher Guido Falcone, assistant professor of neurology at Yale University in the US.



METABOLISM MAY PLAY ROLE IN RMMD

Researchers have found that certain metabolites — small molecules produced by the process of metabolism — may be the predictive indicators for persons at risk of recurrent major depressive disorder (rMMD).

The findings, published in the journal Translational Psychiatry, indicated that the accuracy of this prediction was more than 90 per cent.

"It's a small study, but it is the first to show the potential of using metabolic markers as predictive clinical indicators of patients at greatest risk and lower risk for recurring bouts of major depressive symptoms," Naviaux added.

rMMD is a mood disorder characterised by multiple symptoms in combination — feelings of sadness or hopelessness, anger or frustration, loss of interest, sleep disturbances, anxiety, slowed or difficulty thinking, suicidal thoughts and unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches.



EVEN ONE DRINK MAY UP ATRIAL FIBRILLATION RISK

People who regularly drink a modest amount of alcohol are at an increased risk of atrial fibrillation, a condition where the heart beats in an abnormal rhythm.

The study published in the European Heart Journal found that compared to drinking no alcohol at all, just one alcoholic drink a day was linked to a 16 per cent increased risk of atrial fibrillation over an average (median) follow-up time of nearly 14 years.

"These findings are important as the regular consumption of alcohol, the 'one glass of wine a day' to protect the heart, as is often recommended for instance in the lay press, should probably no longer be suggested without balancing risks and possible benefits for all heart and blood vessel diseases, including atrial fibrillation," said researcher Renate Schnabel, a professor at the University Heart and Vascular Center, Hamburg-Eppendorf in Germany.



DISCRIMINATION UPS ANXIETY RISK

Regardless of genetic risks, exposure to discrimination in life plays a significant role in developing anxiety and related disorders, suggests a new study.

Published in the Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences journal, the study determined that even after controlling genetic risk for anxiety, depression and neuroticism, people reported greater discrimination experiences.

"The results demonstrate that discriminatory experiences can potentially cause stress and mental health problems regardless of the genetic constitution of the individual," said researcher Adolfo G Cuevas, an assistant professor at Tufts University in the US.

The team said the findings demonstrate that alleviating the impact of discrimination has the potential to improve mental health within the overall population.



STRESS IN EXPECTING MOTHERS IMPACT CHILDREN

Expecting mothers, stop worrying or taking any kind of stress as it may affect your baby's chance of developing disease, a new study suggests.

Psychosocial factors creating stress such as lack of social support, loneliness, marriage status or bereavement may be mutating their child's mitochondrial DNA and could be a precursor to a host of diseases, the researchers at the University of Cincinnati in the US said.

"There are a lot of conditions that start in childhood that have ties to mitochondrial dysfunction including asthma, obesity, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism," said the lead researcher, Kelly Brunst, Assistant professor at the varsity.



NO STOPPING INDIAN NEWCOMERS

Thakur, Sundar 7th-wicket stand ensure India aren't out of Brisbane Test

4th Test. Day 4

Live from 5:00am IST

SONY TEN 1, 3 & SIX

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Debutant Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur punched above their weight with splendid half-centuries to keep Australia at bay and India bullish after an engrossing third day's play in the series-deciding fourth Test here on Sunday.

Australia's openers — David Warner (20) and Marcus Harris (1) — saw out six overs, and extended the home team's lead to 54 by stumps after India's first innings ended at 336.

However, Australia's lead could have been much more had it not been for a delightful 123-run partnership for the seventh wicket between Washington (62) and Shardul (67), who defied and then attacked the rival bowling attack with gusto.

Pacer Josh Hazlewood finished with a well-deserved 5/57 for Australia, a reward for consistently bowling with an impeccable line and length at a brisk pace.

Symbolising the courage shown by the visitors, now rendered almost second-string owing to a plethora of injuries suffered by their top players through the four-match series, Washington and Shardul mixed caution with aggression to bail their team out of a precarious 186 for six.

First, they turned unlikely saviours after three soft dismissals pushed India on the back foot, and in the final session, the two opened up and went after the world-class Australian attack.

If his nine fours were not enough, Shardul bludgeoned off-spinner Nathan Lyon, holder of 397 wickets, for a maximum over long-on to reach his maiden Test fifty in style in only his second match.

In fact, Shardul opened his



account with a hooked six off the world's number one bowler, Pat Cummins.

Playing in his first Test, Washington too soon got to his maiden fifty in the traditional format while finding the fence seven times and clearing it once.

He became the first visiting cricketer in Australia in 74 years

to grab three wickets and smash a half-century on debut. The one before him was also an Indian, Dattu Phadkar, who made 51 while batting at No 8 and took three wickets during a 1947/48 tour.

