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37 kisan leaders booked for egging on rioters

Medha Patkar, Yogendra Yadav, Darshan Pal, Rakesh Tikait among accused; SIT formed, CCTV footage being scanned to identify mischief-makers

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava on Wednesday said farmers' leaders were involved in the violence in national Capital and those involved in the violence will not be spared and a Special Investigation Team (SIT), including officials from Special Cell, Crime Branch and district police, have been constituted to investigate the incident.

Police has also registered 25 First Information Reports (FIRs) for riots, robbing, attempt to murder and other criminal offences across the city.

The top cop also said by January 25 evening, it became clear that the farmers' unions were not keeping their words as they brought forward the aggressive and militant elements who occupied the stage at protest site and delivered provocative speeches.

The Delhi Police has also named 37 farmer union Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) leaders, including Medha Patkar, Yogendra Yadav, in an FIR registered at Samaypur Badli police station in connection with the violence that took place during a tractor rally by farmers. According to the FIR, in the riot, the protesters had also robbed the official pistol with 10 rounds of ammunition along with two gas gun on Tuesday.

The farmers' leaders named in the FIR includes Medha Patkar, Yogendra Yadav, Darshan Pal, Kulwant Singh Sandhu, Satnam Singh Pannu,



Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava, with Special Commissioner of Police Dependra Pathak, addresses a Press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday PTI

Joginder Singh Ugraha, Surjeet Singh Phool, Jagjeet Singh Dalewal, Balbir Singh Rajewal, Harinder Singh Lakhovai, Gurnam Singh Chanduni and Rakesh Tikait.

Addressing the Press conference at Police Head Quarters (PHQ) on Wednesday evening, the CP said after five rounds of talks with farmers union regarding the tractor parade on Republic Day there was mutual agreement on the parade routes from Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders.

"Police laid down the conditions, which were agreed by the farmers and the first term was a time that was fixed for tractor rally at all border from 12 pm to 5 on. Second condition laid was that tractor march will be led by farmers' union leaders and with every jhatha their leader should lead the rally and tractors should not exceed more than 5,000 in the rally. Police also put a condition

to not bring any kind of weapons. The farmers gave undertaking and agreed on the route," said the CP.

"The protesters from Singhu border started their rally, hours before the time allotted, despite request from police officials they did not stop and broke down the barricades," said the CP.

"Farmer leader Satnam Singh Pannu, who was with farmers from Singhu border was stopped by police at Mukarba chowk after they deviated from the route. Pannu sat on dharna and gave inflammatory speech following which the protesters got agitated and broke past the police installed barricades towards ITO," said the Police Commissioner adding that Darshan Pal Singh, to sat on dharna with other when Pannu delivered the speech.

"The farmers' march from Tikri and Ghazipur started



Farmers during the ongoing protest at Tikri Border in New Delhi on Wednesday PTI

around 8:30 am. The farmers from Tikri border also broke barricades at Nangloi to move ahead towards Red Fort. They overturned trailers and vandalized vehicles," said the CP.

"Farmer leaders were instigating farmers and they were the ones who were refusing to move on the predetermined routes. We have videos which are showing how leaders were instigating farmers. From Ghazipur, many from Rakesh Tikait's team broke barriers and marched forward," he said.

The Police Commissioner also said not a single life was lost as the Delhi Police showed

extreme restraint. "As many as 25 FIRs have been registered so far. Police teams are using the facial recognition system and taking the help of CCTV and video footage to identify the accused. Strict action will be taken against those identified. No culprit will be spared," said the CP.

He said 394 police personnel were injured while 30 police vehicles were damaged in the violence on Wednesday. Six DTC buses were damaged in the violence. Capital's ITO area became the main clashing point where several cops and protesters sustained injuries.

2 farm unions end protest, condemn R-Day violence

STAFF REPORTER ■
GHAZIABAD

A day after the violence during the tractor parade on Republic Day, two farmer unions announced the end of their protest against farm laws. Bharatiya Kisan Union (Bhanu) president Thakur Bhanu Pratap Singh said he was deeply pained by whatever happened during the tractor parade in Delhi on Republic Day.

Sardar VM Singh of All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee said the union is withdrawing from the ongoing agitation as they cannot carry forward a protest with someone "whose direction is something else".

Many farmers' bodies across northern India blamed actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu for Red Fort incident. Senior farmer leader Balbir Singh Rajewal, who has been steering the farmers' agitation since beginning, on Wednesday termed Punjab actor Sidhu and Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Committee leaders Satnam Singh Pannu and Sarwan Singh Pandher as "biggest traitors" giving a call for their boycott in Punjab.

Sidhu, who is in the eye of a storm for egging on protesters to put up a religious flag atop the Red Fort on Republic Day, has been considered by several farm bodies as an "agent" of the Government

Actor-turned-activist Deep blamed for Red Fort incident, farmers term him Centre's agent



Sanyukt Kisan Morcha leaders during a Press conference at Singhu border in New Delhi on Wednesday PTI



Deep Sidhu

saying they did not remove the national flag and had put up the "Nishan Sahib" flag as a symbolic protest.

VM Singh alleged Rakesh Tikait, the national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, who is heading the Ghazipur front, misdirected the movement. He also questioned the committee of 40 people negotiating with the Government.

Continued on Page 11

Farmers cancel Budget day march on Parliament

New Delhi: As cracks began to appear in their ongoing agitation against the agri laws, farmer unions on Wednesday cancelled their planned march to Parliament on Budget day, February 1.

Doors for talks with farmers not closed, says Javadekar

Govt will inform when decision is taken for dialogue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



the unions squarely rejected the Centre's proposal to put three contentious laws on hold.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar also blamed external "forces" for their rigid stand and said no resolution is possible when the sanctity of agitation is lost.

Unlike the last 10 rounds of talks, the 11th round saw both the sides hardening their positions and could not even reach a decision on the next date for the meeting. The Government asked unions to revert by Saturday last in case they agree to the suspension proposal and the talks can continue only thereafter.

Farmer leaders, however, are adamant that they would settle for nothing less than repeal of the laws, which they find pro-corporate, and a legal guarantee for the procurement of crops at Government-fixed minimum support price (MSP).

holding the three farm laws on hold for 1-1.5 years, but the farmers rejected their proposal. No decision has been taken on another round of talks with farmers. He said whatever decisions with regard to talks with farmers are taken, will be disclosed at the right time.

"We have already told you, if there is any change, we will let you know," he said. Asked whether Tuesday's violence was discussed in the meeting of the Union Cabinet, Javadekar said the Cabinet is different from the security committee.

The Government's negotiations with representatives of thousands of protesting farmers hit a roadblock on Friday as

Shah reviews Delhi's security, Opp demands his resignation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Opposition gunning for him for the farmers-led chaos in Delhi on the Republic Day, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday took stock of the security situation and measures taken to ensure peace in the city. Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla and senior officers of the MHA and the Delhi Police attended the meeting.

"The Home Minister reviewed the law and order sit-

uation in Delhi, which witnessed violence during the farmers' tractor rally on Tuesday, an official said.

The high-level meeting decided to take action against all leaders responsible for untoward incidents on Tuesday in the Capital. Delhi Police was directed to register FIRs on the various incidents. The Central

Government has deployed around 4,500 paramilitary troops to assist the Delhi Police in maintaining law and order.

Rapid Action Force personnel have also been repositioned in the national Capital and vigil has been intensified in view of the evolving situation.

Meanwhile, the Congress blamed the BJP-led Central

Government for the violence and vandalism that ensued on the streets of national Capital on Republic Day and demanded resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah for failing to protect Red Fort.

"Union Home Minister Amit Shah is directly responsible for the violence carried out in the name of farmers

protest. His failure to stop the vandalism despite intelligence inputs means he has no right to remain in his position. We demand that he resign from his position immediately," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said at AICC Press conference.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi appealed to the Narendra Modi Government on Wednesday to repeal, what he claimed were, "anti-agriculture" laws.

Continued on Page 11

Lone INLD MLA Abhay Chautala quits Haryana House over farm laws

Chandigarh: Indian National Lok Dal's only representative in Haryana Assembly, Abhay Singh Chautala, on Wednesday resigned as an MLA over the three new Central farm laws. "I decided I cannot sit in the Assembly with those who bring resolutions favouring these laws," Chautala said.



Security personnel stand guard at Red Fort a day after it was stormed by protesting farmers during their tractor march in New Delhi on Wednesday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

SIKHS FOR JUSTICE CALLS FOR SIEGE OF PARLIAMENT

New Delhi: The outlawed Sikhs for Justice is learnt to have released a seven-minute video backing the Red Fort siege and announcing a reward of \$3,50,000 for those who hoisted the Nishan Sahib there. The SFJ has called for a siege of the Parliament when the Budget Session begins. This comes a day after a tractor parade called to protest the agriculture laws.

SC rejects plea to stay Tandav makers' arrest

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday declined to grant interim protection from any coercive action to Ali Abbas Zafar, Director of web series "Tandav", and others seeking quashing of FIRs against them for allegedly hurting religious sentiments of Hindus and issued notices Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and other States on their pleas.

Observing that "freedom of speech and expression is not absolute" and is subject to restrictions, the top court said Zafar, Amazon Prime India head Aparna Purohit, producer Himanshu Mehra, the show's writer Gaurav Solanki and actor Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub may seek bail from courts concerned in the FIRs lodged in connection with the web series.

A bench comprising justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and MR Shah, hearing as many as three separate petitions on behalf of the makers and others connected to the web series, issued notices to the makers and others to appear before the court on Wednesday.

They have sought either quashing or clubbing of the FIRs lodged in several States on various grounds, including that the objectionable scenes have already been removed from the political thriller.

"We cannot use the power under section 482 CrPC (power of courts to quash the criminal case). We are not inclined to grant interim protection," said the apex court at the end of the hearing conducted through video-conferencing.

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Sasikala released from jail after 4 yrs

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■
BANGALORE

V K Sasikala, former general secretary of the AIADMK and aide to late J Jayalalitha, was released after four years from the Parappana Agrahara Central Prison in Bangalore on Wednesday, it was officially announced by the Karnataka Government and her nephew TTV Dhinakaran.

Hectic parleys are underway in Chennai where Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami and his deputy O Panneerselvam are chalking out strategies to counter the moves from Sasikala camp. EPS had made it clear during his trip to the national Capital that Sasikala has no place in the AIADMK. "There are possibilities of former Ministers and MPs joining Sasikala in days to come," said G Satyamurthy specialist in AIADMK matters.

Cinema halls to fill over 50% seats, swimming pools open for all: MHA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday issued new guidelines allowing more capacity in cinema halls and opening up swimming pools for "all" persons. The Ministry also allowed the opening up of all exhibition halls.

The MHA new guidelines said that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry will issue new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for cinema halls to increase the current capacity of 50 per cent to higher seating capacity.

As far as the opening of swimming pools, the Ministry of Sports will issue SOPs for allowing all persons. Currently, only sports persons are allowed to use swimming pools. The Ministry of Commerce is

empowered to formulate SOPs for opening up of exhibition halls.

"Cinema halls and theatres have already been permitted up to 50 per cent of seating capacity. Now they will be permitted to operate at higher seating capacity, for which a revised SOP will be issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in consultation with the MHA.

Continued on Page 11

DELHI REGISTERS 96 COVID-19 CASES, LOWEST IN OVER NINE MONTHS

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 96 fresh Covid-19 cases in a day, the lowest single-day rise in over nine months.

Rana Kapoor held for PMC-linked money laundering

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a second arrest in less than one year, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested former chairman of Yes Bank Rana Kapoor in a money laundering case linked to the Mack Star Group-₹4,300 crore PMC Bank scam case.

Rana Kapoor is the third person to have been arrested in the Mack Star Group-PMC Bank scam case. On January 23, ED had arrested Mehul Thakur and Madan Gopal Chaturvedi in this year. A day ahead of these arrests, the ED conducted raids at ten premises including the residence of former underworld don Bhai Thakur and offices of Viva Group which is controlled by his family.

Rana Kapoor was produced before a PMLA court which remanded in ED custody till January 30.

SC stays HC acquittal order under POCSO on lack of skin touch

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the Bombay High Court order which acquitted a man under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act saying "groping a minor's breast without 'skin to skin contact' cannot be termed as sexual assault".

A bench of Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian stayed the high court order after Attorney General KK Venugopal mentioned the matter.

The top court also issued notice to Maharashtra Government and permitted the AG to file an appeal against

the January 19 verdict of the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court.

"In view of what is stated, we permit the learned Attorney General to file an appropriate petition against the said judgment. In the meantime, we stay the acquittal of the accused in Criminal Appeal...In respect of the offence under section 8 of the POCSO Act. Issue notice to the accused and the State of Maharashtra returnable two weeks," the bench said in its order.

Venugopal, while mentioning the matter before the bench, submitted that the judgment of the high court is "unprecedented" and is likely to set a "dangerous precedent".

Continued on Page 11

PMAY: Yogi transfers ₹2,409 cr into accounts of 3.42 lakh beneficiaries

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sticking to his commitment to providing houses to everyone, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday transferred Rs 2,409 crore into the accounts of over 3.42 lakh beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Urban.

"Roti, kapda aur makaan was barely a slogan in the previous governments, but for the present Central and state government, it is a guarantee. It has become possible only due to the immense support of people," he said.

"Before 2017, UP stood at the 27th position in PMAY and after the BJP government took over in 2017, we worked on a war-footing and the state achieved first rank in three years. As many as 16.82 lakh people in urban areas and more than 23 lakh people in rural areas have benefited from the scheme," the CM said.

"As per target set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the target of housing for all will be

CM for regular programmes at martyrs' memorials

Lucknow (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said programmes should be organised at all the martyrs' memorials of the state at least once a month, so that children may know about their importance. Public participation in these programmes should also be ensured, he said while addressing officials after inspecting Chauri Chaura Shaheed Smarak in Gorakhpur on Wednesday.

He said the police band should also play patriotic tunes once a week at memorials as a tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives for the country. Also reviewing the centenary celebrations of Chauri Chaura freedom struggle commencing on February 4, the CM said that the walls of the memorial should have paintings of martyrs and literature related to Chauri Chaura should be compiled, digitised and published.

The CM directed the officials to send a proposal to the Railway Ministry to develop Chauri Chaura railway station. "Use logo of Chauri Chaura in the official correspondence and honour the families of those connected with the historical event," he said.

The CM said the centenary functions should be celebrated with full grandeur and the inaugural event should be telecast live in the state, he added.

various schemes," he said. Asking the beneficiaries to use the money only for house construction, the CM said that bribery was a culture in the previous governments of Congress, Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party when Rs 85 out of Rs 100 went into the pockets of middlemen and scamsters.

"Now the money directly reaches the beneficiaries. If anyone asks for money, complain to your MP and MLA or at the CM Helpline or Integrated Grievance Redressal System (IGRS) Helpline. Stern action will be taken and property of the person seeking money will be seized," Yogi said. The CM also appealed to public representatives for a weekly review of the houses being constructed under PMAY and ensure that funds given to the beneficiaries are used only for house construction. He also interacted with 10 beneficiaries of Varanasi, Mathura, Ayodhya, Saharanpur and Ghaziabad virtually, and handed over the keys to ten beneficiaries of Gorakhpur.

achieved by 2022, and the happiness of people getting the benefits of the scheme is quite visible. This happiness could have come earlier (during pre-

vious regimes) but the poor were not on their agenda. Today, people are getting the benefits of housing, electricity, LPG, health facilities, etc under

Arvind Sharma likely to get major portfolio in UP govt

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Once termed the eyes and ears of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former IAS officer Arvind Kumar Sharma is now lending his ears to BJP leaders and fellow bureaucrats as speculations are rife that Sharma, who recently became an MLC, is likely to get a heavyweight portfolio in the Yogi Adityanath government. The speculations got credence after Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said in a recent tweet that following request from Sharma, operation of a special train has started from New Delhi and Mau.

Sharma, a Bhumihar by caste, belongs to Mau district of Uttar Pradesh but has worked in Gujarat — and closely with Narendra Modi for over two decades in Gujarat as well as in New Delhi. Before he took voluntary retirement in January, he was secretary in the MSME department, Government of India.

"I got a call and was asked to join the party, and I did,"

Sharma said after filing nomination papers for the legislative council polls. He did not specify who asked him to join the party. But the way he was shepherded in the higher echelons of the party and introduced among senior leaders showed that his entry into BJP and Uttar Pradesh is part of a bigger plan.

