

OPINION 8
IN TRUMP
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WORLD 11
KAMALA HARRIS AS VICE PRESIDENT FURTHER
CEMENTS US-INDIA RELATIONSHIP: WH

SPORT 14
LIVERPOOL LOSE
AT ANFIELD

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Farm parleys fail on misgivings

Farmers' unions reject Govt's offer to put farm laws on hold, insist on repeal; next talks date not fixed as rift widens

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Two days after the Government offered to keep in abeyance the three farm laws, the rift widened between the Government and farmers' unions on Friday.

In the 11th round of meeting, farmer unions rejected the Government's offer and insisted on complete repeal of the three laws. Both sides hardened their stands and could not even reach a decision on the date of the next meeting.

In the very beginning of the meeting, farmer leaders said that they have decided to reject the proposal to put off farm laws for 18 months.

Hardening its stand, the Government asked farmers' unions that the next round of talks will only continue if they agree to accept the proposal by Saturday. Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the Centre has asked farmers to consider its proposal on the temporary suspension of the implementation of the farm laws.

The Minister added that the next meeting would be

scheduled only after farmers' unions come back with a response. He blamed external "forces" for their rigid stand and said no resolution is possible when the sanctity of agitation is lost.

Meanwhile, farmer leaders alleged even as the meeting lasted for nearly five hours, the two sides sat face to face for less than 20-25 minutes and for the rest of the time, they were in a separate room. Farmers' leaders said they felt "insulted" by the manner in which the Ministers treated them.

"The Minister made us wait for three and a half hours. This is an insult to farmers. When he came, he asked us to consider the Government's proposal and said that he is ending the process of meetings," said SS Pandher of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee.

At the meeting, the Union Ministers told farmers' unions that they have been given all possible options and they must discuss internally the proposal of suspending the laws. Sources said the Ministers were not happy with the farmers'



Farmer leaders during meeting with the Central Government on new farm laws at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Friday. AP

decision to go ahead with their plan to hold tractor rally on Republic Day in Delhi.

"The Government has given the best, solution-oriented proposal to farmer organisations. We should remain hopeful. We asked them to convey their decision tomorrow (Saturday). Let's wait to hear farmer unions' final decision," Tomar said after the meeting.

from the unions' side. I am sad about it. Farmers' unions said that they only want the repeal of the laws despite the Government asking for alternatives. We should remain hopeful. We asked them to convey their decision tomorrow (Saturday). Let's wait to hear farmer unions' final decision," Tomar said after the meeting.

Taking a hardline position, the Minister said some external force was definitely trying to ensure that the agitation continues and those were obviously against the interests of farmers.

"The Government gave many proposals to end the protest, but no resolution is possible when the sanctity of an agitation is lost," he said.

Asked whether he expects farmer leaders holding consultations among themselves, at times in smaller groups, while the three Union Ministers waited in a separate room at Vigyan Bhawan.

Farmer leader Shiv Kumar Kakka who was the first to leave the talks said there was no headway in the discussions and the Government asked unions to deliberate on its proposal again. After the meeting, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan) leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan said the discussions have broken down as the unions rejected the Government's proposal.

Harpal Singh, president of Bhartiya Kisan Union Asli Aranjaitik, said, "Even if we accept the Government's offer, our fellow brothers sitting at Delhi borders will not accept anything other than a repeal of the laws. They will not spare us. What achievement will we show to them?" He also questioned the Government's credibility, alleging it was difficult to believe that they will keep their word on putting the laws on hold for 18 months.

The break, during which farmer leaders had their langar (community kitchen) food, lasted for more than three hours. The break also saw 41

farmer leaders holding consultations among themselves, at times in smaller groups, while the three Union Ministers waited in a separate room at Vigyan Bhawan.

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BJP only party with internal democracy, says Nadda

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hailing party workers as real warriors, BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda said that the outfit was set to ink history as it was the only party with internal democracy where workers, not family members, held the key to success.

"The enthusiasm and perseverance of BJP workers gives out an indication about the future of Uttar Pradesh. Of the 1,500 odd small and big parties in the country, the BJP is the only one with internal democracy," Nadda said while addressing booth-level workers in Lucknow on Friday.

The BJP boss said that this was due to the BJP that Narendra Modi with such humble background, could become Prime Minister of the country. It is only BJP where people from modest families become Home Minister and Defense Minister of the country," he said.

"Barring BJP, almost all parties in the country suffer from dynasty politics. Whether you come to BJP by chance, by choice or by accident, once you have done so, you have come to the right place," Nadda said.

The BJP leader further said that the Congress and Left parties used to make fun of the outfit during its initial years as there was no possibility of the party coming to power.

"We continued to fight for the cause as we believed that ideology can bring change in the country. The Congress and the Left used to talk of revolution while we focussed on evolution as the strength of our outfit were our workers," he said.

Nadda said that the principle of integral humanism, Antyodaya and cultural nationalism propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay have been carried forward by the BJP regimes headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi. "On grounds of Antyodaya, a policy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Biswas' was laid down and

Continued on Page 11

Covid jabs safe, Modi dispels fears

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A week after the first dose of anti-coronavirus vaccines was given to front-line health workers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday interacted with those involved in the Covid-19 vaccination drive in Varanasi, his Lok Sabha constituency, and assured those anxious about the safety of the desi vaccines.

Instilling confidence among those who were vaccinated in the first phase of the vaccination drive in the country, the PM said there are no major side-effects of the vaccine and that India is absolutely self-reliant in regard to jabs. The beneficiaries said they have experienced no side effects, mental or physical. "If anything it feels like a normal injection,"

they said.

The Prime Minister, Ministers and other elected leaders or "key functionaries" are expected take shot of the vaccine in the second phase to boost the public confidence in the ongoing vaccination.

The second phase of vaccination would focus on the priority group above the age of 50 in the country. Of the two available vaccines — Covaxin or Covishield — every beneficiary will need to receive two doses of the same vaccine, 28 days apart.

Addressing the beneficiaries and those administering the shots through video conference, Modi also expressed pride over the development of two vaccines in the country to tackle coronavirus pandemic.

"The biggest vaccination



programme in the world is going on in our country. Today, the nation has the willpower to manufacture its own vaccine - not one but two Made in India vaccines. Vaccines are reaching every corner of the country. India is absolutely self-reliant in this regard," the PM said.

Modi sought to dispel fears and misconceptions over the efficacy and safety of Covid vaccines in an interaction with health workers in Varanasi, his

Lok Sabha constituency.

"When doctors and health workers give a clean chit to the vaccine, it sends a very strong message among people about the efficacy of the jab," he said.

The PM said politicians or politics has no role in deciding the efficiency of the vaccine.

The PM kicked off the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination programme via video conferencing on January 16, as he congratulated India and the country's scientists and researchers for developing two vaccines in such a short span of time. Nearly 10.5 lakh people have been administered one of the two vaccines approved by the regulator. But several people, including some doctors and other healthcare workers, seem to be hesitant.

Covaxin effective with no side effects: Lancet study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While a section of health experts have raised questions about the efficacy of the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech's anti-Covid-19 vaccine, Covaxin, a report in The Lancet Infectious Disease journal has said the vaccine showed enhanced immune response without any serious side effects in the participants enrolled for the phase 1 trials.

Bharat Biotech has developed the vaccine in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. Covaxin has been granted emergency

use authorisation (EUA) in clinical trial mode by the Government.

Covaxin, which is now undergoing phase-3 trials, had raised concerns among experts over its emergency approval earlier this month. The vaccine, codenamed BBV152, was well tolerated in all dose groups with no vaccine-related serious adverse events, noted the authors of the study funded by Bharat Biotech.

The published results were earlier published in the preprint server medRxiv in December.

However, there has been no new data released in the public domain which could demonstrate further safety and

efficacy of the preventive.

The authors said all adverse events were mild and moderate, and were more frequent after the first dose, adding that one adverse event was reported but was unrelated to the vaccine.

The randomised phase 1 trial to assess the safety and immunogenicity of BBV152 was carried at 11 hospitals across the country. Adults aged 18-55 years who were deemed healthy by the investigator were eligible. Between July 13 and 30, last year, 827 participants were screened, of whom 375 were enrolled. Among the enrolled participants, 100 each

Continued on Page 11

Another Bengal minister quits, may join BJP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Amid speculation that more politicians might join the BJP ranks during Home Minister Amit Shah's January 31 rally in Howrah, another Bengal Minister Rajib Banerjee on Friday put in his papers holding out some "emotional details" before the media moments after tendering his resignation to Governor Jagdeep Dhanekar.

An hour later, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee reportedly "removed" the Forest Minister from his position because there were some procedural lapses on his part in tendering his resignation. Sources at State Secretariat Nabanna said that he was being removed as he had tendered his resignation to the Governor instead of the Chief Minister who was his official appointee

as the leader of the Cabinet.

While the Trinamool Congress leadership promptly responded to the latest resignation drama saying a bucket of water taken out of the ocean would not matter much, besides raising some feeble corruption charges against the "just former" Minister who was yet to quit the party, Rajib said he had made up his mind to resign more than two years ago after the Chief Minister removed him unceremoniously as the Irrigation Minister.

"Most regretfully I inform you that I have tendered my resignation from my office as Cabinet Minister being in charge of Forest Department," an emotional Rajib Banerjee said adding he had "never thought that such a situation will come someday... but I had taken a decision more than two years ago when the Chief

Minister removed me from the Irrigation Department without any prior intimation... I had to know it from the television breaking news even as I was busy meeting my party men in North Bengal."

It was a hurtful situation as "the Chief Minister should at least have informed me before taking such decision... it should be the minimum courtesy... there is no problem in changing portfolios by the Chief Minister who is the master of the situation... but there is a way to do things... and why I still continued as the Forest Minister is because when I told her that I was quitting from all Government posts she persuaded me to continue and I could not disregard her requests at that point in time."

Rajib is still an MLA, a party member said that he would "continue to work for

the people in future," dropping suggestions that he was in look out for some "platform".

He said, "I do not know which platform I will get and from where I will work for the people but I will continue to work for them till I am alive." Moments after Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh offered him a platform saying "though he still continues to be a TMC leader we have not problem accepting him in our party should he decide to join us."

Rajib is the third Minister to resign from the Government in a month after Suvendu Adhikari and Laxmi Ratan Shukla.

Rajib had been critical of the Government and the party telling openly in the public how corrupt sidekicks of top leadership always got the plum positions and the dedicated

Continued on Page 11

Cong to elect chief after 5 Assembly polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday announced that the grand old party will have an elected president by this June. The schedule announced by the party's working committee will ensure that the new president will escape responsibility for the outcome of the five State Assembly elections that will be held in May or before.

After three and a half hours meeting, the CWC authorised incumbent interim party chief Sonia Gandhi to schedule the internal election after the conclusion of Assembly polls in five States.

Addressing a joint Press conference to brief details of the CWC, Congress leaders KC Venugopal and Randeep Surjewala said elections to the CWC will also be held, but it



remains to be seen whether they can be scheduled before or after the election to the Congress chief's post.

AICC sources said the Central Election Authority has proposed the holding of polls for electing the party president and AICC session on May 29 and the working committee discussed the dates but autho-

rised Sonia Gandhi to schedule them after the Assembly polls.

The CWC passed three resolutions demanding a repeal of the three agriculture laws, a time-bound JPC probe into the alleged violations of national security and Official Secrets Act and another to ensure that the Government ensures free time-bound Covid-19 vaccination for the poor and oppressed sections.

"The CWC decided that there will be an elected Congress president by June 2021 at any cost," AICC general secretary KC Venugopal said.

He said the little change in schedule depending on the State elections will be decided soon.

"The CWC discussed the schedule of Congress president's elections in May-end, proposed by its election author-

ity. All CWC members unanimously requested the Congress president that the internal elections should not interfere with the Assembly elections."

He said the Congress president was requested unanimously to reschedule AICC Plenary Session to the end of June 2021 and the Congress chief's election would be concluded by June 2021.

"We will conduct elections as per the Constitution of the party. We need a change of schedule due to Assembly polls as counting would be underway in May," he said.

Asked about any dissenting notes on the holding of elections, Surjewala said, "There was no dissent at the meeting."

He added that leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma or P Chidambaram

Continued on Page 11

CAPSULE

₹5L SOLATIUM TO EACH KILLED IN K'TAKA BLAST

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Friday announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the kin of those who died in Shivamogga blast and asserted that his Government was committed to stop all illegal mining in the State.

TEEN, NEPHEW KILLED IN UP; RAPE SUSPECTED

Chitrakoot: A 15-year-old girl was hacked to death with an axe allegedly after being raped and her four-year-old nephew killed in a village here, police said on Friday, said.

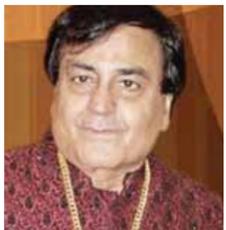
'Chalo bulawa aaya hai' singer Narendra no more

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Popular "bhajan" singer Narendra Chanchal, best known for his songs "Chalo bulawa aaya hai" and "Tune mujhe bulaya shrawaliye", died following prolonged illness at a hospital here on Friday, sources in the hospital said.

Chanchal, 76, breathed his last at 12:15 pm at the Apollo Hospital after suffering from brain complications, the sources said.

The singer, who is survived by his wife Namrata, had been admitted to the south Delhi hospital on November



Born to a Punjabi family in Namak Mandi, Amritsar, Chanchal's growing up years in a religious atmosphere inspired him to start singing "bhajans" and "aartis" (devo-

tional songs) from a very young age. In Hindi cinema, he found fame with the song "Beshak Mandir Masjid" for the 1973 film "Bobby", the blockbuster debut of Rishi Kapoor and Dimple Kapadia.

He won the Filmfare Best Male Playback Award in 1974 for the song.

One of his most popular tracks was "Chalo Bulawa Aaya Hain Mata Ne Bulaya Hain" from Rajesh Khanna's 1983 drama "Avtaar".

In 2009, Chanchal released his autobiography "Midnight Singer", chronicling his life from his early struggles and hardships to his achievements.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the many people who condoled his death. Chanchal had carved a unique place for himself in the field of devotional music with his voice, the prime minister said on Twitter while expressing his condolences to the singer's family and fans.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said his thoughts are with Chanchal's family and admirers in this hour of grief. "The death of Narendra Chanchal ji, who made many bhajans popular with his melodious voice, is an irreparable loss," Gandhi wrote on Telegram. His party colleague

Abhishek Singhvi also sent his condolences.

"#NarendraChanchal Ji is one of the names that automatically pops into mind when we think of Bhajans or Mata ka Jagrata. A true devotee of Devi Mata. Om Shanti!" he said on Twitter.

Describing him as a talented singer and a devotee of Matarani, singing legend Lata Mangeshkar said she was saddened at the news. "He was a very good person, may his soul rest in peace. I offer humble tribute to him," she said.

Singer Daler Mehndi, actor Manoj Bajpayee, actor Ranvir Shorey and music com-

poser Vishal Dadlani also mourned his death.

"Rest in peace Narendra Chanchal sahab!! What a singer with such inspiring voice. Singing your songs now in your memory. God bless your soul with peace," Bajpayee tweeted.

"Saddened at the demise of vocalist Sh. Narendra Chanchal, singer of many iconic bhajans & Hindi film songs in history. His unique voice had the ability to pierce straight to a listener's heart, making every listening experience an emotional & spiritual one. #RIP #respect," Shorey tweeted.

Mehndi termed Chanchal an "iconic and most loved" singer. "In prayers for his soul to rest in peace. Heartfelt condolences to his family and legions of fans," he said.

Dadlani said Chanchal will be remembered forever through his songs.

"I doubt anyone will ever walk up to Vaishnudevji without hearing his voice resounding through the hills," he said.

Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar also mourned Chanchal's passing away and said the singer will be "remembered for his bhajans and some remarkable songs in Hindi films".

Govt app on opportunities for youth to be launched on UP Diwas tomorrow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to open new opportunities, the Yogi government will launch 'Udyam Sarathi App' on January 24 which will provide information on self-employment and



NOTICE

I hereby declared that my ICSE Year 2019 Statement of Marks & Pass Certificate UID 6968956 of Dr. Virendra Swarup Memorial Public School, Kanpur has been lost somewhere. PRAKHAR SINGH.

सूचना

सूचित हो कि मेरा हाईस्कूल अंकपत्र व प्रमाण पत्र वर्ष 2017-18 वास्तव में खो गया है। Candidate ID-6964996 सेंट थामस कालेज लखनऊ शिवांग पाण्डेय पुत्र विकास पाण्डेय मोन0 565ख/24ग अमरुदहीबाग, आलमबाग, लखनऊ।

NOTICE

Original Registry Papers of my House No. 1, Chandari, Kanpur have been lost somewhere. Whosoever finds these Papers may kindly return to Smt. Parwati Das W/o Late Umashankar Das House No. 314, Harishganj, Rail Bazar, Cantt, Kanpur.

NOTICE

To be inform that in Class X-C Kendriya Vidyalaya AMC Cantt Lucknow in my school record my father's name is wrongly mention as A. K. JHA while his correct name is AJIT KUMAR JHA. In future he will be known as AJIT KUMAR JHA for all future purposes. Anjali Jha D/o AJIT KUMAR JHA, R/o 592/156 Bengali Tola Ward - Kharika, Post - Vrindavan Colony Telibag, Lucknow.

NOTICE

General public is informed that Smt. Shashi Shukla w/o Desh Ratan Shukla R/O M I G 462-C Priyadarshini Nagar Unnao purchase the above said house whose former deed which sampati prabhari U S D A in favour of Ram Bahadur Singh which is duly Reg. In book No.1 Jid No.3932 Page No. 51/66 Document No. 3116 Registered in Unnao The original deed really lost anywhere, Smt. Shashi Shukla.

NOTICE

I, No-14815233 W, Hav/Mt RAM AWATAR YADAV S/o Late MISHRI YADAV R/o VIII & Post Kori, Police Stn. Alinagar, Chandauli-232120. By mistake in my service record my wife's name is written as MADHURI YADAV whereas her correct name is MADHURI DEVI I vide affidavit dated 19.01.2021 before district court Prayagraj (UP).

NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE LOSS OF ID CARD
This Is To Bring To The Notice Of The General Public That One Id Card Of Mr. Varun Tewari Issued By ICICI Bank Ltd. Having Card No: 30626 Has Been Found Missing/lost 30/12/2020, Any One To Finds The Side Id Card Is Requested To The Said Id Card To Manager Debt Service & Management Group Of ICICI Bank Ltd. Lucknow

NOTICE

I, Kiran Singh (Existing name of spouse as per change of Next of Kin Records/Service document), spouse of Gajendra Singh (name of the husband), resident of Vill- Puralhar, Post Office- Gazeppur, Tehsil-Ghatampur, Police Station- Sadh, Dist- Kanpur (UP) (Address) have changed my name from Kiran Singh (existing name of spouse as per change of Next of Kin Records/Service document) to Kiran (Proposed/adopted new name) vide affidavit dated 22.01.2021 (Date of the Affidavit in DD/MM/YYYY format) before Kanpur Court (name and place of the Court).

CM to inaugurate Hunar Haat today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate the 24th Hunar Haat of indigenous products of artisans and craftsmen at Awadh Shipgram in the state capital on Saturday.

Artisans and craftsmen from 31 states and Union Territories will participate in the event.

Hunar Haat is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Minority Affairs to create employment opportunities for artisans across the country.

Promotion of artisans, craftsmen and village industries is part of the ODOOP (One District, One Product) scheme of the UP government. It was launched by the Yogi Adityanath government on January 24 in 2018 which coincides with the UP Foundation Day which was also launched in 2018.

The prime focus of this 10-day event will be 'Vocal for Local', representing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for an Atmanirbhar Bharat. The UP chief minister has repeatedly urged the state to embrace the 'Vocal for Local' pledge and use its vast natural resources for the success of



'Make in Uttar Pradesh' and 'Make for India' vision so that the country gains global recognition of its products.

Union Minister for Minority Welfare Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who arrived in the state capital on Friday, said that about 500 artisans, craftsmen and culinary experts from Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh,

Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Punjab, Sikkim, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir will participate in the event.

Indigenous products such as ajrakh, applique, art metal ware, Bagh print, Batik, Banarasi saree, Bandhej, Bastar art and herbal products, block print, brass metal bangles, Kota silk, Pashmina shawls, cane and bamboo products, canvas painting, chikankari, copper bells will be displayed at the Hunar Haat.

Exclusive handloom textile, kalamkari, mangalgiri, lac bangles, leather products, Rampuri violins, wooden and iron toys, Kantha embroidery, crystal glass items, sandalwood products will also be on display and sale.

The highlight of the entire event will be the ethereal folk performances every evening by eminent personalities like Kailash Kher, Vinod Rathore, Shibani Kashyap, Bhupendra Bhuppi, the Mirza sisters, Prem Bhatia and Rekha Raj and will be accompanied by the enticing traditional delicacies of Lucknow depicting a self-reliant India.

Teenge girl hacked to death, kin allege rape

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 15-year-old girl was hacked to death allegedly after being raped and her four-year-old nephew was also injured by unidentified assailants in Chitrakoot on Thursday.

The victim was returning home after delivering food to her father in the fields when she was subjected to the brutality and done to death before disposing of her body on the fringes of the village.

The nephew accompanying the girl at the time of incident was also injured by the attackers. Both were rushed to a nearby hospital where the girl was declared dead upon arrival. The victim's family also alleged that the girl was raped before being hacked to death and the police were awaiting the autopsy report to confirm the incident. A case was registered against unknown assailants under PoCSO Act and efforts were being made to identify them with inputs from the victim's moiror nephew.

Elsewhere in Maharajganj, a 12-year-old girl was raped and murdered and semi-nude body was dumped in a forest area close to her house on Thursday evening.

Later, a police team rushed to the crime scene and sent the body for autopsy. The police suspected that victim was gang-raped before being done to death. The girl was the eldest among three sisters and their father works in another city. Efforts were on to identify the accused and arrest them.

Forest dept told to issue NOC for industries within 45 days

Lucknow (PNS): The UP government has directed Forest and Environment department to reduce the timeline for issuing pollution control related No Objection Certificate (NOC) to industrial units from four months to 30-45 days.

Chief Secretary R K Tewari issued a government order mandating concerned departments to accept entrepreneurs' applications exclusively through single window portal 'Nivesh Mitra'.

Presiding over a review meeting of Infrastructure and Industrial Development department on ease of doing business under Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP)-2020 on Thursday evening, the official said that respective Additional Chief Secretaries or Principal Secretaries should review feedback received on Nivesh Mitra portal on a monthly basis. Irrelevant and cumbersome rules and laws replaced and related departments like Labour, Home (Fire

Services), Urban Development, Excise, Basic Education, Forest & Environment and Law etc. were discussed and directions were issued to complete repealing, merger or reduction in number of these compliances by March 31.

Tiwary said that adequate scrutiny should be done for repeal and amendment of laws/rules and regulations and will create a conducive environment for industrialization. Infrastructure and Industrial

Development Commissioner (IIDC), Alok Tandon informed that concerned departments had been directed to ensure regular review of Nivesh Mitra dashboard for timely disposal of applications and complaints of entrepreneurs.

"In addition to the above, action was being taken at departmental level to reduce the number of 1,300 compliances related to industries in various departments. This would allow relaxation in laws and rules

related to establishment and operation of industries in future and speed up the creation of an investment-oriented environment," he said. It was decided that more services be integrated with Nivesh Mitra and action be taken to eliminate the need for renewal of various clearances required for operation of low risk industries or increase frequency and duration of such renewals. Presently, 176 online services of 25 departments are being provided through Nivesh Mitra.

Ahead of R-Day, threat tweets keep cops on tenterhooks

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Social media posts threatening to blow up malls and cine theatres put the cops on tenterhooks leading to searches in Varanasi, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Mathura, Noida and other cities on Friday.

These threat posts however turned out to be hoax but police brass were busy identifying those who uploaded them.

Meanwhile, a statewide alert was sounded in Uttar Pradesh on Friday to ally apprehension of any subversive activity during the imminent Republic Day celebrations.

Earlier, security at Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi, Ram and Krishna Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya and Mathura respectively, were already beefed up with Deputy SP rank officers being posted for the purpose.

Local Intelligence Units and cops in civvies were deployed at sensitive places to report any suspicious person/s. Directions were issued to allow devotees, visitors to enter these places through metal detectors only after physical frisking.



Canine squads were also stationed at important public places.

On Friday morning, the Varanasi Police received input of a bomb being planted at a Mall in Chavni Parishad area. Personnel from Cant police station and officials rushed there and carried out a search but failed to detect any objectionable item.

In Kanpur too, a post from a tweeter handle 'Badshah' claimed to blow up a Mall in Kidwai Nagar area and some

theatres, to protest the release of film 'Madam Chief Minister'. After a thorough combing of the area, it turned out to be a 'hoax'. Later a case was registered in this connection.

DIG Kanpur, Pratinder Singh confirmed the messages were also sent from twitter handle @suryavanshi Bad1.

In Prayagraj, a tweer confirmed planting bombs at two places to protest the release of 'Madam Chief Minister'. Subsequently, cine theatres in two malls at Mutthiganj area,

roadways bus depot etc were searched but failed to detect anything untoward.

In another tweet spotted by Mathura police, search was carried out in Roopam Talkies in Govindnagar area. After an hour -long search, the cops found no objectionable object.

In Noida, the police rushed to a place in Sector 63 upon learning that a suspicious bomb-like device was spotted. While the unclaimed article was recovered, no detonator or explosives were found in it.