Earlier, Washington and Shardul did not let Australia run away with the game after

Hazlewood sliced through India's middle-order with the wickets of Mayank Agarwal (38) and Rishabh Pant (23) at the start of the second session.

At tea break, India trailed Australia's first-innings total of 369 by 116 runs at the Gabba.

This was largely due to the fight put up by Washington

Winning over Aussie crowd was Shardul's inspiration

PTI ■ BRISBANE

When Shardul Thakur stepped out to bat on Sunday, rescuing India from a precarious 186/6 was not the only target on his mind as he was also keen to impress the Australian crowd after being told how "rewarding" it would feel by coach Ravi Shastri.

India were staring down the barrel at 186 for six on the third day of the fourth Test but Thakur (67) joined hands with debutant Washington Sundar (62) for a combative 123-run seventh wicket stand which helped his team cut down Australia's first innings lead to just 33 runs.

"When I walked in, the situation was difficult I would not deny that. The crowd was cheering for Australians bowlers. But I remembered our coach Ravi Shastri saying right at the start of the One-day series that if you

perform in this country, you will be rewarded," Thakur talked about the inspiration behind the unfazed manner with which he batted.

"People will love you for your performances and that one thing was also on my mind that people are going love me. Batting at number eight, Thakur impressed with his stroke-play, his drives coming straight out of coaching manuals.

"Eventually at the end of the day it would help my team, that was the biggest positive. These two things were on my mind. Crowd would make noise, but If I bat well, the same crowd will cheer for me," Thakur said at a virtual post-play press conference.

Cheered, he definitely was by not just the crowd but also his teammates, who gave him a standing ovation on his way back to the dressing room.

and Shardul who played their strokes without worrying about the end result, frustrating the high-quality Australian attack with their carefree approach.

However, India were in a spot of bother before their counter-attacking act. If the visitors lost the big wicket of skipper Ajinkya Rahane (37) to a poor shot at the stroke of lunch, they were dealt another blow right after the break when the persevering Hazlewood lured Agarwal into a loose drive for Steve Smith to complete a catch at second slip on the rebound.

More trouble was in store for India as Pant failed to get past Cameron Green, who pulled off a sharp reflex catch at gully, after the batsman tried to work Hazlewood through that region.

At that stage Australia were still ahead by 183 runs.

This was after Mitchell Starc induced a thick edge off Rahane for Matthew Wade to complete a comfortable catch in the slip cordon after the India captain had gotten away with similar shots twice in the first hour of play.

It was a shot that the seasoned Rahane could have definitely avoided.

Earlier, Cheteshwar Pujara (25) added 43 runs with Rahane before falling to a near unplayable delivery by Hazlewood in only his second over of the day.

Until Pujara's dismissal, the experienced duo raised hopes of a big partnership by negotiating the formidable attack in the first one hour of play.

Making a successful comeback after '10-ball' debut is dream come true moment: Shardul

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India fast bowler Shardul Thakur had a nightmare of a Test debut in 2018 as he got injured after bowling just 10 balls but on Sunday said his dream came true after doing well with both bat and ball in the ongoing fourth Test against Australia here.

Shardul took three wickets with the ball in Australia's first innings and then top-scored for India with a 67 as he got involved with Washington Sundar (62) in a fine rear-guard fightback to keep India in contention.

"It was not easy to bowl those 10 balls and get injured. I went back and grinded out in domestic cricket and whatever opportunities I got," Shardul said in an interview taken by senior spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, posted on bcci.Tv.

"Waiting for two years to play Test cricket again and getting the wicket (of Marcus Harris) in the very first ball, it is a dream come true. I am happy to contribute to the team's cause."

In October 2018, Shardul was forced to leave the field due to a groin strain after bowling just 10 deliveries on the first day of the second Test against the West Indies in Hyderabad.

But on Sunday, he and Washington rescued India from conceding a huge lead to Australia. After India were reduced to 186 for 6 in reply to the hosts' 369, the duo stitched 123 runs for the seventh wicket and defied the Australians for 36 overs.

In fact, Shardul began his innings with a six and also got to his half-century by hitting a stunning six.

Asked about it, he said, "At that point of time I was not looking to hit a six but it was more of a reaction. I saw the ball and played it instinctively. It came out well for me. I am happy about it"



On the cover drives he hit, Shardul said, "Honestly, I have not done practice for that but it was one of the days when I was batting really well. I did not want to miss any opportunity and any loose ball. I felt like putting it away. That is it"

Washington said Shardul was trying to hit a six off Nathan Lyon and he was not surprised when his batting partner reached to his 50 with a six.