Sharma is the second person from Gujarat, after Governor Anandiben Patel, who is close to Modi and has been given a responsibility. Patel, who was former Chief Minister of Gujarat and a minister in Modi's cabinet, was also known as the eyes and ears of Modi. After taking charge as UP Governor, she also started monitoring the Central government projects — indirectly putting Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath under the leash.

Sharma's entry into UP politics may be another attempt to put pressure on Yogi and it has already created a turbulence of sorts. BJP leaders have already started making a beeline outside his room in the guest house to get the prover-

bial aashirvaad. There are speculations that Sharma may be given an important portfolio, possibly the post of deputy chief minister, in the Yogi Adityanath government.

"Modi must have a plan in his mind. He will not bring Sharma to UP just to make him a legislator. He will be given an important post but what will it be is only known to Modi and Yogi," a BJP lawmaker told this reporter.

On January 7, Yogi had a meeting with the prime minister in New Delhi and insiders say that in the meeting, Yogi was informed about Sharma's entry into the state's political scenario. Political leaders have come up with various possibilities. They say Arvind Sharma may become the deputy CM and Dinesh Sharma be made the chairman of Legislative Council. The present incumbent is likely to retire on January 31. Some also believe he may be given the charge of MSME department to ensure successful implementation of employment schemes at village level.

Youth held for raping minor

Lucknow (PNS): A youth was arrested in Ballia for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl, making obscene videos and attempting to force her for religious conversion for marriage, police said on Wednesday. The accused and his father were arrested on Tuesday while they were attempting to escape. The man has been charged with rape and unlawful religious conversion besides being slapped with POCSO Act.

SP Vipin Tada said: "The youth (22) entered the house of a 14-year-old girl on January 11 and raped her. He made a video clip and blackmailed the girl. "On January 13, the girl narrated her ordeal to her parents. Since the accused were influential, family members of the girl could not muster courage to lodge a complaint," the SP said. Finally, a case was registered on Monday following a complaint by father of the victim. "The youth and his father were arrested on Tuesday from near a railway station. Both were produced before a local court which sent them to jail," the SP said.

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I have change my name from Irsad Ahmad to Irsad Ahmad in all future purpose. Irsad Ahmad S/o Jabbar Add-Miyantola Jahanabad Fatehpur.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from ASTITVA GUPTA TO ASTITVA S/o Gajendra Kumar Gupta in all future purpose, R/o 2048 - Patel Kunj, Gail Gaon, Dibiyaapur, Auraiya.

सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मैंने अपने पुत्र जयशंकर सिंह बत्स का नाम बदलकर प्रोतेश बत्स रख लिया है शेष में उसे प्रोतेश बत्स के नाम से जाना वह पहचाना जाए। प्रोतेश बत्स पुत्र विजय प्रताप सिंह, निवासी - डी-704 सरस्वती अपार्टमेंट, गोमतीनगर विस्तार लखनऊ।

NOTICE

I Devendra Pratap Singh S/o Late Mr. Krishna Pal Singh H.N. 18/284, Indira Nagar, Lucknow declare that in my son Aditya Pratap Singh 10th class marksheet/certificate index no. 1185238/012 and no. TF-20114055 year 2018 and class 12th class marksheet/certificate Index no. 2201807/009 no. BN 60071008 year 2020 from St. Dominic Sovia School Lucknow my name is wrongly mentioned as D.P. Singh. My correct name is Devendra Pratap Singh and same is to be corrected in marksheet and certificate also.

ED files money laundering case against BSP MLA

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a money laundering case against Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA Vinay Shankar Tiwari and his associates in connection with an alleged fraud of over Rs 750 crore against a consortium of banks led by Bank of India (BoI), official sources said on Wednesday.

The Central probe agency's Lucknow zonal office has filed an ECIR or the enforcement case information report under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act against the MLA from Chillupar (Gorakhpur) and Gangotri Enterprises, a company based in the state capital. Tiwari (54) is the son of a former minister and strongman from Gorakhpur, Hari Shankar Tiwari.

The ED studied a CBI FIR of October last year filed against Tiwari, his wife Rita and Gangotri Enterprises among others to register its ECIR, the sources said. The CBI had also carried out raids in Lucknow and Noida after filing this complaint. The alleged fraud perpetrated against the BoI-led consortium of banks involves Rs 754.25 crore.

According to official sources, at least four instances that led to the alleged diversion and misappropriation of the bank funds are under the ED's radar. Gangotri Enterprises invested in the group company without major capital contribution from the promoters' side. It created double charges

"THE COMPANY HAS NOT ROUTED RECEIPTS THROUGH TRA (TRUST AND RETENTION ACCOUNT) WHICH IS ALSO ONE OF THE CONDITIONS TO AVAIL OF THE LOAN FACILITIES"

in fixed assets, which means that the company mortgaged the same property for availing multiple loans, the ED complaint said.

It alleged that the accused company mortgaged agricultural land to avail of loans but did not change it to non-agricultural land, one of the conditions for availing the loans, despite repeated reminders from the bank.

"The company has not routed receipts through TRA (trust and retention account) which is also one of the conditions to avail of the loan facilities," it alleged.

The sources said that the agency is now identifying movable and immovable properties of the accused for possible attachment under PMLA once the primary probe finds money laundering and linked financial irregularities. The role of the MLA, his family members, associates and bank officials will also be probed and they are expected to be examined in the coming days, the sources said.

स्वच्छ सर्वेक्षण 2021

आप सभी नगरवासियों को 72वें गणतंत्र दिवस की हार्दिक बधाई व शुभकामनाएँ

स्वच्छ सर्वेक्षण 2020 में नगर मीरजापुर की रैंक 198 थी, इस वर्ष स्वच्छ सर्वेक्षण 2021 में नगर मीरजापुर को उत्कृष्ट स्थान दिलाने के लिए नागरिक प्रतिक्रिया (Citizen Feedback) अवश्य दें

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Covid vaccination: Focus on better turnout today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as 14,500 health workers are expected to be vaccinated at the 43 centres in Lucknow on Thursday. District immunisation officer MK Singh said that 125 persons will be vaccinated at every booth, as per the final micro-plan.

"Covaxin shots will be given at the three centres where it was administered in the previous phase — Civil, Lok Bandhu and Rani Laxmi Bai hospitals. Covishield will be given at the rest of the vaccination centres."

Singh said that vaccines were sent to 18 cold chain points from the District Vaccine Centre on Wednesday and will be sent to the 43 vaccination centres.

The additional centres this time are Mayo, Chandan, St Joseph, Charak, Fatima and Midland hospitals apart from Vivekananda Polyclinic Institute of Medical Sciences. Singh said that there are 700

hospitals in the district and they have clubbed them together because they have to vaccinate 125 persons at each booth. Singh said they are also trying to ensure the presence of Anganwadi workers this time as their absence last time had impacted the turnout. Regarding the drive on January 29 and February 4, he said the modalities are being finalised.

Nodal officer for Covid immunisation at KGMU Dr Nishant Verma said they are trying to ensure better turnout of beneficiaries this time. "The vaccination will be held at 15 booths and 1,875 beneficiaries will be covered. Fifty-six per cent of the health workers were vaccinated in the first round on January 22 and 68 per cent in the second round on January 22. However, many of the persons were not well and others were out of station. This time, we expect a better turnout," he said.

Chief medical superintendent at Rani Laxmi Bai

Hospital Dr Anil Arya also said that efforts have been made for a better response this time.

Meanwhile, SGPGI director Dr RK Dhiman said there are only 27 Covid patients at the hospital at present. "Now, we should again develop the Rajdhani Covid hospital as a non-Covid facility," he said.

Meanwhile, 42 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Lucknow on Wednesday while 70 patients recovered. The fresh cases included four each from Sushant Golf City, Chowk, Madiaon and Cantt. In the state, 173 persons tested positive, including four each in Kanpur, Ghaziabad & Gautam Buddh Nagar, three in Varanasi and 14 in Meerut, taking the tally to 5,99,376. There were four deaths in the state, including two in Lucknow and one each in Prayagraj & Rampur. As many as 333 patients recovered, taking the recovery figures to 5,84,372. There are 6,368 active cases in the state.

Day temp plunges by 7.9 deg C

Lucknow (PNS): The mercury plummeted by 7.9 degree Celsius as the city recorded the day maximum temperature at 16.3 degree Celsius. Dense fog added to the chill. MeT director JP Gupta said the lowest visibility was recorded in the morning and it was 50 metres. "The fog is due to moisture in the air and though the north-westerly winds are blowing, the speed is not very high," he said. The local forecast is mod-



erate to dense fog in the morning and clear skies thereafter. The maximum and minimum

temperature is expected to be around 17 degree Celsius and 7 degree Celsius, respectively. The weather is most likely to be dry over the state. There is warning of dense to very dense fog at a few places in the morning over east UP and dense fog at isolated places in the morning over west UP. Cold day to severe cold day conditions very likely at a few places over east UP and isolated places over west UP.



LMC field officer commits suicide

Lucknow (PNS): A field officer of Lucknow Municipal Corporation ended his life at his rented accommodation in Madiaon on Wednesday afternoon. Identified as Dharmendra Yadav (26) of Sarojininaray, he was staying in the flat of Suresh Kumar Dixit of Preeti Nagar near Anna market. Around 2 pm, Dharmendra hanged himself from the ceiling.

The police said a suicide note was recovered from the room and Dharmendra felt guilty after beating up his live-in partner. Meanwhile, a 28-year-old man, identified as Rajesh Chauhan of Mau, attempted to end his life by jumping into Indira Canal in Chihat on Wednesday morning. However, he was rescued by a police team.

ABSCONDING IPS OFFICER SURRENDERS IN COURT

Declared as an absconder by police, IPS officer Arvind Sen on Wednesday surrendered before a Lucknow court in a criminal case in which a Madhya Pradesh businessman was duped in the infamous scam of Animal Husbandry department. The court remanded him to judicial custody till February 9. Arvind Sen is slated to retire from the police services on January 31. On January 6, the police had announced a cash reward of Rs 50,000 for information leading to the arrest of the suspended DIG who had been on the lam since his name figured in the multi-crore tender scam in the Animal Husbandry department.



Man blackmailing girls by hacking into private data nabbed by police

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An accused was held on Tuesday for blackmailing girls after accessing photo galleries of their mobile phones and their private chats. He was identified as Vinit Mishra of Shahjahanpur.

The Lucknow police commissionerate issued an alert asking people not to click any unknown link on their social media accounts or share their email IDs and passwords.

It surfaced that Vinit hacked

photo galleries and private chats of 300-400 girls across the state and threatened to upload the same on social media, if not given money.

His arrest came after a girl approached the cyber cell for help. She said an unidentified girl was demanding money from her on Facebook and threatening to share her private photos on social media. The police worked on the case and it surfaced that the messages were sent by Vinit. Police worked on the case and nabbed him. Vinit told the police

that he learnt hacking after watching a video on YouTube.

He said he used to generate an internet link which he would send different girls. He said he would also send messages along with a link, stating that it contains objectionable photos which can be verified by clicking on it. Several girls used to click the link and share their email IDs and passwords. Their accounts were hacked as a result and the accused would have access to the private photos/videos and chats which e used to download in his

laptop.

The accused admitted to extracted a huge sum of money from different girls and that his laptop contains videos/photos and chats of 300-400 girls.

The police recovered the data and sent the same to Forensic Science Lab. They said it would be included in the investigation after the report is obtained. The police recovered a laptop, an ATM card, two SIM cards and two mobile phones from the possession of the accused.

पंचायती राज विभाग द्वारा संचालित की जा रही योजनाओं का संक्षिप्त विवरण

- स्वच्छ भारत मिशन (ग्रा0) के अन्तर्गत 02 अक्टूबर, 2014 से अबतक 287902 व्यक्तिगत शौचालयों का निर्माण कर जनपद को (809 ग्राम पंचायतों, 1874 ग्रामों) खुले में शौच से मुक्त घोषित किया जा चुका है।
 - ओ0डी0एफ0 के स्थायित्व हेतु गरीब कल्याण रोजगार अभियान के अन्तर्गत 809 ग्राम पंचायतों में सामुदायिक महिला एवं पुरुष शौचालय का निर्माण किया जा रहा है जिसके सापेक्ष 734 सामुदायिक शौचालयों का पूर्ण रूप से निर्माण कर भारत सरकार की वेबसाइट पर फोटो अपलोड किया गया है जिसका प्रतिशत 90.73 है तथा 401 सामुदायिक शौचालयों को रखरखाव एवं संचालन हेतु स्वयं सहायता समूह की महिलाओं को हस्तान्तरित किया जा चुका है।
 - ओ0डी0एफ0 के स्थायित्व हेतु बेसलाइन सर्वेक्षण फेज-2 के अन्तर्गत 7516 व्यक्तिगत शौचालयों के निर्माण का लक्ष्य शासन द्वारा निर्धारित है। सर्वेक्षण के उपरान्त शारान से प्राप्त निर्देश के अनुसार शौचालय का निर्माण कराया जायेगा।
 - स्वच्छ भारत मिशन (ग्रा0) के अन्तर्गत उत्कृष्ट कार्य करने पर प्रदेश की मात्र एक प्रधान श्रीमती पुष्पा देवी ग्राम पंचायत गोगांव विकास खण्ड छानवे, जनपद मीरजापुर को मा0 प्रधानमंत्री जी के कर कर्मलों द्वारा 11 फरवरी 2019 को कुरुक्षेत्र, हरियाणा में स्वच्छ शक्ति-2019 पुरस्कार से सम्मानित किया गया।
 - ग्राम पंचायतों की धनराशि से कायाकल्प अभियान के अन्तर्गत पंचायत भवन, आंगनबाड़ी केन्द्र का कायाकल्प कराया जा रहा है एवं विद्यालयों में आधारभूत सुविधाओं को सुदृढ़ करने हेतु कार्य कराया जा रहा है जिसमें 1757 विद्यालयों में से 1567 विद्यालयों में कोटा स्टोन, इण्टरलाकिंग, बाउण्ड्रीवाल, बालक एवं बालिकाओं हेतु अलग-अलग शौचालय एवं मूत्रालय तथा 761 विद्यालयों में समरसेबल एवं बालिका विद्यालयों में इन्स्तीनेरेटर की व्यवस्था की गयी है।
 - गरीब कल्याण रोजगार अभियान के अन्तर्गत जनपद में 113 पंचायत भवन निर्माण / मरम्मत का लक्ष्य है जिसके सापेक्ष 51 पंचायत भवनों का निर्माण / मरम्मत कर भारत सरकार की वेबसाइट पर फोटो अपलोड किया जा चुका है।
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मीरजापुर

नगर पंचायत समधन के समस्त नागरिकों को गणतंत्र दिवस की हार्दिक शुभकामनायें

नागरिकों से अपील

01- सूझ एवं नीला कूड़े का संग्रहण पर ही प्रयत्न करें।
02- कूड़े में रीछ न डालें।
03- नगर को स्वच्छ एवं सुन्दर रखने में अपना सहयोग करें।
04- सड़कों एवं गलियों में अशुभ न डालें।
05- नगर पंचायत के कारों का समय से भुगतान करें।
06- जल अनुपयोग हेतु ट्यूबका टुकवयोग न करें।
07- घर से बाहर निकलने पर नगरका प्रयोग अवश्य करें।
08- सार्वजनिक स्थलों पर मीठ न डालें।/सार्वजनिक बसुओं को न घुसें।
09- नव शिक्षण योजना सविधि योजना के तहत अपना सहीचरण कराएं।
10- जल अनुपयोग है, श्रम निर्माण के समय जल संयंत्र वंच अवश्य लगायें।