Statue of Lord Ram unveiled at BJP office in Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Janata Party president JP Nadda unveiled a huge statue of Lord Rama at the state party headquarters in Lucknow on Friday. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, state in-charge Radha Mohan Singh, Deputy CM Keshav Maurya and state BJP chief Swatantra Dev Singh were present on the occasion. A party functionary said that a proper canopy would later be constructed for the statue which has been carved out of bronze.

Earlier in June, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had unveiled a seven-foot tall statue of Lord Rama at Shodh Sansthan museum in Ayodhya. The statue, made of a single block of rosewood in Karnataka and costing Rs 35 lakh, has been put on display at the museum.

Kindapped medic recovered; doctor, two others held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A medicine student kidnapped from Gonda last Monday, was recovered by a joint team of Gonda Police and Special Task Force and three of the four kidnappers were arrested from Yamuna Expressway on Friday.

During the probe, it surfaced that kidnapping mastermind Dr Abhishek was a resident of Gonda. He worked at Rathi Hospital in Delhi's Najafgarh and was acquainted with the victim.

Abhishek colluded with his friend Dr Preeti Mehra and asked her to honeytrap Gaurav and ask him to come to Gonda for a meeting. Later, Gaurav was anaesthetised and brought to Delhi and held hostage at DDA flat in Bakkarwala area of Delhi.

The Gonda police also arrested Rohit and Satish for their involvement in the kidnapping.

They told the police that Nitesh used to run a fake call centre in Delhi to cheat people and that the plan to kidnap Gaurav was in the pipeline since Diwali last year.

People will reject BJP's politics of hate, deceit: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

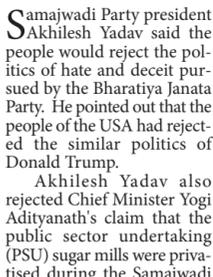
Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the people would reject the politics of hate and deceit pursued by the Bharatiya Janata Party. He pointed out that the people of the USA had rejected the similar politics of Donald Trump.

Akhilesh Yadav also rejected Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's claim that the public sector undertaking (PSU) sugar mills were privatised during the Samajwadi Party regime.

The SP chief, who was in Rampur on Friday, said the BJP had captured power at the Centre and in UP by pursuing the politics of hate and communal polarisation.

He said the negative politics of the BJP had resulted in a sharp rise in incidents of communal violence, unemployment, deterioration in education standards and public health services and a spurt in crime. He said all sections of society were suffering under the misrule of the BJP.

The SP chief alleged that on the plank of development, the BJP government had ruined the economy of the state and the farmers and the agriculture sector were the worst affected. Yadav claimed that no sugar mill was sold out to the private sector during his regime. He said in fact many closed PSU sugar mills were revived by his government and payment to the sugarcane farmers was made by the sugar mills within the legal time frame.



NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E-Tender No.: PRYJ-Sig-206-2020-21 Sr. Divl. Sig. & Telecom. Engineer, North Central Railway, Kanpur Date: 20.01.2021

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Coordination/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-Tender on prescribed form for the following works upto 12:00 hrs. on 15.02.2021. The details of the Tender is as under:-

S.N.	Tender No.	Name of Work	Approx. Cost of Work	Completion Period	Date of Opening of tender
1.	PRYJ-Sig-206-2020-21	"Comprehensive AMC of Electronics make Dataloggers installed at Stations in KANPUR-GHAZIABAD Section of Prayagraj division for a period of One Years.	₹ 49,46,222.07	12 Months	15.02.2021

Note:-(1) Availability of tender form: Tender forms shall be available on <http://www.ireps.gov.in> 21 days prior to date of opening of the tender. (2) Time, Date & Place of Opening of Tender: Tender will be opened through E-Tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Prayagraj on or after per determined date 15.02.2021 at 12:30 hours. 96/21 (P)

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

"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (E&M)-II WAZIRABAD WATER WORKS, TIMARPUR, DELHI-110054

NIT No.	Name of Work	Estimate Cost	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date of release of Tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/Time receipt of Tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Removal of sand/sludge Tilla in upstream of River Yamuna form Weir side gate no 13 to 17 at Yamuna river Barrage in front of Sangam raw water pump house at Wazirabadwater works	Job Work	62000/-	Tender Id: 2021_DJB_199094_1 Publish Date 22-Jan-2021-05:00 PM onward	05-Feb-2021 upto 12:15 PM
2.	Procurement of Turn Table for Clariflocculator at 3rd 40 MGD plant Wazirabad Water Works Make: HDO	Job Work	64500/-	Tender Id: 2021_DJB_199094_2 Publish Date 22-Jan-2021-05:00 PM onward	05-Feb-2021 upto 12:15 PM

NIT along with all terms & conditions is available on DJB website <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in> ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 336 (2020-21) Executive Engineer (E&M)-II

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

4,812 people vaccinated at 35 centres

CM stresses on Central government guidelines



Beneficiaries getting vaccine shots at Civil hospital and SGPGI in the second phase of vaccination on Friday

CM Yogi Adityanath on a visit to RMLIMS on Friday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A total of 4,812 health workers were given vaccine shots at 35 vaccination centres in Lucknow on Friday. District immunisation officer MK Singh said there were no reports of adverse reactions from any centre. He said that 79 sessions were planned for the Covishield vaccine and 4,475 out of 7,754 beneficiaries were administered the shots. In the six sessions for Covaxin, 337 out of 600 health workers were vaccinated. Singh said less number of Anganwadi workers turned up for vaccinations.

At the three centres in Lucknow where Covaxin was given, 74 out of 120 health workers were given the shots at Civil hospital, 107 out of 199 at Rani Laxmi Bai Hospital and 153 out of 200 at Lok Bandhu Hospital.

As for Covaxin, the beneficiaries filled consent forms and were vaccinated. Medical Education Minister Suresh Khanna interacted with the

beneficiaries at Lok Bandhu Hospital. Singh, who received Covishield shot at the Urban CHC Red Cross, said he was feeling fine despite the hectic routine. "I was at RMLIMS in the morning and then I visited SGPGI and Lok Bandhu Hospital before coming to the Urban CHC at 1:10 pm to get vaccinated. I was back to work and had no complaints," he said.

Chief medical superintendent, Civil hospital, Dr SK Nanda said there was not a single case of adverse reaction. Dr Rajesh Singh, an anaesthetist at Civil hospital, was also given the shot and he said he was feeling normal. "Though there was a discussion in the family on the choice of vaccine, I had no issues," he said.

Uma Singh (60), a matron at Civil hospital, said she faced no problems after getting the shot. She said she had tested positive for coronavirus earlier.

Sanjay Kumari Mishra

(60), who is the incharge of Paediatric Ward at Civil hospital, said she had full faith in the vaccines made available by the government.

Susheela Devi, a matron at Civil hospital, said though she is a patient of hypertension and takes medicines for it, she faced no problems after getting vaccinated. "My family was supportive and when I was told to get vaccinated, I was ready because I had tested positive for Covid earlier," she said.

Dr N Bhalla, who was also given the vaccine shot, said he was back on duty soon afterwards. However, he said his wife, who also is a doctor at KGMU, was a little concerned but he took the call and went for it.

Nodal officer for Covid immunisation at Lok Bandhu Hospital Dr Arun Tewari said 97 health workers had been given the shots till 1 pm and there was no case of adverse reactions.

Dr Brijesh Kumar (51), a senior paediatrician at Lok Bandhu Hospital, said he felt no side-effects after getting vaccinated. Dr Kumar, who suffers from hypertension, said he filled the consent form and also motivated others to follow suit.

Chief medical superintendent at Rani Laxmi Bai Hospital Dr Anil Arya said that 56 persons had been vaccinated till 1 pm. "The process was slow because filling the consent forms was taking time. Some of

the health workers did not take the vaccine as they were suffering from allergies and hypertension, but they had no problem with the vaccine," he said.

Media spokesperson of RMLIMS Dr Shrikesh Singh said there were less number of beneficiaries owing to begin with as it was foggy morning, but they were in touch with most of the beneficiaries.

Dr Singh, who also got the shot on Friday, said he was not apprehensive at all. "I was open to both the vaccines," he said. However, he admitted that he got a bit scared when his father had tested positive for Covid. "My father is also keen on getting vaccinated," he added.

Balrampur Hospital director Dr Rajeev Lochan said that a total of 300 health workers had to be vaccinated and there was considerable excitement after the first round of vaccination.

SM Tripathi from the Balrampur hospital where Covishield was given said that he did not even feel the prick when he was given the vaccine. "I am feeling fine and back on duty and was given the vaccination at 10 am," he said.

Manjula Chowdhary (58), a pharmacist at Balrampur Hospital, said she is a patient of hypertension but was encouraged by her family to go for vaccination. "I have not tested Covid positive till now, and will see now whether the vaccine helps in the coming days or

not," she said.

Nargis (59), who is the pharmacy incharge at Balrampur Hospital, said her mother was slightly concerned. "However, I assured her that I would be fine. I have no comorbidities," she said.

Gaurav Pandey (36), an occupational therapist at Balrampur Hospital, said there was no hesitancy amongst his family members and his wife encouraged him to take the vaccine shot.

Nodal officer for Covid

immunisation (KGMU) Dr Nishant Verma said 420 persons had been vaccinated till 4 pm. On the first day of the vaccination on January 16, only 57 per cent of health workers had turned up for vaccination.

Meanwhile, only 34 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow on Friday while 135 patients recovered. There are 1,740 active cases in the district. In the state, 370 persons tested positive. There were eight deaths in the state, including five in Lucknow.

Lucknow (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday directed officials to ensure that vaccination was carried out as per the guidelines of the Central government. He said that the vaccine would be available to everyone in the state as per the priority order set by the Central government.

Earlier in the day, Yogi made a surprise inspection of the Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS) to get feedback from ground zero of the second phase of the vaccination campaign and spoke to the health workers who were being vac-

inated. According to information, 61,585 people were vaccinated in the second phase by 3 pm and the vaccination was carried out by the Health department at 1,537 centres in the state. Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said that vaccination would be done every Thursday and Friday of the week.

"No untoward incident has been reported so far and all those who have been vaccinated are healthy. All the vaccinated persons are being kept under observation at the centre for 30 minutes before being discharged," he said.

पंजाब नेशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank
 Circle Office, Lucknow (West): General Administration Department, 4-A, Habibullah Estate, Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001
BRANCH SHIFTING
 All the esteemed customers and locker holders are informed that the transfer of Punjab National Bank (formerly Oriental Bank of Commerce) Branch, Old Tempo Stand, Rajajipuram Lucknow to Punjab National Bank (formerly United Bank of India) Branch Rajajipuram, Lucknow is going to be done shortly. Please be informed accordingly. Circle Head (Circle Office, Lucknow West)

ARYAVART BANK आर्यावर्त बैंक
 (A Joint Undertaking of Govt. of India, U.P. Govt. & Bank of India)
 Head Office: A-2/46, Vijay Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010
POSSESSION NOTICE {for immovable property under Rule 8(1)}
 The Authorized Officer of Aryavart Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule-3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice on the date mentioned against account and stated hereunder calling upon the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being together with further interest at contractual rate on the aforesaid amount and incidental expenses, costs, charges etc. within sixty days from the date of receipt of said notice. The borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors having failed to repay the amount notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the possession of the properties described herein below in exercise to powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said act read with the Rule-8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned hereunder. The borrowers attention is invited to the provision of Sub-Section (8) of section - 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets. The Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties. Any dealing with the properties will be subject to the charge of Aryavart Bank for the amounts and interest thereon. Details of the mortgaged Properties of which the possession had been taken is as follows.

Name of the Borrowers/ Guarantors/Branch	Details of the mortgaged property	Amt. Due as per demand Notice. Date Demand notice Date of possession
Borrower: Mr. Awadhesh Kumar Singh S/o Mr. Ram Bahadur R/o Plot No. 23-A-4, kausalpuri Colony, Khargapur, Gomti Nagar Extension Lucknow-226010 Dist- Lucknow. Branch: Gomti Nagar, Lucknow Date: 23.01.2021	Residential property House constructed upon Plot No. 23-A-3, part of khasra No. 42 min situated at Village-Khargapur, Pargana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow, Title Holder Mr. Awadhesh Kumar Singh S/o Late Ram Bahadur. Area 139.50 Sq. Mtr., Bounded as: East: 25 ft wide road, West: Plot others, North: Plot No. 23-A-4, South: Plot No. 23-A-2. Place: Lucknow	Rs. 24,95,562.00 + Intt. & other expenses 18.08.2020 22.01.2021

Authorised Officer

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Ministry of Minority Affairs Government of India

Leaders of opp parties still in quarantine: Yogi

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Taking a dig the opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said their leaders are still in "quarantine", months after the first case of coronavirus was detected. Addressing a "Prabuddhjan Sammelan" (meeting of the intellectuals) organised by the BJP's Lucknow unit at Indira Gandhi Pratisthaan, the CM said their workers got isolated as their leaders did not show up.

"The first case of COVID-19 in UP was detected in the first week of March. Almost 10-and-half months have passed. Leaders of many parties are still in quarantine and not moving out of their houses. Their tweets come. When the leader is in quarantine, then it is natural that the workers will get isolated," he said.

He also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying there was not a single week when he did not speak to the chief ministers. "At the onset of the COVID pandemic, we were not talking about sangathan (organisation) but we talked about seva (service). This was an unprecedented work.

In a state like Uttar Pradesh, which has a population of 24 crore, it was difficult for the government machinery. But, when workers, intellectuals and self-help groups worked in tandem with the government, UP showed a successful model of COVID management," he claimed. Adityanath said despite propaganda, Prime Minister Narendra Modi enjoyed unprecedented support of people. On a call given by the prime minister, people from different sections of society came together, lit lamps and beat plates, he said. The UP chief minister said in the past three years, 39 lakh people in UP got houses under the PM Awas Yojana.

"This could have been done earlier as well. The houses are not named after any person or any party," he said. He said it was the thought of a "bright future" that led to a surgical strike against Pakistan and the abrogation of the Jammu and Kashmir's special status. "Today India is not a soft state, but a 'maargdarshak' (guiding) state with new vigour, new impression. All this is possible because of the BJP," he claimed.

Bid to check liquor adulteration

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh Excise department will use information technology (IT) enabled measures to check the menace adulterated liquor at the retail excise shops. The department has developed software by which sampling of liquor shops will be done on a random basis in all the districts of the state. Additional Chief Secretary Sanjay

R Bhoosreddy said here on Friday that the Excise department was committed to ensuring the availability of standard quality liquor to the consumers in the state. He said the samples collected on a random basis would be tested by the regional laboratories of the Excise department and if any type of adulteration was found in the sample, strict action would be taken against the licensee.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice

On behalf of the President of India, acting through Chief Administrative Officer/Con. N. E. Railway, Gorakhpur invites the following E-works Tenders:
S.No.-1, E-Tender No.: Dy CE-CON-1-05-2021, Closing date: 15-02-2021
Name of Work: Fabrication, supply, transportation, Erection and Launching of welded type two number Bow string girders (60m span) as per latest RDSO drawing including POT PTFE bearings as per latest RDSO drawing and specifications and one number composite girder (24 m span) as per latest RDSO drawing including POT PTFE bearings as per latest RDSO drawing and specification for Road over bridge at chainage 19.460 on NH-101 (Mahamadpur- Chhapara Road) between Barakaganj Basantpur stations in connection with Maharajganj-Masharakh new line Project. Approximate Value: ₹ 15,96,36,042/-, Earnest Money (Rs.): NIL, Cost of Tender Form (Rs.): Nil, Completion Period: 09 (Nine) Months.

• Bid starting date- on 01-02-2021.
• Last date of submission of above E-Tender up to 15:00 hrs. on 15-02-2021. • Date of opening of above E-Tender 15:30 hrs. on 15-02-2021.

• Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria, terms & conditions is available on website: <https://tenders.gov.in>

• In case any disparity arises between Hindi and English version of tender notice, English version will hold good and will be followed.

Shri Ram Awadh XEN/Con./Br./Gorakhpur
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Executive Engineer/Con.
CPRO-W-233 Gonda

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कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, उत्तर प्रदेश दूरसंचालन कारपोरेशन लिटि पावरन वन, कब संख्या 212, एलएनएलसीसीसी परिसर, निकट मंत्री आवास विद्युत खण्ड-2, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा सूचना अनुमोदी फर्म/ ठेकेदारों/ अधिकृत विक्रेताओं/निर्माताओं से निम्नलिखित कार्य के सम्पादन हेतु सीलबन्ध ई-निविदाये दो भागों में ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। अत्यकालीन ई-निविदा संख्या-15-निपाखडि(ल)/2020-21 विद्युत खण्ड-1। लखनऊ के अधीन 220 कुसी रोड-पीजीसीआईएल सफिंट-1। पारंपरिक लाइन के वाई व बी फेजों पर इति-युक्त कण्डक्टर बदलने एम अन्य सम्बन्धित कार्य-घरोंह रशि रू 1500.00 ई-निविदा माग-1 खुलने की तिथि 04.02.2021, समय 13.00 बजे, ई-निविदा माग-2 (प्रवाह पट्टी) खुलने की तिथि हेतु तदनुसार वेबसाइट पर सूचित किया जायेगा। ई-निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य रू 236.00 (18 प्रतिशत जीएसटीडीसी सहित)। ई-निविदा का नाम प्रथम व द्वितीय - प्राइड बिड (दरें व शर्तें) www.etender.up.nic.in पर नरी जायेगी। माग-1 में वरोंह घनराशि व निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य जोकि अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत पारंपरिक खण्ड-द्वितीय, लखनऊ के खाता संख्या - 0758002100009361, IFSC Code-PUNB0691100 पंजाब नेशनल बैंक शाखा विजयनगर खण्ड, लखनऊ में RTGS/NEFT के माध्यम से स्थानान्तरण कर सूचीआधार संख्या तथा पे-रिलिफ की प्रति www.etender.up.nic.in web site पर निविदा प्रपत्रों के साथ सह प्रामाणित पैन एम जीएसटीडीसी में पंजीकरण प्रमाण-पत्र, कार्य अनुभव प्रमाण-पत्र व अहंकारी शर्तें एम अन्य सम्बन्धी प्रपत्र तथा निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में मूल्य/ दरें www.etender.up.nic.in पर दिनांक 03.02.2021, सायं 04.00 बजे तक ही Up-Load की जानी है। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग के प्रपत्र निर्धारित तिथि पर 13.00 बजे अथवा उसके उपरान्त ही Down-Load किये जायेगे। निविदाओं के प्रथम भाग के मूल्यांकन के उपरान्त उपयुक्त पायी गयी निविदाओं के ही द्वितीय भाग Down-Load/खोला जायेगा। निविदा सम्बन्धी समस्त जानकारी, नियम व अहंकारी शर्तें निविदा प्रपत्र में अंकित है जो www.etender.up.nic.in द्वारा Down-Load या अवलोकित की जा सकती है। ई-निविदा खुलने की तिथि पर अयोग्य होने की स्थिति में ई-निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस पर निर्धारित समय तक स्वीकार की जायेगी एवं निर्धारित समय पर खोली जायेगी। ई-निविदाओं को बिना कोई कारण बताये ई-निविदा/ई-निविदाओं को अस्वीकार/ विभाजित करने का अधिकार अधिशासी-कर्ता के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा। अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत पारंपरिक खण्ड - द्वितीय, पत्रांक - 143, दिनांक - 22.01.2021 "राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाय"

10-year-old girl raped

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 10-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a youth in the forest area of Mall on Thursday afternoon. She was found in an unconscious state a few yards away from the spot late in the evening. Police said she is the daughter of a farmer, and a resident of Maal. She was playing with other children when Sheru, also of the same village, took the girl to a nearby market to buy her toffees.

He then took her to an isolated place in the forest cover and raped her. The girl told the police she tried to raise an alarm but Sheru threatened to her kill. She said she when she regained consciousness, she found herself in the community health centre. Her father said when the girl did not come back after playing, he and others started searching for her and

found her in an unconscious state around 10 pm on Thursday.

Meanwhile, an attempt was made to rape an 8-year-old girl, a resident of Nagram. Police said the girl left her house to dump garbage a few yards from her house around 8 pm. Satyendra, who is a resident of the same locality, dragged her to a field and tore her clothes. However, she raised an alarm after which farmers rushed to her rescue and the accused fled the scene.

In another case, a teenage girl, identified as Mansi Gupta of Sahara Garden, Sahara Estate, under Jankipuram police station, hanged herself from the ceiling in her room around 3 pm on Friday. However, no suicide note was recovered from the room. Locals told police that a youth, Shubham Maurya of Jankipuram, used to harass the girl by calling

her at odd hours and would force her for friendship. They said she changed her number on several occasions to avoid the youth. She had narrated her ordeal to her father in October last year.

Maurya (24) is said to have a good rapport with police. The bereaved father had lodged a complaint against the accused at Jankipuram police station in October last year. However, Maurya managed the situation due to his links with police and no action was taken against him. A month later, her father gave an application to the Commissioner of Police. It was alleged that the girl hanged herself on being deprived of justice. After she was found hanging, she was rushed a private nursing home, from where she was referred to KGMU Trauma Centre. However, she was declared dead at the Trauma Centre at 4:30 am.



Schoolchildren taking part in Republic Day parade rehearsal on Friday

Pioneer

MSME dept forging partnerships with experts: Sehgal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The MSME department is constantly forging partnerships with experts to handhold MSMEs to become globally competitive — be it for quality, design, e-commerce or establishment of common facility centres. However, the efforts of the government will not get multiplied till the enterprises make extensive use of all the facilities and schemes available.

This was stated by Additional Chief Secretary, MSME & Export Promotion, Navneet Sehgal at the 'UP MSME Conclave', hosted by CII for the micro, small and medium enterprises of the state. Sehgal spoke about the various schemes introduced by the state government in line with the vision of the chief minister of achieving one trillion dollar GDP over the next five years. He also informed the participants that the ODOF programme is creating a huge difference in helping to develop clusters with natural momentum.

He urged CII to submit a report on the deliberations so

that the department can formulate strategy and policies for the MSMEs accordingly. Chairman of CII UP State Council Ankit Gupta pointed out that majority of MSMEs comprise micro-enterprises with a higher number in rural areas than urban parts of the country and UP stands 4th in terms of growth rate of MSMEs. He also highlighted that credit availability, delayed payments, availability of skilled manpower, inadequate access to domestic and global markets are the major roadblocks which impede the growth of the sector.

Vice-chairman of CII UP State Council, CP Gupta said the various initiatives that CII undertakes for competitiveness building of the small enterprises and reiterated that the association is committed to further strengthening the MSME eco-system in the state and encouraging entrepreneurs and small businesses. More than 200 participants attended the conclave and experts from the listing board, web services, quality council, DGT & SIDBI addressed the participants.

CISH gives licence of four technologies to entrepreneurs

Lucknow (PNS): The Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) has licenced four technologies to entrepreneurs. Director of CISH Shailendra Rajan said that the licence was granted to the entrepreneurs for promoting organic cultivation in the country so that they can produce traps, bio-enhancer and bio-immunised tissue culture plants.

"The licence was given to the entrepreneurs of Uttar Pradesh as well as Maharashtra for CISH bio-enhancer, in-vitro immunisation of tissue culture banana technology, CISH-OMAT and CISH-VMAT fruit fly technologies. Last year, a great damage was caused by fruit flies to fruits and vegetables and it motivated the farmers to use fruit fly traps. The traps developed at CISH have addi-

tional benefits as they are rain-proof and have long-lasting lure," he said. He added that a young entrepreneur, Mansi Rai Sharma, was given the licence for in-vitro banana immunisation technology. "As a start-up, she will be producing resistant banana plants for the farmers," he said.

"CISH received several indents for the supply of immunised banana tissue culture plants after seeing the success of the technology in farmers' field and the demand for the plant is increasing by the day. This start-up will be working under the guidance of CISH for producing a large number of immunised plants to meet the demand," he said. He added that the entrepreneurs were keen on purchasing the licence for various other technologies developed at CISH have addi-

Replica of Ram temple, Ayodhya's heritage to be showcased in UP's R-Day tableau

New Delhi: Ancient city Ayodhya's heritage, replica of a Ram temple, glimpse of 'Deeptotsav' and various stories from Ramayana epic have been depicted in the tableau of Uttar Pradesh which will be showcased in the Republic Day parade on January 26.

The bedecked tableau is fronted by a sitting model of Maharishi Valmiki and the temple model is on the rear side, officials said on Friday.

"Ayodhya is our holy place and the Ram temple issue has been an emotive one for the faithful. Our tableau will showcase the ancient heritage of the town, revered by countless people across the country," an

official of the Uttar Pradesh government, accompanying the state team, said.

A group of artistes, including two women dancers will be part of the tableau and one person will be dressed up as Lord Ram. A media preview of the various tableaux, including a total of 17 states and union territories, was held at the Republic Day's cultural camp at Delhi Cantonment on Friday.

Ajay Kumar, who wore a yellow silk dhoti and rudraksh garland around his neck and held a bow in his hand, said, "I am very excited and happy that Ayodhya and its heritage will be showcased in our tableau

and I have been chosen to play our beloved Lord Ram".