For Washington, it was also a memorable debut as he got his first Test wicket in the form of Steven Smith and then got a half century.

Asked about it by Ashwin, Washington said, "Test cricket is the toughest format. I am very happy to start off in this fashion. God's grace and a lot of support from the family."

Another debutant, pacer T Natarajan said he did not try too much for his three wickets in Australia's first innings.

"I did not try too much. I came around the wicket because the plan of the team was that."

Eng need 36 runs to win 1st Test

AFP ■ GALLE

Sri Lanka rattled England with three quick wickets late on the fourth day of the first Test in Galle on Sunday, but the visitors remained favourites to win the match with just 36 more runs needed and seven wickets in hand.

England were expected to comfortably close in on a victory after Sri Lanka finished with 359 in their second innings, leaving visitors needing 74 to win.

But Sri Lanka struck early, with Dom Sibley (2) and Zak Crawley (8) falling to left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya. Captain Joe Root was run-out for one after a mix-up with Jonny Bairstow.

Bairstow and Dan Lawrence, who was making his debut, took a nervous England to 38-3 as bad light brought an early end to proceedings at Galle International Stadium.

Earlier, England's spinners had claimed three key wickets to tighten the noose around the hosts in their second innings.

Off-spinner Dom Bess removed Dinesh Chandimal (20) and Niroshan Dickwella (29) while left-arm Jack Leach sent back Dasun Shanaka for



four.

Sri Lanka were bundled out for 135 runs in their first innings.

Angelo Mathews struck 71 after hitting his 36th half century in Tests to hold fort at one end after opener Lahiru Thirimanne made 111 to steady the innings. This was Thirimanne's second hundred of his Test career and his first in seven years.

Mathews was batting on 51 with Wanindu Hasaranga (3) at the break.

England, who made 421 in

their first innings on the back of a fine double century by Root, struck in the first over after lunch, with Bess having Chandimal caught at first slip.

Mathews stitched a 48-run partnership with Dickwella before the wicketkeeper-batsman nicked one behind off Bess. England took a review against Mathews after the on-field umpire ruled not out to an lbw appeal from Bess. However, replays showed the ball was missing the stumps.

Axelsen, Marin win Thai titles

AFP ■ BANGKOK

Reigning Olympic champion RCarolina Marin bolstered her chances of defending in Tokyo later this year after claiming the Thailand Open in Bangkok on Sunday over top seed Tai Tzu-ying.

Despite having a cold, fourth seed Viktor Axelsen was electric in the men's final against Hong Kong's Angus Long, ranked eighth, claiming the title in straight sets.

Spaniard Marin, 27, a former world number one, was an imposing force with razor-sharp smashes, clever net work and an unmatched level of aggression and agility.

She screamed in delight as she won match point in the second-set after steam-rolling her 26-year-old opponent from Taiwan 21-9, 21-16 in 42 minutes.

The first non-Asian women's player to win an Olympic badminton Gold, Marin has faced an uphill battle to recover from a January 2019 knee injury in time to defend her crown in Tokyo.



Axelsen, meanwhile, took just 44 minutes to triumph 21-14, 21-14 over Long.

Indonesia's Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu were too good for Thailand's Jongkolphan Kittharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai in the women's doubles final, prevailing 21-15, 21-12.

In the mixed doubles, top-seeded Thais Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai beat Indonesia's Praveen Jordan and Melati Daeva Oktavianti 21-3, 20-22, 21-18.

In the men's doubles Taiwan's Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin beat Malaysia's Goh V Shem and Tan Wee Kiong 16-21, 23-21, 19-21.

We faltered in execution: Hazlewood

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Australia speedster Josh Hazlewood on Sunday credited Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur for taking India to a safe position with their century stand but rued the execution of home team bowlers in finishing off the visitors tail on the third day of the series-deciding fourth Test here.

"Yes, it is obviously a crucial partnership (between Shardul and Washington), but then we had them. I think, 6/200 around that mark, so we thought we (were) on top there but to be fair the guys batted really well," Hazlewood, who returned with figures of 5 for 57, said at the virtual post-day press conference.

"We didn't probably execute well as we could have in that period but (we) created a few little half chances. On any other day, hopefully we take those, but credit to those two guys (Shardul and Washington). They batted beautifully and I think it just shows the wicket is pretty good."

Hazlewood conceded that Australia let a few moments slip



in the day, which could have eventually made the difference.

"I thought the guys did bowl really well again and everyone else backed us up. Just let a few moments slipped, I think, and also a few a half chances there. If we could have grabbed them, it could have made a little difference," the 30-year-old said.

Hazlewood said the match is at present evenly-poised and

a call on declaration in their second innings will be made taking into consideration all factors, including the weather.