कोरोना से बचें
हाथ धोएं बार बार
सही से जलक पारवें
सिक्काट हो गन की दूरी

अपने नगर को नं0 1 बनाने के लिए संद्वयद मोबाइल नं0 SS2021 एप डाउनलोड करें।

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मौनू सिंह
अधिसाधी अधिकारी

समस्त सभासदगण नगर पंचायत समधन-कन्नौज

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank e-Auction

इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD

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Sale notice for sale of immovable properties [See proviso Rule 8 (6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank (e-Allahabad Bank), Zonal Office: 10/379 Rameni (Tarauns), Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh - 210301 as Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 26.02.2021, for recovery of Bank's dues from Borrowers and Guarantors to the Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower/ Branch/Phone No.	Name of Guarantors	Name of Property owner/Mortgagor	Bank's Dues	Details of Property	Reserve Price	Earnest Money	Details of the encumbrance known to the Bank
1.	M/s Vasudev Anand and Company Prop:- Shri Pradeep Kumar Anand	Shri Pradeep Kumar Anand S/o Late Vasudev Anand	Shri Pradeep Kumar Anand S/o Late Vasudev Anand	Rs. 12,96,183.00 + interest till the date of realization and costs, charges and expenses	All that Part and Parcel of Property No: 77/1, at Mohalla: Sikanderpura-1, Ward No: 14, Rath, District: Hamirpur -210431, U.P. (East & West: 20 Ft, North & south: 08 Ft, Measuring 160 Sq Ft) Sale Deed No: 221 dated 15/02/2017 Boundaries as per Sale Deed: North: Building of LIC Rath South: Broad Road East: Shop of Sanjay Kumar Agrawal West: Shop of Sanjay Kumar Agrawal	Rs. 10.60 Lacs	Rs. 1.06 Lacs	-
2.	M/s Sushil Kumar Anand Prop:- Shri Vinay Kumar Anand	Smt. Shruti Anand W/o Shri Vinay Kumar Anand	Smt. Shruti Anand W/o Shri Vinay Kumar Anand	Rs. 27,00,522.00 + interest till the date of realization and costs, charges and expenses	All the Part and parcel of the property consisting House No. 75 (2014 to 2019), at Mohalla Kot Bazar, Kasba Rath, Distt Hamirpur, U.P. at Mohalla:- Miyanpura, Front of Hotel Ashray, Kasba:- Rath, District Hamirpur- 210431, U.P. Within the registration at SRO Rath, Hamirpur Measurement as East to West:- 20 Ft and North to South:- 30 Ft Total Area: 600 Sq Ft (55.76 Sq M) Boundaries: North: Main Road South: House of Annu Ansar East: Narrow street (Gali) West: Animal House of Pawan Soni	Rs. 33.60 Lacs	Rs. 3.36 Lacs	-

Date & Time of submission of process Compliance form & EMD - 24.02.2021 upto 4 P.M. at and Date & Time of e-auction 26.02.2021 from 10.00 AM - 4.00 P.M. with unlimited extension, with Bid incremental Amount. Rs. 10000/-

For further details and Terms & Conditions Contact: Rajneesh Kumar (Auth. Officer) Mo. No. 05282-224660 e-mail:- zohamirpur@indianbank.co.in

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Date: 27.01.2021 Place: Hamirpur (UP) Authorized Officer, Indian Bank

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'Rashtra dharma paramount'



CM Yogi Adityanath speaking during the R-Day programme at his official residence on Tuesday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Calling to shun discrimination on all grounds, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that *rashtra dharma* is paramount and should be kept above everything else. "Our constitution does grant us the fundamental rights but there is a provision of fundamental duties. As citizens, we must not forget that both go together," the CM said while speaking at the 72nd Republic Day celebrations in Lucknow on Tuesday. "The country has a rich diversity of caste and religion. People follow different worship methods, food habits, living and costumes depending on their faith and religion but despite the diversity, the entire country is tied in a thread of unity because of the spirit of constitution," Yogi said. He further said that UP has strongly believes that UP has

immense potential to be self-reliant and it would continue to make 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' campaign a success. "Due to a better environment of security and safety, not only has the confidence of the common man increased, but the possibilities of extensive investment and employment opportunities are also expanding in the state," the CM said. He said that after agriculture, the MSME sector provides the most employment opportunities and special attention was given to this sector to accommodate workers in the industries. In the current financial year, over 7.15 lakh new units were given loans of more than Rs 24 crore while loans of more than Rs 11 crore were given to about 4.37 lakh existing MSME units. Due to these efforts, over 25 lakh employment opportunities were created

in the MSME sector. "It is due to the result of the timely decisions of the PM that India is moving forward with confidence to overcome this global challenge. India is the only country that has prepared two Covid-19 vaccines," the CM said, adding that while the world's biggest vaccination programme started in the country on January 15, vaccination of health workers in the first phase is in progress. Despite being a state with a population of 24 crore, the state has set a standard in Covid-19 management and the WHO appreciated the UP model to contain and control the spread of coronavirus. Invoking all those who contributed to India's freedom, he called upon people to take pledge to make Uttar Pradesh the most developed state in the country and remain a fore-runner in all fields.

'Ayodhya set to become potent religious dot on global tourism map'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The roar of the high-decibel mortar-spraying machines in the ancient town of Ayodhya has, for the time being, drowned the chiming of bells from hundreds of temples and 'Jai Shree Ram' greetings. However, Ayodhya, the birth place of Lord Rama, is set for a change after the Supreme Court verdict in favour of the Ram Temple construction. In the next three years, the temple town is all set to become a potent religious dot on the global tourism map. These are some of the observations made by Hemant Sharma in his 10-chapter-book, which is yet to be formally released and has new additions as compared to the Hindi version 'Yudh Main Ayodhya', which was released by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and two Union ministers. After his first visit to Ayodhya since the Ram temple's foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, Sharma said his book is titled 'Ayodhya-A Battleground'.

Sharma, who has covered Ayodhya developments since the unlocking of the disputed place to the mosque demolition, said: "The Ram temple symbolises India's radical shift towards illiberal majoritarianism, which runs on the idea of maintaining Hindu supremacy in the country. The resurrection of Ayodhya's exalted status and keeping the promise of building the Ram temple at the Ramjanmabhoomi has brought affiliation to its future and the role in reconnecting youths to their roots." "Millions of Hindus across the world have their eyes fixed on Ayodhya today. At the same time, I must commend the Muslims for living up to the 'unity within diversity' nature of our country and for letting bygones be bygones in the hope of a unified future," the author said. His observations are close to the ground reality as the temple town is now all set to be the Vatican of east. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has already sanctioned a new Ram Setu that will connect the lakes of Shabri Vatika to Ashok Vatika. The Shri Ram International Airport has been fast-tracked as Rs 640 crore have already been released while another sum of Rs 647 crore has also been allotted to build the 251-meter Lord Ram statue with a digital museum underneath. This year, the country's biggest theme park will come up on a 100-acre land in Ayodhya having a simulated version of the Ramayana. "The door has opened for a long forgotten cultural fountainhead to send India's gestalt across the oceans to interact with other world cultures. With the consecration of the temple in Ayodhya, another long exile of Lord Ram has come to an end. The next focus will be on Ram Rajya," Sharma said.

YOUTH KILLED IN ROAD MISHAP

Lucknow (PNS): A youth was killed in a road mishap in Banthra on Monday night. The deceased was identified as Sandeep (24) of Bhatganj locality in the area. He worked as the helper of an earthmover driver. His family suspected foul play in the incident. Reports said Sandeep left for his employer's house to collect pending wages on Monday night. "We were told that Sandeep was hit by a speeding car, the number of which was identified by police later, in Gudauli village and he died on the spot,"

deceased's father Nanhel stated in the FIR. Police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigation. Meanwhile, a group of men attacked a youth over some petty issue in Chinhat on January 24 morning. Reports said that Raunak of New Panchwati Colony in the area, along with his mother and other family members, was basking in the sun when his rival Rishi reached the house along with three persons, including a woman. They beat up Raunak and other family members before fleeing the scene.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ

E-Procurement Tender Notice No. 21/01 Dt. 21.01.2021

On behalf of the President of India, Dr. Divisional Material Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj, invites the E-Procurement Tenders.

S.N.	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	EMD (₹)	Tender Opening Date
1	19215040	Cast steel bogies complete as per RDSO Drg. No. CONTR 9404, S-2 Alt. 7 or latest conforming to specification No.-CONTR-LCCF-20 C 96 Rev.2 with amendment No.1 of Feb. 2010 or latest for BLC wagons as per attached drawing in pdf.	10 Nos.	71680/-	15.02.2021
2	19206327	Tool kit Bag as per Drg. and specification Length-14.5 inch, width-6.5 inch Height-14.5 inch. made by Nylon 1680, Black, Nos.	3046 Nos.	39730/-	15.02.2021

Note: 1. The complete information of above E-Procurement Tenders are available on IREPS website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website alongwith Class-III Digital Signature Certificates issued by CCA under IT Act -2000. 3. Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form / letter head if attached by vendors shall be straightway ignored and shall not be considered. 4. Documents being attached should be signed on their body. 5. Allocation for "Cost of Drawing" is Z-650 and for "Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)" is Deposit Misc. store-00844517. The above tender notice has been uploaded on <http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in>. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the IREPS website may be approached.

115/21 FA
North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in North Central Railway@CPRONCR

ARYAVART BANK आर्यावर्त बैंक

(A Joint Undertaking of Govt. of India, U.P. Govt. & Bank of India)

Regional Office: Lucknow, Aryavart Bhawan, 569/20/K/1, Sneh Nagar, V.I.P. Road, Opp. Awadh Hospital, Alambagh, Lucknow

Possession Notice Under Rule-8(1) (for Imovable Properties)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized officer of ARYAVART BANK, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the securities Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand notice in the account mentioned hereunder on the dates mentioned before the names calling upon the borrower and guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notices along with interest within 60 days from the date of receipts said notices. The borrower/legal heirs of borrower and guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notices are hereby given to the Borrower/legal heirs of borrower and guarantor in particular and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the possession of the properties described here below in exercise of power conferred on him under sub-section 13(4) of the Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned against each property. The borrower/legal heirs of borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealing with the under noted property will be subject to the charge of ARYAVART BANK for the amount with interest and other charges etc. thereon. The Borrower's/Guarantors attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Details of Properties whose possession has been taken are as follows:-

Name & Address of the Borrowers/Guarantors/Branch	Description of the properties	Amnt. due as per demand notice Date Demand Notice
Borrower:- (1) Mr. Vikas Kharey S/o Late Hari Kishan Kharey (2) Mr. Adarsh Kharey S/o Late Hari Kishan Kharey (3) Mr. Vikas Kharey S/o Late Hari Kishan Kharey & Mr. Adarsh Kharey S/o Late Hari Kishan Kharey Boundaries:-East-Road 20 ft wide, West- Arraji Seller, North-Road 20 ft wide, South-Plot no.26A Area-111.524 Sq.mt	Residential Property-Plot no. 26, Khasra no. 2101 Part Para Ward, Alamnagar Lucknow, As Per Sale Deed Dated-19.02.2014, Owner- Mr. Vikas Kharey S/o Late Hari Kishan Kharey & Mr. Adarsh Kharey S/o Late Hari Kishan Kharey Boundaries:-East-Road 20 ft wide, West- Arraji Seller, North-Road 20 ft wide, South-Plot no.26A Area-111.524 Sq.mt	Rs. 6,22,488.54 + Interest & other Expenses 31.10.2020 25.01.2021
Borrower:- Mr. Kamal Singh S/o Mr. Kripal Kumar Singh R/o 46, Nayak Nagar, Faizullaganj, Sitapur Road, Lucknow-226024 Distt-Lucknow Branch-Gudamba	Residential Property-Plot No. 15 situated at Khasra No. 503, Ganeshpur, Rehmanpur Pargana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow, As Per Sale Deed Dated-16.02.2005, Owner- Mr. Kamal Singh S/o Mr. Kripal Singh Boundaries:-East-Land Deegar, West-Road 20 Ft. wide, North- Arraji Private Plot No-16, South-Arraji Private Plot No-14 Area-1050 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 11,69,822.32 + Interest & other Expenses 15.10.2020 25.01.2021
Borrower:- M/s Suman Mini Rice Mill, Prop. Mrs. Suman Jaiswal W/o Sanjay Jaishwal, Lucknow-226303 Distt-Sankhuan Branch-Samesi	Property-Shops situated at Gata No.1521 minj of Khata No.2103 at village-Samesi, Pargana & Tehsil Mohaniganj Distt-Lucknow, As Per Sale Deed Dated-06.10.2005, Owner-Mr. Suman Jaiswal W/o Mr. Sanjay Kumar Jaiswal Boundaries:-East-Sampah Marg, West- Canal, North-Khet Bhagauti, South-Khet Pappu Area-1716 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 7,77,806.00 + Interest & other Expenses 17.11.2020 25.01.2021

Date : 28.01.2021 Place : Lucknow Authorised Officer

ARYAVART BANK आर्यावर्त बैंक

(A Joint Undertaking of Govt. of India, U.P. Govt. & Bank of India)

Regional Office: Lucknow, Aryavart Bhawan, 569/20/K/1, Sneh Nagar, V.I.P. Road, Opp. Awadh Hospital, Alambagh, Lucknow

Demand Notice

Notice Under Section-13(2) of The Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. (SARFAESI ACT.)

Authorized officer, Aryavart Bank, Regional Office - Lucknow, have issued Demand Notice under Section-13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 through Registered/Speed post. The contents of the same are interalia the defaults committed by you in the payment of outstanding amount including principal interest and other charges etc. The outstanding dues are mentioned here-in-below:

Name & Address of the Borrowers/Legal Heirs/ Guarantors/Branch	Description of the properties	Date of Demand Notice	Amount of Notice
Borrower-(1) Mrs. Basukin Nisha W/o Mahboob Ali, Plot No. 91B, Kanti Nagar, Kanak City, Habibpur, Lucknow-226017 (2) Mr. Mahboob Ali S/o Kareem, Plot No. 91B, Kanti Nagar, Kanak City, Habibpur, Lucknow-226017	Residential Property-Plot No. 91B, Minj Khasra No. 590 situated at village-Coochhar, Pargana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow, As Per Sale Deed Dated 2/9/2010, Owner- Mrs. Basukin Nisha W/o Mahboob Ali Boundaries:-East-Arraji Seller, West-Arraji Seller, North-Arraji Seller, South-Road 15 Ft Wide Area-37.17 sq. mt	08.01.2021	Rs. 1,12,587.20 + Interest & other Expenses
Guarantors-(1) Mr. Pawan Kishor Saini S/o Awadh Kishor, 23, New Haiderganj, Aman Vihar, Lucknow-226003 (2) Mr. Anwar Ali S/o Munwar Ali, Sangam City, Malpur Para, Lucknow-226026 Branch-Rajajipuram Branch	Residential Property-Plot No. 2538 out of Khasra No. 495, situated at Baraura, Hussain Bari, Lucknow, As Per Sale Deed Dated-17.09.2002, Owner-Mr. Pawan Kishor Saini S/o Awadh Kishor, 23, New Haiderganj, Aman Vihar, Lucknow-226003	08.01.2021	Rs. 1,64,349.60 + Interest & other Expenses
Borrower-(1) Mr. Sattar S/o Shamsher, New Colony, Fareedpur, Jehita, Near Sunnise School, Lucknow-226017 (2) Mr. Neelam Tiwari W/o Dwarika Tiwari, 544/1943, Baraura, Hussain Bari, Lucknow-226003 Branch-Rajajipuram Branch	Residential Property-Plot No. 252 West-Plot No. 254, North-Road 15 ft. wide, South-Plot No. 253A Area-1050 Sq. Ft.	08.01.2021	Rs. 2,19,153.02 + Interest & other Expenses
Borrower-Mr. Jalees Ahmad S/o Anees Ahmad, 543/492/2, Sangam City, Malpur Rajajipuram, Lucknow-226017	Residential Property- One kita plot min khasra No.487 situated at Malpur Ward Haiderganj, Lucknow, As Per Sale Deed, Dated-03-12-2014, Owner- Mr. Jalees Ahmad S/o Anees Ahmad Boundaries:-East-Arraji Deegar, West-Road 15 Ft wide, North- Plot Shahjahan, South-Plot Kaniza Khatoun Area-46.468 sq. mt	08.01.2021	Rs. 1,85,915.30 + Interest & other Expenses
Borrower-(1) Mr. Krishna Sharma S/o Saik Ram Sharma, 548/v-632, Vikram Nagar, Ashram Marg, Manak Nagar, Lucknow-226017 (2) Mr. Muneswar Lal Sharma S/o Jadunath Sharma, 548/v-632, Vikram Nagar, Ashram Marg, Manak Nagar, Lucknow-226017 Branch-Khushhalganj Branch	Residential Property- House built on Plot No.40-A, Part of Khasra No. 427 minj, Village-Devpur, Ward- Khesri Khera, Pargana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow, As Per Sale Deed, Dated-06.04.2004, Owner-Mr. Harinam Sharma S/o Jadunath Sharma Boundaries:-East-Plot Samiti, West-Road 15 Ft. Wide (Samiti), North-Plot Samiti, South-Plot Samiti Area-62.732 Sqm	22.12.2020	Rs. 1,48,267.00 + Interest & other Expenses
Borrower- Mr. Neeru S/o Shri Krishna, Plot No.4, Sikandarpur, Inayat Ali, Bahadurpur (Beniganj), Pahadpur Chauraha, Lucknow-226021	Residential Property- Plot No. A-4, Khasra No. 271 minj, Village-Sikandarpur Inayat Ali Ward-Jankipuram/Pargana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow, As Per Sale Deed, Dated-08-20-2012, Owner-Mr. Neeru S/o Shri Krishna	17.12.2020	Rs. 1,48,267.00 + Interest & other Expenses
Guarantors-(1) Mr. Abdul Kalam S/o Mohd. 3/851, Sec-H, Jankipuram, Lucknow-226021 (2) Mr. Bhusi Prsada Pal S/o Lutwan Pal, Bahadurpur, Pahadpur, Kanchna Bihari Marg, Beniganj, Lucknow-226021 Branch-Gudamba Branch	Residential Property- Plot No. A-3, North- Arraji Samiti, South-Road 20 Ft. wide Area-111.524 Sqm	17.12.2020	Rs. 1,48,267.00 + Interest & other Expenses

Further with reasons, we believe that you are avoiding the service of said Demand Notice issued under the Act hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of demand notice, as required u/s-13(2) of said Act. The Rule-3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are hereby called upon to pay Aryavart Bank, within a period of 60 days from the date of publication of this Demand Notice with the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, incidental expenses, charges etc., failing which, we Aryavart Bank will take necessary action under the provisions of Section-13(4) of said Act. Further, you are prohibited u/s-13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale/lease etc. and encumber in any other way, the aforesaid secured asset.