"We have been waiting to see Ayodhya's heritage being showcased on Rajpath," said Kumar, a resident of Laxmangarh in Chandauli district, as he posed for photographers. Ayodhya's Deepotsav celebrations with earthen lamps is depicted on one side of the tableau, while other murals show embracing of Nishadraj by Lord Ram and eating of Shabri's berry by him, salvation of Ahilya, bringing of Sanjeevani by Lord Hanuman, Jatayu-Ram samvad, Ashok Vatika and other scenes. On November 9, 2019, the Supreme Court had settled

the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue going back more than a century and backed the construction of a Ram temple by a trust at the disputed site. It also ruled that an alternative five-acre plot must be found for a mosque in the Hindu holy town. Prime Minister Narendra Modi last August had performed the 'bhoomi puja' of a Supreme Court-mandated Ram temple in Ayodhya, bringing to fruition the BJP's mandir movement that defined its politics for three decades and took it to the heights of power. The Ram temple is scheduled for completion in 2023. **PTI**

Two dead after consuming hooch

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): In yet another hooch tragedy, two labourers died and four others, including a woman, were taken ill after consuming spurious liquor in Pratapgarh on Thursday.

As per reports, labourers working at a brick kiln in Chandrabhan Pur village consumed the hooch late on Wednesday night. By early Thursday morning, one of them Rohit (35) complained of severe stomach pain and nausea, after which he was rushed to a hospital. However, he died during treatment and was later cremated without the police being informed.

By Thursday evening, the condition of another workers Lail (40) and four others deteriorated and were hospitalised. Lail also died during treatment and his body was sent for autopsy. Rohit's wife Shivani alleged that her husband and Lail died due to spurious liquor supplied at the brick kiln where they worked.

The police were now investigating to confirm the source from where the liquor was purchased so that samples could be sent for examination.

Earlier a fortnight back, five people had died and 17 others were hospitalised after consuming spurious liquor in Secunderabad area of Bulandshahr. An angry Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had ordered to book the culprits under National Security Act (NSA) and Gangster Act.

Kidnapped kid found murdered

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The body of a 10-year-old boy, who was kidnapped last Monday and a ransom of Rs 40 lakh was demanded for his release, was found in Sidhpura area of Kasganj on Wednesday. On Thursday evening, the local police claimed to have arrested three miscreants and said that the victim was kidnapped over a family enmity between two families.

Last Monday, Lokesh (10) went missing near his home at Pithampur village of Sidhpura police station area. After the family got a call for a ransom of

Rs 40 lakh for his release, Lokesh's father Kishanveer Singh lodged a case of kidnapping accusing some persons and three police teams were formed to track down the accused. However on Wednesday, Lokesh's body was recovered on the fringes of the village. The police later intensified their search and arrested three accused - Ajay Kumar, Amar Pal and Raj Bahadur on Thursday.

Circle Officer (Patiyali) Gavendra Pal Gautam said that two families have been living in adjacent houses in the village and also had neighbouring

farm lands. The dispute started after Lokesh's family objected to installation of irrigation equipment by the other family on the farmland.

During quizzing the accused are reported to have revealed that they kidnapped Lokesh over the family feud. Ajay and Amar lured the boy by assuring to let him listen to songs on their phones and took him to a field where they strangled him and dumped his body near a bajra mound. Despite the killing the hostage on Monday, the accused made the ransom call to mislead them.



State Bank of India organised a felicitation ceremony at Tarawali Kothi in Lucknow to acknowledge the efforts put in by their lady officers, also called 'Sakhi', who help in grooming new female employees. CGM of SBI, Lucknow Circle, Ajay Kumar Khanna said, "Every year, SBI inducts new talent in the form of probationary officers and junior associates. In order to ensure their smooth transition and assimilation into bank's ethics, system, culture and environment, 'Project Sakhi' was introduced at SBI Lucknow Circle on July 1 last year to provide mentorship, guidance and support to new female employees.

CITYBRIEFS

LIVE BAND CONCERT FOR COVID WARRIORS

As part of Republic Day celebrations, Central Command organised a live band concert to honour Covid warriors at Dilkusha Kothi in Lucknow on Friday. The highly decorated band of 11 Gorkha Rifles Regimental Centre enthralled the audience with a splendid performance as they played tunes of famous patriotic and motivational songs. The Covid warriors from Health department, UP Police, Lucknow Municipal Corporation and medical fraternity of armed forces were filled with pride as patriotic tunes were played in their honour.

MEETING

A meeting will be organised by DST, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University and UPCST on January 24 for necessary recommendation on the draft of

India's 5th National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy. The meeting will be chaired by Vice-Chancellor Sanjay Singh and will be led by advisor and head, STIP Secretariat, department of Science and Technology, Akhilesh Gupta. The process was initiated in June last year involving nearly 150 experts from government, academia, industry, diplomacy, policy, administration, NGOs, etc from across the country segregated into 21 thematic groups. "An extensive consultation process involving representatives of Science and Line Ministries, States and Union Territories (UTs), R&D organisations, academic institutions, NGOs, civil society organisations, industry leaders, researchers and young scientists and many others followed the initial deliberations. Subsequent meetings at the apex level consisting of

secretaries of Science and Line ministries; Science and Technology ministers and chief secretaries of states and UTs besides some eminent members of Indian diaspora were also held.

WEBINAR

A webinar on 'Environment and disaster risk reduction' was held by Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University (SRMU), Barabanki, in collaboration with National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Union Ministry of Home Affairs, on January 21. The programme was conducted in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 20-point agenda on disaster risk reduction. Issues related to the prevailing pandemic and other factors causing disasters were discussed. The speakers discussed concerns towards environment exploitation and grave forthcoming situation

due to neglect towards environment safety and conservation. The importance of disaster risk reduction was also highlighted in light of safer environment and sustainable development under global trends under SDGs.

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

The literary society of BBDNIIT bagged the first position in 'SDG Shutterbug Competition', organised under Youth for Sustainability Dialogues (Y4SD) and Connecting Dreams Foundation. The competition was organised under two categories. One category was for the 13-19 years age group and another one was for 20-30 years age group. In the first category (13-19 years), Team Russia got the first position and in another category (20-30 years), the Team Babu Banarasi Das Northern India Institute of Technology bagged the first position. The

competition witnessed participation from all across the world. The team members also got a chance to attend a masterclass on photography by a renowned photographer. "The photos, along with the short story, were presented to the United Nations and UNDP. The photographs will be included in global and country-specific media and marketing campaigns and a Youth for Sustainability Dialogues Coffee Table. The jury members were invited by the United Nations. The competition was started on December 22 last year and the final result was announced on January 8 in online mode," he said. Sahil, Vindhya Srivastava, Roseline Churblin, Nitin Singh, Rachit Goyal, Aditya Raj, Ritika Pandey and Shivankur participated in the event. Chairperson of Babu Banarasi Das Educational Group Alka Das congratulated the team.

UPMRC unravels job scam

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation's security department claimed to have unearthed a job scam which was being carried out in its name. The PRO said that UPMRC received information regarding fake job appointment letters given to applicants. "The applicants were asked to pay the bond amount for the job in UPMRC," he said. An FIR was registered at Naka police station following a complaint by UPMRC and the accused was arrested from Roop Guest House in Charbagh. "In the guest house, there were 16 applicants being called by the accused for the fake job offer. Police told us that a total of 29 applicants were being called to the guest house. The police also recovered fake job offer letters and application forms from the guest house. We told the police that no such vacancy has been officially released," he said.

Modi wishes an early 100 pc vaccination in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Being the local parliamentarian, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished an early 100 per cent Covid vaccination in the city. 'The year 2021 has started with a very good sign because the world's largest vaccination programme is going on in the country and after the first phase, a campaign will be carried out to apply Covid vaccination to 30 crore people soon in the next phase,' he said, adding that country is making its own two vaccines which are not only being sent to every corner of the country but also providing the same to many other countries. He was interacting with doctors and health workers through video conferencing on the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. After January 16, Covid vaccines were given to the health workers in the district on Friday and after this, the doses will be provided to the same group on January 28 and 29.

'At such a time we should be among you. Whatever we can do for people in Kashi, it is a privilege for us,' he told the health workers, adding that the entire infrastructure of Varanasi has changed during the last six years and the whole of Purvanchal (eastern UP) is benefiting from it. According to him, so far, more than 20,000 people have been vaccinated in the first phase at 15 centres in the district, praising the entire medical staff, district adminis-



Health workers interacting with PM Narendra Modi on virtual platform at Women's Hospital in Varanasi on Friday Pioneer

tration and Yogi-led state government for this achievement.

When the PM asked matron of the Government Women's Hospital, Pushp Devi how she was feeling after being vaccinated, the latter responded that she was feeling completely well. Then Modi appealed to all the people to get vaccines in view to keep them and their families safe. Pushpa Devi thanked the PM for his initiative to provide Covid vaccines to the people within just nine months. 'The scientists have played an important role in making the vaccines. As the doctors and paramedical staff are most exposed to coronavirus, treating the people from the front, it was decided to pro-

vide them vaccinations first so that the whole society remains healthy,' Modi said. While speaking to ANM Rani Kunwar Srivastava of Shree Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Divisional Hospital, the PM praised the work done by health workers and scientists in an atmosphere of uncertainty, terming the corona as an unknown enemy.

While interacting with Chief Medical Superintendent (CMS) of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital Dr V Shukla, when Modi asked whether the local people are safe and happy or not, the latter replied that despite being a developing country, India has also gone ahead in the field of

making Covid vaccines compared to developed countries. 'Till yesterday, 10 lakh people had been vaccinated in the country and they are safe,' Dr Shukla said.

In reply, the PM appealed to Dr Shukla to run competition for the first phase Covid vaccination so that all the frontline workers can be vaccinated as soon as possible and after this, in the second phase, vaccination of people above 50 years of age will be done. Modi also interacted with Lab Technician of DDU Hospital Ramesh Chandra Rai and ANM Shrinkla Chauhan of Community Health Centre (CHC) at Hathi Bazar (Sevapuri).

Covid vaccination held at NCR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

COVID-19 vaccination programme rolled out on North Central Railway on Friday. As many as 28 Railway doctors and 43 other frontline healthcare personnel were immunised at Central Hospital Prayagraj.

The most awaited and important COVID-19 vaccination programme began at North Central Railway. In line with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare guidelines, Railway Board has already advised for vaccination of primary health care workers of Railways. In its letter the Railway Board has also asked to compile data of frontline workers of all departments of Indian Railways who are at greater risk of exposure to COVID-19 infection and list of such frontline workers belonging to different departments is being worked out on Prayagraj, Jhansi and Agra divisions, workshops and other units of North Central Railway.

Meanwhile requisite preparations have also been made to organise this critical and important vaccination programme in Railway hospitals and dispensaries over North Central Railway. In this connection a mock drill on vaccination was also organised on January 11, 2021. Necessary coordination with state authorities for smooth conduct of this biggest vaccination programme is being ensured.

Those given the first dose of COVIDSHIELD vaccine on Friday include Principal Chief Medical Director NCR Dr Anand Tandon, Medical



Director Central Hospital Dr Vinit Agrawal, ACHD Dr SK Handoo, Sr DMO Dr Gautam Sen, Chief Health Consultant Dr Rajiv Kapoor other Railway doctors and primary healthcare workers. All participants of vaccination programme were observed for a period of 30 minutes in the Railway Hospital and no adverse effects post immunisation were observed. Dr Vishal Pandey Nodal Medical officer from state government along with seven paramedics and other staff helped in organising this vaccination drive. Participation of senior railway doctors of North Central Railway in this immunisation drive will help confidence building in Railway fraternity and public at large w.r.t. health safety standard followed in this immunisation and will bring impetus to this biggest and most important

vaccination programme of our country.

Awareness campaign related to this important vaccination campaign is also being organised at stations, trains, hospitals and other units of North Central Railway. Thrust of campaign is to create awareness on importance of vaccination, health safety standard followed in vaccination and precaution against COVID-19 which are required to be continued even after taking COVID-19 vaccine.

24 NEW COVID CASES IN PRAYAGRAJ: As many as 24 new cases of coronavirus were detected in the last 24 hours on Thursday night in Prayagraj district. The infected also included an account officer of the Higher Education Commission, a teacher at BHS. On the same day one infected person died of infection. At the

same time, a total of 13 people beat corona.

Nodal Officer for Corona Dr Rishi Sahai gave this information. He said that on Thursday, 5,459 people were tested for Covid test. As against the testing, 28 new cases of the COVID-19 are a bit relieving for the Health department.

At the same time, six out of 13 healthy people were discharged from various Covid hospitals and seven people completed their home isolation.

Dr Rishi Sahai said that the account officer of Higher Education Commission, teacher of BHS along with two advocates of High Court and District Court respectively are also included in the list of infected. At the same time, the number of active patients has now come down to 337 in falling order.

Vaccination held at BLW, other hospitals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign for corona warriors (the healthcare team) started on Friday at Central Hospital in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) in presence of General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal. Two vaccination centres are allotted to this BLW hospital by the district authority in co-ordination with Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to cover both Railway as well as non-Railway workers. This historic moment was witnessed by officers of BLW, members of Staff Council, besides the medical team of BLW. The GM expressed her happiness over the enthusiastic response of the beneficiaries and meticulous arrangements.

All beneficiaries were first seated in the waiting hall for registration and verification of documents by the UP Police. Thereafter, beneficiaries were sent for vaccination one by one as per predetermined plan from the waiting hall. Registered beneficiaries were again verified by the security personnel before getting entry into vaccination centres. They were vaccinated as per protocol. Every vaccinated person was kept in the hospital ward for half an hour under observation for treatment in case of any emergency. District team was led by ACMO Dr Piyush Rai and it comprised two vaccinators, two constables, helpers and WHO representatives to assist the BLW hospital in successful vaccination of health care workers.

Campaign commenced



GM Anjali Goyal inspecting vaccination at DLW Hospital in Varanasi on Friday Pioneer

with vaccination of Chief Nursing Superintendent Chandrakala Rao and Lab Assistant Chandan Prasad. Other healthcare workers were also immunised as per predetermined protocol and directive on Co-Win portal. BLW GM inspected the preparedness for vaccination and motivated healthcare workers for their own vaccination as well as a safe vaccination process for other beneficiaries. She also inspected posters displayed at various places in hospital premises and emphasised the responsibilities of healthcare workers for prompt and safe vaccination to make it grand success.

On this occasion, Principal

Chief Medical Officer Dr Sujit Mallik, ACMS/Admin Dr Devesh Kumar, ACMS Dr Sunil Kumar, ACMS Dr SK Sharma, CPRO Vijay, Sr DMO Dr Madhulika Singh, DMO Dr Minhaj Ahmad, DMO Dr SK Maurya, DMO Dr Vishal Mishra, ADMO Dr Amit Gupta, ADMO Dr Tanmay Anand, Hospital Visiting Skin Consultant Dr Srinivas Yadav were also present. Apart from it, Ravi Narayan Singh, Secretary Staff Council, along with other members such as BD Dubey, Pradeep Yada, Dharmendra Kumar Singh, Naveen Sinha, Alok Kumar Verma, Sushil Singh, Ajimul Haq and Nursing Staff, Lab and Pharmacy staff were also present.

Meanwhile, vaccination was also performed in direct close monitoring by WHO staff for its successful performance. Vaccination was also administered to Health workers at Community Health Centres (CHCs) Arajline, Cholapur, Narpatpur, Hathi Bazar and Gangapur Mangri (Pindra) apart from Primary Health Centres (PHCs) Baragaon and Harahuwa in rural areas while CHC Shivpur, District Women's Hospital, Pt Deendayal Hospital, IMS BHU, Heritage Medical College and LBS Hospital Ramnagar, apart from BLW Hospital in urban areas where two sessions each were conducted.

Akhilesh Yadav did nothing for holy places: Maurya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said in reference to the promises made after Akhilesh Yadav's return to power in Uttar Pradesh that it is written that when he (Akhilesh Yadav) was in power, he did nothing for the holy places of Lord Tathagata Buddha and other pilgrimage sites including

Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama.

When there is no possibility of coming to power, then promises of development made by him are dreaming of Mungerilal. In the same sequence, a video has also been tweeted in which 500-year-old Ram Janmabhoomi struggle has been shown as a 12-minute short film by Chandraprakash Dwivedi, the

producer of Chanakya serial. Along with that video, it is written that the source of national unity, synonymous with religion, Maryada Purushottam, the triumph of liberation of the birthplace of Lord Shri Ram.

The Deputy Chief Minister has also informed about celebrating National Road Safety Month from January 18 to February 17. It is written that we should be responsible and

sensible citizens.

Following traffic rules completely. While posting a picture he tweeted that 'Jaan Hai toh Jahan hai'. In this context, people have also been urged to follow the rules of traffic during Prayag stay. Maurya said that it is the responsibility of every person to follow the rules on the road. Otherwise the concept of smart city will not be fulfilled, he added.

Electrification of 66 rail routes to be completed this fiscal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Under the mission speed of the Railways, in the same financial year, the electrification of 66 rail routes of the country will be completed. With the completion of railway electrification, the operation of passenger trains with electric locomotives on these routes will also begin. Of the railway sections whose electrification will be completed in this financial year, 15 are in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

In this also, more than 90

per cent work on all routes has been completed. There are some railway sections in which inspection to be carried by the Chief Safety Commissioner (CRS) is awaiting. Electric locomotives will start operating on the respective route as soon as nod is received by the CRS.

In fact, the Railway Board has entrusted the work of electrification of all the rail blocks of the country to the Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE) Prayagraj and other working

organisations. The CORE has also set the target of electrification of all rail routes by the year 2024. So that the trains speed up and the cost of crores of diesel will be saved.

In this series, CORE Prayagraj has claimed to complete the electrification work of 66 rail blocks of the country in this financial year. Its total length is 3965 kilometres. Out of this, in 18 railways of 700 km, electrification was done by itself. Now the 66 railways which are to be completed in

this financial year, a lot of work has been done by the CORE. The nod to be given by the CRS is now being waited for the electrification work to end in some railways.

Preparations are being made to operate electric locomotive trains on Phaphamau to Pratapgarh route from January 26.

It is discussed that this week CRS can inspect this route. After its OK, electric locomotives will start operating on this route from January 26.

Bomb hoax at two places in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Bomb hoax at Vinayak City Centre, popularly known as PVR Mall in down town Civil Lines, and at Starworld Cineplex in Katghar Mutthiganj sent the police on their toes. People got panicked but they followed the police instructions and left the place smoothly. Officials, after receiving an alert on social media platform Twitter, reached the above two spots with heavy police force, bomb disposal squad, Fire tenders and other precautionary mechanism, but later to their relief no explosive material was found there.

The SP City confirmed that they had received a message that bombs have been planted in the Vinayak City Centre Civil Lines and Starworld Cineplex in Mutthiganj. The first information was regarding Vinayak City Centre, so heavy police force was rushed for the spot. The whole mall including the PVR Cineplex was emptied. The shopkeepers, customers,

and the cinema goers were asked to leave the place immediately in a disciplined manner to avoid any untoward incident owing to panic.

Police surrounded the whole mall, and the officials and personnel required for tracing out the bomb and disposing it off, took their positions. After over an hour's search nothing was found there, and the teams were sent back.

Some kind of message was received for the Starworld Cineplex of Katghar in Mutthiganj. No explosive material was found there after a massive search.

Now, the police are tracing out the person who had sent the message through Twitter. Some police officers were heard saying that it would have been an exercise to check police alertness, but the SP City did not confirm the report of any such exercise.

THREE HELD FOR SELLING SMACK: The cops of the Nawabganj police station and Anti-Narcotics team

arrested three members of the gang who were promoting their illegal occupation after making underage boys indulged in intoxication. A consignment of smack has been recovered from their possession. All three are being questioned about their drug network.

Earlier, the ganja and smack addicts used to be mostly in the city, but now a large number of addicts have been found in villages and towns too. The truth is that the gang members who indulge in drug trade first add new boys and then make them their customers. Drug dealers who have been caught by the police have also confessed this fact. On Thursday evening, the cops of Nawabganj police station along with the Anti-Narcotics team arrested three people for smuggling and selling them here. Among those caught are Yashwant Maurya of Pithapur village, Akash Mishra alias Chintu of Dasapur village and Mohammad Farooq alias Sheru of Nawabganj town. A 40 gram smack was also found after they

were thoroughly frisked.

During police interrogation, it was found that by smuggling smugglers from other places including Barabanki, they have been supplying it to Prayagraj and surrounding districts.

The three also confessed that the people associated with their network first smack new-age boys for little money or for free and force them to buy smacks when they are intoxicated. In this way the customers of drug dealers increase. Bad boys also start stealing from home and outside due to intoxication.

SEMINAR: In the memory of the all time great Hindi poetess Mahadevi Verma, the Hindustani Academy and the Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth have jointly organised a seminar on 'Chhayavaad aur Mahadevi Verma' in the Mahadevi Hall of the Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth on Saturday from 11 am onwards. The seminar will be presided over by Dr Uday Pratap Singh, chairman Hindustani Academy.

9 more test positive in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as nine new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district on Friday, increasing the total number to 21,830. No casualty has been reported during the day and the death toll remained at 375. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 17 and all of them have been recovered from home isolation, increasing the number to 18,367. As no patient has been discharged from any of the hospitals, the number remained at 2,963. The total number of patients who have been recovered so far is 21,330, leaving 125 active cases. The recovery rate is 97.70 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 1,926 reports received. Till then, the total test reports received were 5,74,816 and the results of 3,468 are awaited. Out of them, 5,52,989 were negative, while 21,827 were positive. The total number of samples collected was 6,01,945. Meanwhile, mass / group corona antigen tests continued and all the 268 tests were found negative at SSPG Hospital Kabirchaura apart from 32 at CHC Shivpur, 65 at Vivekanand Hospital Bheulapur, 132 at LBS Hospital Ramnagar and 198 at SSH BHU. Along with this, samples of 200 from SSPG, 30 from Vivekanand Hospital and 127 from SSH BHU have been sent for

RT-PCR investigation.

DOMESTIC TOURISM CAN BE BOOSTED BY COLLECTIVE EFFORT: Domestic tourism is the need of the hour and it can be boosted by a collective effort at a time when international tourism has come to a grinding halt due to COVID-19 global pandemic. These were views by the participants in a meeting organised by India Tourism, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand Chapters of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) and Buddhist Inbound Tourism Fertility of India (BITF) at a hotel, here. At the time when international tourism suffered a lot because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, there is a

need to boost domestic tourism which is also the need of the hour, the president of BITF Vikram Singh said adding, it could be enhanced only by a collective effort. There are numerous tourist spots in the country but there is a need to bring them in mainstream by giving exposure, the chairman of Bihar and Jharkhand chapters of IATO Sushil Singh expressed. Describing the awareness campaign such as Dekho Apna Desh and Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat being run by the Indian Government to give a boost to the tourism as a milestone in the field of domestic tourism, the chairman of UP and Uttrakhand chapters of IATO Pratiq Heeraji said.

DM inaugurates vaccination camp at IIT-Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur District Magistrate Alok Tiwari while inaugurating the vaccination camp at IIT-Kanpur on Friday said it was a privilege to kick off the vaccination campaign from the prestigious IIT-K.

He thanked IIT-K Director Prof Abhai Karandikar for his cooperation and said the aim of the present round of vaccination drive was to give priority to the health professionals.

He appealed to the vaccinated persons to continue to maintain social distancing.

He said all necessary arrangements had been made for the success of the vaccination centre at this academic institute and the target was to vaccinate around 100 persons.

He said all those who were vaccinated on Friday should ensure that they strictly followed the COVID-19 protocol and come for the second dose after 28 days.

It may be mentioned here that the people who were vaccinated on Friday were given counselling and reminded to take the second dose after the



District Magistrate, City, Alok Tiwari and CMO Dr AK Mishra inaugurate the vaccination camp at IIT-K on Friday. Pioneer

prescribed time. They were asked to remain in the waiting area for at least half an hour and report if they felt any

uneasiness on the given mobile phone number for immediate assistance. The IIT-Kanpur director

thanked the district administration team for the successful conduct of the vaccination campaign.

DC stresses on timely completion of Kanpur Metro project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Raj Shekhar, on Friday, visited the Metro rail construction sites at IIT Kanpur and the depot workshop near polytechnic. He said timely completion of the mega projects was the priority of the Uttar Pradesh government.

The divisional commissioner also directed the project director (PD) to prepare the full documents of the SOP and present it before the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) in the next three months for information and better coordination in handling all emergency related issues by the Metro rail and the district administration.

Shekhar also asked the City Bus Services MD and Kanpur Metro PD to submit a plan for shuttle buses in one month and then carry out a house-to-house survey and awareness campaign for three months from August to October, 2021.

He said the Metro rail project was one of the most ambitious and important projects of Kanpur Nagar and thus its timely completion and operation was important for easing traffic congestion and also for reducing vehicular pollution in the city.

The DC said regular review and field visits were being done by local administration as well to sort out small issues and problems faced by the UP Metro Rail Corporation from time to time.

He said the metro work was continuing on a war footing and the Metro train trial



Kanpur Divisional Commissioner, Raj Shekhar, visited the Metro Rail work site of IIT-Kanpur and depot workshop site near polytechnic on Friday. Pioneer

runs would start in November 2021 but the commercial operations would begin in January 2022.

Forty Metro trains will be used for Kanpur and this number is sufficient for the next 20 years but if required the number of trains can be increased.

The DC said the work related to the administrative office, control room, PD offices, workshops, yards etc. Was underway and would be completed by July 2021 and all the offices would start operation from August 2021 at the new site.

He added that as on date, provision had been made at the

workshop and yard for 10 tracks and if needed in the times to come another seven tracks could be constructed at the site.

Shekhar took a first hand feedback of the emergency handling and also handling of the disaster during operations of the Metro trains.

He said the tentative plan was to start Metro operations from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm daily and if necessary the timings of the operations could be extended.

He added that the City Bus Service in association with the Metro Rail was working for a

Shuttle City Bus Services for all the nine Metro stations in the priority section (IIT-K to Motijheel).