"I think, the way it is set up, it is probably going to be both. Probably depends (on) who bats, if Davy (David Warner) bats a long time, things happen pretty quickly as we know. I think it will be pretty similar to maybe Sydney, three-three and half sessions, maybe four sessions," he said.

Napoli hit Fiorentina for 6

AFP ■ NAPLES

Lorenzo Insigne scored twice and set up another as Napoli thumped Fiorentina 6-0 on Sunday to move into third in Serie A.

Napoli got back to winning ways in their newly-named Diego Armando Maradona Stadium after falling to promoted Spezia in their last home match.

Insigne got the first goal after just five minutes following good work from Hirving Lozano and Andrea Petagna.

Fiorentina missed three chances to equalise, twice through Cristiano Biraghi, with Napoli keeper David Ospina denying Franck Ribery before the hosts notched three goals in the last nine minutes of the first half.

Petagna found Diego Demme to finish off, with Insigne then bursting through to set up Lozano for the third and Piotr Zielinski adding a fourth before the break.



Fiorentina could find no way past Kalidou Koulibaly and the Napoli defence.

Napoli were awarded a penalty after Gaetano Castrovilli fouled Tiemoue Bakayoko. Insigne converted from the spot for his ninth goal this season.

Substitute Matteo Politano completed the rout with a minute to go as Napoli got a major boost before next week's Coppa Italia against Juventus.

Napoli move ahead of Roma, who lost 3-0 to Lazio on Friday.

Milan lose Hernandez, Calhanoglu

Milan: Serie A leaders AC Milan will be without French defender Theo Hernandez and Turkish midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu for Monday's game in Cagliari after both returned positive tests for Covid-19, the club announced on Sunday.

AC Milan are already missing Croatian striker Ante Rebic

and Bosnian midfielder Rade Krunic, who have not featured since their positive tests on January 6.

It marks a new setback for Pioli, who is also without Ismael Bennacer, Alexis Saelemaekers and Matteo Gabbia, who are all injured, while striker Rafael Leao is suspended. AFP

Spurs pile misery on Blades

AFP ■ SHEFFIELD

Tottenham climbed back into the Premier League title race as Tanguy Ndombele's stunning strike sealed a 3-1 win against Sheffield United on Sunday.

Jose Mourinho's side took an early lead through a rare goal from Ivory Coast defender Serge Aurier.

Harry Kane's 19th goal of the season — the England captain's fourth in his last six games — increased Spurs' advantage before half-time.

David McGoldrick got one back for United in the second half, but Ndombele's sublime lob wrapped up the points at Bramall Lane.

The wonder-goal was the latest sign of Ndombele turning his Tottenham career around.

The 24-year-old's fine form is a stark contrast to his



struggles in his first season after arriving from Lyon, with Mourinho admitting the player had to change his mindset to get back on track.

Tottenham are on a seven-match unbeaten run in all competitions after winning at Bramall Lane for the first time since 1975.

With a home game against champions Liverpool looming next in the league on January 28, Tottenham still have a chance to mount a serious title challenge.

They sit fourth in the table, just three points behind leaders Manchester United, who were due to play third placed Liverpool later.

Meanwhile, after securing their first league win this season against Newcastle in mid-week, the bottom of the table Blades remain 11 points from safety after their 16th defeat of the campaign.

Mourinho's men made the perfect start as Steven Bergwijn's fierce effort was superbly tipped over by Aaron Ramsdale.

From the resulting corner, Aurier rose highest to meet Son Heung-min's delivery with a powerful header past Ramsdale to give Tottenham a fifth minute lead.

Tottenham have scored five goals in the opening five minutes of Premier League games this season, more than any other team.

Son nearly got on the scoresheet himself moments later when the South Korea forward fired against the post from Kane's pass.

With Tottenham on top, it was half an hour before Hugo Lloris had to make a save as he kept out Oliver Burke's shot.

Lloris had to save again from John Fleck's effort, but Kane doubled Tottenham's lead in the 40th minute.

Taking Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg's pass in stride and shrugging off Chris Basham's

challenge, Kane drilled a superb low strike past Ramsdale from 20 yards.

Kane's sixth goal from outside the area was more than anyone in the Premier League since the start of last season.

He threatened to add another long-range screamer to that list with a thunderous strike tipped over by Ramsdale early in the second half.

McGoldrick gave the Blades an unexpected lifeline when he got above Ben Davies to head home from Fleck's cross in the 59th minute.

Tottenham's habit of sitting back to defend those leads proved costly when they conceded late equalisers against Fulham, Wolves and Crystal Palace in recent weeks.

But Ndombele crushed any hopes of a United comeback in the 62nd minute.