Date : 28.01.2021 Place : Lucknow Authorised Officer

Three criminals held for dacoity in Mumbai jewellery shop

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Three hardcore criminals, including the gang leader who had executed daring dacoity at S Kumar Gold and Diamond Shop in Mumbai, were nabbed by the STF seluths and a team of Mumbai crime branch in Chinhat on Wednesday. The team recovered 46 rings, four necklaces, 10 lockets, two pairs of bracelets, precious gems (21 gm), pieces of ornaments (14 gm), diamond pieces (4 gm), Rs 5.27 lakh in cash, two weapons (including a colt revolver), 38 live cartridges, two mobile phones and some documents from their possession. The dacoity was executed on January 7 at the establishment located on Meera Road in Mumbai. The Mumbai police had sought help from the UP STF, after which a team was arrested were identified as Vinay Kumar Singh aka Cintu Singh (gangleader) of Ghazipur and his aides — Dinesh Nishad of Jaunpur and Shalendra Kumar Mishra

aka Bablu of Varanasi. Others involved in the crime were named as Sanjeet of Azamgarh and Sonu Singh of Ghazipur. They owned up their crime during interrogation. Vinay said he and his aides committed the dacoity in Mumbai on January 7 and reached their homes in UP through various routes before assembling to distribute the booty. They sold some of the items and reached Lucknow to hide the looted ornaments. Vinay told the police that he was given the revolver by Rinku Rai and it was the police pistol looted by someone. Vinay said he forayed into the crime world to avenge the murder of his father, who was killed in 1991. He attempted to murder the killer of his father in 1991 and later killed a person, Prem Prajapati, in 1993. In 1994, he finally eliminated his father killer. He said he looted money from a bank employee after killing the latter in 2001 in Ghazipur and in the same year, he and his aide Manoj Dubey committed loot

at a life insurance company. Dubey was killed in a police encounter later. He confessed that he had planned to attack big business establishments, including a jeweller's shop close to Fun Republic in Lucknow, a jewellery store in Subhash Nagar in Prayagraj and a casino in Goa. CASH, ORNAMENTS STOLEN FROM RETD RLY EMPLOYEE'S HOUSE Thieves made off with cash and ornaments from the house of a retired railway employee in Ashiyana. The incident came to light on Tuesday. Rajesh Kumar Srivastava of Aurangabad Jageer-2 locality, and his family had gone out of town on January 23. When they returned home on Tuesday, they found the main gate lock broken. Srivastava said as he went inside, he found articles lying strewn across the floor. In his complaint, he stated that the thieves decamped with cash, ornaments and clothes kept in an almirah.

PUBLIC NOTICE

No.RMSA/ICT/237/1306/2020/4098 Date : 27.01.2021

It is to inform all the prospective bidders that the minutes of the pre-bid meeting on e-tender for Integrated Virtual class room with Broad casting Software and content sharing portal vide no. RMSA/ICT/237/1306/2020/158 Dated.11.01.2021 has been uploaded in the e-tendering web site www.assamtenders.gov.in.

Sd/- Executive Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam Kahilipara, Guwahati -19

Janasanyog /CF/4168/20

CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION

1, NAWAB YUSUF ROAD, CIVIL LINES/Prayagraj-211001 FAX No. : 0532-2407892 www.coe.indianrailways.gov.in

E - TENDER NOTICE

No. RE/Tender/Civil/506 Dated: 25.01.2021

Name of work: Works of Housekeeping and sanitation of ORH (Including Canteen) at Tilak Bridge and work of sanitation Care Taker/Security for GM/CORE's camp office cum office building at ITO in New Delhi for a period of Two years.

(1) Completion Period : 24 months.
(2) Approximate cost of the work : ₹ 67,44,457.39
(3) Tender Cost : ₹ 0.00
(4) Earnest Money to be deposited : ₹ 0.00

(5) Submission/Opening of tender : 22.02.2021 up to 13.30 for submission of tender through www.ireps.gov.in and the Tender shall be opened online using IREPS portal any time after closing of tender

(6) Website particulars : www.ireps.gov.in (where details have been uploaded).

(7) Office address : Office of PCE/CORE, 1, Nawab Yusuf Road, Civil Lines, Prayagraj.

NOTE:- Only e-Bid shall be accepted against above tender.

Dy. Chief Engineer/CORE/Prayagraj For and on behalf of President of India

PR/662/2021 Adk "Serving Customers with a Smile"

उत्तर प्रदेश ग्रामीण सड़क विकास अभिकरण

चतुर्थ एवं पंचम तल, गन्ना किसान संस्थान, न्यू डेरी रोड, लखनऊ फोन नं. 0522-2209450, 7311189228, ई-जेल: up-cexo@nic.in

पत्रांक: 2540 /E-48/एपीआरआरडीए/2020 दिनांक 27.01.2021

आवश्यकता है

ग्राम्य विकास विभाग, उ०प्र० शासन के असीन केन्द्र पोषित प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना के क्रियान्वयन हेतु उत्तर प्रदेश ग्रामीण सड़क विकास अभिकरण में शासकीय विभागों/अर्द्धशासकीय संस्थाओं/प्रतिष्ठित निजी कम्पनी में कार्यरत/सेवानिवृत्त अर्ह अभियन्ताओं से अभिकरण कार्यालय में कार्य करने हेतु निम्नलिखित पद पर इच्छुक अभ्यर्थियों से आवेदन पत्र आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं:-

क्र० सं०	पदनाम	रिक्त पद	वेतनमान	प्रतिमाह नियत धनराशि (आउट सोर्सिंग हेतु)
1	मुख्य अभियन्ता	1	1,00,000.00 (परिमित्युक्ति हेतु)	₹ 80 एक लाख मात्र)

अनिवार्य अर्हता - इंजीनियरिंग में स्नातक। सड़क निर्माण कार्य में 05 वर्ष का अनुभव तथा कम्प्यूटर पर कार्य करने की दक्षता।

शासकीय विभाग व संस्थाओं में कार्यरत अभियन्ता चयन के उपरान्त अपने विभाग से अनारपित प्रमाण पत्र (NOC) प्राप्त कर प्रतिनियुक्ति पर जवाइन कर सकते हैं। सेवानिवृत्त अथवा निजी क्षेत्र के चयनित अभ्यर्थी सेवाप्रदाता के माध्यम से रजि. जायेंगे। एक अभ्यर्थी का चयन किया जायेगा और एक अभ्यर्थी प्रतीक्षा सूची में होगा। प्रतीक्षा सूची एक वर्ष के लिए मान्य होगी। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी अपना आवेदन पत्र बन्द लिफाफे में अर्हता सम्बन्धी प्रमाण पत्रों की स्वस्थानित छायाप्रतियों सहित अयोध्याक्षेत्री के कार्यालय उ०प्र० ग्रामीण सड़क विकास अभिकरण, चतुर्थ एवं पंचम तल, गन्ना किसान संस्थान, न्यू डेरी रोड, लखनऊ - 226001 में जमा कर सकते हैं। आवेदक ई-जेल up-cexo@nic.in पर भी आवेदन भेज सकते हैं। आवेदन का फार्म वेबसाइट www.uprrda.in पर उपलब्ध है। आवेदन दिनांक 28.01.2021 से दिनांक 20.02.2021 तक स्पीड पोस्ट/रजिस्टर्ड डाक/ऑन लाइन अथवा व्यक्तिगत रूप से भी अभिकरण कार्यालय में सार्थ 6.00 बजे तक उपलब्ध करा सकते हैं। प्रतिनियुक्ति की शर्त एवं आवेदन पत्र का प्रारूप अभिकरण कार्यालय की वेबसाइट www.uprrda.in पर उपलब्ध है। मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड निविदा सूचना संख्या 16/17/ECTD-III/ko/2020-21 के अन्तर्गत पत्र क्र प्रकल्प निविदा सूचना संख्या 16/17/ECTD-III/ko/2020-21 के अन्तर्गत क्रमांक: 132 के०बी० उपकेंद्र, बेगमपुर, बहराइच पर जल आपूर्ति हेतु ओवर हैड टैंक स्थापित करने का कार्य 220 के०बी० उपकेंद्र, बहराइच पर जल आपूर्ति हेतु ओवर हैड टैंक स्थापित करने का कार्य, हेतु निविदाओं आमंत्रित की जा रही है। जिसे <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर दिनांक 28.01.2021 को प्रकाशित किया जायेगा। कार्य की अनुमानित लागत क्रमांक: ₹. 1.15 लाख एवम् ₹. 1.15 लाख, कार्यवधि 20 दिन एवम् 20 दिन, क्रमांक: धरोहर धनराशि ₹. 3,00,00,00 एवम् ₹. 3,00,00,00 है। निविदा करने की अंतिम तिथि 25.02.2021 (दोपहर 2.00 बजे तक) है। कार्य की कुल मात्रा, निविदा विशिष्टीकरण व अन्य नियम एवम् शर्त निविदा पोर्टल पर उपलब्ध है। ओवरसाइडी को बिना कारण बताये निविदा निरस्त करने का अधिकार होगा। निष्पत्ति तिथि के विस्तार संस्था शुद्धि पत्र से संबंधित सूचना यदि कोई होगी तो केवल वेबसाइट पर डाली जाएगी। अतः स्वयं को अपडेट रखने के लिये उपरोक्त वेबसाइट को नियमित देखते रहना चाहिये। अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत जानपद पार्षदण खण्ड-द्वितीय उ०प्र० पावर ट्रान्समिशन कारपोरेशन लि० सुदीप तल विद्युत सेवा आयोग भवन, एमएनएसडीपीओ परिसर निकट मन्त्री आवास, विद्युतखण्ड-द्वितीय, गौतमनगर, लखनऊ पत्रांक - 82 दिनांक - 27.1.21 "राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाए"

Acid thrown on Dalit couple

Lucknow (PNS): In a sensational incident in Pratapgarh, a Dalit couple sustained burns after a group of unidentified people threw acid on them on Republic Day, police said on Wednesday. Luckily, two children of the couple escaped unhurt. The incident took place in Bhogapur village on Tuesday night when the Dalit couple and their children were sleep-

ing in their hut, ASP Dinesh Dwivedi said. Reports said that Amarjeet Kori (45), a resident of Bhogapur hamlet of Jethwara in Pratapgarh, along with his wife Ranno Kori (45) and children Shivam (12) and Sanjana (7), was sleeping on Tuesday night when some unknown persons entered their hut and threw acid on them. Both Amarjeet and Ranno received burns.

Record purchase of maize by govt

Lucknow (PNS): After achieving success in the paddy purchase, the Uttar Pradesh government has brought a turnaround in the fortunes of farmers by record purchase of maize and groundnut. While the purchase of groundnuts has been four times since last year, maize has been purchased in the state for the first time. The UP government agencies purchased maize from as many as 24,859 farmers and paid over Rs 167 crore to them. According to official statistics, the state government had set a target of one lakh metric tonne purchase of maize but

till January 16, it had already exceeded the target and purchased 1,06,412 MT of maize paying Rs 167 crore to farmers. Around 100 maize purchase centres were set up by the government — 24 in Kanpur division, 18 in Aligarh and 15 in Devpatan divisions. For groundnuts, the government purchase has been phenomenal during the kharif year 2020. As compared to 1546 MT purchase during kharif year 2019, as much as 6,365 MT groundnut was purchased this year, a quantum jump of four times from 2019-2020.



DELHI JAL BOARD (GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI) OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C) DR-X JAGRITI SPS, KARKARDOOMA X-ING. DELHI-110092

PRESS NOTICE TENDER NIT NO.03 / E.E. (C) Dr.X / (2020-21)

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Contract Value (ECV)/ Amount put to Tender	Tender Fees	Date of Release of tender in E-Procurement Solution & Tender ID No	Last Date/Time of receipt of E-Procurement Solution
01	Construction of Lift Station and Laying/ jointing and Commissioning of 100 mm dia. rising Main at Khena Village in Shahdara.	28,48,969.00	56980.00	21.01.2021 2020_DJB_191855_1	08.02.2021 At 03.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in> ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt No. J.S.V. 341/2020-21 Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C)-DR.X

COVID-19 vaccination new phase from today

PNS ■ VARANASI

On the eve of starting the next phase of COVID-19 vaccination, District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma, while holding a meeting of the Covid District Task Force at the Rifle Club here on Wednesday, directed the officers concerned to ensure vaccination of 100 per cent beneficiaries on Thursday during the scheduled time.

Expressing displeasure over the poor vaccination at IMA BHU and Heritage Hospital, the DM directed the health officials to send letters to the administration concerned to ensure hundred per cent vaccination by counseling the beneficiaries.

Apart from this, he also instructed the ICDS to ensure 100 per cent vaccination of identified beneficiaries.

According to the programme, on Thursday, as many as 5,586 beneficiaries will be vaccinated at 33 sites in 48 sessions (15 rural, 33 urban) while on next day (January 29), 5,560 will be vaccinated at 33 sites in

Seven test positive in VNS

PNS ■ VARANASI

After a long time, the number of active COVID-19 cases has come down to double digits in the district with only 86 patients remaining in hospitals of home isolation on Wednesday.

Seven new coronavirus positive cases were detected during the past 24 hours, taking the tally to 21,868. The day saw one COVID-

19 death, increasing the toll to 376. During the day, the follow-up negative reports included 21 and all of them have been recovered in home isolation, increasing the tally to 18,441. The total number of COVID-19 patients who have recovered so far is 21,406, leaving 86 active cases.

The recovery rate is 97.88 per cent while the mortality rate is 1.71 per cent.

47 sessions (16 rural, 31 urban), on February 4, 3,398 at 31 session at 30 places (10 rural, 21 urban) and on February 5, 907 beneficiaries will be vaccinated in seven sessions.

In all, in this phase 15,451 beneficiaries will be vaccinated in 135 sessions. Earlier, the vaccinations in the district were held on January 16 and 22.

The DM also directed the officials to make Pulse Polio vaccination campaign a success as on January 31.

According to the DM, door-to-door vaccination will be done on February 1, 2, 3 and 6 and 7. The DM asked the health officials to identify the families resisting the vaccination and motivate them for it.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Maurya, Nodal Officer (Covid Vaccination) Dr NP Singh, Integrated Child Development Project Officer Itikhar Ahmed, doctors of Heritage Hospital and others were present in the meeting.

Minister honours 16 cops at Police Lines

PNS ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Urban Development Minister and in-charge of the district Ashutosh Tandon honoured 16 policemen, including additional director general (zone), inspector general of police (range) and Crime Branch in-charge.