He said the City Bus Service would run new electric buses for the Metro Rail shuttle service. He suggested better awareness among people towards the benefits of using Metro rail and other public facilities available at the stations and inside the trains.

The DC was accompanied by Metro Rail PD Arvind Singh, Roadways RM, City Bus Services ARM, AFCON construction company officers and other Metro officials.

21 more test positive in Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said 21 more people tested positive of coronavirus infection in Kanpur Nagar during the past 24 hours.

With this, the tally of confirmed coronavirus infections detected in the city reached 32,752 on Friday evening.

The CMO said no COVID-19 death was reported in the city during the past 24 hours.

Dr Mishra said 219 active cases were undergoing treatment in the city at present. He said 3169 samples were taken in the city on Friday for testing.

Criminal wanted in loot, rape case arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Bithoor police arrested a wanted robber and rape accused after an encounter with him in the wee hours on Friday. Reports said the criminal snatched the pistol from a sub-inspector and fired three rounds on him.

During the exchange of fire, the criminal sustained bullet injury on his left leg and was sent to hospital.

Station House Officer Kaushendra Pratap Singh said the arrested criminal, Shiv Karan Bairi, was a resident of Kalyanpur and on December 31 last year, after looting a couple along with his accomplices on Pulse Research Institute road in Naramau, he had raped the woman. The incident took place when the couple from Naubasta were returning home after visiting their plot in Nankari. The woman had initially not disclosed about the rape but later informed the police about it. The police had arrested Bairi on Thursday and during interrogation, he had disclosed that he had thrown his mobile phone near the scene of the crime. The police were taking the criminal with them to recover the cell-phone when he suddenly snatched the pistol from the sub-inspector of Mandhana outpost and fired three rounds in succession on him near the Blue World Ganga Barrage Highway trisection.

Bomb hoax

KANPUR (PNS): Panic prevailed in South-X Mall when rumours about a bomb being planted there went viral on twitter on Friday afternoon.

The local police immediately rushed to the spot and asked everybody present there to leave the mall. Thereafter, with the help of PVR cinema hall staff, sniffer dog and bomb disposal squad, the police carried out intensive checking but did not find any objectionable thing there.

Later, a case was registered with the Juhu police and investigations were on about the twitter account holder.

Senior Superintendent of Police Printinder Singh said the tweet was removed from the twitter handle after some time.

The surveillance cell has been asked to trace out the twitter account holder.

According to reports, the tweet tagging the police was made from the twitter handle of 'Badshah' and it carried threats to blow up cinema halls in Kalyanpur and Juhu for screening the film 'Madam Chief Minister'.

As the first show of the film in South-X Mall of Juhu was scheduled to start from 11 am, the police team reached the spot at 12:45 pm and carried out checking in the basement parking. Thereafter, the team moved towards the PVR auditorium and found only six viewers present in the hall watching the movie. Likewise, in the Pummy theatre in Gurdeo Palace, Kalyanpur, only nine viewers were present.

PVR manager Sumit Bhattacharya said during the show, none of the viewers had any problem.

Superintendent of Police (South) Deepak Bhuker said some disgruntled element may have threatened to blow up the Kalyanpur and Juhu cinema halls.

A case was registered at the Juhu police station.

Students urged to emerge as 'job givers'

CORRESPONDENT ■ AGRA

Secretary Department of Higher Education Amit Khare addressed the convocation ceremony of Dayalbagh Educational Institution, Agra, on Friday. Director, Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Prof Prem Kumar Kalra, also graced the occasion.

Congratulating students on their graduation, Khare said that "India's journey from being a third world, fledgling democracy to this position of power and eminence is the result of the toil and dedicated contribution of every section of society. The role of the educated people in any sector has been especially significant because they have guided and led this change in various capacities. Today you are joining this rank of educated intellectuals, the young enlightened Indians who will lead the world". Khare expressed confidence that students graduating today will become future leaders and lead the world. "It is this confidence that fuels our

dreams for country's missions like Start Up India, Skill India, Make in India- Make for the World and Atma Nirbhar Bharat", he added. He urged students to emerge not as 'job seekers' but as 'job givers', to promote the individual capability of each student, teach them to think, equip them with the skills required to face the 21st century and global leaders - while imparting values rooted in Indian culture. Khare also said that the experience of the Covid pandemic would have given students a fresh perspective to life and prepared them better for facing its vagaries in future. He appreciated the efforts of DEI in imparting multidisciplinary education in subjects as diverse as quantum computing to textile designing to music and its Vision 2031 to support the same principles that have been recommended by the National Education Policy 2020. He said that the institute's focus on value-based quality education, inclusivity, multidisciplinary, research, use of ICT - all align

well with the NEP 2020, he added. In this context he recalled his conversation with Prof Kalra a few years ago when he had highlighted that Dayalbagh is a unique institution that brings education and values together something which is now talked about in the National Education Policy 2020. Khare said that Dayalbagh Educational Institution in its philosophy and vision has been much ahead of times in its thinking of the day and many of the ideas of National Education Policy 2020 are already enshrined in the ethos of DEI. Highlighting India's growing presence in the international media space, Khare mentioned about IMF Chief Kristalina Georgieva praise on India's decisive steps taken to deal with COVID-19 pandemic. He prevailed upon the students to help those who have been less fortunate, who are deprived of the benefits that a good education provides. He extended his best wishes to the students for a bright future.

RED (North) inspects Rihand station

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Regional Executive Director (North) Debashis Sen inspected the Rihand station of NTPC and gave necessary guidelines to the heads of departments. Earlier on his arrival at Rihand, he was welcomed by the officials at the Shivalik guest house by being presented a bouquet. During the inspection, Sen first inspected the DG hall of unit 6. In the sequel, after observing the control room of the station he became aware of the situation there. He then inspected the FGD of unit 3.



After the inspection, at the conference room of the Executive Director located in the administrative building complex of the station, Sen held a meeting with the officials and departmental heads, sought other information regarding the station and gave necessary guidelines to them. He also did plantation before leaving Rihand on Thursday morning.

During the inspection, Sen was accompanied by Executive Executive (Rihand) Balaji Iyengar, GMs and other heads of departments.

Sambalpur-Manduadih special extended

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration for the convenience of the passengers has decided to extend the 08311/08312 Sambalpur-Manduadih-Sambalpur bi-weekly special train. As a result the 08311 Sambalpur-Manduadih bi-weekly special will from January 31 to March 31 be run every Wednesday and Sunday and the 08312 Manduadih-Sambalpur bi-weekly special will from February 1 to April 1 be run every Thursday and Monday. All coaches in these train will be of reserved category and passengers travelling in them will have to follow the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said.

CANCELLED: As per information released by the railway administration earlier the 05153 Manduadih-Prayagraj Rambagh special train to run on January 27 and 05152 Prayagraj Rambagh-Manduadih special train to run from Prayagraj Rambagh on January 28 will remain cancelled. On the other hand, the

02573 Muzaffarpur-Anand Vihar Terminus weekly clone special train from January 31 and the 02574 Anand Vihar Terminus-Muzaffarpur Weekly clone special train from February 1 will be cancelled by the railway administration due to poor occupancy, CPRO said.

PLATFORM BERTHING: The railway administration is running many special trains, puja special and clone trains. Due to the ongoing work on platform No 4, the railway administration at Gorakhpur Jn has done platform berthing (except platform no. 04) of the following trains. However, under special circumstances in view of operational requirements and due to late arrival of trains of trains changes in platform berthing can also be done, CPRO PK Singh said.

The arrival/departure of special trains from platform No 01 — 05114, 05529, 04654, 05269, 04186, 05003, 01015, 05251, 09040, 09038, 02563, 05273, 01016, 04673, 04653, 05001, 02529 and 05007 Varanasi City-Lucknow Junction daily special train, from platform No 02— 02566,

04009, 09034, 02531, 05028, 02556, 02165, 02166, 09033, 05027, 05017 and 05004, from platform no 3— 02574, 05113, 05252, 02408, 09601, 05008, 09451, 05002, 05117, 02554, 02530, 03020, 05097, 05118, 05531, 04010, 05530, 02565, 02553, 05098, 05101, 02532 and 05910, from platform number 05 — 01079, 01080, 02521, 01056, 09089, 09090, 05104, 09037, 09039, 01116, 05532, 05103, 09452, 05029, 01055 and 02407, from platform No 06- 02570, 04185, 02558, 05064, 05066, 05102, 02564, 05006, 05105, 05274, 04674, 08202, 02569, 02522, 02573, 05106, 03019, 02557, 05024, 05270, 09602 and 05909, from platform number 07:- 02032, 05063, 05065, 05067, 05010, 02596, 05023, 02572, 05022, 02592, 02590, 02571, 02595, 02588, 05005 and 02031, from platform number 08:- 01115, 05018, 05058, 05047, 05051, 05049, 08206, 02587, 05068, 02512, 05021, 05030, 05057, 05009, trains arriving and departing from platform number 09— 05069, 05045, 02591, 02511, 02589, 05050, 02597, 05052, 05048, 02555, 02542, 02598, 05046, 08201, 08205, 02541, 05070 and from platform No 2A — 05080 and 05079.

Blankets, sweaters distributed

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Under community policing in the Naxal-infested area, Ahraura police distributed blankets and sweaters among 50 needy persons on Thursday. At a brief function organised at the police station SO Rajesh Chaudhey that the government was of the view that innocent persons should not bear the brunt due to the menace of Naxalism and their welfare was its priority. He said under the scheme in order to involve youths in sports activities the government had provided track suits and sports equipment for distribution. The SO told the people to contact police and feel free to approach them for the redressal of their grievances. On the occasion the police distributed sweaters and blankets among the 50 needy people of Van Imiliya village. SSI Chandrashekhar Yadav and entire staff of the police station welcomed the citizens.

write a letter against the LDM to the government as well as bank authorities. Besides, Nagar Palika Parishad was directed to get the Industrial Estate cleaned minimum twice a week and the LDM was directed to get an ATM installed there. The DM made it clear that no laxity would be tolerated in cases where online applications were pending. The meeting was attended by CDO Avinash Singh, deputy commissioner, Industry, VK Chaudhary along with other officials concerned and entrepreneurs. Meanwhile the DM raided sand mining lease at Newarhia Ghat on the bank of Ganga under Dehat Kotwali and ordered the officials concerned to seize all vehicles which did not have proper papers and realise fine as per the provisions. The DM reached the site during day hours and checked those vehicles to which were found on the way and loaded with sand. The DM took action against those vehicles and machines which were involved in excavation at the site but did not have proper papers. The DM directed the SHO Dehat Kotwali to seize the vehicles and told the mines officer to initiate proceeding for realising the fine.

'KHUSHAAL PARIVAR DIVAS': The Health department on Thursday organised the 'Khushaal Parivar Divas' in the district to make the couples aware about family planning. Giving details about the awareness programme Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr PD Gupta said it was organised at nine community health centres (CHCs), 44 PHCs and 216 sub-health centres and was attended by as many as 6,589 persons. He said under it the doctors and health workers underlined the benefits of a small family to the couples. He said that first time such programme was held on November 21 last year and as per the government directive it was to be held on 21st of every month. About its success, he said while 8,954 condoms were distributed, 65 women preferred Antara injection, 344 Chhaya and 758 Mala tablets. He said that for the programme the young couples were to be targeted and the department had made a plan for increasing the turn out of people by 10 per cent every month.

DM'S DIRECTIVE: District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Laxkar has directed to cancel the lease of those industrial plots which were not being used and allot to the needy. At the meeting of Udyog Bandhu held at Collectorate on Thursday while reviewing the schemes like ODOF and others the DM expressed discontent over their tardy progress due to non-cooperative attitude of the banks. He directed the LDM to achieve the target within this month taking personal interest in each case. For the lethargic attitude of the banks towards the schemes the DM directed the Chief Development Officer to

Loan distribution camp organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Baroda UP Bank organised a loan distribution camp at Kalyanpur block branch at Bhailamau-Bhauti on Friday.

Regional Manager SB Saxena, while handing over the cheques to the beneficiaries, said the bank was more focused on rural uplift and thus it was constantly providing easy loans to the people.

He then distributed Rs 51 lakh as loan to 41 beneficiaries. Saxena said this included KCC and KCC-Dairy loans.

He said if the KCC loan was repaid in the stipulated time-frame of 12 months, the bank would provide an additional 5 per cent rebate on the interest.

He appealed to people to avail themselves of the loan facilities under Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Bima Surakhsha Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and said they should take insurance and protect themselves as well as their families.



Baroda UP Bank Regional Manager, SB Saxena distributing loans in camp organised at Kalyanpur Block on Friday. Pioneer

Prominent among those present on the occasion were YK Mahawar, Gautam Ranawat, Mansi Tripathi, AK Shukla and dozens of bank customers.

ORGANIC VEG SALES COUNTER: The Chandra

Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology launched its organic vegetables sale counter for the people of the city on its premises on Friday. People can purchase fresh organic vegetables at a much cheaper rate as compared

to the market price. The vegetables will be available at ATIC (Agriculture Technology and Information Centre) near the entry gate. The fresh vegetables will be available between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm daily. Inaugurating the sale centre, Vice Chancellor Dr DR Singh said the university was the leading agricultural university of Uttar Pradesh and it had a very updated horticulture department. He said the farm scientists of the university not only promoted organic farming but trained farmers as well.

He said the university had decided to experiment by selling its fresh organic vegetables from the premises and appealed to the people of the city to avail themselves of the facility. He said the vegetable rates would be decided for each week. He said it would be the endeavour of the university to directly sell the vegetables to the consumers instead of promoting middlemen. He said it was strictly for the consumers so that middlemen did not make profit on these healthy vegetables.

Over 12L get shots so far; 2.28L on Fri



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 2.28 lakh healthcare workers and frontline workers received the Covid-19 vaccine shots across the States on Friday, the seventh day of the mega immunisation exercise that was launched on January 16 in the country. It took the total tally of people who have been given the vaccine to 12,72,097.

"The Covid-19 vaccination programme was conducted successfully on the seventh day of the countrywide massive exercise. The cumulative number of healthcare workers vaccinated has surpassed 12.7 lakh (12,72,097) (till 6 p.m. today) through 24,397 sessions, as per the provisional report," the Union Health Ministry said in a statement.

A total of 267 cases of Adverse Effect After Vaccination (AEFI) have been reported till 6 pm on the sev-

enth day of the vaccination drive.

On Friday, 2,28,563 beneficiaries were vaccinated till 6 p.m. through 6,230 sessions. On Thursday, 1,92,581 people were vaccinated and 1,12,007 a day before.

In Karnataka, 1,82,503 have been vaccinated so far, highest amongst all states, followed by 1,27,726 in Andhra Pradesh, 1,21,004 in Odisha and 1,02,724 in Telangana, according to the data available from the Government.

On the testing front too, India continues to register growing numbers. The cumulative testing has crossed 19 Crore, said a statement from the Union Health Ministry with 8,00,242 samples tested in the last 24 hours itself.

The Ministry also said that steadily following the trend set over the past weeks, India's active caseload has

13K receive second dose of Covaxin in Phase 3 trials

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharat Biotech has successfully administered the second dose of its COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin to 13,000 volunteers as part of its ongoing phase-3 clinical trials of the jab, Suchitra Ella joint managing director of Bharat Biotech said on Friday.

She said in a tweet, "13,000 volunteers have been successfully administered the 2nd dose in the phase-3 clinical trials of Covaxin. My heartfelt thanks to all of them for their pro-vaccine public health voluntarism."

The city-based vaccine maker has successfully completed enrollment of 25,800 volunteers for the Phase-3 trials of Covaxin, Ella had earlier said.

The DCGI has granted permission for the sale or distribution of Covaxin for restricted use in emergency situations in public interest as an abundant precaution, in clinical trial mode.

The vaccine-maker in the fact sheet on Covaxin, posted in its website, had said the clinical efficacy of the vaccine is yet to be established and is being studied in

Phase 3 clinical trial and hence it is important to appreciate that receiving the vaccine does not mean other precautions related to COVID-19 need not be followed.

Covaxin is India's totally indigenous COVID-19 vaccine developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research and National Institute of Virology.

The inactivated vaccine is developed and manufactured in Bharat Biotech's BSL-3 (Bio-Safety Level 3) bio-containment facility, one of its kind in the world.

fallen to 1.78% of the total active cases. India's active caseload presently stands at 1,88,688.

18,002 new recoveries were registered during the past 24 hours. This has led to a net decline of 3,620 cases from the total Active Caseload in the last 24 hours.

The total recovered cases are 10,283,708 as on Thursday pushing the growing gap between the recovered and the active cases to 1,00,95,020 (

54.5 times). The Recovery Rate has improved to 96.78%.

Around 85 per cent of the new recovered cases are contributed by ten States/UTs with Kerala reporting 6,229 persons recovering from the infection. Maharashtra and Karnataka reported 3,980 and 815 new recoveries, respectively.

At least 14,545 new positive cases were registered in the last 24 hours. Eight States/UTs have contributed 84.14 per

cent of the new cases. Kerala reported 6,334 cases in the last 24 hours. Maharashtra recorded 2,886 new cases while Karnataka registered 674 daily cases on Wednesday.

As many as 82.82 per cent of the 163 case fatalities that have been reported in the past 24 hours are from Nine States/UTs with Maharashtra reported the maximum new daily deaths at 52. Kerala also saw a fatality count of 21, as per the statement.

Centre not in favour of giving extra chance to UPSC aspirants, SC told



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday told the Supreme Court that it was not in favour of granting an extra opportunity to those civil services aspirants who could not appear in their last attempt in the exams conducted by the UPSC last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar took note of the submissions of Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing on behalf of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

"We are not ready to give one more chance. Give me the time to file an affidavit... last night I received instruction that we are not agreeable," Raju told the bench, which also comprised justices B R Gavai and Krishna Murai.

The bench has now posted the plea of a civil services aspirant Rachna Singh for hearing on January 25 and

asked the Centre to file an affidavit during the period and serve it to the parties.

Earlier, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had told the bench that the government was considering the issue of granting one more opportunity to those civil services aspirants who could not appear in their last attempt to crack the UPSC exam.

The top court, on September 30 last year, had refused to postpone the UPSC civil services preliminary exam, which was held on October 4, because of COVID-19 pandemic and floods in several parts of the country.

However, it had directed the Central Government and the Union Public Service Commission to consider granting an extra chance to candidates who otherwise have their last attempt in 2020, with corresponding extension of the upper age-limit. The bench was then told that a formal decision can be taken by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) only.

EX-CJI Gogoi gets Z+ VIP security cover



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has accorded the top category 'Z+' VIP security cover to former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi, official sources said on Friday.

They said Gogoi, 66, will be protected by armed commandos of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) during his travel all across the country.

A Rajya Sabha member now, Gogoi was earlier being provided with a security cover of Delhi Police.

He retired in November, 2019 and was later nominated to the upper house of Parliament by the Government.

The CRPF has a VIP security unit and Gogoi is its 63rd protectee, sources said.

Students should work towards making India self-reliant, exhorts PM

Modi addresses 18th convocation of Tezpur varsity



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the country's students should work towards building a self-reliant India. He said that by the time India celebrates its 100th Independence day, the nation would also be celebrating the efforts of the students who would be graduating now.

"The universities of future will be entirely virtual and students from any part of the world would be able to study anywhere at anytime," Modi addressing students and faculty at the 18th convocation of Tezpur University in Assam.

"We need to have a regulatory framework for such transformation and we are continuously trying to achieve that goal with the New Education Policy. The NEP 2020 aims at a flexible and interdisciplinary education system," he said. The NEP focuses on data and analytics. It has the power to improve the admission, teaching, and evaluation system," he added in the virtual address.

Referring to the incubation centre of the university and innovative technologies emerging out of it, Modi told students that they have great opportunities ahead of them. "Your efforts tell that you have potential," said the Prime Minister. He also applauded the efforts of varsity in the

documentation of tribal languages and culture, waste energy among others.

"During the freedom struggle, many brave hearts from Assam have given their lives now you have to live for the AtmaNirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)," Modi told graduating students asking them to spread the tej (light) of Tezpur University across the nation and the world.

In this pandemic circumstances, the AtmaNirbhar Bharat programme has become a nomenclature in our dictionary and we need to understand what is this change brought by the initiative, said Modi. The biggest change is of perspective - the attitude of the entire nation has changed, said Modi.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, and Tezpur Lok Sabha MP Pallab Lochan Das also attended the convocation.

Citing the Indian cricket team's recent win against Australia, the Prime Minister said the youth needs to take inspiration from them. "The young team was inexperienced and injured, but that didn't deter their determination and beat one of the best teams in the world," he mentioned. A total of 1,218 students received their degrees and diplomas in the convocation.

Bird flu in 12 States: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The outbreak of avian influenza, also known as bird flu, has been confirmed in poultry birds in as many as nine States across the country, and in crows, migratory/wild birds in a dozen-odd 12 states, the Union Ministry of Animal Husbandry informed on Friday.

In Rajasthan, bird flu has been confirmed in 17 districts of Rajasthan.

As many as 6,290 birds have been found dead in the state between December 25, 2020, and January 22, 2021, the state Animal Husbandry Department informed.

In Punjab, 11,200 birds



were culled at the Alfa Poultry Farm in village Bhera in Derabassi, Aashika Jain Additional Deputy Commissioner told a news agency.

About a hundred men were engaged in the operation who

worked for around eight hours to conduct the exercise.

The team began the job with sedation of birds, followed by culling via cervical dislocation. Thereafter the birds were buried in deep pits and covered with lime.

Statue of Govind Ballabh Pant inside Parliament premises relocated

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 9-foot statue of Govind Ballabh Pant inside Parliament premises has been temporarily relocated and the statue of Motilal Nehru will be moved in the next two-three days to make way for the construction of the new building. Meanwhile, the Central Public Works Department has put the central vista redevelopment design in public domain and has sought views and objections till January 31.

Earlier this week, the Central Public Works Department had shifted the 16-foot bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi to a spot between Gate 2 and 3 of the Parliament. The construction work of the new Parliament building started on January 15 after the Heritage Conservation Committee gave its approval to the ambitious project under the Central Vista redevelopment plan.

"The statue of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant has been temporarily relocated by the CPWD. The statue of Motilal Nehru, which is also coming in the way of construction of the new building, will also be moved in the next two-three days," official sources said.

They said the statues being moved temporarily will be shifted to a prominent location once the construction completes. There is also a statue of B R Ambedkar which will be moved temporarily, they said.

The new parliament building will have a triangular shape and is expected to be completed by the 75th anniversary



THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO HOLD THE MONSOON SESSION OF PARLIAMENT IN 2022 IN THE NEW BUILDING

of India's independence in 2022. The Government plans to hold the monsoon session of Parliament in 2022 in the new building. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone for the new building, being constructed by Tata Projects Ltd, on December 10 last year. The project is estimated to cost Rs 971 crore.

Besides the new Parliament building, the redevelopment of the Central Vista - the nation's power corridor - envisages a common central secretariat, revamping of the 3-km Rajpath from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate, new prime minister's residence and prime minister's office, and a new Vice-President Enclave.

Sonu Sood moves SC against HC order on illegal construction

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Actor Sonu Sood moved the Supreme Court Friday challenging the Bombay High Court order which dismissed his appeal against a BMC notice over alleged illegal construction at his residential building in Mumbai's Juhu area.

Advocate Vineet Dhandu, who has filed the plea in the top court, told PTI that Sood has challenged the high court order.

As per the BMC, the Bollywood actor had carried out structural changes in the six-storey residential building "Shakti Sagar", and converted

it into a hotel without taking requisite permissions.

The BMC earlier this month also filed a complaint at the Juhu police station, seeking an FIR to be lodged against Sood for allegedly converting the residential building into a hotel without permission.

The complaint letter was sent to the police after the BMC inspected the building and found that Sood had allegedly not complied with the requisitions and was continuing unauthorised construction even after the notice was served to him in October last year.

The police is yet to register FIR in the case.

SC refuses early hearing to Vedanta's Sterlite copper unit plea

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to accord early hearing to the plea related to mining major Vedanta's Sterlite copper unit at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu which is closed since May 2018 over pollution concerns.

The top court, on December 2, last year had rejected the interim plea of Vedanta Ltd that it be permitted to inspect its Sterlite copper plant and to operate it for a month to assess the pollution level.

Vedanta had sought handing over of the plant for three months saying it requires two months to start the unit and the company should be allowed to run it for four weeks to ascertain whether its polluting or not.

Vaccine for Kala Azar tested at BHU

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Raising hopes, scientists of the School of Biochemical Engineering of IIT-BHU in collaboration with the Institute of Medical Sciences, BHU have tested a vaccine that halts the progress of the Kala Azar, a neglected tropical disease caused by Leishmania parasite.

Currently there is no vaccine yet available in the market for humans against this disease and the treatment depends on drugs with limitations which is a serious concern towards its complete elimination.

In India which has postponed Kala Azar disease elimination goal thrice with 2025 new deadline, 54 districts in Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal are still affected by the disease with sporadic cases in other states like Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Sikkim, and Uttarakhand.

The scientists including Prof Vikash Kumar Dubey of the School of Biochemical Engineering and Prof Shyam



Sundar of the department of medicine, IMS, investigated and tested the new recombinant vaccine on the mice infected with the disease.

Dr Sunita Yadav, a National Postdoctoral Fellow and Prof Dubey who are investigator in the study said that the prophylactic potential of this vaccine was evaluated in preclinical studies in mice model that showed a significant reduction in parasite load in liver and spleen organs of vaccinated infected mice than infected control mice. The research has been recently reported in the prestigious journal

Immunology".