He also garlanded the freedom fighters, saying they were an inspiration for the people.

Tandon was the chief guest at the function organised at the Police Lines where he unfurled the national flag and took the salute of an attractive parade on the occasion of 72nd Republic Day here on Tuesday.

Addressing the function, he highlighted the strong democratic structure of the country.

Referring to Pakistan, Tandon said that a nation which also got independence along with India could not keep itself intact as a republic and it was the main reason why military rule was imposed there on many occasions.

Highlighting the strength of Indian democracy, he said that once a popular government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee failed to survive just by one vote and also quoted the lines of Vajpayee, who, respecting



Cabinet Minister Ashutosh Tandon lifting balloons on occasion of Republic Day at Police Lines in Varanasi on Tuesday

the democracy preferred to go for the poll again to get an absolute majority.

He also gave an example of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the minister said that Modi rose to the top post from a poor family background which shows the strength of India's democracy.

On the occasion, the national flag was unfurled at all government offices. ANM Jyoti

Singh unfurled the flag along with Varanasi Divisional Commissioner Deepak Agrawal at the divisional headquarters while District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma unfurled the flag along with a meritorious girl student of Harishchandra Inter College at district headquarters. The district magistrate also honoured the freedom fighters and presented them with shawls.

In Banaras Hindu University, Vice Chancellor Prof Rakesh Bhatnagar first

unfurled the national flag at Malviya Bhawan and then at the amphitheatre where the main function was held.

The function was also attended by Rector Prof VK Shukla, Registrar Dr Neeraj Tripathi, Dean of Students Prof MK Singh, Chief Proctor Prof Anand Chaudhary, directors of various institutes, deans of faculties and others. Later, the registrar unfurled the flag at the Central Office.

On the occasion, the vice chancellor honoured several

students, NCC cadets and employees. For the session 2019-20, former President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma Gold Medal was given to Apporva (MSc Botany), Mahamana Sanskrit Award to Shishu Mishra of Jyotish department, Major SL Dar gold medal to Yogesh Pal and silver medal to NCC cadet Virendra. Besides, he also honoured Soumik Bhattacharya and some other employees.

Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi region Krishna Kumar Yadav unfurled the flag at the regional office at Cantonment head post campus and also honored 12 postmen for their meritorious services.

At 95th CRPF Battalion, Pahadia Mandi, officiating Commandant Niteendra Nath hoisted the tricolour and highlighted the importance of the day.

At Swami Harsewanand Public School's Ramna branch, Baba Prakashdhyananad unfurled the tricolour while at Kendriya Vidyalaya, BHU, chairman of school management committee Prof TR Mankhand and principal Dr Diwaker Singh and at Seth MR Jaipuria Schools, Babatpur chairman Deepak Kumar Bajaj unfurled the tricolour.

Republic Day celebrated at BLW, NER

PNS ■ VARANASI

The 72nd Republic Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour by Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) and the Varanasi division of North Eastern Railway (NER) here on Tuesday.

General Manager Anjali Goyal unfurled the tricolour and took the salute of the parade at BLW Stadium where the students presented colourful cultural programmes while at the NER Mini Stadium, Divisional Railway Manager Vijay Kumar Panjiar unfurled the tricolour and inspected the parade.

Highlighting the importance of the day, Anjali Goyal said that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, BLW produced 200 locomotives till December last year, five more than the production previous year during the corresponding months. Besides, BLW received an order for export of six diesel locomotives from Mozambique and realising this potential, the Railway Board had increased the electric locomotive production target of the BLW from 275 to 380 for the next financial year, Goyal added.



GM Anjali Goyal at Republic Day function in BLW (top) and DRM VK Panjiar inspecting parade at NER Mini Stadium (bottom) in Varanasi on Tuesday

The BLW GM said apart from this, in the field of self-reliance, 98 per cent of the production at BLW was indigenous, giving a contribution of about Rs 4,000 crore annually to the country's manufacturing GDP, along with strengthening the small industries by purchasing materials worth Rs 1,400 crore from the MSME sector.

On the occasion, an attractive march past was presented by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel and volunteers of Civil Defence, St John's Ambulance Brigade, Bharat Scouts and Guides.

The entire stadium was decorated with colorful flags and flowers. A cultural programme that included patriotic songs and group dances was presented by the members of BLW Sanskritik Sanstha, Sangeet Mahavidhyalaya and Bharat Scouts and Guides.

The vote of thanks was proposed by BLW Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar while the function was conducted by senior translator Amlesh Srivastava. Senior officers and trade union representatives were also present.

Later, Goyal inaugurated the newly-constructed gym at

RPF barrack. The GM also distributed various articles to the patients at Central Hospital and donated a refrigerator to the hospital.

Meanwhile, addressing the function at NER Mini Stadium, the DRM said that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Varanasi Division of NER saw a remarkable increase in freight revenue earning of Rs 31.72 crore by December last which was 8.73 per cent higher than the previous year.

Besides, the division was providing safe, protected and comfortable travel facilities to its passengers during the pandemic, Panjiar said, highlighting various other achievements of the division.

He also announced awards for the RPF personnel and others who participated in an attractive parade.

Apart from this, he along with NER Women's Welfare Organisation chairperson Manisha Panjiar unfurled the national flag at NER Den Lahartara and presented gifts to scouts and guides.

ADRM (Operations) SPS Yadav and several other senior officers were present on the occasion.

SWC organisis youth festival

PNS ■ VARANASI

Sunbeam Women's College (SWC) organised a two-day virtual youth festival, Aakaar-2021, at its premise in Varuna here that concluded with the cultural event presented online by the college students.

During the two-day festival, various competitions were organised at different times through online zoom links. Hindi debate competition, business plan, painting, sun talk, beat boxing, poetry evaluation, solo song, cooking, Ad mad show and solo dance were organised on the first day while English debate, case study, article writing, business quiz and monologue acting competi-

tions were held on the second day. In the closing function, the college students presented a cultural programme which was highly appreciated by the guests. A group song was presented by college students Ishika, Nikita, Srishti Rashmi, Kriti, Aradhana and Shreyasi. Taking the programme forward, Shanaya, Ananya, Priya, Ishita, Soumya, Deepam and Srishti gave a beautiful performance of classical dance. Visakha, Vaishali, Nidhi, Rashi, Ankita, Shruti, Namira also gave a mesmerising performance. The festival was titled 'Lead the Change, Shape the Future. About 350 students from 15 universities and 54 colleges from different states of the country participated in various

competitions. Along with this, the Outstanding Youth Award Competition was also organised in which the participants participated with enthusiasm.

Chairman of Sunbeam Group Dr Deepak Madhok, and Director of Sunbeam Group, Bharti Madhok, congratulated all the winners. Deputy Director Amrita Burman praised SCW for organising the event successfully. SWC Varuna Administrator Dr Shalini Singh and Principal Dr Rajiv Singh proposed the vote of thanks.

The function was also attended by Honorary Director Harsh Madhok and Sunbeam Varuna campus head Dr Anupama Mishra.

Homage paid to Red Eagle martyrs

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

Maj Gen Ravindra Singh, General Officer Commanding, Red Eagle Division and Maj Gen IM Lamba, GOC Allahabad Sub Area, paid homage to martyrs at Old Cantonment in Prayagraj on the 72nd Republic Day.

Maj Gen Ravindra Singh is himself a participant of the Kargil War and has been awarded the Sena Medal for Gallantry for actions during the

Battle of Tiger Hill. The occasion was marked by wreath laying by Maj Gen Ravindra Singh, Maj Gen IM Lamba and all officers at Red Eagle War Memorial. Red Eagle Division, the oldest division of the Indian Army, has the singular honour of participating in World War-II, India-China War of 1962, India-Pakistan Wars of 1965 and 1971, Operation Pawan in Sri Lanka and Operation Vijay in 1999. The ceremony was held following Covid protocols.

Prayagraj taking part in temple fund-raiser

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

People of Prayagraj are also taking part in the nation-wide fund-raising campaign for the construction of Ram temple at Ram Janmabhoomi site in Ayodhya.

The number of people donating funds for the temple is increasing every day. Funds have been raised in IFFCO Ghyianagar Colony. For fund-raising in Ghyianagar, Toli convenor SK Pandey and co-convenor Pawan Kumar Dwivedi said that everyone should donate funds for the temple of Lord Ram.

The fund-raiser team includes SK Sharma, Sushil Mohan Tiwari, Mayank Dutt Pandey, Mukesh Tiwari, Kripa Shankar Mishra, Manoj Tiwari, Krishna Kumar Tiwari etc. Gaurav Tandon, Major AK Singh, AK Badeswari Prasad Mishra, Manoj Kumar Tiwari, Pandit Vishwamohan Tiwari, Rajesh Srivastava, Kripa Shankar Mishra, DK Singh,

Kavita Tandon, PK Singh.

Similarly, social worker Pramod Kumar Patel led by state BJP working committee member Ramakant Mishra is raising funds for the Ram temple in Saura village.

Apart from this, Umakant Pandey, Vinay Kumar, Anjali Kumar, Ravi, Pushpa, Anil, Subhash Chandra Bose, Utkarsh Patel, Krishna Kumar, Prashant Kumar, Pradeep, Ram Bhuwal have also contributed to the fund.

Local MP Rita Bahuguna Joshi also got the collection deposited at Shankargarh Nagar Panchayat for Ram temple construction. On Tuesday, Rita Bahuguna Joshi along with BJP district president of Yamunapar, Vibhavnath Bharti, and block head of Shankargarh, Bharat, contacted people from all walks of life to seek funds for the construction of a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Illicit liquor factory unearthed

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

The Excise department unearthed a long-running illegal liquor factory in Sarainayat police station area of Gangapur in Prayagraj. Materials, including sealing machine, spirit, fake wrapper and bottles were recovered from the factory.

A case was registered in this connection. Deputy Commissioner of Excise Ajay Singh was tipped-off about the illicit liquor factory in Gharara village of Sarainayat. The information was found to be correct when it was investigated. Following this, a team comprising Inspector Indrajit Garg, Neha Singh, Subhash Chandra and Kaushalendra Pratap was pressed into action.

On Tuesday night, the Excise team conducted a sudden raid in Gharara village. This caused panic there and those present in the factory managed to escape.

Excise officials were surprised to see the arrangements made to make illicit liquor. There were machines for packing, a large quantity of empty bottles, fake wrappers, QR codes, sealing machines and spirits.

Inspector Neha Singh said that the person running the factory was traced and was being searched and after his arrest the culprits involved in manufacturing of the illicit liquor would be nabbed.

25 devotees test positive in Mela Area

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

The number of COVID-19 patients in the city increased compared to other days with more than 25 devotees testing positive for the coronavirus infection in the Mela Area alone.

Two seers have also been infected by coronavirus at Dandi Bada ashram. The Mela administration removed the tents of the infected persons. With this, a dozen people have been quarantined in Kalindipuram. This is the first time that such a number of positive cases have been reported in the Mela Area in one day and vigilance has been increased by the Health department.

Dr Rishi Sahai, the nodal officer for COVID-19, confirmed this. He said that one COVID-19 patient died on Monday.

Dr Sahai said that 25 new positive cases

were found in the Mela Area on Monday in sectors five and four. The Dandi Bada is in Sector Four. On Monday, two kalpavasi tested positive through antigen test. Apart from this, 16 kalpavasi, four devotees, five from other districts also tested positive. The tents of those infected were removed and 12 positive contacts were sent to the quarantine centre in Kalindipuram. An intensive testing campaign was conducted there on Tuesday.

CMO Dr Prabhakar Rai said that with 32 more testing positive, the tally confirmed cases increased to 29,137 in the city. Out of these, 28,376 COVID-19 patients have recovered, 27 of them on Tuesday. At present 40 Covid-19 patients are admitted in hospitals while 334 are undergoing treatment in home isolation.

A total of 6,479 people were screened for coronavirus infection on Tuesday.

Republic Day celebrated with grandeur, gaiety at NCR

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

The 72nd Republic Day was celebrated with grandeur, gaiety, fervour and enthusiasm at North Central Railway Headquarters in Prayagraj.

In view of COVID-19 pandemic, all preventive measures such as maintaining social distancing, wearing of masks, proper sanitisation, limited congregations, protecting vulnerable persons, were followed while organising the function.

The programme started with the national flag being unfurled by Additional General Manager Ranjan Yadav. He inspected the parade of Railway Protection Force, Bharat Scout and Guides and St John Ambulance Brigade.

The additional general manager also awarded 19 railway personnel for their outstanding performance.

Ranjan Yadav released tricolour balloons with banner of Nation Security Helpline 182 to reaffirm commitment towards passenger safety.

During the function, the additional general manager greeted all the employees of North Central Railway and their families on the auspicious occasion of the 72nd Republic Day.

Ranjan Yadav also conveyed Republic

Day Message from GM Vinay Kumar Tripathi who currently holds charge of GM NER as well as NCR and attended Republic Day celebrations at NER HQ Gorakhpur. The General Manager's message was also web-casted online utilising a YouTube link.

To reach out approximately 60,000 employees of NCR who have worked tirelessly during the current challenging time, a link of Republic Day message from General Manager was sent electronically on their mobile numbers.

In his message the GM said, "On the occasion of 72nd Republic Day of our beloved nation, I wish to convey my heartfelt greetings to the entire North Central Railway family. This day commemorates the birth of our Republic and adoption of our Constitution, twenty years after the declaration of Poorna Swaraj. The great men and women who fought to get us our independence and our own republic cannot be forgotten. On this day, along with recalling the sacrifice and selfless service of those great personages with gratitude, we evaluate our immediate past and look ahead at our future."

"In our mission to serve the nation, North Central Railway has been contributing commendably as an important constituent of the Indian Railways. During the



An Indian army officer praying floral tribute to Shaheed officers and Jawans on the occasion of 72nd Republic Day at Red Eagle in Prayagraj

current phase of COVID-19 pandemic, Indian Railways with its holistic approach has reaffirmed its status as the lifeline of the nation. During this adverse time of unprecedented magnitude Railways not only ensured unhindered supply of essential items throughout the country but also helped the hapless and stranded migrant labourers in reaching their homes. North Central Railway, which is traditionally not a freight loading railway, made significant

efforts to increase freight loading to match the revenues in spite of comparatively fewer coaching operations. We have adopted innovative and proactive approach like constituting BDU to facilitate customers, running of Kisan Express, finalising 12 STS proposals, upgraded facilities at goods sheds and opening of Ultratek cement siding along with opening of parcel traffic from Prayagraj Chheeki. Our efforts are bearing fruits and during the

ongoing financial year, NCR achieved ever best freight loading of 1.6 million tonnes during December 2020 which is 49.5 per cent more than the December 2019 and 10 per cent over the target of 1.5 MT," he said.

CELEBRATIONS AT NAZARETH HOSP, SH UNIVERSITY

The 72nd Republic Day was celebrated at Nazareth Hospital premises with all Covid precautions. Retired IG Shri Ram Tripathi was the chief guest on this occasion. The programme started with a prayer led by Nazareth choir. Rev Fr Louis Mascarenhas, Director of Nazareth Hospital, welcomed the chief guest and other distinguished guests along with members of the Nazareth family.

The national flag was unfurled by the chief guest with the hospital choir singing the national anthem.

In his brief address, the chief guest spoke on the significance and importance of the Republic Day and said Indians should take pride in the achievements and growth of the country in all spheres.

He also acknowledged the quality and efficient delivery of medical health services of Nazareth Hospital for the needy people of Prayagraj and its neighbouring districts. He exhorted the Nazareth family members

to achieve more growth and success in their endeavors.

The chief guest was presented with a hospital memento by Dr Ashok Agarwal, the chief medical superintendent.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr RP Shukla.

Republic Day was also celebrated with fervour and zest at Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology & Science with Vice Chancellor Prof Rajendra B Lal unfurling the tricolour.

Due to COVID-19 epidemic, the programme was simple and followed all Covid guidelines.

A March Past was organised by the NCC cadets. Students of the university presented a patriotic song. The opening prayer was led by Bishop DK Sahu.

Prof Rajendra B Lal, in his message, said that behind all sustainability of Indian democracy there was only one word love. He said freedom of the nation and the framing of the Indian Constitution were historic efforts of our forefathers. He added that there were many cultures and languages in the country but they all were united by the Constitution.

On the occasion the vice chancellor released the annual report of the university.

Stand united to fight divisive forces: DM

Unfurls tricolour on Republic Day

PNS ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Alok Tiwari, while unfurling the Tricolour on the occasion of Republic Day at the Collectorate, said it was the duty of every individual to ensure that India progressed rapidly on the principles of secularism, socialism and dominating democracy so that its people could get social, economic and political justice with freedom for religion and to practice one's religion.

He said all this could be made possible if the nation remained united and the responsibility rested on the shoulders of each Indian.

He said freedom of the country could be achieved by massive sacrifices and thus it was the duty of each citizen to protect the integrity of the country at every cost.

The DM said the freedom fighters had made immense sacrifice and thus the people should remember their sacrifices for our present day. He said on this day everyone should take oath to work for the further development and progress of the country.

The DM said the country



DM Alok Tiwari hoisting the tricolour at the Collectorate on R-Day

was faced with many problems and thus everyone should stand united to fight divisive forces and remain united. He said unity and trust in one another and the Constitution was the key for the progress and for the survival of a nation. He said due to the constitutional framework today India stood at par with the rest of the countries of the world.

He then felicitated the freedom fighters and the outstanding officials and persons who had through their hard work made the city proud.

A large number of officials,

police personnel, guests and students took part in the Republic Day ceremony.

Meanwhile, Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) celebrated Republic Day in a simple manner here on Tuesday.

After unfurling the tricolour, KDA Vice Chairman Rakesh Kumar Singh along with other officers and employees sang the national song and raised the slogan 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'.

Thereafter, Singh and other officers garlanded the portraits of Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji

Subhas Chandra Bose and Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar.

The KDA VC also administered an oath to all the officers and employees for not chewing tobacco and making their office tobacco-free as given in the pledge of the Constitution.

The speakers spoke on the importance of Republic Day in a programme organised at the Atal Behari Vajpayee auditorium of KDA.

Addressing the gathering, the vice chairman said we all should deliver cent per cent contribution for the uplift of the nation and this was only possible when everyone discharged one's duties honestly.

Additional Secretary Gudakesh Sharma and Secretary SP Singh highlighted the events from the time of freedom struggle to the present India.

The proceedings were conducted by KDA Law Officer & Public Relations Officer Shashi Bhushan Rai. Chief Engineer Chakresh Jain, Joint Secretary KK Singh, OSD Alok Kumar Verma, Bhairpal Singh, Renu Pathak and other officers and employees were present.

Documents, files stolen from CMM court

PNS ■ KANPUR

Important documents and files were reportedly stolen from the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) in the collectorate compound late on Tuesday night.

The Kotwali police along with forensic experts reached the spot and carried out investigation.

When the staff of CMM court reached there on Wednesday morning, they found the locks of the court broken.

Kotwali Inspector Sanjiv Kant Mishra said on the basis of CCTV footage, the incident took place at 1:45 am on Tuesday. The miscreant broke open the lock with the help of a saw and entered the room and remained there for about two minutes.

The Kotwali inspector was not informed about the number of files stolen from there so far. Efforts were on to trace the miscreant with the help of CCTV footage.

No complaint was received by the police so far in the matter, he said.

SUICIDE

A depressed elderly man committed suicide by jumping off the eighth floor of his apartment in Kalyanpur police station area on Wednesday morning. He was identified as Anoop Khanna (62), resident of flat 804-B, Imperial Heights Apartment, near Bithoor trisection. He was manager in a private company on Mall Road and lived with his wife Priti Khanna. His daughter is a software engineer and employed in Mumbai.

The neighbours said that Anoop was in depression for a long time and would often talk about committing suicide. Kalyanpur Station House Officer Ajay Seth said the wife of the deceased was not in a state to tell anything in the matter.

NER GM hoists national flag

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

General Manager of North Eastern Railway (NER) Vinay Kumar Tripathi on the occasion of 72nd Republic Day hoisted the national flag at a function organised at Syed Modi Railway Stadium here. On the occasion he took the salute of the parade presented by Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Railway Protection Special Forces (RPSF) jawans, members of Civil Defence Organisation, Scouts/Guides besides students of railway schools. In his address GM while congratulating the Railway officials, employees and their families on Republic Day, said in order to provide safe, secure and comfortable journey to the passengers we are constantly moving forward for making improvement in the way of our functioning and for modernisation. During the Corona infection our railway personnel made an outstanding contribution in service of the country, he said. In the year 2020-21 the NER has made a significant progress in every field, the GM added.

Elaborating further, Tripathi said after converting 217 coaches into Covid Care ones as per the demand of the state government were placed at 16 different railway stations. At different stations of NER via as many as 911 Shramik special trains around 9,38,000 passengers came. During this period at Gorakhpur railway station the most in the country 313 Shramik trains arrived. From different stations of NER for various cities 116 shramik specials were run and about 1,27,000 passengers were sent to their respective destinations. During the lockdown for the supply of essential materials throughout the country uninterrupted and safe movement of goods trains was done. Moreover, for protection from Covid-19 in-house production of safety devices was done, he added. While highlighting passenger amenities, Tripathi said the doubling and electrification of Aunrihar-Nandganj and Kachhwa Road-Madhosingh section, gauge conversion of Pilibhit-Shahjahanpur section and electrification of Bhatni-Aunrihar, Gonda-Subhagpur, Sitapur-Lakhimpur, Kasganj-Bareilly and Duraundha-Maharajganj-Masrahk rail sections had been completed. In the financial year 2020-21 he said that by the month of December 2020, from passenger traffic ₹390 crore, from goods traffic ₹1,184 crore and gross income ₹1,618 crore was recorded. The General Manager said that the praiseworthy marketing efforts of the Business Development Unit (BDU) set up at various levels have provided opportunities to the NER for goods loading inside the country as well as international freight transportation. Tripathi said that

in this financial year till December 2020 as many as 283 ICF coaches were converted into newly-modified goods (NMG) wagons which are being used for transporting automobiles. Tripathi said that Wi-Fi facility has been provided at a total of 289 stations. By December 2020 a total of 52 manned level crossings were closed, interlocking of 10 level crossings was done and sliding booms were installed at 56 level crossings and electric lifting barriers were put at 16 level crossings. The GM said that the disposal of unwanted and disposable materials lying on the railway premises and along the railway tracks is being done at a rapid pace. Under the programmes for environmental protection so far more than nine lakh saplings have been planted this year. He said that for commendable contribution in the field of energy conservation under the 30th National Energy Conservation Award, NER has received three awards in various categories. In the Transport category NER received the award, in the building category the DRM office, Lucknow and in the Industry category the Mechanical Workshop, Izzatnagar. While discussing security and employee welfare, he said that 350 women trainees were sent to the field by giving excel-

lent training to strengthen women safety. For the safety of women passengers, 'Meri Saheli' campaign is being run by the RPF. Appointments are being made on priority basis on compassionate grounds. About 800 e-passes have been issued so far on NER. Tripathi said that as a result of electrification till December 2020 HSD consumption had decreased by 81.5 per cent due to which ₹490.5 crore railway revenue was saved. Expressing his happiness, the GM said that Mohammad Abbas Rizvi, Assistant Sub-Inspector/Prosecution Branch, Headquarters, Gorakhpur, has been awarded the Indian Police Medal for the year 2020 for his outstanding services. On the occasion he appealed to railway personnel to complete all projects on time. They should accord priority to works of railway safety and security and achieve the goal of passenger satisfaction and increasing revenue. After this the GM did flag hoisting at Swarna Jayanti School, Baulia Railway Colony and encouraged the students. General Manager VK Tripathi, and Chairperson, North Eastern Railway Women's Welfare Organisation (NERWWO), Meena Tripathi, inquired about the well-being and health of patients admitted to the Lalit Narayan Mishra Railway Hospital and presented and gifts to them. The GM also inaugurated a fully automatic bio-chemistry analyzer machine. On the occasion GM and NERWWO chairperson Meena Tripathi and senior railway officials did plantation near Road No 16.



Helping Hands distributes blankets to the poor

PNS ■ KANPUR

Chairman and CEO of Eldyne Electrosystems and noted philanthropist Santanu Basu, while speaking at a blanket distribution camp organised by Helping Hands, Kolkata, on Wednesday, said with the temperature between three and five degrees Centigrade in Uttar Pradesh, it was right time for people to reach out to the underprivileged people and create a meaningful impact.

He said Helping Hands had for the first time ventured into Uttar Pradesh as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR).

He said it was a matter of concern that the villagers did not have proper blankets to protect themselves from the cold and



many of them huddled in gunny bags.

He said the organisation had decided to distribute 100 blankets and would continue to do so in other surrounding vil-

lages as well. Secretary Kaushik Dey said for most of the people the idea of winter meant cuddling under the blanket for warmth, lying in one's comfort zone but for those on the streets, with every drop in the temperature it was a fight for survival.

He said it was the prime objective of human beings to help others in distress. He said Helping Hands every winter ran a blanket donation campaign under which it provided high quality warm blankets. He said the organisation was doing its best to reach out to people in Uttar Pradesh.

It may be mentioned that Kanpur and its surrounding areas are reeling under a cold wave and the smog for the past over one month. He said more NGOs need to come forward and help these people.

KNN to take up genuine problems of street vendors

PNS ■ KANPUR

Additional Municipal Commissioner Bhanu Pratap Singh, while addressing the Vendors' Day function organised by Kanpur Street Vendors Association at Rajiv Vatika, said street vendors constituted an integral and legitimate part of the urban retail trade and distribution system for daily necessities of the general public.

He said the Kanpur Nagar Nigam had decided to take up the genuine problems of street vendors and ensure they got the benefits of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act.

He said street vendors represented around 4 per cent of the urban workforce across India and played a variety of roles in city life.

He said despite street vend-

ing being one of the oldest forms of retail trade in the country, the urban laws still neglected the activity and its practitioners.

Singh said the administration would take up the genuine problems of the street vendors and ensure they were provided with proper hawking zones.

Addressing the gathering, the association's president, Ramesh Kumar, said city

administrators continued to regard hawking as illegal. He said there were sections of the public who felt that the hawkers encroached upon spaces meant for civic use and others simply considered them as eyesores.

He said nearly 2,00,000 women and 21,500 children were engaged in street vending in India and around 1.18 million households were dependent on this informal sector as

their primary source of income.

He said with more urbanisation likely to happen across India, the number of street vendors was likely to rise substantially, engendering the need for better rules and regulations in favour of the street vendors.

He appealed to the KNN to allow street vendors to eke out their livelihood. Others present on the occasion included Satish Verma.

Baroda UP Bank organises loan distribution camp



Baroda UP Bank regional manager SB Saxena distributes loan cheques to beneficiaries.

PNS ■ KANPUR

The Baroda UP Bank organised a loan distribution camp at Ghatampur block's Korian branch.

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 15

lakh as loans to 56 beneficiaries. He said this included KCC and KCC-Dairy loans. He said if a person repaid the KCC loan within the stipulated time frame of 12 months then the bank would provide an additional 5 per cent rebate on the interest. He appealed to the people to avail themselves of the loan facilities.

Branch Manager K Shukla and loan officer Jitendra Kumar were present on the occasion.

Singhania Education Centre celebrates R-Day

PNS ■ KANPUR

Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre Principal Bhawna Gupta, while unfurling the Tricolour on the occasion of R-Day, saluted the efforts of the national leaders who formulated and drafted an exemplary Constitution of India and for building an Independent Republic nation. She apprised the students about the highlights of the 72nd Republic Day at New Delhi.

She said that the students had enough talent, discipline and determination to achieve the goals that they had set for themselves. She said with courage, strength and tenacity, the students should strive to reach the sky.

She also appealed to the students to join hands in solidarity to build a cleaner, brighter, healthier and prosperous India.

Manager administration, Col (Retired) JN Dubey and vice principal Kavita Chaddha were also present on the occasion.

SPORTS DAY AT MMV

The annual sports day and prize distribution ceremony was held at Mahila Mahavidyalaya on Wednesday. SP (South) Deepak Bhuker, who was the chief guest, appreciated the students for striking a perfect balance between academics and co-curricular activities. He said sports, especially team sports, caused deliberate and significant cultural connections in our society.

Principal of the college, Dr BR Agarwal, said today's sports persons were the future of the institution and the country and they would grow up to become ideal citizens of the country. She motivated them to showcase their talents.

The girls later presented a

dance drama based on river Ganga. The annual report was read out by Dr Deepali Nigam and the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Pratibha Srivastava. Others present included Dr Pragma Srivastava, Dr Sadhana Pandey, Dr Pooja Srivastava, Dr Parul Awasthi and several others.

JAIPURIA SCHOOL

Seth Anandram Jaipuria School, Kanpur celebrated the 72nd Republic Day virtually to commemorate the historic moment when India became an independent republic country.

Indian chess grandmaster and former World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand was the chief guest at the function. He emphasised on the virtue of discipline and motivated the students to be determined and focused in life. The National Flag was unfurled by Principal Shikha Banerjee.

Fruits distributed among patients

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

At NTPC Rihand's Son-Shakti stadium the 72nd Republic Day celebrations were held on Tuesday. On the occasion Covid-19 guidelines were followed. The ceremony was inaugurated by Executive Director (Rihand) Balaji Iyengar, who was the chief guest, by hoisting the national flag. The people present there then sang the national anthem. The chief guest along with the chairperson of Vartika Mahila Mandal (VMM) Padma Iyengar and other co-guests gave the message of peace by releasing balloons in the sky. In his address, Iyengar extended Republic Day greetings to the people present there and said it is the result of the hard work, dedication, loyalty and honesty of the project personnel that today our company's installed capacity has become 63,785 MW. The project personnel were awarded the BUH Meritorious Award for better work in various

fields. Before the programme started in the stadium, Iyengar garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Park. The new Rihand intranet was also inaugurated by the chief guest. The chief guest and co-guests distributed fruits among the patients in Dhanwantari Hospital. Besides a friendly cricket match was organised by the Sports Council. The programme was mainly

attended by General Managers, heads of departments, Additional General Manager (Human Resources) SVD Ravi Kumar, chairperson of Vartika Mahila Mandal Padma Iyengar and women office-bearers besides representatives of various unions and associations etc. Meanwhile the vote of thanks during the programme was proposed by Executive Director (Corporate Communications) Shiksha Gupta.



Govt decision to more than double investment in R&D sector hailed

PNS ■ KANPUR

Addressing the first roundtable discussions on promotion of R&D services exports from the country, FIEO President Sharad Kumar Saraf appreciated the government's decision to more than double the investment in the R&D sector to around 2 per cent of GDP.

He said that this would help the R&D services sector to grow and also double its exports in the coming years. He urged the state governments to also come up with larger participation and extend support to the R&D services sector.

Saraf requested the government to incentivise the R&D services exports through

schemes like SEIS etc., enable the right infrastructure and ecosystem in the country, provide the right regulatory regime, streamline taxation so as to provide encouragement and ensure growth of the sector and also provide a level playing field in the international market. He said that R&D was extremely important to change the profile of India's exports to put more focus on high technology exports.

Delivering the keynote address, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Prof K Vijayaraghavan, said that the COVID-19 pandemic gave many lessons for the future. He said one striking lesson was that countries need to step up their investment in

R&D in order to prevent such a crisis. He said investment in R&D also needed to be undertaken through global collaboration and coordination.

He said this had underscored the importance of exchange of R&D services across the globe as they were more relevant than ever. He said that the attention of policy makers so far had been on high-tech merchandise exports as a country's engagement in high technology exports (HTX) reflected the sophistication of its economy, level of productivity and future capabilities.

He said the government appreciated the need to propel growth in the services sector and boost its exports in the

R&D sector. He said India's scientific manpower had been doing exceedingly well globally and they had already created a niche for themselves in the global R&D sector. He said the developed countries acknowledged this fact and recognised Indian talent and technical expertise.

He said India had targeted an FDI investment of US\$ 500 million in the coming year and it was important to align with Atmanirbhar Bharat mission of achieving self-reliance. He also highlighted the business opportunity on R&D services offered by FIEO through its mobile app Niryat Mitra wherein global technology requests, technology offers and also global R&D collaboration opportunities

were covered.

Prominent among those who took part in the roundtable Dr Arabinda Mitra, Scientific Secretary, Bidyut Behari Swain, Special Secretary, Department of Commerce, Dr Ajay Sahai, DG & CEO, FIEO, Siva Prasad, NASSCOM and senior officials from the Department of Commerce, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Reserve Bank of India, Department of Science & Technology, Department of Bio Technology, Department of Telecom, MEITY, CSIR, ICMR, members of the trade, academia, start-ups and veteran exporters and many other government and private organisations.