"Clearance of the parasite burden in vaccinated challenged mice is correlated with immune response expected in a vaccine candidate," said Professor Vikash Kumar Dubey. It is a type of defence mechanism that happens in our body after vaccination and helpful for prevention of disease progression.

He said this study provides insight towards the evaluation of vaccine molecules against Leishmania infection. In future, it might be utilised as a vaccine candidate against the pathogen. However, more study is needed to better

understand its mode of action. The team next plans to further evaluate its potential in other clinical trials.

As of November 2020, 12 blocks in Jharkhand and 4 blocks in Bihar reported more than 1 case of Kala Azar per 10,000 population. Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have also managed to significantly achieve their elimination target.

Kala Azar is the 2nd largest parasitic killer in the world after Malaria and results in a 95 per cent fatality rate if the patients are not treated. Additionally, up to 20 per cent of the patients who are correctly treated and cured, develop a skin condition called Post-Kala-Azar Dermal Leishmaniasis (PKDL) which surfaces within months to years after treatment. These patients can contain large amounts of parasites in their skin lesions, making them an important source of transmission, Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Health Minister recently pointed out at a meeting held to review the status of the disease.

SII pegs fire loss at ₹1,000 crore

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Admittedly a massive fire claimed five lives and gutted its equipment and products at the proposed BCG and Rotavirus vaccine manufacturing facility, Serum Institute of India (SII) on Friday pegged the losses suffered by it at Rs 1,000 crore, even as Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray visited the fire ravaged SII premises.

Addressing a joint news conference with the chief minister, SII's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Adar Poonawala said that there was no damage to the place where Covishield was manufactured and stored. "The mishap took place at a brand new facility. It was for the future production of BCG and Rotavirus," he said.

"Equipment and products worth Rs 1,000 crore were damaged in the fire... The loss is mainly financial. There is no loss to supplies as such," Poonawala said.

Poonawala said that at the place where the fire broke out,

"no actual vaccine was actually being produced there, so there was no damage to any vaccine".

While the fire swept through the third and fourth floors of the upcoming facility in Manjari that was scheduled to become operational within a month, the Covishield Vaccine that is currently being manufactured at its other plant which is one km away.

The chief minister, accompanied by Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray, Deputy Chairperson of Maharashtra Legislative Council Neelam Gorhe, Pune MP Girish Bapat, visited the SII facility and met the company Chairman Cyrus Poonawala and his son Adar.

Declining to comment on the progress of investigations into the circumstances leading to Thursday's fire, Uddhav said: "We have ordered a thorough probe. There cannot be any conclusions till the full investigations are complete and the report is available. It is then we will know whether it was an accident or sabotage" the chief

minister said.

The chief minister said that Poonawalas had repeatedly assured him that there would be no impact on the Covishield Vaccine production, stocks and rollout which would continue unhindered.

After the chief minister's visit to the mishap-hit SII facility, Adar Poonawala tweeted: "Thank you Shri Uddhav Ji @CMOMaharashtra and @AUTHackerayfor visiting @SerumInstIndiaand extending your help and support during this terrible crisis. As you have seen, the production of #COVISHIELD is on schedule and remains unaffected by this tragedy."

Meanwhile, the SII has announced a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the next of kin of each of the five labourers, including 3 migrants, killed in the blaze.

On his part, the chief minister said that if any more assistance was needed to be extended to the bereaved families, the state government would consider it.

In a related development, Pune's Hadapsar Police have registered an accidental death, the Pune Municipal Corporation, Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority and Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation have launched simultaneous investigations into the fire.

It may be recalled that five persons were killed and others evacuated safely after a massive fire broke out in an under-construction building at the Covid-19 vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India (SII) in Pune on Thursday afternoon.

The fire, which broke out at around 2.30 pm, swept through the fourth and fifth floors of an under-construction building at Manjari, which is one kilometer away from the SII facility where Covid vaccines are being manufactured. Manjari is a complex in Special Economic Zone where SII's half a dozen buildings are being constructed. The fire was brought under control within three hours.

The farm divide

Whosoever wins this 'war of prestige', the poor peasants will still remain at the receiving end



No matter who wins the tug of war between the farmer unions and the Government, the poor cultivators will continue to remain at the receiving end. Who are these tens of thousands of farmers protesting on Delhi's borders for almost two months, demanding a repeal of the three new farm legislations and remunerative Minimum Support Price (MSP)? They certainly do not belong to the class of peasants that is neck-deep in debt and many of whom die by suicide every year as they see no option to bail themselves out of the vicious cycle of interest payments on loan by moneylenders. A majority of those camping at the interstate borders are big and upper-middle class landlords from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh who

are part and parcel of the strong *arhatiya* (commission agents) lobby, a community that drives the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee's (APMC's) *mandis*. These farmers constitute a sizeable chunk of the vote bank of various political parties who cannot afford to go against the populist stance taken by the community. Only the APMC-licensed traders are allowed to purchase produce from farmers within that particular APMC's jurisdiction. This helps the cartel of traders and prevents the hardworking farmers from receiving a fair price for their produce. This is why, perhaps, the hectic parleys and several rounds of dialogue have yielded no result and the farmer leaders have even turned down the Centre's offer to put the new laws on hold. The latest round of talks on Friday also remained inconclusive, with no date fixed for the next meeting. The growers remain adamant on the full repeal of the farm Acts and for enacting a legislation on the MSP. The farmers have also raised doubts over receiving fair treatment at the hands of the members of the Supreme Court-appointed expert committee and termed it "biased". On the other hand, the apex court has made it clear that the panel, tasked to submit its report after noting the farmers' reservations, would proceed with or without their participation.

However, the farmers' apprehensions cannot just be brushed aside. The NDA Government's haste in finalising the three laws, the lack of consultation with stakeholders and the Bills' passage in Parliament without thoroughly discussing and debating these ought to raise a reasonable doubt over the Centre's intention. Further, these laws were first introduced in June 2020 as Ordinances before being approved by Parliament in September by a voice vote. The farmers allege that the Centre has made the laws for benefiting big corporate houses and is not concerned about the welfare of the peasants. It cannot be denied that by promoting private investment in the sector and allowing outside-APMC trade of farm produce, the Government will subsequently buy less from farmers, and it will eventually make the MSP system irrelevant. Further, there is no denying that India's MSP system is the costliest Government food procurement programme in the world. It's high time the Government and the farmers think about the pertinent issues impacting the agriculture sector. The Green Revolution has given us food self-sufficiency but the chemical fertiliser-centric farming has also led to enormous health and environmental hazards, besides degrading the soil's fertility. These harmful carcinogens have become embedded into our food web. Further, the introduction of hybrid and transgenic varieties of seeds and crops, just for the sake of increasing productivity and meeting the market demand, is a potent threat to indigenous varieties. These local varieties are naturally resistant to many diseases and pests, and are part of our rich genetic stock. Apart from focusing on eco-friendly agriculture, the Government must devise an effective policy to help the poor peasants who are in distress and who are always at the receiving end, no matter what.

Manufacturing champions

'Make in India' is already a success story for some companies; this should inspire others



As Hero MotoCorp rolled an Xtreme 160R off its manufacturing line at Gurugram on Thursday, it might have been just another motorcycle rolling off the line. But this one was being ridden off the line by Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan. That was because this was two-wheeler number 100 million to roll off one of Hero's various lines across India and abroad. The company, which has been the world's largest two-wheeler manufacturer for a few years now, and also in India where it has a market share of about 46 per cent, reached this milestone after four decades of operating, and has seen its sales shoot up after breaking up with its erstwhile partner, Japan's Honda Motor Company. And Pawan Munjal, the chairman of the company,

believes that Hero will sell its second 100 million within the next decade as it expands globally from Central and South America and even Africa. And while the spotlight might be on Hero, others — such as Bajaj Auto and TVS Motors — have also been huge 'Make In India' superstars with Bajaj, in particular, one of the strongest performers in the export market, its name ubiquitous in many parts of the world for their three-wheelers and the Pulsar motorcycle, has been so successful that Bajaj's Chinese rivals have taken to copying it. India's success story in the two-wheeler segment proves that Indian companies can be champions in manufacturing as well, and the narrative that India lost out to China in manufacturing does not hold true. Much like Bajaj, another Pune-based company, the Serum Institute of India (SII), is playing a major role in manufacturing the AstraZeneca-Oxford University vaccine for the world. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi endorsed its work and importance by saying that India's fight against the Coronavirus pandemic strengthened the country's health infrastructure through the 'Make in India' mission. Lauding companies like the SII, Bharat Biotech and others, he said that India took quick, proactive decisions and did not wait for the problem to aggravate.

Similarly, the Cabinet Committee on Security last week approved a ₹48,000-crore agreement for the acquisition of 83 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft for the Indian Air Force — the largest indigenous procurement deal to date. The Defence establishment also unveiled a slew of, ingeniously-developed equipment at an Army innovation event that included Shakti, a cutting-edge bulletproof jacket, a 9mm machine pistol and a surveillance 'microcopter', among other technologies. India cannot only be self-sufficient, India can and must manufacture for the world. While our services sector has proved that India can be the back office for the globe and we can make software for the entire world, manufacturing in India can employ millions and turbocharge job creation which should be the priority of the Government right now. As companies seek to diversify their manufacturing chains away from China after the pandemic, successes like Hero, Bajaj and TVS prove that India can do it and that it can be a destination for high-quality manufacturing. Yes, there remain some pitfalls in terms of compliances, legal and regulatory issues, and as the recent incident in Bengaluru shows when an irate Communist mob attacked the facilities of Taiwanese company Winstrom that was making iPhones, there are still some major problems. And those have to be resolved if both the Government's ambitious schemes — 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat's and 'Make In India' — are to go to the next level.

In Trump they trust

Why do Americans in such large numbers continue to support the Don? Could it be the search for security that drives them?



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

What explains the fact of tens of millions of Donald Trump's supporters remaining fiercely loyal to him even after his role in the deplorable storming of the Capitol Hill on January 6? The question is important. The army of supporters is numerically huge and, reports say, the Right-wing extremist groups in their ranks are likely to continue to resort to violence and terror on an escalating scale.

Any search for an explanation must begin by identifying those involved in the January 6 outrage. A Reuters report by Ted Hesson, Ned Parker, Kristina Cooke and Julia Harte, dated January 8, cites Devin Burghart, executive director of the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, which tracks extremism, as saying that protesters at the Capitol building on January 6 included some of the most extreme elements of Trump's base, including White nationalists, militia groups and QAnon conspiracy theorists.

The last-named perhaps played the most important part in the storming as well as in organising it. As a report, by Drew Harwell, Isaac Stanley-Becker, Razzan Nakhlawi and Craig Timberg in *The Washington Post* — dated January 13, 2021 — puts it: "The siege on the US Capitol played out as a QAnon fantasy made real: The faithful rose up in their thousands, summoned to Washington by their leader, President Trump. They seized the people's house as politicians cowered under desks." It further states: "Born in the Internet's fever swamps, QAnon played an unmistakable role in energising rioters during the real-world attack on Jan 6." A report by Mike Wendling, dated January 6, in *BBC*, states: "Supporters of the QAnon movement were among the crowd that stormed the US Capitol building on Wednesday. Several prominent activists were spotted inside the building..."

According to these reports, QAnon propagates the baseless theory that Trump is waging a secret war against a cabal of deep State operators, entrenched in the Government, business and media, who are paedophiles worshipping Satan and trafficking in children for sex. They, according to *The Washington Post* report, hold that there will be a final day of reckoning when "prominent people such as former presidential can-



didate, Hillary Clinton, will be arrested and executed".

The other Right-wing organisations involved included the Boogaloo movement, which comprises Right-wing extremist groups whose ideologies and stand on issues like racism sometimes differ. Some of them are White supremacists, some are not. Many of them believe in Neo-Nazism. The movement's adherents, known as Boogaloo Boys or Boogaloo Bois, are, however, united in their opposition to gun control measures and in working towards a second civil war to bring down the US Federal Government. Also involved was the far-Right, anti-immigrant, all-male group called Proud Boys, which has a history of street violence against its Left-wing opponents. It stands for glorifying entrepreneurship, ending welfare, every-one's right to own guns and women playing traditional gender roles, like being housewives.

One new returns to the question: Why do people in such massive numbers continue to support Trump, with many joining the Right-wing extremist groups advocating violence to achieve their goals? According to Erich Fromm in *Fear of Freedom*, the search for security is the most powerful factor drawing people to militant mass movements. He adds that despite the biological separation caused by birth, a child "remains functionally one with its mother's world for a considerable period". The primary ties which link a mother to a child "offer security and basic unity

with the world outside oneself".

Slowly, the child becomes aware of its separateness from its mother and others. With physical, emotional and mental development, an "organised structure guided by the individual's will and reason develops. If we call this organised and integrated whole of the personality the self, we can also say that the [sic] *one side of the growing process of individuation is the growth of self-strength*". (The italics are Fromm's). On the other side, one, on becoming an individual, and facing the world with all its threats and perils alone, experiences an increasing feeling of "aloneness" and insecurity.

Fromm believes that to overcome the feeling of loneliness and insecurity, one needs "to relate to the world in love and work; in the genuine expression of one's emotional, sensuous and intellectual capacities", becoming "one with man, nature and himself, without giving up the integrity and independence of his individual self". Not all can do this. Those who cannot, resort to sadism and masochism.

Fromm holds that the infliction of pain is not the essence of sadism. "All the different forms of sadism" are rooted in the simple impulse to have complete mastery over another person, "to make him a helpless object of one's will, to become the absolute ruler over him..." The feeling of strength and power arising from the exercise of absolute control enables the sadist to overcome his/her feeling of insecurity.

Masochists "attempt to become a part of a bigger and more powerful whole outside oneself, to submerge and participate in it. This power can be a person, or an institution, God, the nation, conscience or a psychic compulsion". One "surrenders one's own self and renounces all strength and pride, one loses one's integrity as an individual and surrenders freedom" but gets a new security and a new pride in the participation in the power in which one submerges. One also "gets security against the torture of doubt". Clearly, masochism plays a critical role in driving people to totalitarian extremist organisations — whether of the Left or the Right — demanding total, unquestioning acceptance or its creed.

Two questions arise here. What causes insecurity among large sections of people in a rich democracy like the US? A feeling of insecurity need not be caused by actual physical threats or apprehensions thereof. It is a psychological phenomenon caused by social, economic and cultural conditions. Success, for example, is highly valued in the US — perhaps more than in any other country. Failure to achieve it often leads to a feeling of inadequacy, triggering a feeling of insecurity. The fear of failure can haunt even the very successful as an uninterrupted continuity of upward progression cannot be taken for granted.

A more specific cause of insecurity — certainly a factor in the emergence of the White supremacist groups — is the fear of a large section of White

Americans of being marginalised by non-Whites — African-Americans, Asians, Latin Americans and others. They see in Barack Obama's election as the President, and Kamala Harris's as Vice-President, both celebrations of American democracy and a corroboration of their fears. There are other causes of insecurity — fear of an economic downturn, job loss, violence in the streets and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, among others.

The Right-wing variety of it, however, is not the only kind of extremism the US has seen. The hippie movement of the 1960s and '70s, albeit of a harmless and peaceful variety, was another. It stood for the wholesale rejection of the American way of life with all its values and symbols — the pursuit of success and wealth, the culture of consumption, personal cleanliness, living in comfortable houses and so on. Its cause was similar but a tad different from that spawning Right-wing extremism. Eric Hoffer identifies it in *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* and says: "A rising mass movement attracts and holds its following not by its doctrine and promises but from the refuge it offers from the anxieties, barrenness and meaninglessness of an individual existence. It cures the poignantly frustrated not by conferring on them an absolute truth or by removing the difficulties and abuses which made their lives miserable but by freeing them from their ineffectual selves, and it does so by enfolding and absorbing them into a closely-knit and exultant corporate whole".

What is to be done? A comprehensive congressional investigation into all aspects of the January 6 outrage should begin even as the identification and arrest of the perpetrators continue. It must cover a wide range — failure to prevent the storming, causes of security and/or intelligence failure, possible extremist infiltration of the armed forces and intelligence agencies, and any other matter that may come up during hearings. Simultaneously, the social, economic and cultural causes of large-scale alienation need to be probed and corrective educational measures and the establishment of an extensive network of counselling services, discussed. Finally, there has to be a global view. The challenge of violent extremism is a global menace.

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

SOUNDBITE

Three farm laws were prepared in haste and Parliament was consciously denied an opportunity to examine in any meaningful detail the implications and impact.

Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi



Some transatlantic disputes, among them the Nord Stream 2 project, are still to be settled with the new US Administration. Germany and the US should put everything on the table.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel



When I started working there, nobody made opportunities for me. In fact, opportunities for people who are South Asian and look like us are very limited in Hollywood.

Actor Priyanka Chopra



Australia are no more the best team in the world and what England should be focusing at is to beat India as they have been virtually unbeatable at home since 2012.

Former England off-spinner Graeme Swan



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Exemplary umpiring

Sir — The celebrations are on after the win on the Australian soil. The players deserve all the hype, hoopla and hysteria over this incredible win. Our cricket was extraordinary and the standard of umpiring was outstanding in Australia. Even when there was a racial abuse, the umpires offered the players the option to leave the Sydney Cricket Ground in protest.

The exemplary home umpiring really gave a glimpse of the high standards. An umpire should be a professional with absolute integrity and ever prepared to discharge his duties fearlessly and impartially. A good umpire is dedicated to the task of conducting a game so that the players and spectators get the utmost enjoyment from it. The finest umpires are those who appear to make the fewest mistakes. Without the ability to self-discipline for attaining concentration, all else is to no avail. The Australian umpires did a commendable job in the entire series; that was the highlight of the series and removed the tag of lopsided Aussie umpiring.

CK Subramaniam
Mumbai

Nitish must control goons, but not like UP does

The Nitish Kumar Government in Bihar must show seriousness over the rising incidents of crime in the State. The recent killing of an airline manager in Patna and two other horrific crimes, the gang rape and murder of a minor girl and the gang rape of a deaf and mute girl, in the past few days show that there are some serious lapses in maintaining law and order in the State and the citizens are not safe. Nitish not only lost his equanimity but made some sharp responses to questions from the media by saying that the media was trying to demoralise the police force.

But what was more significant was the response of some BJP leaders from the State, to which the Chief Minister did not reply. The BJP leaders want Nitish to adopt the Uttar Pradesh model of gunning down criminals in encounters. It is a matter of grave concern that this model is being recommended for other states. It is a model where the rule of law has no place and the rights of citizens are not respected. Summary execution of suspects without investigation of crimes and trial is the new norm and Uttar Pradesh has seen many such



incidents. This model has not brought the crime rate down but only raised a new class of criminals in uniform. The Government has given license to the police to do as it pleases, and anybody could be a victim. Nitish Kumar must not follow the model of Uttar Pradesh while dealing with criminals but set a precedent by adopting such practices that are not a blot on policing and democracy.

Shovanlal Chakraborty
Kolkata

Tighten the noose on OTT

Sir — The unregulated use of OTT platform has propelled the Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry to promulgate an overarching statute which provides for self-regulation of these platforms. Such regulation is necessary in times where sensitive video content and fake news

travel far and wide quickly.

The I&B Ministry must take action against the complaints pertaining to use of foul language, violence and adult content shown on OTT platforms, which are inappropriate for audiences below the age of 18. Moreover, complaints against single-shop digital new websites have also risen with regard to the circulation of

fake news without retraction or clarification. The proposed regulation is likely to accord a higher degree of protection to the viewers in a previously unregulated domain. Moreover, this regulation is likely to address and redress consumer complaints pertaining to content on OTT.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Jab of political dividend

Sir — In a vast country like ours, with a huge population, administering COVID-19 vaccine is a Herculean exercise. However, the Union Government is up to the task of managing such a large section of people and providing them the job. It is a masterstroke, which the people of this country will not forget in the times to come. It will pay dividends for the BJP in the next Lok Sabha elections.

COVID-19 has fallen upon us in 2020 like an unexpected visitor out to shock the human race. Unlike wars or natural catastrophes, COVID-19 is likely to leave more insidious consequences.

India's vaccine rollout is more than about protection from the pandemic. It is also symbolic of economic rejuvenation and return of normalcy after a year of distress. The healing project is on and we will win over the world again with grit and determination and provide free vaccines to other countries in an effort to help the human race survive.

Jyanthi Subramaniam
Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A matter of confusion

The title, 'Status of Leopards in India', is a bit misleading as this report is on the number of leopards in tiger States, not for the whole of India



HARI SHANKER SINGH

A report titled the 'Status of leopards in India: 2018', prepared by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, was released in 2020. However, the title is a bit misleading as this report is on the status of leopards in the tiger States of India, not for the whole of the country. In fact, the 'Status of leopards in India: 2018' is based on the fourth cycle of tiger population assessment in the Tiger Landscape that was undertaken using the camera image capture and recapture method.

It is stated in the report that the leopard population in India has increased from 7,910 in 2014 to 12,580 sub-adult and adult leopards in 2018 in the 18 tiger-bearing States of the country. Immediately, the media jumped on this number without going into the report and stated that the leopard population had increased by 60 per cent in India. The international media, too, highlighted that the population of the smart cat was 12,580 subadult and adult leopards, but this was only half the truth. During the All-India Tiger Estimation in 2018, the leopard population, too, was estimated within the forested habitats of the tiger States. However, within the tiger States also, other leopard-occupied areas such as non-forested habitats (coffee and tea plantations, ravines and other areas where leopards are known to occur), higher elevations in the Himalayas, arid landscapes and a majority of the landscapes in the North-East were not sampled. Therefore, the population estimation should be considered as the minimum number of leopards in the tiger distribution range of the country.

The fact remains that leopards are present in 29 States and one Union Territory in India and the fourth cycle of assessment was restricted to tiger distribution areas in just 18 States. Even in these States, the entire leopard habitat was not surveyed. This raises concerns as these findings do not represent the facts or the leopard numbers for the entire country.

For instance, the high concentration zone of the leopard in the Himalayas, that has been witnessing intense human-leopard conflicts in Uttarakhand, was not covered in the survey. The Forest Department of Uttarakhand estimated that there were about 2,100-2,400 leopards in the State during the three previous leopard censuses. This reveals that about two-third leopard habitats were not surveyed in Uttarakhand in the fourth cycle of assessment in 2018. Two other Himalayan territories i.e. Himachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are in the leopard zone. They, too, have been facing serious man-leopard conflicts. The Forest Department of Himachal Pradesh had reported 761 leopards in the previous count, although field officials were of the opinion that there was a higher population of the elusive cat than had been reported.

Similarly, Jammu and Kashmir also support hundreds of leopards. Gujarat is another major State which counted 1,395 leopards (1,220 adult and subadult while the rest were cubs) in 2016. Except for some areas, say below 10 per cent of the forested land, the entire forested area of seven States in the North-East and West Bengal was not covered in this survey. An analysis of the data procured from all Chief Wildlife Wardens revealed that about one-third of the leopard population occurs in about 384 Protected Areas, covering about 1,36,551 square kilometre (sq km) in India. The current occupancy area may be roughly in the range of about half of Indian forests, say about 3,00,000 sq km.

The report on the 'Status of leopards in India: 2018' in tiger States, the leopard censuses by forest departments in non-tiger States and many other studies provide the basis for assessment of the population of leopards in India.

Outside the country, the Indian leopard, a subspecies out of eight subspecies of leopards in the world, has a population of about 1,200 to 1,500 in Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and a few in the bordering countries of Bangladesh, Myanmar and China. Out of about 20,000-22,000 adult and subadult leopards belonging to seven subspecies of the Asian leopards, three-fourth are found in India and the rest in about 30 countries in Asia. The African leopard, a subspecies, has a different story as its number is several times, perhaps 20 times, the combined population of all leopards in Asia. Even though the number of leopards in India has increased over the years, there is a need to conserve the beautiful and highly intelligent animal. This is becoming more and more difficult given the increasing instances of man-animal conflict in India which, more often than not, results in the big cat being at the receiving end of man's cruelty. It is high time that we learn to live in harmony with nature and leave the habitats of these creatures untouched. After all, they too have as much right over this world as we humans do. Our children need to be taught this lesson in sharing the world and its resources from a very young age. Else, the loss will be ours.

(The writer is Member, National Board for Wildlife. The views expressed are personal.)

NAIDU IS STRUGGLING POLITICALLY IN THE LAST LEG OF HIS LIFE. HE IS TRYING TO SALVAGE HIS POLITICAL LIFE WITH RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS. —YSRCP LEADER V VIJAYASAI REDDY

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



GOVERNMENT RULE SHOULD TRANSFORM PEOPLE'S LIVES BUT YSRCP IS RULING IN SUCH A WAY THAT PEOPLE ARE THINKING IT IS OKAY IF THEY ARE ALIVE. —TDP CHIEF N CHANDRABABU NAIDU

A vision for modern India

Subhas Chandra Bose aimed for nothing less than the formation of a new and happy India on the basis of the eternal principles of liberty, democracy and socialism



PRASHANT TEWARI

The two figures who dominated the last leg of India's freedom struggle were Mahatma Gandhi's favourite soldiers, namely Fabian Socialist acolyte Jawaharlal Nehru and assertive and aggressive Subhas Chandra Bose, a man who admired the Mahatma but despaired at his aims and methods. Bose played a prominent role in India's political life post-1930. He was twice elected president of the Indian National Congress (INC), the country's most important political force for freedom from British rule. Both before and during World War-II, Bose worked tirelessly to secure German and Japanese support in freeing India. During the final two years of the war, Bose, with considerable Japanese backing, led the forces of the Indian National Army (INA) into battle against the British. Without a shadow of a doubt, Bose remains one of the key figures in the history of India's Independence.

True to his character, Bose propounded the fusion ideology of socialism and fascism: In years that followed, he asserted that India must have a political system of an authoritarian character. In India, though, Bose is regarded as a national hero in spite of his praise of autocratic leadership and authoritarian Government, and admiration for European fascist regimes with which he allied himself. Bose was frequently denounced as a fascist, particularly in the wake of the radical, revolutionary (as opposed to reformist) views he expressed in radio addresses broadcast to India from National Socialist Germany and, later, from quasi-fascist Japan. By 1930, Bose had formulated the broad strategy that he believed India must follow to throw off the yoke of British imperialism and assume its rightful place as a leader in Asia. Until his death 15 years later, Bose would continue publicly to praise certain aspects of fascism and express his hope for a synthesis of that ideology and socialism.

However, he was willing to tone down his radical political beliefs on those occasions when he considered it necessary to do so. For example, in his February 1938 inaugural speech as president of the INC, Bose made a sincere attempt to placate the Gandhian faction. A year later he successfully re-contested the presidential election, but two months later was forced to resign because of his differences with Gandhiji and the Gandhian faction. Bose once again proclaimed his belief in the efficacy of authoritarian Government and a synthesis of fascism and socialism. He struggled throughout his life for the independence of India, in his own way.

Along with his abiding love for his country, Bose had an equally passionate hatred for the imperial power that ruled it: Great Britain. In a radio address broadcast from Berlin on March 1, 1943, he exclaimed that Britain's demise was near and predicted that it would be "India's privilege to end that Satanic Empire." Bose was able to give a much grander expression to his "militarism" when, in 1930, he volunteered to form a guard of honour during the ceremonial functions at the Calcutta session of the Congress Party. Gandhiji and several other champions of ahimsa were uncomfortable with this display. A high point in Bose's "military career" came in July 1943 in Singapore. At a mass meeting there on July 4, Rash Behari Bose (no relation) handed over to him the leadership of the Indian Independence League. This 'Azad Hind Fauj' would not only "emancipate India from the British yoke," he told the soldiers, but would become the standing

“NONETHELESS, HAVING HIMSELF BEEN IMPRISONED 11 TIMES AND SENT INTO EXILE THREE TIMES, BOSE WAS COMMITTED TO UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY INTELLECTUAL, RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND RACIAL GROUPS. HE HOPED FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FREEDOM FOR INDIANS”



national army of the liberated nation. Bose clearly admired strong, vigorous, military-type leaders, and in 'The Indian Struggle' he listed several whom he particularly respected. These included Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Nowhere in this book is there any criticism of these dictators for having too much power, yet another man is chastised for this: Gandhiji. Bose admired Gandhiji for many things, not least his ability to "exploit the mass psychology of the people, just as Lenin did the same thing in Russia, Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany." But he accused Gandhiji of accepting too much power and responsibility, of becoming a "dictator for the whole country" who issued "decrees" to the Congress. According to Bose, the Mahatma was a brilliant and gifted man but, unlike Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin, a very ineffective leader.

Gandhiji had failed to liberate India because of his frequent indecision and constant willingness to compromise with the Raj (something Bose said he would never do). Bose's militarism, ambition and leadership traits do not necessarily indicate (contrary to popular opinion) that he was a leader in the fascist mould.

Bose proclaimed, on October 21, 1943, the formation of the Provisional Government of 'Azad Hind (Free India)'. While retaining his post as Supreme Commander of the INA, he announced that he was naming himself Head of State, Prime Minister and Minister for War and Foreign Affairs. (The most important of these positions — Head of State — he anticipated retaining in a free India.) These appointments involved no democratic process or voting of any kind.

He demanded total obedience and loyalty from the Indians in south Asia and anyone who opposed him, his army or government faced imprisonment, torture, or even execution. Bose aimed for nothing less than the formation of "a new India and a happy India on the

basis of the eternal principles of liberty, democracy and socialism." He rejected communism (at least its Soviet version) because of its internationalism and because he believed that the theoretical ideal found in the writings of Marx could not be applied, without modification, to India. Still, he maintained socialist views throughout his adult life and, on many occasions, expressed his hope for an egalitarian, industrialised society in which the State would control the basic means of production.

He was opposed to liberalism, believing that greater emphasis should be placed on social goals than on the will of individuals. The wishes of citizens, he reasoned, must be subordinate to the needs of the State, especially during the struggle for Independence and the period of reconstruction immediately following liberation. Nonetheless, having himself been imprisoned 11 times and sent into exile three times, he was committed to upholding the rights of minority intellectual, religious, cultural and racial groups. He hoped for social, economic and political freedom for Indians and would, he said "wage a relentless war against bondage of every kind till the people can become really free."

Of course, Bose demanded not only the total mobilisation of Indian resources in south Asia but everywhere else, too. He called for mass mobilisation not only in support of his army, but also for his dynamic new government, the various branches of which required financing and manpower. First, his ideology and actions were not the result of any extreme neurotic or pathological psychosocial impulses. He was not a megalomaniac, nor did he display any of the pathological traits often attributed to fascists, such as aggression, obsessive hatred or delusions. Moreover, while he was an ardent patriot and nationalist, Bose's nationalism was cultural, not racialist. Second, his radical political ideology was shaped

by a consuming frustration with the unsuccessful efforts of others to gain independence for India. His "fascist" outlook did not come from a drive for personal power or social elevation. While he was ambitious his obsession was not adulation or power, but rather freedom for his motherland: A goal for which he was willing to suffer and sacrifice, even his life.

Bose was favourably impressed with the discipline and organisational strength of fascism as early as 1930, when he first expressed support for a synthesis of fascism and socialism. During his stays in Europe he was deeply moved by the dynamism of the two major "fascist" powers, Italy and Germany. After observing these regimes first-hand, he developed a political ideology of his own that, he was convinced, could bring about the liberation of India and the total reconstruction of its society along vaguely authoritarian-socialist lines. Bose's lack of success in liberating India was certainly not due to any lack of effort. From 1921, when he became the first Indian to resign formally from the Indian Civil Service, until his death in 1945 as leader of an Indian government in exile, Bose struggled ceaselessly to achieve freedom and prosperity for his beloved homeland.

In the present context, politics since 2014 has been inspired by Netaji's brand of politics and the present leadership of the country has genuinely embraced his ideology and political wisdom. The country is more assertive and aggressive though, unfortunately, certain democratic rights are infringed in the process. Though, history will judge the outcome regarding the better option of being Left or Right-wing, but the country voted for Narendra Modi in 2019 to reaffirm the faith in Netaji's philosophy and vision for a modern and strong India.

(The writer is Editor, Opinion Express, and columnist, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

India's medical devices sector gets a fillip

The outbreak taught us the importance of local manufacturing, the domestic market and local supply chains



HIMANSHU BAID

The COVID-19 pandemic presented India with unique conditions that forced the country to fast track innovations in the medical devices sector which, up until now, was highly dependent on imports. The Government's proactive approach in seeking the participation of entrepreneurs, national and global medical devices companies for innovation and collaboration in the medical devices sector resulted in a host of solutions to help overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic.

As a result of this, several public-private partnerships (PPPs) and

collaborations are already underway to address the gaps in the healthcare sector. These range from the COVID-19 Taskforce which brought together various technological advancements related to the virus in public Research & Development (R&D) laboratories, academia, start-ups, and industries to the Department of Pharmaceuticals, which partnered with various Ministries, academia and a group of private companies for the indigenous production of high-quality medical devices at a much lower cost as compared to imported ones.

In the war against COVID-19, the med-tech sector in India has stood firmly with the Government and private healthcare delivery players. The Coronavirus outbreak was especially challenging for India which has always had a highly import-dependent medical devices sector. Through its flagship 'Make in India' initiative, the Centre has taken steps in the right direction by relying on local Indian manufacturers to

meet the increased demand for essential medical equipment and consumables. Collaboration in the manufacturing sector has never been so important as it has been in the midst of this outbreak. This is because, no manufacturer has been left untouched by the effects of the pandemic. The manufacturing community coming together to produce critical medical supplies for the country, shows that we can do extraordinary things through collaboration.

The world has seen the danger of relying on only a few countries for critical supplies. India has already started promoting itself as an alternative low-cost manufacturing destination. Lots of companies will emerge out of the current crisis with much stronger customer and supplier relationships, which will put them in a good position for the future. To further promote local manufacturing, the Government introduced the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. The PLI scheme for

the medical devices sector will help meet the objective of product diversification and innovation. Under this scheme, the Government has witnessed a very positive response from the industry, whereby 28 applications were submitted by 23 medical device manufacturers and 215 came from 83 pharmaceutical firms. These initiatives have the potential to contribute significantly in achieving self-reliance in the medical technology sector.

In the nation's attempts to stay ahead of any unforeseen threats, diagnostics has a pivotal role to play. Obtaining timely, patient-level data on emerging threats to global health, including infectious diseases will be crucial in the long run. Framing of disease-control strategies can be aided through capturing and sharing of patient healthcare data from testing which can be instrumental in improving triage and management of infectious diseases before they become severe outbreaks. India needs to continue with its

bold efforts to be able to position itself strongly in the post-pandemic world by creating a more conducive environment for global and domestic manufacturing of medical devices, vaccines and pharma products. With an exemplar shift in global economics and geopolitics, it will be crucial for India to re-strategise a clear long-term road map for the promotion of this industry.

The contagion has accelerated reliance on diagnostics and testing. The focus of the Government since the start of the pandemic has been to scale and upgrade testing infrastructure and ensure availability of testing kits. In addition, the designated COVID-19 laboratories require skilled manpower for operating various instruments and accessories, and for the use of software for accurate reporting of test results.

There is a colossal need to train staff to efficiently handle samples and operate instruments in multiple shifts in order to ramp up the testing capability. Boosting local man-

ufacturing will help in expanding the country's domestic production and national self-sufficiency for implementing scalable testing strategies. Domestic manufacturers came forward to develop low-cost diagnostic kits, including Viral Transport Media kits, RT-PCR kits and RNA isolation kits, for the pandemic. The large-scale production of all these kits helped meet the requirements of the country, reducing its dependence on imports.

The Novel Coronavirus outbreak has managed to teach us the importance of local manufacturing, the domestic market and local supply chains. Through concerted efforts, the Government, healthcare stakeholders and the industry can drive innovation in diagnostics by making resources available and the healthcare ecosystem more agile in the fight against these emerging threats.

(The author is Managing Director, Poly Medicare Ltd. The views expressed are personal.)

FOREIGN EYE



THE WEST MUST PUSH XI BACK

President Xi Jinping's expansionist policies abroad and dictatorship at home make pressing the need for new geopolitical strategy. There is little doubt 2021 will see concerted western pushback like sanctions on individuals to bans on Chinese investment in strategic industries and new laws linking two-way trade to human rights. (The Observer editorial)

For NBFCs, RBI proposes 4-layer regulatory structure

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank on Friday proposed a four-layered regulatory structure for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) with progressive increase in intensity of regulation. According to a discussion paper released by the RBI, the NBFCs will be split into four layers -- base, middle, upper and top. The classification of the NBFCs, it said, will be based on host of parameters including size, leverage, interconnectedness, substitutability, complexity and nature of activity, among others.

"The regulatory framework envisages a progressive increase in the intensity of regulation," said the RBI's discussion paper on 'Revised Regulatory Framework for NBFCs - A Scale-Based Approach'.

Stakeholders can send

their comments on the paper to the RBI within a month.

Over the years, the NBFC sector has undergone considerable evolution. Higher risk appetite of NBFCs has contributed to their size, complexity and interconnectedness, making some of the entities systemically significant, posing potential threat to financial stability.

While NBFCs are under RBI's regulation since 1964, the central bank introduced a comprehensive regulatory framework for the systemically important NBFCs in 2006, which was further refined in 2014. Since then, the RBI has been carrying out calibrated modifications to mould the regulations to the changing environment. Accordingly, within the universe of systemically important NBFCs, an

additional identifier has been placed at Rs 5,000 crore, wherein, additional regulations have been made applicable to such large NBFCs. "Unbridled growth aided by less rigorous regulatory framework within an interconnected financial system can sow the seeds of systemic risk. Failure of any large and deeply interconnected NBFC is capable of transmitting shocks in to the entire financial sector and cause disruption even to the operations of the small and mid-sized NBFCs," the RBI said. "Under the circumstances, regulatory framework for NBFCs needs to be reoriented to keep pace with the changing realities," it said, and added a calibrated and graded regulatory framework proportionate to the systemic significance of NBFCs may be best suited. **PTI**

Lower fees structure for investment advisors to be effective from April 1: Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday said the lower fees structure for filing application and registration for individuals and corporates seeking a registered investment advisor status will come into force from April 1.

The regulator has issued a corrigendum to its earlier notification issued on January 11, wherein it was mentioned that the new norms on fees would come into force on the date of their publication in the official gazette.

In a fresh notification, Sebi said the new fee norms for investment advisers would become effective from April 1, 2021.

Under the new norms, individuals and firms (partnership) will have to pay Rs

2,000 while applying for an investment advisor certificate. Earlier, they had to cough up Rs 5,000 as application fee.

The application fee for corporates, including Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs), has been brought down to Rs 10,000 from Rs 25,000.

At the time of grant of a certificate, individuals and firms will have to shell out a fee of Rs 3,000 and Rs 15,000 by bodies corporate. Earlier, registration fee was Rs 10,000 and Rs 5 lakh for individuals as well as firms and body corporates, respectively.

The reduction in fees is expected to help those seeking registration as investment advisers. The move comes after a series of tightening of norms by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) for registered investment advisers.

Road Transport and Highways Min inks pact with IIT, Roorkee

New Delhi: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways on Friday entered into a pact with Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, to strengthen research and development activities in the road sector. This collaboration of MoRTH with IIT-Roorkee will strengthen R&D (Research and Development) activities in road sector and the Chair professor is expected to provide leadership in conducting and coordinating research, development and teaching in the area of development of highway infrastructure," the ministry said in a statement. The MoU was signed by Indresh Kumar Pandey, Director General-Road Development and Special Secretary, and Manoranjan Parida, Deputy Director and Professor of Civil Engineering, IIT Roorkee.

Vaccine to Vacation: Inoculation drive to pump up airline sector

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

India's aviation sector is set to become a major beneficiary of the massive anti-Covid vaccination programme which has re-ignited the confidence of the travellers.

Market insiders have cited that the commencement of the inoculation drive has raised travellers' optimism, which will not only boost air travel, but also the entire hospitality value chain. Consequently, industry players like ixigo have seen a surge in demand and search queries. "We are already seeing a renewed sense of optimism among the travellers in the wake of the vaccine roll-out. Demand and search queries for travel are slowly increasing, while domestic travel is on the road to a strong recovery," said Rajnish Kumar, Co-founder

and CTO, ixigo. "On the international front, we are still at 40 per cent of pre-Covid range in terms of bookings due to the current country restrictions. A widespread and effective distribution of the vaccine will be critical to get the international travel numbers back to normal," he added. India launched the biggest vaccination drive in the world on January 16. The programme is backed up by the country's comparative advantage of having the largest vaccine manufacturing capacity in the world and a rich experience of mass inoculation drives against polio and measles.

"The pick up in leisure as well as business travel is dependent on the improvement in consumer sentiments, which in turn is dependent on the wide availability of a vaccine," said Kinjal Shah, Vice President, ICRA.

Sensex crashes 746 pts as profit-taking deepens; posts weekly loss

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Widespread profit-taking hammered stocks for the second straight session on Friday, with the Sensex tanking 746 points and the Nifty crashing below the 14,400-mark.

A day after touching the

historic 50,000-level, the Sensex found it tough to sustain itself at higher levels as investors offloaded Reliance Industries ahead of its results, while banking and finance counters also bore the brunt of heavy selling amid lacklustre global cues.

The 30-share BSE bench-

mark tumbled 746.22 points or 1.50 per cent to finish at 48,878.54, posting its largest single-session drop in a month. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slumped 218.45 points or 1.5 per cent to 14,371.90.

Axis Bank was the biggest laggard among the Sensex

constituents, skidding 4.63 per cent, followed by Asian Paints, SBI, IndusInd Bank, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, HDFC and Reliance Industries. On the other hand, Bajaj Auto stole the show by surging 10.45 per cent, a day after it reported a robust 23 per cent jump in profit after

tax at Rs 1,556 crore for the three months ended December 2020. Hindustan Unilever, UltraTech Cement, TCS, Bajaj Finserv and Infosys were the other gainers, advancing up to 1.76 per cent.

On a weekly basis, the Sensex slipped 156.13 points or 0.31 per cent, while the

Nifty shed 61.8 points or 0.42 per cent. "Indian indices tumbled in afternoon trade dragged by weak global markets and selling seen in metal and banking indices. Positive outlook for auto and IT stocks helped them to retain their momentum even during today's correction."

Petrol crosses ₹92 mark in Mumbai, diesel at all-time high

NEW DELHI: Petrol price on Friday crossed ₹92 a litre mark in Mumbai, while diesel touched an all-time high after rates were raised for the third time this week. Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 25 paise per litre each, according to a price notification from oil marketing companies. This took the petrol price in Delhi to ₹85.45 per litre and ₹92.04 in Mumbai. Diesel rate climbed to ₹75.63 a litre in the national capital - its highest ever. Petrol and diesel prices were raised by 25 paise per litre each on January 18 and 19.

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	14583.40	14619.90	14357.75	14371.90	-218.45
BAJAJ-AUTO	37499.5	41300.0	37400.5	41129.5	4159.5
HEROMOTOCO	3265.00	3483.95	3258.90	3377.00	129.7
EICHERMOT	2900.00	3037.00	2900.00	2978.75	52.15
HINDUNILVR	2359.00	2422.00	2357.00	2402.00	34.35
ULTRACEMCO	5578.00	5950.00	5468.05	5580.75	37.3
TCS	3241.90	3325.00	3241.90	3292.20	18.35
GAIL	134	136.3	133	134.45	0.7
TATAMOTORS	295.95	306.9	278.35	290.85	0.25
BAJAJFINSV	9070.00	9213.50	8965.20	9053.00	30.2
SHRECEM	23799.00	24142.00	23612.45	23710.25	-8.75
POWERGRID	195	196.3	193	194.6	-0.35
INFY	1327.00	1365.00	1326.55	1338.00	-3.7
DREDDY	5048.75	5105.35	4985.00	5037.75	-14.45
WIPRO	447.45	452	440.45	443.5	-1.45
NESTLEIND	17784.00	17882.30	17550.00	17639.00	-77.3
CPIA	815.8	822.5	798.25	809.8	-3.85
BRITANNIA	3649.00	3690.00	3591.00	3613.45	-17.35
BHARTIARTL	583.9	585.55	572.75	578.5	-28.8
MARUTI	1362.00	1375.00	1348.50	1363.35	-7.95
LANIT	8085.00	8308.00	8004.00	8024.00	-52.75
HITCECH	991.7	1004.00	981.4	985.95	-7.35
IOC	96.5	97.25	95.75	95.75	-0.95
ITC	214	217.75	209.15	211.2	-2.5
M&M	808	826.7	795	798	-10.25
SUNPHARMA	582.9	586.95	570.6	575.5	-7.4
KOTAKBANK	1850.00	1875.00	1824.50	1829.30	-28.5
GRASIM	1022.30	1030.75	1000.00	1001.25	-28.5
NTPC	96.3	96.5	92.9	94.6	-1.5
TITAN	1522.00	1534.70	1487.00	1489.80	-27.5
ONGC	94.6	95.45	92.5	92.95	-1.75
DIVISLAB	3604.60	3613.75	3530.00	3536.20	-6.84
HDFCLIFE	702.7	708.8	684.1	686.85	-13.65
HDFCBANK	1467.90	1477.00	1440.15	1444.35	-30.45
TECHM	1004.70	1005.00	975	982	-22.7
ADANIPOR	549.5	557.5	531.7	535	-12.65
SBLIFE	885.5	885.7	838	857.65	-20.65
RELIANCE	2111.00	2115.35	2035.15	2047.95	-51.45
HDFC	2669.00	2678.75	2583.05	2589.95	-73.05
UPL	585.4	592.5	564	568.5	-16.05
COALINDIA	137.35	137.8	132.5	133.55	-3.8
BPL	409	412.95	394.95	399.5	-11.4
TATATEEL	670	675.8	635.65	646.85	-19.85
BAIFINANCE	5135.00	5137.00	4945.60	4949.00	-109.3
SBN	295.5	298	282.4	284.4	-10.45
HINDUSNBK	930	934	890	893	-32.85
INDIALCO	247.25	249.8	235.55	239.6	-9.3
ICICIBANK	553.1	553.5	530.6	532	-20.7
JSWSTEEL	396	397.45	372.2	377.7	-15.6
ASIANPAINT	2750.00	2768.85	2590.00	2600.95	-115.4
AXISBANK	670	673.9	638.8	645.55	-30.3

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	33683.05	33841.55	33231.05	33339.15	-275.4
DMART	2730.10	2899.00	2730.00	2866.15	147
SBCARD	1011.00	1040.00	978.95	1030.00	50.35
NAUKRI	5250.00	5375.80	5245.00	5365.00	157.25
AUROPHARMA	904.75	948	880.15	926.95	24.7
AMBUJACEM	255	259.9	250.9	258.3	5.75
ACC	1674.00	1708.95	1653.25	1697.60	31.85
ADANIPOR	475.1	486	462.65	473.5	7.7
CANBK	136.5	138.3	131.1	133.3	6.85
MGL	1040	1062.75	1020	1040.95	24.5
CLITECH	3280.00	3299.60	3220.05	3295.00	48.8
LUPIN	1107.00	1089.00	1056.65	1081.85	13.65
PGHIL	1181.00	1140.00	1125.05	1129.00	70.15
MARICO	416	422.45	413.1	418.3	1.75
IGL	537.75	544	530.25	533.55	0.65
HDFCAMC	3100.05	3133.45	3071.05	3101.00	3.4
ABOTINDIA	14549.00	14569.95	14350.00	14479.00	-8.8
ADANI GREENE	1047.80	1065.45	1035.00	1047.00	-1.8
UBL	1257.00	1270.00	1242.05	1245.05	-2.3
CONCOR	428	435.6	424.3	427	-1.25
SIEMENS	1677.60	1692.45	1642.75	1661.60	-7.65
HAVELLS	1142.00	1155.70	1114.50	1126.40	-5.55
BOSCHLTD	15848.90	16550.00	15460.05	15700.00	-106.2
MCDOWELL-N	631.95	643.35	620.4	633.45	-4.25
OFSS	3350.00	3388.00	3285.00	3320.00	-25.95
DABUR	537	540.5	513.3	526.4	-4.45
ICICIPRULI	505	510.9	500	510.8	-4.3
GODREJCP	797	801	785.7	790.2	-7.25
MUTHOOTFIN	1184.00	1197.40	1162.00	1172.00	-10.9
ALKEM	3050.00	3110.00	2986.00	3040.00	-35.55
COPAL	1541.95	1552.05	1517.10	1519.10	-19.1
LIT	3970.00	4028.80	3910.00	3930.00	-49.35
GICRE	138.5	139.3	135.6	136.6	-1.9
HINDPETRO	228.5	230.8	223.1	225.65	-3.15
CADILAC	470.05	471.1	453.3	461.9	-7.6
TATACONSUM	599.2	606.9	582.6	585.5	-9.75
PETRONET	245.1	245.9	241	241.45	-4.4
INDUSTOWER	247.6	248.2	246.85	241.4	-4.75
INDIGO	1684.40	1684.40	1634.05	1643.90	-33.65
TORNTPHARM	2744.00	2744.00	2680.00	2684.00	-54.95
PIDILITIND	1779.70	1794.45	1730.00	1735.00	-40.55
PFC	1185.19	1195.05	1150.5	1175.5	-2.95
HINDZINC	286.8	286.8	274	275.7	-7.7
ICICIGI	1465.20	1479.35	1420.00	1423.00	-39.85
PNB	35.8	36.05	34.2	34.6	-1.05
BANKBARODA	761.5	77.35	73	73.4	-2.9
BERGEPAIN	811.7	822.8	771.05	777.7	-31.55
DLF	284.5	285	266.4	271	-11.7
NMDC	117	117.8	111.2	112	-5.2
PEL	1564.00	1587.60	1480.45	1489.80	-73.7
BANDHANBANK	333	336.2	311.85	314.95	-25.75
BIOCON	422.4	423	376.3	393.1	-48.85

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	Change
TATAMOTORS	296	306.9	278.3	289.4	-7.4
INDUSINDBK	927.6	933.9	890	893.4	-34.2
BAJAJ-AUTO	3787	4130	3730	4094.1	455.6
IDEA	12.91	13.09	12.4	12.7	0.3
RELIANCE	2114.8	2115.9	2035.2	2049.65	-51.45
TCS	3249.1	3323.9	3249.05	3303.4	54.35
SBN	296	298	282.4	283.75	-7.65
BANDHANBANK	334	335.9	312	314.2	-20.7
ASHOKLEY	119.8	127.25	119.8	122.3	2.5
TATASTEEL	670.4	675.85	633.95	646.95	-23.5
SAIL	64.65	65.3	56.35	58.2	-6.45
APOLLOTYRE	221	237.4	219.2	231.05	11.85
JKYUTE	126.95	137.8	126.05	136.05	9.1
HDFC	2660	2678	2583		

Biden halts border wall building after Trump's final surge

San Diego (US): In the days before Joe Biden became US president, construction crews worked quickly to finish Donald Trump's wall at an iconic cross-border park overlooking the Pacific Ocean, which then-first lady Pat Nixon inaugurated in 1971 as a symbol of international friendship.