NTPC Unchahar celebrates R-Day

CORRESPONDENT ■ RAE BAREILY

The 72nd Republic Day was celebrated at NTPC Unchahar on Tuesday. CGM NTPC Unchahar Bhola Nath unfurled the tricolour and took a salute of the march past. In his address Bholanath highlighted achievements of Unchahar plant. He said today NTPC Limited is the largest power producer of country with installed capacity of 63,785 mega watt. He said on January 18 NTPC created a record by generating one billion units in a day. NTPC Limited has been ranked as the best PSU employer of the country. Earlier in the morning General Manager (Operation and Maintenance) Asit Dutta hoisted the national flag at Administrative Building in the plant premises. On the occasion Covid-19 protocol was followed. The ceremony was attended by GMs Asit Dutta, Arindam Banerjee, SK Jha and Dipendran Mandal, GM Centre of Excellence (COE) Keshav Kumar, head of HR Vandana Chaturvedi, Priyadarshini Women's Club chairperson Chandrakala Mishra, dignitaries office-bearers of Union and Association, principals, and family members of NTPC personnel were present.

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Students, others felicitated

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAUH

On National Girl Child Day District Magistrate Mannan Akhtar and veteran Bollywood actress Sushmita Mukherjee felicitated many women and girls of the district for their outstanding contribution in different fields at an event held at Vikas Bhawan, Orao. Sushmita Mukherjee who was the chief guest on the occasion felicitated Radha Soni and Neha Gupta (for making a short movie), Deepika (for giving message against child marriage), Reshma Gupta (organising a rally on National Voter's Day) and Riya Singh (three-time national volleyball player) by providing them cheques of ₹1,000 each. The DM felicitated S-I Rani Gupta besides Sunita Shyama and Suman Devi. For performing well in 2020 board exams of class X he also felicitated Prayanshi Srivastava, Varsha Singh, Parul Vishwakarma, Sakshi Dixit, Gauri Dixit, Mehak, Sanya Tiwari, Madhu Devi, Khushi Shukla and Anjali Rajawat by presenting a cheque of ₹5,000 each and gave a cheque of ₹20,000 to Purnima Pandey, class XII topper of 2020. Few other meritorious students who got a cheque of ₹5,000 each for performing well in class XII board exam 2020 were Akrahi Mishra, Nitya Dubey, Akansha Yadav, Astha Devi, Suparna Choudhary, Priya Singh, Prachi Yadav, Saumya Yadav and Sujata Choudhary. MLAs Gauri Shankar Verma and Moolchand Niranjani, ADM Prameel Kumar Singh, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Abhay Kumar Srivastava, Joint Magistrate Gulab Singh and DIOS Bhagwat Patel were also present on the occasion.



Sourav Ganguly hospitalised again following chest pain

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Board of Control for Cricket in India president Sourav Ganguly was on Wednesday hospitalised with cardiac discomfort for barely three weeks after being discharged from a hospital where he was treated for heart blockage.

The former Team India captain was rushed to the Apollo Hospital ---after the State Government created a special "green corridor" for his vehicle --- following mild chest pain and uneasiness, sources said adding he had a disturbed sleep on Tuesday night.

The former Indian south-paw had undergone an angioplasty early this month after doctors treating him found more than 90 percent blockage

in one of his coronary arteries. The other two arteries also have similar blockages and the doctors had decided to address those problems at a later date.

The doctors said his ECG and echocardiogram reports were not normal adding he an angiogram to ascertain his condition would be conducted on Thursday.

Incidentally Ganguli's elder brother Snehasish Ganguli also a former first class cricketer and Bengal captain too underwent an angioplasty days after the BCCI president was treated for the same ailments. Their father Chandidas Ganguli too had similar problems sources said.

The doctors were tightlipped on whether he would require more angio-

plasties. "A team of four doctors led by Dr Aftab is monitoring his condition, and they will take the decision as and when necessary," family sources said adding the cricketer was doing fine at present.

Earlier the doctors treating him at the Woodlands Hospitals had said that "he would not require a by-pass surgery at this moment as he is comparatively young and fit. He would return to normal life within 3-4 weeks."

Meanwhile, anxious calls had started pouring in from all parts of the country with Home Minister Amit Shah being among the first persons to enquire about the cricketer legend's health. He called up Bengal BJP observer Kailash Vijayargiya to enquire about his health, sources said.

NIA to investigate Shaurya Chakra Sandhu's killing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken up probe into the murder of Comrade Balwinder Singh Sandhu of Punjab. Sandhu was a Shaurya Chakra awardee and he was shot dead by two unidentified men in the early hours of October 16, 2020 at the residence-cum-school run by him in Bhiokindir, Tarn Taran, Punjab.

Kaur, his elder brother Ranjit Singh and his wife Balraj Kaur had also received the Shaurya Chakra," the NIA said in a statement.

During the initial investigation by Punjab Police, it was revealed that the killing was executed under a conspiracy hatched by Pakistan-based Khalistani terrorist Lakvir Singh Rode and his handlers in Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI, it said. The killing of Comrade Balwinder Singh was executed through Sukhmeet Pal Singh alias Sukh Bhikariwal of village Bhikariwal, Kalanaur, Gurdaspur, a gangster-turned-terrorist, it further said.

"Considering the gravity of the offence and its inter-state and international ramifications, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government directed NIA to take up the investigation of the case. In compliance of these directions, NIA has re-registered the case and has taken up the investigation," it added.



Sasikala released from jail

BANGALORE: VK Sasikala, former general secretary of the AIADMK and aide to late Jayalalithaa was released from the Parappana Agrahara Central Prison in Bangalore on Wednesday morning, it was officially announced by the Government of Karnataka and her nephew TV Dhinakaran.

Hectic parties are underway in Chennai where Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami and his deputy O Panneerselvam are chalking out strategies to counter the moves from Sasikala camp. EPS had made it clear during his trip to the national capital that Sasikala has no place in the AIADMK. "There are possibilities of former ministers and MPs joining Sasikala in days to come. Anwar Raja, the former Ramanathapuram MO and

Gokula Indira, former Tamil Nadu minister are likely to cast their lots with Sasikala," said G Satyamurthy, veteran scribe and long time specialist in AIADMK matters. But Sasikala is undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at the Victoria Hospital in Bangalore where she was admitted on January 20. A medical bulletin issued by the hospital on Wednesday said though she has been tested negative for the pandemic, as per medical protocol, she would be discharged on tenth day (January 30) if she is asymptomatic and free of oxygen support for at least three days. "The decision for her to continue treatment in Victoria Hospital has been taken by her and her family members," said the bulletin signed by medical superintendent and director

cum dean of the hospital. A team of astrologers are working to find out the auspicious day for Chinnamma (as she is addressed by party cadre) to return to Chennai. It was on February 15, 2017 she left for Bangalore to serve the four-year rigorous imprisonment term slapped on her by the Special Court Judge in connection with the disproportionate asset case. Her nephew Sudhakaran, cousin Ilavarasi and former chief minister Jayalalithaa were the co-accused in the case. Since Jayalalithaa breathed her last on December 5, 2016, the supreme Court which upheld the trial court verdict had released her from the case.

Since her departure to Bangalore, the AIADMK of which she was the general secretary went a total transformation as the Edappadi Palaniswamy and O Panneerselvam duo took control of the party and eased out the Mannargudi Mafia (as Sasikala and her relatives were known) from the AIADMK.

Dhinakaran launched the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) in 2017 reportedly with the blessings of Sasikala. PNS

23,28,799 people in India vaccinated till date

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At least 23,28,799 people have been vaccinated in countrywide Covid-19 vaccination program till date on Wednesday since January 16 with nine people dying after taking the jab. However, the Union Health Ministry said that these deaths were in no way linked to the vaccine. "The cumulative number of healthcare workers vaccinated against Covid-19 has crossed 23 lakh on Wednesday. A total of 23,28,779 beneficiaries (till 6 pm) were vaccinated through 41,599 sessions, as per the provisional report. A total 2,99,299 beneficiaries were vaccinated on Wednesday alone through 5,308 sessions held till 6 pm,"

said the Ministry. Final reports would be completed for the day by late tonight. At least 79 per cent of beneficiaries vaccinated on Wednesday were from five States Karnataka, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The Ministry said that on the twelfth day of the vaccination drive, 123 AEFIs have been reported while a total 16 persons have been hospitalized so far. 0.0007 per cent people have recorded hospitalization against vaccinations.

In the last 24 hours, one person who is suffering from bacterial sepsis has been hospitalized at Apollo Hospital, Chennai. He was vaccinated on 23rd January and was hospitalized on 24th January, said the Ministry.

THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL Form No.9
(9/2-A, Panna Lal Road, Allahabad-211002, U.P.)
(Area of Jurisdiction, Part of Uttar Pradesh)
Summons for filing Reply & Appearance by Publication

Date: 21.01.2021
(Summon to defendant under section 19(3), of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Acts, 1993 read with Rules 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993).

Original Application No. 113 of 2020
HDFC BANK LTD. Versus M/s Ya NiyaZ Fruit Company & Others
Applicant Bank. Defendants

1. M/s Ya NiyaZ Fruit Company, Navin Mandi Sihal, Fruit Salsaji Mandi, District-Mainpuri-205001 through its Proprietor Mr. Basuliiah
2. Mr. Basuliiah S/o Sri Sasulallah R/o 338, Agra Road, Danba, District - Mainpuri-205001
3. Smt. Hasin Raja W/o Sri Sasulallah R/o 338, Agra Road, Danba, District - Mainpuri-205001
Also at: 454, Hanuman Teela, Jama Masjid, District - Mathura-281001

In the above noted application, you required to file Reply in Paper Book from in four sets alongwith documents and affidavits (if any), Personally or through your duly Authorised Agent or legal practitioner in the Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/ duly authorised agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 17.03.2021 at 10.30 AM failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar, Debts Recovery Tribunal, Allahabad

कार्यालय सहायक श्रम आयुक्त लेबर कालोनी, जंगी रोड, बथुआ, मोरजापुर

पत्रांक-421/मोरजापुर-मि.बी.सी.टी.द.पु. /2020 दिनांक-23.01.2021

पंजीकरण हेतु पात्रता :-
18 से 60 वर्ष आयु के सभी निर्माण श्रमिक, जिन्होंने पंजीकरण के समय पिछले 12 माह में 90 दिनों तक निर्माण श्रमिक के रूप में कार्य किया हो।

पंजीकरण प्रक्रिया :-
1. वर्तमान में आयुक्त को देखते हुए 31.03.2021 तक पंजीकरण शुरू, नवीनीकरण शुरू एवं विलयन शुरू को 01 वर्ष की अवधि के लिये शुरू कर दिया गया है। (आपदा अवधि के उपरत आवेदन के साथ रु.20 आवेदन शुरू तथा रु.20 प्रथम वर्ष का अंशदान। एक बार में 03 वर्ष का अंशदान भी जमा किया जा सकता है।) 2. 02 पासपोर्ट आकार के फोटो।
3. स्वधोषणा पत्र/प्रोजेक्ट प्रमाण पत्र। 4. आधार कार्ड की प्रतियां। 5. एक पासवर्क की प्रतियां। 6. Cso-egov/जनसेवा केन्द्र/लोकवाणी केन्द्र/ई-सुविधा केन्द्रों के माध्यम से ऑनलाइन पंजीकरण नवीनीकरण एवं योजना के आवेदन करने पर पंजीकरण/श्रीमतीकरण शुरू के अतिरिक्त प्रती आवेदन केंद्र संवाहक शुरू अतिरिक्त रु. 15/-

निर्माण कार्य जिनमें कार्यरत श्रमिक पंजीकरण हेतु पात्र है :-
बैरिडन का कार्य, चौकीदारी (निर्माण स्थल पर सुरक्षा प्रदान करने के लिये), बर्दई का कार्य, घुना बनाना, कुओं खोदना, मिट्टी का काम, रोस्टर चलाना, सीमेंट, कंक्रीट, ईट आदि ढोने का कार्य, छप्पर डालने का कार्य लिफ्ट एवं स्टाइलित सीढ़ी की स्थापना का कार्य, राजमिस्त्री का कार्य, सुरक्षा द्वार एवं अन्य उपकरणों की स्थापना का कार्य, प्लम्बिंग, मिट्टी, बांध व मंजर के खनन का कार्य, लोहार, ईट-भट्ठा एवं ईट निर्माण का कार्य, मोटोक पीछिंग, सामुदायिक पाठ्य या कृषियोग का निर्माण, सड़क निर्माण, सर्राई में उपयोग हेतु माइक्रो इकायों की स्थापना, निस्सर चलाने का कार्य/ड्रिफ्टिंग, बाँध, पूर, सड़क का निर्माण या भवन निर्माण के अंशों कर्तव्य संचालन हेतु माइक्रो इकाय का कार्य, टारल्ला लाने का कार्य, बाढ़ प्रथन व इसी प्रकार के अन्य कार्य से सम्बंधित सभी कार्य, कुएँ से गाद (तारट्ट) टटाने का कार्य/ड्रिफ्टिंग, बाँध, पूर, सड़क का निर्माण या भवन निर्माण के अंशों कर्तव्य संचालन हेतु माइक्रो इकाय का कार्य या खनिज रिजर्व पुर, मोटक कोर्स आदि/सड़ित अन्य मनोरंजन प्रकृतियों का निर्माण कार्य, रो या सिमिंग बर्क (सड़क निर्माण से सम्बन्ध) सिमिडिंग/सेरा-बर्क (किरी मिगम अधिकांश सिमिडिंग व लेकावर के रूप में कार्यरत सभी प्रकार के कर्मकार के लिये) मॉबल एवं स्टेशन बर्क, सभी प्रकार के पथर काटने, सोढ़ने व पीसने का कार्य।

- माइलव, सिंधु एवं बालिका नवद योजना**
पंजीकृत महिला श्रमिक के संस्थागत प्रथम की दशा में निर्धारित तीन माह के न्यूनतम वेतन के समतुल्य धनराशि एवं रु. 1,000/- विरक्तिा बीमा। पंजीकृत पुरुष कामगारों की परिणयो को एकमुश्त रु.6,000/-।
2. सिंधु के पुत्र होने के दशा में एकमुश्त रु.20,000/- तथा पुत्री होने के दशा में एकमुश्त रु.25,000/-।
3. परिवार में जन्मी पहली बालिका एवं दूसरी संतान बालिका को भी वार्षिक सवधि जमा रु.25,000/-।
4. जन्म से देखाया बालिकाओं को वार्षिक सवधि जमा रु.50,000/-।
- रजत उदिवेस शिमा सहायता योजना**
पंजीकृत निर्माण श्रमिकों के अधिकतम रु.20 लाख (पुत्र/पुत्रियों) को कक्षा-01 से उच्चतर शिक्षा हेतु विभिन्न दरों से मासिक छात्रवृत्ति न्यूनतम रु.150/- से रु.12,000/-।
इसके अतिरिक्त दो पुत्र/पुत्रियों के कक्षा 10 या कक्षा 12 उत्तीर्ण कर अगली कक्षा में प्रवेशित होने पर सड़किल वी छात्रवृत्ति।
- शेवावी छात्र पुरस्कार योजना**
शेवावी छात्र/छात्राओं को प्रस्ताविक के आधार पर कक्षा 05 से लेकर उच्च शिक्षा हेतु रु.4000/- से रु.22,000/- तक की वार्षिक छात्रवृत्ति।
- कोशल विकास तकनीकी उन्नयन एवं प्रमाणन योजना**
श्रमिक या उसके पुत्र/पुत्री के व्यावसायिक प्रशिक्षण पर व्यय की गयी धनराशि को प्रतिपूर्ति तथा प्रशिक्षण काश श्रमिकों के मजदूरी का भुगतान।
- कन्या विवाह सहायता योजना**
श्रमिकों की दो पुत्रियों के विवाह हेतु रु.55,000/- एवं अनारजतीय विवाह में रु.61,000/- प्रति विवाह अनुदान।
समुचित विवाह की स्थिति में रु.65,000/- का अनुदान एवं प्रति वर-व्यू के पोशाक हेतु रु.5,000/-।
- शौचाध्य सहायता योजना**
श्रमिकों को उनके स्वयं के आवास पर शौचाध्य निर्माण हेतु दो किस्मों में कुल रु.12,000/-।
- आवास सहायता योजना**
पंजीकृत निर्माण श्रमिक के अपनी जमीन पर मकान बनाने अथवा कर्माग्र हेतु दो किस्मों में कुल रु.10,000/- निजी मकान के मरम्मत हेतु एक मुश्त धनराशि 15,000/-।
- विरक्तिा सुविधा योजना**
पंजीकृत निर्माण श्रमिक को प्रतिवर्ष विवाह हेतु 3,00,000/- अविवाहित को प्रतिवर्ष रु.2,00,000/-।
- महात्मा गाँधी पेशन योजना**
निर्माण श्रमिक के 80 वर्ष की आयु पूरे होने एवं तत्समय पूर्ववर्ती 10 वर्ष तक लगातार अंशदान जमा करने पर आवेदन मासिक वेतन रु.1,000/-।
- अग्रणी वीमारी सहायता योजना**
निर्वाहित वीमारियों, जेम्स-ड्रव्य की बहुरास सज्जी, कैन्सर, युवा प्रकाशेण इत्यादि हेतु ईलाज की प्रतिक्रिया की व्यवस्था।
- निर्माण कामगार मृत्यु विकलांगता सहायता एवं अक्षरता पेशन योजना**
दुर्घटना से मृत्यु होने पर रु.5,00,00,000/- सामान्य मृत्यु पर रु.2,00,00,000/- श्रमिक के पंजीकृत न होने की दशा में कार्यस्थल पर मृत्यु हो जाने पर रु.50,00,000/- की आर्थिक सहायता।
कार्यस्थल पर दुर्घटनाग्रस्त होने पर पूर्ण स्थायी अपंगता पर रु.1,00,00,000/- रु.1,50,00,000/- प्रतिमाह आवेदन अक्षरता पेशन।
- निर्माण कामगार अन्वेषित सहायता योजना**
पंजीकृत श्रमिक की मृत्यु पर अन्वेषित हेतु रु.25,00,00,000/- की आर्थिक सहायता।