Biden on Wednesday ordered a "pause" on all wall construction within a week, one of 17 executive orders issued on his first day in office, including six dealing with immigration.

The order leaves billions of dollars of work unfinished - but still under contract - after Trump worked feverishly last year to build more than 450 miles (720 km), a goal he said he achieved eight days before leaving office.

As of January 15, the government spent \$6.1 billion of the \$10.8 billion in work it signed contracts to have done, according to a Senate Democratic aide with knowledge of

the contracts who spoke on condition of anonymity because details have not been made public.

The full amount under contract would have extended Trump's wall to 664 miles (1,069 km). Biden, seeking to fulfil a pledge not to build "another foot," gave his administration two months to determine how much it would cost to cancel contracts and whether money could be spent elsewhere.

The Senate aide said fees would be negotiated with contractors and the administration would seek to spend whatever's left on related uses on the border, such as roads, lights, sensors and other technology.

Publicly, the Trump administration said it secured \$15 billion for the wall. The Senate aide said it was actually \$16.45 billion as of Wednesday, \$5.8 billion of which was appropriated by Congress and the rest diverted from the Defence and Treasury departments. **AP**

Biden has no plans to call Trump: WH

Washington: US President Joe Biden has no plans to call his predecessor Donald Trump, the White House has said. "There's no call planned," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at a news conference on Thursday.

She was responding to questions on the remarks made by Biden a day earlier when he said that Trump has left him a "very generous" letter in the Oval Office, and he plans to talk to him. Trump did not attend his inauguration, a rare for an outgoing president.

"What he was conveying is that he didn't want to release a private note without having agreement from the former president. But I wouldn't say he's seeking it through a phone call, he was just trying to be respectful in that moment of a private letter that was sent," Psaki said. It is customary for outgoing presidents to write their successors a letter and leave it for them on the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office.

However, given that the former president broke several of the past traditions, including skipping Biden's inauguration ceremony and never formally congratulated him on his election win, it was unclear until Wednesday whether Trump would maintain the tradition of outgoing presidents leaving notes for their successors.

"The president wrote a very generous letter. Because it was private, I will not talk about it until I talk to him. But it was generous," Biden had told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House on Wednesday. **PTI**

US Prez launches '100 days mask challenge'; makes Covid test, quarantine mandatory for people entering US

Washington: US President Joe Biden has unveiled his "wartime" national strategy to boost the fight against the raging COVID-19 pandemic, including making the coronavirus test followed by quarantine mandatory for all travellers coming from overseas.

Announcing the measures, Biden said it would take months to defeat the pandemic but America would "get through this" if people stood together. The moves come a day after Biden was sworn in as the 46th president. In addition to wearing masks, everyone flying to the United States from another country will need to test before they get on that plane, before they depart, and quarantine when they arrive in America," Biden said at a White House event where he signed the orders.

In terms of total deaths from coronavirus, the US is the worst-hit country with more than 406,000 lives lost, according to Johns Hopkins University. Nearly 24.5 million have been infected in the country.

US airlines and their employees have been seeking such a federal mask mandate almost since the pandemic began, as they have struggled to deal with score of passengers who refuse to follow the airlines' own mask-wearing rules. But the previous Trump administration had refused to enact such a mask mandate, as the ex-president himself and many in his administration often made a point of going mask-less. **PTI**

Kamala Harris as Vice President further cements US-India relationship: WH

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The historic inauguration of Kamala Harris as America's vice president has further cemented the importance of the relationship between the United States and India, according to a top White House official.

Born to a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, 56-year-old Harris made history on Wednesday when she was sworn in as the first female, first Black and first Asian-American US vice-president. The former senator from California was sworn in just before Joe Biden, 78, took the oath of office to become the 46th President of the United States.

Addressing reporters at her daily news conference on Thursday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said President Biden respects the long bipartisan successful relationship between the two countries.

"President Biden, of

course, has visited India many times, respects and values the long bipartisan successful relationship between leaders in India and the United States. It looks forward to a continuation of that," Psaki said responding to a question on India-US relationship under the new Biden administration.

The historic inauguration of Indian-origin Harris, she said, further cements this relationship.

"Obviously, he (Biden) selected and yesterday, she (Harris) was sworn in as the first Indian-American to serve as president or vice president. Certainly, a historic moment for all of us in this country but a further cementing of the importance of our relationship," Psaki said.

On Wednesday, Harris credited her mother for showing faith in her and always reminding her two daughters that "though we may be the first, we should not be the last."

Harris remembered her

late mother Shyamala Gopalan, a cancer researcher and civil rights activist from India, saying she has always carried that lesson from her mother with her throughout her career from serving as the first woman District Attorney of San Francisco, to the first woman Attorney General of California, and the first woman of colour to represent California in the United States Senate.

"My story is the story of millions of Americans. My mother Shyamala Gopalan arrived in the United States from India. She raised my sister Maya and me to know that though we may be the first, we should not be the last," Harris said at the Presidential Inaugural Committee's official Asian American inaugural ball, hosted virtually by IMPACT, the leading Indian American advocacy and political action committee.

"Your continued faith in me has brought me to this moment," she said.

Biden admin believes WHO is vital to contain Covid-19 pandemic, VP Harris tells WHO chief

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden administration believes that the WHO is vital to controlling the spread of COVID-19 and building back better global health and pandemic preparedness, Vice President Kamala Harris has told WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, a day after the US rejoined the UN health agency.

The US rejoined the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday in one of the first official orders of the Joe Biden presidency, reversing a key foreign policy decision his predecessor Donald Trump took last year after accusing the UN health agency of incompetence and bowing to Chinese pressure over the coronavirus pandemic.

In April last year, as the coronavirus pandemic was spreading across the globe, Trump cut off US funding to the WHO, saying it was "virtually controlled by China."

He then went further, triggering the process to pull the US completely out of the organisation.

The withdrawal was due to go into effect in July this year, but Biden's order will cancel it.

During her phone call on Thursday, Harris discussed the decision by the Biden administration to rejoin the WHO with the health agency's Director-General Dr. Ghebreyesus.

Harris emphasised that she and Biden believe that the WHO is vital to controlling the spread of COVID-19 and building back better global health and pandemic preparedness, according to a read-out of the call issued by the White House.

"The vice president and the director-general also discussed the resumption of the United States' role in the global public health and humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic," it said.

Islamic State claims deadly and rare twin blasts in Baghdad

Baghdad: The Islamic State claimed responsibility for a rare suicide attack that rocked central Baghdad, killing 32 people and wounding dozens.

The bombing targeted "apostate Shiites," the group said in a statement on an IS-affiliated website late Thursday.

At least 32 people were killed and over 100 people wounded in the blasts on Thursday. Some were in severe condition. According to officials,

the first suicide bomber cried out loudly that he was in the middle of the bustling market, prompting a crowd to gather around him — and that's when he detonated his explosive belt. The second detonated shortly after.

The U.S.-led coalition recently ceased combat activities and is gradually drawing down its troop presence in Iraq, sparking fears of an IS resurgence. **AP**

UN warns of 'serious' rape charges in Ethiopia's Tigray

Nairobi: The UN special representative on sexual violence in conflict says "serious allegations of sexual violence" have emerged in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, while women and girls face shortages of rape kits and HIV drugs amid restrictions on humanitarian access.

"There are also disturbing reports of individuals allegedly forced to rape members of

their own family, under threats of imminent violence," Pramila Patten said in a statement released late Thursday.

"Some women have also reportedly been forced by military elements to have sex in exchange for basic commodities, while medical centers have indicated an increase in the demand for emergency contraception and testing for sexually transmitted infections." **AP**

Mongolian PM quits in Covid hospital treatment scandal

Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia): Mongolia's Prime Minister has resigned following a protest over a hospital's treatment of a new mother who tested positive for the coronavirus.

Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, whose Mongolian People's Party holds a strong majority in the parliament known as the State Great Khural, stepped down Thursday night after accusing President Khaltmaagiin Battulga of the Democratic Party of orchestrating a political crisis.

A small protest broke out in the capital Ulaanbaatar Wednesday after TV footage appeared of a woman who had just given birth being escorted in slippers and a thin robe from the maternity ward to a special wing for COVID-19 patients while holding her newborn. Mongolia closed its borders last January and has held coronavirus cases to just 1,592, although many Mongolians have protested at the economic impact of control measures. **AP**

Russia welcomes US proposal to extend nuclear treaty

Moscow: The Kremlin on Friday welcomed US President Joe Biden's proposal to extend the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty between the two countries, which is set to expire in less than two weeks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said that Russia stands for extending the pact and is waiting to see the details of the US proposal.

The White House said Thursday that Biden has proposed to Russia a five-year extension of the New START treaty.

The treaty, signed in 2010 by President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads. It expires on Feb. 5. **AP**

Central African Republic declares state of emergency

Bangui (Central African Republic): Central African Republic has declared a 15-day state of emergency throughout the country as a coalition of armed groups seeks to overthrow the newly re-elected President Faustin-Archange Touadera.

The spokesperson for the presidency, Albert Yaloke Mokpeme, made the announcement on Thursday on national radio.

He said the state of emergency applies until February 4. **AP**

Israeli warplanes strike targets in central Syria

Beirut: Israeli warplanes fired several missiles in central Syria early on Friday, Syrian state media reported, without giving word on casualties.

State-news agency SANA quoted an unnamed military official as saying the attack took place shortly before dawn when Israeli warplanes flew over neigh-

bouring Lebanon. Israel has launched hundreds of strikes against Iran-linked military targets in Syria over the years but rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations. The Syrian military official said the attack was aimed at several targets in and near the central province of Hama. It added that Syrian air

defence units shot down most of the missiles. It was Israel's first strike on Syria since President Joe Biden took office.

Tension has been high in the Middle East over the past weeks as many had feared retaliation for the US killing of Iran's Revolutionary Guard commander Qassem Soleimani last year

in Baghdad.

On January 13, Israeli warplanes carried out intense airstrikes in eastern Syria apparently targeting positions and arms depots of Iran-backed forces. At least 57 fighters were killed and dozens were wounded, according to a Syrian opposition war monitoring group.

FROM PAGE 1

BJP ONLY PARTY WITH INTERNAL DEMOCRACY, SAYS NADDA

based on these policies, Jan Dhan Yojana, Jeevan Dhansh Bima, Ayushman Bharat, Ujjwala Yojana, Saubhagya Yojana, Housing Scheme, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and welfare schemes like Pradhan Mantri Krishi Samman Nidhi were drafted," he said.

"In UP too, gas connections were distributed to more than one crore poor families, more than one crore 40 lakh toilets were made and the state could become Open Defecation Free (ODF)," he said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, state BJP chief Swatantra Dev Singh, national organization general secretary BL Santosh, UP in-charge Radha Mohan Singh, BJP general secretary Arun Singh, Dushyant Gautam, Deputy CMs Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dinesh Sharma, UP organization general secretary Sunil Bansal and general secretary Amarpal Maurya were present besides senior party officials and booth chiefs from Lucknow metropolis and Lucknow district.

COVAXIN EFFECTIVE WITH NO SIDE EFFECTS: LANCET STUDY

were randomly assigned to the three vaccine groups, and 75 were intramuscularly assigned to the control group.

Two intramuscular doses of vaccines were administered 14 days apart.

"BBV152 led to tolerable safety outcomes and enhanced immune responses. The vaccine was well tolerated in all dose groups with no vaccine-related serious adverse events," the authors of the study said.

The most common adverse event was pain at the injection site, followed by headache, fatigue, and fever. Covaxin is an inactivated vaccine developed by chemically treating novel coronavirus samples to make them incapable of reproduction.

This process leaves the viral proteins, including the spike protein of the coronavirus which it uses to enter the human cells, intact. Given as two doses, three weeks apart, the viral proteins in the vaccine activate the immune system and prepare people for future infections with the actual infectious virus.

According to Bharat Biotech, the therapeutic can be stored at room temperature for at least a week.

CONG TO GET ELECTED CHIEF BY JUNE AFTER 5 ASSEMBLY POLLS

were not dissenters but senior members of the Congress and were all unanimous in deciding to extend the election schedule a little. "There was no argument in the election schedule issue. The meeting was very fruitful. There is no dispute over conducting organisational election," Venugopal said.

He said a little clarity was needed on whether the CWC election can be held before or after the Congress president's election.

"We have to go to the constitution to look at that. The practice is to hold Congress president's election first and then the CWC election," he said.

Sources within the CWC meet said Rajasthan Chief

Minister Ashok Gehlot hit out at those demanding internal elections, saying the leaders should leave this to the party chief and focus on how to fight the Narendra Modi Government. Anand Sharma objected to the tone of his remarks, dubbing it "disrespectful", sources said.

The virtual meeting chaired by party chief Sonia Gandhi started with her address.

In her opening remarks, Sonia hit out at the Government over a host of issues. She said there were "many pressing issues of public concern" that needed to be debated and discussed in the upcoming session of Parliament.

On the ongoing farmers' agitation, she said the Government had shown "shocking insensitivity and arrogance going through the charade of consultations".

"It is abundantly clear that the three laws were prepared in haste and Parliament was consciously denied an opportunity for examining in any meaningful details their implications and impacts. Our position has been very clear from the very beginning; we reject them categorically because they will destroy the foundations of food security that are based on the three pillars of MSP, public procurement and PDS," she said.

After the address, Sonia asked AICC general secretary organisation KC Venugopal to read out the Organisational Election Schedule sent by chairperson of the Central Election Authority.

The CEC chaired by Madhusudan Mistry has proposed that the AICC Session and the party president's election be held on May 29, with the process of nomination filing starting in the month of May itself.

The party's top leadership also discussed the current political situation in the wake of the farmers' agitation and the party's strategy ahead of the Budget Session of Parliament on various issues, including the leaked WhatsApp chats of journalist Arnab Goswami.

Sonia took over as the interim Congress president in August 2019 after Rahul Gandhi resigned in the wake of the party's Lok Sabha debacle in May 2019.

There have been demands from a section of the Congress leaders for having a full-time and active party president and an organisational overhaul.

The CWC had in its earlier meeting decided to hold organisational elections, following a storm in the party in August last year over a letter to Sonia Gandhi by a group of 23 leaders including Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Bhupinder Hooda, Prithviraj Chavan, Kapil Sibal, Manish Tewari, Shashi Tharoor and Mukul Wasnik raising these issues.

Sonia last month met some of these 'dissenters' and discussed the issues raised by them.

ANOTHER BENGAL MIN QUILTS, MAY JOIN BJP

ones were ignored. In a Facebook Live post he rued the falling economic condition of Bengal where the youth were forced to leave the State in lakhs in search of jobs.

Reacting to the Friday's development Bengal Minister and TMC general secretary Partho Chatterjee said "a bucket of water taken out of the ocean does not dry it up and the TMC is that ocean," while Trinamool MP Kalyan Banerjee made suggestive statements saying the Forest Minister was aggrieved because "he was removed from the Irrigation Department where he had the opportunity to work with a large number of contractors."

TMC remark on BSF unfortunate, says EC

Kolkata: The Election Commission of India on Friday asked the Bengal political parties to exercise restraint while choosing their words particularly for armed forces.

While it termed the allegations made by Trinamool Congress against the Border Security Forces without producing evidence as "unfortunate" and avoidable, it also called the BJP contentions that the names of 4-5 lakh Rohingyas had been illegally included in the electoral rolls as unsubstantiated.

Describing allegations made by a political party against the BSF as "unfortunate," Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said that it was "one of the finest forces in the country," adding the political party concerned should come up with facts to support its allegations.

Earlier the Trinamool Congress alleged that the BSF was threatening people living (within 15 km) of the international border to make them cast their votes in favour of a particular political party.

On BJP's allegations that the names of 4-5 lakh Rohingyas had been incorporated in the electoral rolls he said such allegations were baseless adding the full bench of the EC which was currently traveling Bengal had asked the State Chief Secretary and Home Secretary to look into the issues of fake information in the social media raised by political parties.

Talking tough on the bureaucrats particularly the police top brass the CEC said that poll panel had "zero-tolerance" insofar as "money and muscle power and misuse of the government machinery" was concerned. He also said no civic police volunteers will be deployed during the elections. **PNS**

J&K Industrial land allotment policy approved

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

The Administrative Council (AC), which met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Friday approved the adoption of Jammu & Kashmir Industrial Land Allotment Policy, 2021-30 to evolve a highly structured industrial land bank for promoting equitable industrial growth in Jammu and Kashmir.

The new policy attempts to address various land-related issues impeding industrial development in J&K by laying down a framework to regulate zoning of industrial areas, project appraisal and evaluation, and the

subsequent process flow.

According to the official spokesperson, "Under the policy, land will be allotted to the investors on lease for an initial period of 40 years, extendable to 99 years.

The allotted land will be liable to be cancelled in case of failure of the investor to take effective steps within the stipulated time of 2 years, failure of the industrial unit to come into production within 3 years, violation of provisions under the lease deed, and non-cooperation of an enterprise for a period of 5 years."

Further, the policy also provides renting out of 60% of the built-up area of a business enter-

prise for setting up an ancillary industrial enterprise through a tripartite agreement.

The spokesperson said, "the policy aims at achieving inclusive growth through sustainable industrialization and employment generation, and includes provisions for evolving a fair and transparent mechanism for land allotment for industrial use."

"The new policy proposes zoning of industrial areas at block/municipality level after taking into consideration various factors including the existing level of industrial development, location of the proposed zone, and level of urbanization. The Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Land Allotment Policy, 2021-30

will also cover land allotment for health institutions/medicities and educational institutions/educities", official spokesperson added.

The policy provides for constitution of Divisional Level Project Appraisal and Evaluation Committees to scrutinize applications received for allotment of industrial land within 30 days; Apex Level Land Allotment Committee, High Level Land Allotment Committee and Divisional Level Land Allotment Committee to decide and allot industrial land to the applicant within 45 days in cases of projects worth Rs. 200 crore, Rs. 50-200 crore and up to Rs. 50 crore, respectively.

SHORT CIRCUITS



PRIYANKA CHOPRA

I don't put myself in a box. I am very organic with what I feel. I am doing a comedy with *Mindy Kaling*, which is probably one of the first few romantic comedies in Hollywood that you will see with all-South Asian star cast. So that's something very exciting. It was my quest.



DALER MEHNDI

It is important to raise one's voice and many do so, too. It is a good thing. But a solution for the ongoing farmers protest can only be given by leaders and not necessarily by celebrity appearances. I pray that the farmers and the government come out with a solution.



NEERAJ PANDEY

We are starting off with a unique *Special Ops 1.5*, which is neither a prequel nor a sequel and with this the audience will be witnessing the backstory of the main protagonist Himmat Singh. It will be narrated across three episodes approximately an hour long each.



VIVIAN DSEENA

I have learnt to never underestimate any human being in this industry or this world. Because there are a lot of people who never believed in me once upon a time and now when they met me, they said they regret for not believing in me back then. So you should not underestimate anyone.

NEIL PATRICK HARRIS

I think there's something sexy about casting a straight actor to play a gay role, if they're willing to invest a lot into it. There's a nervousness that comes from the newness of it all. To declare that you'd never do that, you might miss opportunities.



JUKEBOX 45 MINUTES

A HARMONIOUS SWITCH

Indie singer, guitarist and songwriter, ARNAV MAGOO tells AYUSHI SHARMA that his Western musical preferences show in his lyrics, ideas and instrumentation

If Arnav Magoo had stuck to the original plan, he would have been crunching numbers at an asset management company. But somewhere along the line, he realised that rather than calculations it was chords that strung a tune in his heart. Though, the switch meant life was not a cakewalk but he did figure out different ways of dealing with the hurdles that come his way. The key to keep going, he believes, is always in our pockets. The little challenges in life that came his way made him stronger and helped him to grow.

Arnav began playing the guitar at the age of 13 and started experimenting with his voice during his time at the New York University. His background in Western music imparts a unique flavour to Hindi songs. Arnav has released two songs so far — *It's Hard Staying Apart* (English) and the latest, *Aa Chalein Hum Kahin* (Hindi). Read on to know more. Excerpts of the interview:

How did you realise that music is your ultimate calling?

I have always been extremely passionate about music and knew that it would be a significant part of my life. I was introduced to bands like Pink Floyd, The Beatles and Queen by my father when I was about 13. I can still recall being particularly mesmerised by the guitarwork and the sound in general. Shortly after I picked up the guitar, I would play for hours every day and quickly became deeply involved. Over the years, it was almost like a companion through every phase. While in the US, it transitioned from being a passion to a dream career. I was dedicating a lot of time and energy to it, collaborating with local musicians and playing in bands ranging from folk to heavy metal, however, I found my solo work quite fulfilling. Over time, my inclination towards it grew and I decided to move back to India and do it more seriously.

Was the switch from finance to music difficult?

It was not an easy decision. However, a career in the world of high finance even-



tually lost out to my devotion towards music. It seemed like the right thing to do. It has been very exciting and rewarding so far. The transition has been quite smooth. I had a great time writing and recording the songs. I have released two so far — *Aa Chalein Hum Kahin* and *It's Hard Staying Apart* and they've got a great response. I am also exploring ideas, styles and planning future projects, so there are a lot of things to look forward to.

How did you conceptualise *Aa Chalein Hum Kahin*?

The idea for this song occurred to me while observing the city from my balcony on the 15th floor. The cars and the people followed the same routine and patterns every day. Things moved at a fast pace and little changed. To me that image felt like a perfect depiction of the situation I was in. All of us at one time or the other feel that we are stuck in a rut, we often feel like a face in the crowd and find ourselves going through the motions without any real sense of purpose. I wrote the song about the desire to move to a new town, one that offers wonder, surprises and meaning. It is about grav-

itating towards what naturally comes to you, finding your identity and letting go of society's expectations.

Since you were working in an asset management company, how were you exposed to different genres of music in the US?

During my time at New York University and subsequently while working, I was consuming and playing a lot of music. There was a lot of cultural influence as well because I went to a lot of concerts and musicals both big and small, got to see

a lot of acts I grew up listening to, which got me closer to the art form. Also, I spent my formative years in New York City and it was the place where I left my comfortable college lifestyle behind and entered the 'real world', which changed my perspective drastically. It gave me a lot of things to think about and express.

Does Western music influence you?

Yes, I am actually influenced by Western music because I grew up listening to a lot of it. My musical preferences derive from several Western genres. I think

it shows in the kind of lyrics I write, the ideas and the instrumentation. In fact, even my Hindi songs do have a Western feel to them in terms of the atmosphere and the composition, which I have been told lends them an interesting touch.

What were your major learnings?

I am mostly self-taught, so I picked up the guitar through online means and played it regularly. I also read a lot about the theory and culture surrounding music even in my free time because I think it's a very fascinating subject. There are a lot of possibilities to it and there's always more to dig into and figure out. I think the greatest source of learning is just listening to a lot of music because your taste and your musical database play a big role in the kind of music you end up writing. Every time you listen to a song, it influences you in some way on a subconscious level.

What has been your creative process as a singer?

I usually build a concept in my head and write the music first. And when I have something going, I think about the ideas for lyrics. It's a bit different from what I hear from a lot of people but I think it's different for everyone. My writing process is quite customised and based on how I listen to music. Once I have a basic version of the song with me, I usually play it a few times, see how I feel about it a few days later and if it still means something to me or makes me feel a certain way, I go with it.

Your biggest inspiration?

I have a variety of inspirations and influences, some artists I am listening to a lot currently are The Beatles, Dire Straits (I absolutely love their guitarwork), Simon & Garfunkel. I also love the sound of Coldplay, Radiohead and Kings of Leon. Among the Indian musicians, I look up to AR Rahman and RD Burman. I usually have phases with artists where I explore them and go through their discographies thoroughly.

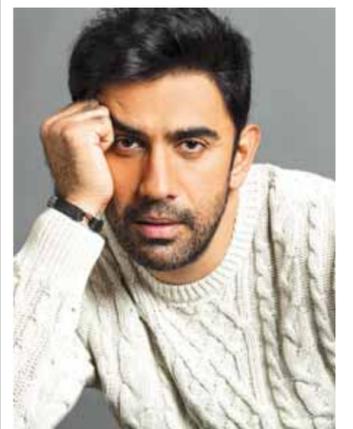


involved into Indic culture than they realised the importance of the pillar. The pillar had become a temple of sorts for a local 'Baba' (holy man) and locals had venerated the pillar, not quite knowing of its historical importance yet that respect ensured that the pillar was not destroyed. That and, possibly, the fact that Madhya Pradesh is not as densely populated as the plains and given its riverside location the pillar was particularly venerated by fishermen. The pillar and the Baba, which is why locals call it the 'Baba Khamba' (Holy Man Pillar), survived and the Baba performed an annual exorcism on a nearby tamarind tree by driving in a nail to predict how the coming year would be. The Baba also agreed to shift from the site and the pillar was largely restored although the annual exorcism ritual still takes place.

What is fascinating is that the pillar is just so incongruous where it lies. There are other broken bits, maybe from other pillars or ancient monuments scattered around the park. And as I walked in, the guard hired by Madhya Pradesh Tourism was about to lock up but he was friendly so he let me in and explained a bit about the pillar and the tree to us. He shared that thanks to the pandemic, the previous year wasn't a good year, maybe 10-20 tourists visited on a regular day, halting off at this pillar on their way between Sanchi and the Udaygiri Caves or some other historical site in this region as central Madhya Pradesh is literally littered with tens of such amazing sites.

This is also a reminder that there is history, sometimes, as interesting as this one. While we visit ancient sites across the world, we must make it a point to recognise our own history like this pillar. We could visit it, all thanks to Hyundai's Great India Drive that lets us explore this great nation.

Sitting on a wheelchair is challenging: Amit



Actor Amit Sadh says sitting on a wheelchair for his role in the web series *Jeet Ki Zid* made him realise the struggle of people who live with such a reality in life.

"Sitting on a wheelchair is no less of a challenge. Being restricted to a chair and having no sense of walking free, is something I could've never imagined. You almost become either invisible or way too visible to the sympathetic eyes," Amit said.

"I cannot imagine the pain people might be going through, but for me sticking to a wheelchair for all that while really made me think of how people struggle around in those. My respect for them has escalated," he added. The series *Jeet Ki Zid* follows the true story of Special Forces officer Major Deep Singh who was left paralysed waist below during the Kargil War, but his relentless attitude helped him bounce back in life. Amit Sadh is cast as the protagonist while Amrita Puri plays his wife.

The series directed by Vishal Mangalorkar also features Sushant Singh, Ali Goni, Mrinal Kulkarni, and Gagan Randhawa.

Heliodorus' Pillar at Vidisha

The 2,000-year-old column documents an important chapter in the history of Takshashila

The town of Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh is most famous for being 'Mamaji's Home' — Mamaji being Shivraj Singh Chauhan, the Chief Minister of the State. Even in a relatively lower population density area, the alleys of Vidisha are narrow and once inside, one would not know whether one is in Madhya Pradesh or a city in the Gangetic plains. Manoeuvring a car inside these crowded streets requires not just the immense skill that a lifetime of driving on narrow Indian streets brings one, but also a yogic sense of patience and calm to stop worrying about handcars, cyclists, scooters or even other cars bumping and grinding against one's own. On this front, the all-new Hyundai i20 that we were driving was a fabulous vehicle.

The reason I was stuck in Vidisha's narrow alleyways was because I wanted to visit the legendary 'Khamba Baba'. As you



cross the Betwa river, on a narrow but modern bridge, to leave the town of Vidisha, having been guided through its *anaj mandi* (grain market), you reach some small hutments, buildings rather than slums, but not necessarily a middle-income area if the ubiquitous cow-dung patties are any indication. There, in the middle of all this, is a small park besides the river. A park with a pillar, that does not seem extraordinary at first. So what is this pillar all about? For one, it is over 2,000-year-old and it celebrates the conversion of Heliodorus, the Ambassador for the Kingdom of Takshashila, one of the many Indo-Greek kingdoms mainly

centred around the region that we know as (undivided) Punjab today. These kingdoms were left behind in the midst of Alexander, The Great's final eastern conquests. Many of his generals, officers and men remained behind, and divided up the territories after his death. I should know all this, because being blessed with the name Kushan, I am named after the ruler of the largest and most successful of the Indo-Greek kingdoms.

Takshashila's king Antialcidas had sent Heliodorus to the court of King Bhagabhadra of Vidisha and upon his arrival, according to the deciphered Brahmi script on the pillar, Heliodorus became a



worshipper of Vishnu. Of course, one should remember that in times past, there was much more religious fluidity than today, particularly given that most polytheistic religions had more similarities than differences.

According to the translation of the Brahmi script on the pil-

lar, it reads: *This Garuda column of Vasudeva (Vishnu), the god of gods, was erected here by Heliodorus, a worshipper of Vishnu, the son of Dion and an inhabitant of Taxila who came as Greek ambassador from the Great King Antialcidas to King Kasiputra Bhagabhadra, the Savior, then reigning prosperously in the fourteenth year of his kingship. Three important precepts when practiced lead to heaven: self-restraint, charity, conscientiousness.*

What is truly amazing about this pillar is that it survived. There must have been hundreds of such pillars across India. Maybe in ancient times, pillars were raised just like foreign dignitaries plant trees nowadays. When it was 'rediscovered' by British archaeologists in the late 1800s, the importance of the pillar was first ignored. It was only as British archaeologists got more

CONVERSATION 60 MINUTES

A KIND SOUL

Actor ANNE HATHAWAY shares that filmmaker NANCY MEYERS is a really warm person who will get down on the floor with you and give you the support you need.

By TEAM VIVA

What was it about *The Intern* that made you want to be a part of it?

Honestly, my in-laws. I was spending some time with them over the holidays and we wanted to go to the movies together but we couldn't find one good film that spoke to all of us. I can recall thinking 'Oh God! This is so sad that we can't find a single film that we can see together.' Then I started thinking of a few hits from the 90s such as all the Cameron Crowe's films... I was like where are such films gone... Literally three days later, this script showed up. So, I said yes to it because I thought it's a film that I can sit and watch with my family. The story fascinated me and it's absolutely a treat to watch.

The director Nancy Meyers is really good at writing and her characters always have a good arc. Tell us about your character, Jules Ostin?

I think one of the best things Nancy does with this film is that she manages to grab some issues that we haven't been talking about. When I read the script, it was a conversation I wanted to be at, the discussion that I wanted to be a part of. The film revolves around my character, of course, and a seventy-year-old widower, Ben Whittaker, (played by Robert De Niro), who has discovered that retirement has become too boring for him. Seizing an opportunity to get back in the game, he becomes a senior intern at an online fashion site, founded and run by Jules Ostin (my character). I loved how Nancy didn't make Jules a tough-cold, unapproachable boss. Although it has been five years, I love reliving the character because I learnt a lot from her. Jules has so many wonderful traits and she just happens to be in a moment where she is overwhelmed and Ben comes in and helps her navigate that moment, but he doesn't navigate for her, she navigates for herself.

Your chemistry with Robert De Niro looks great. How was it working with him?

I had a lovely time working with him.



So much of the chemistry was in the writing. When you take on a job, in the beginning, you don't always know your co-actor well. But by the end of the film's shooting, you literally become their best friends. I can still recall an amazing moment. When we were filming the Facebook scene, which is pretty long, we both actually forgot that we were acting. The process became so natural with him.

You haven't worked with Nancy. What is she like as a director on set?

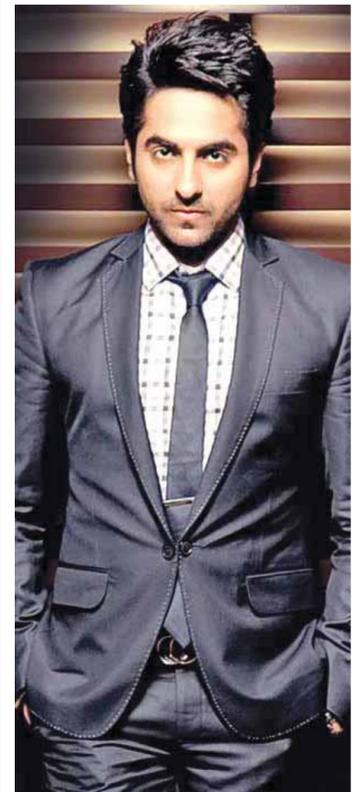
When I think about Nancy, I think about two scenes. One, where I needed to say a line the way she wanted... But it wasn't coming out her way, so we had to shoot that scene a couple of times until I got it right and Nancy was satisfied. And second, we just came back from lunch one day and we got late. There was some-

thing that triggered my bad memory and I got so emotional. I told her that I needed a few minutes to feel okay. So I just sat down on the floor and all of a sudden, I looked up and Nancy was sitting on the floor with me. She had so much pressure from the team but she made sure I was feeling okay. She said, 'take your time, let's just talk.' So, she is both the things. She is the person who will push

you to get the best out of you and will make you say the line until you get it right. She is really a warm person who will get down on the floor with you and give you the support you need. A kind soul she is. She's also the most spectacular writer and makes films that I completely adore.

(The film premieres on Sony PIX on January 31 at 9 pm.)

Films should generate dialogue: Ayushmann



The poster boy of content cinema, Ayushmann Khurrana, opens up about his definition of what a big film is. "I have never chosen a film basis its budget, scale or mounting. For me, these aren't the only important factors for a film to be perceived as big. I have only chosen films basis the bigness and uniqueness of its content. For me, a big film should trigger conversations on a national level and pull people into discussing issues that concern them," says the actor.

For Ayushmann, a big film should generate the right conversations for people to engage with. He says, "A big film should make us ponder, raise important questions and offer solutions to things that matter to people and to society. I have always seen bigness through this lens and I'm happy with how I have selected my films because I have a personal ambition to do the best films that my industry is producing."

As an entertainer, the actor relates to films that are fresh, clutter-breaking and at the same time highly entertaining. He says, "Through my films, I would like to have a conversation about topics that are taboo, that people are not comfortable addressing despite it being important and are a little off-centre. Honestly, I relate to these subjects much more because they are unique, multi-layered and offer something fresh to audiences."

STUDIO CHAT 15 MINUTES



Proud to see response to BAFTA: Rahman

Oscar and Grammy-winning Indian composer AR Rahman is proud to see the response to the BAFTA Breakthrough initiative in India, and says he wants to encourage more individuals from across film, games and television to get involved in the project.

It was announced that British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) has extended the deadline for submission of applications for BAFTA Breakthrough India by two weeks, from January 25 to February 8.

"I am extremely proud to see the response that BAFTA Breakthrough India has received from across the country. We have received applica-

tions from across the nation, proving that talent can be found in all corners of India," said Rahman, who has been roped in as ambassador of the initiative in India.

"We are so pleased with the uptake and I am delighted to see BAFTA extend the deadline to February 8. I encourage talented individuals from across film, games and television to get involved and submit their application for what could be a life changing experience," he added.

The exercise, known as BAFTA Breakthrough initiative, is part of the Academy's year-round effort to support new talent, operating alongside their Awards ceremonies, and is supported by Netflix.

ARTS & CULTURE 30 MINUTES

An exploration into time

Aadyam presents *Bandish 20-20,000Hz*, a musical tale, that focusses on a figurative comparison between the lives of artists from the pre-Independence era to those living on contemporary times

Bandish is a homonym that means being bound but in the Hindustani vocal or instrumental music context it means composition. Aadyam's next and final show of their digital edition, *Bandish 20-20,000Hz*, intertwines these two contrasting meanings, chronicling the journey of yesteryear artistes set against the backdrop of a function commemorating 70 years of India's Independence. In essence, the play crusades through a musical path showing how artists have been bound in more ways than one through history to this day. Be it social media trolls, threats, political bans or social exclusions, artistes have always faced various kinds of 'Bandish' and that is what this play highlights — with a touch of humour, emotion and musical interludes. Being launched on January 26, the play rightly sets the tone for a patriotic Republic Day celebration.

Directed by Purva Naresh, the show was first showcased in 2017 as the country celebrated 70 years of independence. It is a story of two singers, one a *nautanki* singer and the other a *baithak* (classical) singer. Both performers come face to face in the green room before the Independence day function, relive their glory days and have witty anecdotes to share. Anecdotes of escapes from kings' palaces, slapping British officers, getting kidnapped by the local *zamindars* and refuting lovelorn *Nawabs*. Each anecdote is accompanied by a musical and a dance number, and is an exploration into time. It sees things with a revived and perhaps, revised perspective.

The story that thrives on its foot-tapping yet meaningful melodies takes a turn as the male heartthrob of the nation gets banned on social media for an 'anti-national' performance. What happens next is what forms the plot of the play.



Director Purva says, "I am really happy that the shows have been scheduled around Republic Day. What better time to explore the show in the context of freedom.

Is it 74 years really? When did we truly get Independence? When the British announced it or when we gained our constitution? The question is asked by the wisest fool in the play-Munnu. It might be the most fun and musical manner to get to know Independence through Shubha Mudgals compositions including *Charkha Chala Chala Kay*, *Quaifi Azmis Nukoosh-e-Hasrat*, *Naresh Saxena's Bidesia*, among others.

Artistic Director, Shernaz Patel says, "Director Purva, when interviewed a few years ago had said, 'Artistes always have to suffer throughout history.' This statement is as true for the protagonists of the play as it is for artists around the world struggling to make ends meet during this pandemic. Yet, ironically, through-

out history it is art that has nourished our souls. Look at all of us guzzling entertainment through this lockdown. Not just consuming it, but also finding ways to express our inner creativity — taking up artistic hobbies, keeping a diary or simply listening to music... even challenging ourselves with a new recipe (also a form of creative expression). So for me, while steeped in nostalgia, the play makes us reflect on the present. The play has respected the theatricality of the performance, yet pushed the boundaries of possibility that this new hybrid medium offers."

The illustrious cast — Anubha Fatehpuria, Danish Hussain, Harsh Khurana, Hitesh Bhojraj, Ipsita Singh Chakraborty and Nivedita Bhargava essay their roles with an earnest passion and verve as Shubha renders her musical prowess to the play. Performed and recorded live in an empty auditorium, the play evokes emotions of patriotism.

Arm twisting Aussies was the plan

Belief of sticking to five bowlers worked for us, says Arun

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian team management started preparing for Australian tour way before it actually began and the plan laid out by head coach Ravi Shastri fell exactly into place during the gruelling four-match series Down Under. India won the series 2-1 after beating hosts at 'Fortress Gabba' by three wickets on the final day of the tour to retain the Border-Gavaskar trophy which they won on the Australian turf for first time during the 2018-19 series.

As the country was slowly returning to normalcy after the lockdown, India's coaching staff — under the leadership of head coach Ravi Shastri had come up with a plan July onwards to tackle Tim Paine's men during the year-end series.

The idea was to bowl a straight line and make the Australian batsmen struggle on the leg side. Months later, after India's win, the team's bowling coach Bharat Arun was happy that their planning and hard work had paid off.

"Ravi called me sometime in July and we were discussing the Australia tour how we needed to take the off side out of the Australians. We had our own analysis and we felt most of the runs Smith, Labuschagne and most of the Aussie batsmen scored, were from the cut and pull on the off side," the 58-year-old said



India head coach Ravi Shastri, right, and bowling coach Bharat Arun talk to Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur ahead of play on the final day of the fourth Test between India and Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane on Tuesday

on Friday during online media interaction.

"We took cue from the New Zealand attack. When they bowled to Smith, they just attacked his body and he felt very uncomfortable," Arun added.

"Shastri called and said 'I want you to make a plan where we can eliminate their offside. We thought about it and decided that we will attack more on the straighter lines

and have an on side field. It becomes very difficult for the batsman to consistently clear the on side field. That worked for us. We discussed it with Virat, he bought the theory. We used the same thing in Adelaide and then Ajinkya was magnificent from Melbourne. The bowlers adjusted to that beautifully," Arun said.

The Indian team faced many injury challenges during the four-

match contest and Bharat lauded Shastri for having the foresight to retain a few of the limited-overs specialists like Shardul Thakur, Washington Sundar and T Natarajan for the Tests. With India hit by a barrage of injuries during the series, all three ended up playing the Brisbane Test and made useful contributions.

"The Australian tour is a big challenge. Any cricketer who has

toured Australia would know that. It's probably one of the most challenging tours. I think in the Covid times, it was a good move by Ravi Shastri to hold back all the net bowlers as well. After the ODI series, most of them were supposed to go back, but somehow, we thought that in case anything happens to a player, it will be impossible for anyone to come because of restrictions. We said we will manage with everyone and since they were with us for long, it became possible for them to understand what was demanded of them to be successful in Australia," he said.

Even though Sundar and Shardul were retained as net bowlers, the support staff made sure that the two also got to bat in the nets. As it turned out, the duo stitched a 123-run stand for the seventh wicket in the first innings of the Gabba Test that allowed India to fight back in the game.

"Washington, though he was a net bowler, used to bat every day for half an hour. We needed to spend extra hours in the net but we needed to give each and everyone the attention. In the end it paid off," Arun said.

Except for the day-night pink ball Test at Adelaide, India played five specialist bowlers, which has been the norm overseas under Virat Kohli's captaincy.

"...On most occasions, we play five bowlers abroad because to bowl out a team in conditions

abroad demands a lot out of just four bowlers. It's a huge task," he said.

The thought of playing an extra batsman did creep in briefly after the Adelaide debacle but the team stuck to its belief.

"The guiding principle of this team is to be fearless and honest. We don't fear losing games. They teach us a lot of lessons.

"In the last Test there were discussions about playing an extra batsman but we felt that it would have been a negative move and all of us felt the five-bowler theory has worked for us. We knew Washington Sundar is more than a capable bat," said Arun.

The injuries were a setback but at the same time, they did expose India's solid bench strength in the bowling department. Whoever was given an opportunity rose to the occasion.

"If you want India to be doing well sustainably, you need a pool of bowlers who will be rotated time and again so that they stay fresh. Now we are blessed with a great bench strength..."

"This tour has taken a lot out of the boys, but now in future you have seven fast bowlers raring to play for the country.

"With the number of Tests we are going to play — four against England here and five in England, it will be very handy. They will all be rotated and we will make sure the best team is put forward," he said.

Pant will improve gradually as wicketkeeper: Saha

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Rishabh Pant the batsman redeemed himself spectacularly in Australia and his much-criticised wicket-keeping skills are also on the mend, feels senior India stumper Wriddhiman Saha who wants the youngster to be given some breathing space as "no one learns algebra in class I".

Saha, who is considered India's No 1 Test wicketkeeper, said that he does not believe that Pant's heroic show in Australia would close the door for him in the Indian team.

"You can ask him (Pant), we have a friendly relationship and help each other whoever gets into the XI. Personally, there's no conflict with him," Saha said after returning home following the historic Test series win.

"I don't see who is No 1 or 2... Team will give a chance to those who do better. I will con-



Pant batting during a match.

tinue to do my job. Selection is not in my hands, it's up to the management."

Saha was all praise for the 23-year-old Pant, whose 89 not out on the fifth day sealed the match for India at the Gabba.

"No one learns algebra in class I. You always go step by step. He is giving his best and will definitely improve. He has matured and proved himself. In the long run, it augurs well for

the Indian team," he said of Pant who has often been found wanting behind the stumps.

"The way he has shown his intent after being sidelined from his favourite T20 and ODI formats was really exceptional."

Since the Brisbane show, Pant is being compared incessantly with the legendary MS Dhoni but Saha said "Dhoni will remain Dhoni and everyone has his own identity".

I can be called a bowling all-rounder: Shardul

MUMBAI

It was a debut over two years after his actual debut and Shardul Thakur says he took a quantum leap from being just a fast bowler to a bowling all-rounder with his impactful show in India's epoch-making Brisbane Test triumph over Australia.

Thakur snared seven wickets and was India's top scorer in the first innings, striking 67 while batting at No 8. He, along with Washington Sundar, pulled the team out of trouble by conjuring a crucial 123-run stand. The partnership eventually played a key role in the team's three-wicket win.

"Yes, I can be called a bowling all-rounder. I have that ability to bat and even in future, whenever I get my opportunity to bat, I am going to contribute useful runs to the team's total," Thakur, who has seven first-class fifties said.

He could have made it even more momentous at Brisbane with a five-wicket haul but has no regrets on missing out on that as he can't feel happy enough

for fellow pacer Mohammed Siraj, who actually got one.

"No, I don't regret on missing a fiver in the second innings. I mean, it would have been okay if I had taken a fiver but I am really happy for Siraj and I really wished that he should get five wickets, because he was going through a lot of hard time," he said.

The 29-year-old was extremely pleased with his own performance, and said it was special because it came amid tough circumstances and against a strong opposition.

"...It is not easy to play against Australia in Brisbane, everyone knows their record in Brisbane, they hadn't lost a Test match (since) 1988 until this one when we beat them," he said.

"So, to have performed in this game taking seven wickets and also scoring a fifty and being able to majorly contribute in the team's victory, it really makes me happy," added the right-arm speedster, who returned with match-figures of 7/155.



India head coach Ravi Shastri on Friday described rookie pacer Mohammed Siraj as the find of the Australia tour, hailing him for playing a key role in the historic Test series win despite personal loss and racial abuse

Mathews' ton lifts Lanka to 229-4

AFP ■ GALLE

Angelo Mathews' stubborn century took Sri Lanka to 229-4 on the first day of the second Test against England on Friday after early strikes by James Anderson made the home side look vulnerable.

Mathews was at the crease on 107 with Niroshan Dickwella on 19 at the close in Galle as Sri Lanka, who lost the first Test by seven wickets, tried to make best use of a good batting pitch after winning the toss.

Anderson bowled with masterful control throughout and claimed the first three wickets, including opener Lahiru Thirimanne for 43 soon after lunch, that took his Test



Angelo Mathews raises his bat after he completes his hundred

tally to 603 in 157 matches. The 38-year-old Lancashire bowler finished the day with remarkable figures of 3-24 from 19 overs.

Mathews built crucial partnerships, including a 117-run

2nd Test. Day 2
Live from 9:50am IST
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK

stand for the fourth wicket with skipper Dinesh Chandimal who made 52.

Mathews, the former captain, acknowledged that England had put his side under pressure early in the day.

"I got into rhythm in the second innings of the first Test, so I thought if I get a good start, I can make it big," said the 33-year-old all-rounder.

"Even though we are 229 for four, we can't give it away tomorrow. If it is this hot tomorrow, it will start turning.

"We don't know what a good score is — we will try to get as many as we can."

Suarez shines in away win



AFP ■ EBIBAR

Eibar goalkeeper Marko Dmitrovic scored a penalty against Atletico Madrid on Thursday but a brace from Luis Suarez saw the La Liga leaders come from behind to win 2-1 at Ipurua. Dmitrovic drove an early spot-kick past fellow goalkeeper Jan Oblak,

only for Suarez to inspire the comeback, his second also a penalty which he earned himself and then converted in the 89th minute.

Another late victory for Atletico means they pull seven points clear of second-placed Real Madrid and 10 ahead of third-placed Barcelona, with another game in hand over

Barca miss two penalties

Cornella: Ronald Koeman criticised his Barcelona players for missing two penalties on Thursday as they needed extra time to end the cup run of third-division side Cornella and reach the Copa del Rey last 16.

Goals from Ousmane Dembele and Martin Braithwaite in extra time sealed a 2-0 victory for Barca but only after Miralem Pjanic and Dembele had both failed to score penalties in normal time.

both still to come. Suarez moves level with Lionel Messi at the top of La Liga's scoring charts on 11 goals, the Uruguayan increasingly looking like a player that can lead his side to the title.

B'desh secure ODI series



Dhaka: Tamim Iqbal hit a half-century and spinner Mehidy Hasan claimed a career-best four for 25 on Friday as Bangladesh beat a weakened West Indies by seven wickets to seal the three-match, one-day series 2-0. Tamim hit 50 off 76 balls to steer Bangladesh to 149-3 in 33.2

overs after West Indies, missing nearly all their top stars, were all out for 148 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka. Mehidy led the attack while spinner Shakib Al Hasan and pacer Mustafizur Rahman complemented with two wickets each.

Rovman Powell hit 41 off 66 balls while debutant opener Kjoorn Ottley and Nkrumah Bonner made 24 and 20 respectively to boost the West Indies score.

Tamim, who hit three fours and a six, and the experienced Shakib then frustrated the visitors to make sure of victory. Shakib remained unbeaten on 43.

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Jurgen Klopp admitted the end of Liverpool's 68-game unbeaten run at Anfield was a "massive punch in the face" as the Premier League champions crashed to a shock 1-0 defeat against Burnley on Thursday.

Klopp's side were beaten in a home league game for the first time since Crystal Palace won at Anfield in April 2017. Ashley Barnes clinched Burnley's first win at Liverpool since 1974 when he converted an 83rd-minute penalty after being fouled by Reds goalkeeper Alisson Becker.

"It's a massive, massive punch in the face," Klopp said. "We had the ball a lot, created some and didn't finish the situations off.

Liverpool lose at Anfield



"That keeps the game open and then they get the penalty. Alisson told me he didn't touch him, but I didn't see it back. We

lost a game which I think it's actually impossible to lose. But we did it."

Spluttering Liverpool have slipped to fourth place after a second defeat in their last three league games and trail leaders Manchester United by six points.

They have gone five league games without a win and it is seven hours and 18 minutes since they last found the net in the league.

The Reds have gone four league games without scoring for the first time since May 2000, failing with 87 shots since Sadio Mane's 12th-minute strike against West Brom.

Satwik scripts twin win in doubles

Rankireddy combine with Chirag, Ashwini to reach men's, mixed doubles semis



PTI ■ BANGKOK

Error-prone P V Sindhu suffered a demoralising defeat in the quarterfinals while Sameer Verma's gallant fight too ended in agony at the Toyota Thailand Open here on Friday. However, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy claimed twin wins in mixed and men's doubles quarterfinals along with Ashwini Ponnappa and Chirag Shetty to keep India's flag fluttering at the BWF World Tour Super 1000 tournament here.

Thailand Open semis
Live from 9:30am IST
STAR SPORTS 3 & HOTSTAR

Sindhu looked a pale shadow of the player who had won the world championship Gold in 2019 as she committed too many unforced errors to go down 13-21, 9-21 against home favourite Ratchanok Intanon.

In men's singles, Sameer's giant-killing run also came to an end after he squandered a match point to go down 13-21, 21-19, 20-22 to world No 3 Anders Antonsen in a quarterfinal.

With the defeat of Sindhu and Sameer, Indian challenge in singles competition ended in the tournament.

The doubles players, however, gave fans something to cheer as Satwik and Ashwini upstaged world No 6 pair of Peng Soon Chan and Liu Ying Goh of Malaysia 18-21, 24-22, 22-20 after toiling hard for one hour and 15 minutes.

Later in the day, Satwik and Chirag saw off another Malaysian pair of Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi 21-18 24-22 in 37 minutes.