(आरो को पाठक सहायक भ्रमावृत्त नौजापुर)

MP DIXIT MONEY LAUNDERING CASE ED seizes ₹80L cash of SECL former CMD

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached movable property in the form of seized cash amounting to ₹ 80 lakh in a money laundering case related to corruption and criminal misconduct by MP Dixit, the then Chairman-cum-Managing Director of South Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (SECL).

Dixit had allegedly demanded and agreed to accept illegal gratification of ₹ 1 crore for illegally favouring a private entity namely Maruti Clean Coal & Power Ltd. (MCCPL).

Investigation under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was initiated on the basis of the FIR registered by CBI, Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU)-II, New Delhi under Indian Penal Code Section relating to criminal conspiracy and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 against Dixit, Vijendra Singh, Surojit

स्वच्छ अकबरपुर सुन्दर अकबरपुर हरा-भरा अकबरपुर सुखियों नहर रंग हो अपना

“गणतन्त्र दिवस” 26 जनवरी, 2021 के पुनीत अवसर पर

नगर पालिका परिषद अकबरपुर, अम्बेडकरनगर, नगर वासियों को 72वें गणतन्त्र दिवस की हार्दिक शुभकामनायें एवं बधाई

- स्वच्छ भारत मिशन में अपना सहयोग प्रदान करें और शौचालय का निर्माण करायें एवं खुले में शौच न जायें तथा पालीथीन/थर्माकोल का प्रयोग न करें। हरे पेड़ की रक्षा करें और बृक्ष लगायें।
- अपने घरों से निकलने वाले कूड़े को कृपया सूखे कड़े को नीले डस्टबिन में तथा गीले कूड़े की हरे डस्टबिन में रखे तथा नगर पालिका परिषद अकबरपुर की गाड़ी पहुंचने पर डाल दें।
- नगर पालिका से सम्बन्धित किसी शिकायत/सुझाव हेतु टोल फ्री नम्बर-18001217076 पर काल करें।
- सरकारी भवनों, नाले-नालियों एवं सड़क, पटरियों आदि पर अतिक्रमण न करें और न करने दें। पानी की टोटियों को खुला न छोड़ें। हाथ को साबुन से बार-बार धोयें एवं मास्क व सैनेटाइजर का प्रयोग करें। नगर को हराभरा रखने में नगर पालिका का सहयोग करें।
- विकास हेतु समय से जलकर व गृहकर का भुगतान करें।
- जन्म एवं मृत्यु का पंजीकरण समय से करायें।
- नगर पालिका परिषद द्वारा प्रदत्त किराये पर सेवायें उपलब्ध हैं :- 1-मोबाइल टायलेट सुविधा 2-पेयजल हेतु टैंकर 3-बारात घर 4-सीवर सेक्शन मशीन।



सुरेश कुमार मौर्य अधिशाषी अधिकारी



दुर्गावती, विनाय कुमार, सतीश तिवारी, निर्मला देवी, नन्दलाल सोनकर, वन्दना भारती, बलिराम, विवेक नन्दन, अमित कुमार, रुकसाना खातून, शिव कुमार, मंजू, गौरव श्रीवास्तव, उर्मिला देवी, ललित मोहन श्रीवास्तव, वन्दना त्रिपाठी, राजकुमारी, रुबी गुप्ता, सुनील कुमार, सन्दीप कुमार, बेबी तवस्सुम, संजय मधेशिया, तारा गुप्ता, ज्ञान कुमार, मोदनलाल, रुकसाना, श्री लालजी मिश्र, श्रीमती शिरीषबाला सिंह, श्री अरविन्द सिंह, श्री अतुल वर्मा, डा0 हिमांशु गुप्ता। सदस्यगण



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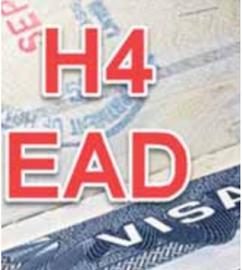
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Let them work

The Biden Administration has already started softening its stand on legal immigrants to the US

The H1-B visa has become a status symbol of sorts for many Indians as it facilitated the immigration of tens of thousands of engineers, particularly software engineers, from India to the United States (US). A huge majority of these vast numbers of engineers, doctors and other professionals was accompanied by their spouses on what was known as an H4 visa. A majority of H1-B visa holders and their spouses are of Indian origin, followed by Chinese nationals. The H4 visa ensured that for several women, many of them educated as much as if not better than their spouses, the US became a country of servitude as, for many years, the conditions of an H4 visa did not allow them to work. The changes brought in by the Obama Administration in those conditions were widely celebrated as it opened the doors of opportunity to thousands of women. These changes in the H4 visa conditions allowed some to not only escape the bounds of their homes, giving them an independent income, but also allowed many to escape from domestic violence. One of the dirty and darkest secrets of the immigrant community from India who live and work in the US is the high levels of domestic violence. Female partners who have been brought up in a culture of domestic abuse in India not only find it culturally difficult to report domestic violence to the authorities but also considered it impossible to report abusive partners for the fear that the partners would be arrested and possibly deported, thus losing their only source of income.



While some horrible cases are occasionally reported, the fear of losing everything and the social ostracism that would inevitably follow, not just for them but for their extended families in India as well, keeps many more cases under wraps, although that is apparently changing, which is a good thing. The previous Trump Administration, by curtailing the ability of H4 visa holders to work, had unfortunately helped promote domestic abuse among immigrants in the US and this decision, while pandering to Trump's White nationalist and anti-immigrant vote bank, was met with howls of anger and protest by various groups campaigning for violence against women. Now, while every country has its own prerogatives in establishing immigration rules, stopping the H4 visa holders from work was a retrograde step. While the US authorities should allow H4 visa holders to work and the Biden Administration's decision to allow this is welcome, given the immense division in the US, some restrictions on the types of employment for such visa holders must apply. That said, the Biden Administration's move is expected to save the jobs of tens of thousands of H4 visa holders who are currently working in the US after being given employment authorisation. If such talented people are not allowed to join the workforce, only the US will be the loser. It is bad enough that India has lost this human capital, but to waste it completely would be a travesty.

PICTALK



A volunteer health worker receives a COVID-19 vaccine in Yangon, Myanmar, on Wednesday

Sports has no colour

Confirmation that Indian players were subjected to racial abuse during the Australia tour should shock no one

The recently-concluded India-Australia series has gone down as one of the classic modern Test series, a victory for the longest form of the game. The fact that the series was won in the last session of the last day of the last Test speaks volumes for the competitiveness of both sides, and India won plaudits for managing this series despite a humiliating loss in the first Test and losing most of their first-choice players by the last game. That said, after India's victorious players have returned home and Australian players have turned their minds to South Africa for that (potential) tour, recriminations have begun over the racial abuse over the last two Tests in Sydney and Brisbane. Matters came to such a boil when young pacer Mohammed Siraj faced abuse at the boundary while fielding in the Sydney Cricket Ground that Indian players had to report the issue to the on-field umpires. Some spectators were even removed from the stands by the police and while those spectators have been exonerated, Cricket Australia has confirmed that Siraj faced racist abuse.



In a year when the "Black Lives Matter" movement across the western world has brought into sharp relief the existing racism in the world and athletes across the board have taken a knee for racial justice and equality, and others like Michael Holding have been extremely eloquent about prevailing attitudes that still exist, the sports world has been forced to look at the mirror. The fans, however, have often been boorish, uncouth and, as in Sydney, openly hostile and racist. Nothing against hostile audiences, that is at a level of the wonderful nature of having spectators at stadia. But the spectators should realise that while being hostile to a player is one thing, being abusive and, worse still, racist is not on. We do not know the nature of the abuse that Siraj faced, but it must have been pretty bad. It speaks volumes about Siraj and his teammates that they didn't leave the park then and there. And while authorities can only do so much to keep racist abuse in check, spectators who are found to be racist, and make no mistakes, many Indian spectators are also quite racist as many West Indian players will testify, they should be permanently banned from sports events and exemplary legal action should be taken against them. Sure, that may not remove racism from sports, let alone society, but it will be a start.

Seasoned security pointsman at helm



BHOPIINDER SINGH

Lloyd Austin, the Secretary of Defense in the Biden Administration, is an old hand in the perilously strategic Afghanistan-Pakistan region

Compared to the Donald Trump era, the Joe Biden Administration is expected to be more decentralised, stable and receptive to professional advice from the respective heads of all 15 executive departments. Given India's security concerns, the appointment of the Secretary of Defense, who defines the security narrative as the "principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the Department of Defense", is significant. In the former four-star General, Lloyd Austin, Biden has picked a former combatant — who despite 41 years of illustrious service — has been described as an "intensely private man", and who, like one of his predecessors and brother-in-arms, James Mattis, joins the administration in a non-partisan role as an "Independent".

As former Military Commander of the unified United States Central Command (CENTCOM) from March 2013 to March 2016, responsible among other countries for the perilously strategic Af-Pak region, Austin would have first-hand experience of the regional dynamics, religious extremism and the patent Pakistani ways. Earlier in 2011, when Austin was still commanding the US forces in Iraq, a US Special Forces raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan, had "taken out" Osama bin Laden from a safe-house less than a mile away from the Pakistani Military Academy. After deliberately keeping the Pakistanis in the dark to avoid them from "alerting the targets", then US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta had said that the Pakistanis were "either involved or incompetent". Less than two years thereafter, Austin himself took over the overall CENTCOM and handled the clearly fractured US-Pakistan relations.

During Austin's formative tenure as the CENTCOM head, he witnessed the breakdown in "talks" of the Pakistanis with the Taliban that had led to three particularly bloody incidents, i.e. execution of 23 Pakistani Frontier Force soldiers, the attack on Karachi airport killing 28, and the horrific Peshawar school massacre killing 148 — all leading to the reactionary Operation Zarb-e-



Azb by the Pakistani forces. But the incorrigibility of the Pakistani 'establishment' soon saw the familiar dalliances with the extremist elements in the region, all to unsettle the Ashraf Ghani regime in Afghanistan, with the CENTCOM personnel paying for the same with their lives. In his three years of direct security control of the Af-Pak region, Austin would have surely grasped the frustrations, dupliciousness and unreliability of working with both — the Pakistani 'establishment' as also terror organisations like the Taliban in Afghanistan. Earlier still, as the 10th Mountain Division Commander in Afghanistan and 18th Airborne Corp Commander in Iraq, Austin would be conversant with the dangerously mutative nature of terror organisations. During a congressional hearing with the Senate Armed Service Committee, Austin had expressed: "We need Pakistan to take decisive actions."

The other indelible imprint from Austin's career would be his forgettable memories of the ill-fated and premature withdrawal of the US troops from Iraq in 2011 as forces inimical to America's interests soon took over. The only thing that earned Austin praise in Iraq during the 2011 withdraw-



IN THE FORMER FOUR-STAR GENERAL, LLOYD AUSTIN, PRESIDENT BIDEN HAS PICKED A COMBATANT WHO, WHO DESPITE 41 YEARS OF ILLUSTRIOUS SERVICE, HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS AN 'INTENSELY PRIVATE MAN'

al was his supposed "mastery of logistics" in handling the same. Today, with an inherited commitment to undertake yet another eerily familiar and ill-fated withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan, memories of the past haste will come rushing back. Irrespective of Austin's eventual ability to reverse Trump's commitment for the US troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan, the military professional in Austin will recognise the irreplaceable criticality of Pakistan in sustaining personnel, assets and resources in Afghanistan. Therefore, reconciliatory expressions for Pakistan like "essential partner in any peace process in Afghanistan" are naturally par for course. Concurrently, Austin added sentences of immense clarity and specificity that ought to concern Islamabad, "Pakistan has also taken steps against anti-Indian groups, such as Lashkar-e-Tayyeba and Jaish-e-Mohammed" but added sharply, "although this progress is incomplete". He also alluded to "Pulwama" by name and insisted that he "will press Pakistan to prevent its territorial misuse by terrorists".

In one of the podcasts on Pakistan, after Austin had retired from the military but before he became the Secretary

of Defense, he spoke of the "sticks and carrots" that he had employed in negotiating with Pakistan during his CENTCOM days. Lloyd had also expressed concerns over the Chinese readily "filling the void" of America's displeasure in Pakistan, and on keeping a hawk-eye on Chinese efforts to "militarise" their investments in Pakistan. Therefore, the practical-minded Austin insisted on the larger merits of remaining "invested" and engaged in Pakistan while working on its behavioural aspects, as opposed to disengaging completely. This backdrop experience, maturity and clarity in Austin will ensure that there is no thundering bluster from the new Secretary of Defense, but more nuanced and behind-the-scenes efforts to correct the regional narrative. The gigantic man may be a man of few words but he was famous for carrying an M4 carbine instead of a traditional pistol on himself — today as the Secretary of Defense, he will be expected to invoke his experiences of success and failure for the better facilitation of security imperatives for the region.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STAY ALERT, STAY SAFE

Sir — Gone are the days when the privacy of a person was guaranteed. Ever since the advent of smart phones and the internet, individual privacy has gone for a toss. If the 'location' feature of a smart phone is kept 'on', the movement of a person is recorded every second by the search engine. When the personal data of any individual lands into the hands of anti-social elements, there is every possibility of it being misused. Innumerable cases have been reported where individuals have been duped by cyber thieves. They will send unsolicited links to personal mobiles and if the user inadvertently clicks on the same, her/his mobile is hacked and personal information like passwords of debit card/UPI is collected.

Nowadays we see that almost everyone is getting message alerts on their mobiles from cell phone providers, money transferring apps and different banks claiming that they will never ask for customers eKYC details, Aadhaar number and other details. Now it is the duty of every individual to stay alert and not share their private information through social media, not to undertake banking transactions through their mobiles or laptops by using the public wi-fi system and change their passwords often, set screen lock and the password lock on their gadgets to stay safe from cyber fraud.

V Nagendra Kumar | Hyderabad

FRAME STRICT TRAFFIC RULES

Sir — There is not a single motorist in India who is unfamiliar with the dangers of road rage incidents. The powerful, rich and the mighty are often the perpetrators of road rage. One cannot win an argument with them; it's better to ignore and move on. Studies have indicated almost 65 per cent of Indian drivers are stressed out. Most of them lose their temper at least once daily.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data shows that thousands are subjected to road rage every year. Road rage may injure a fellow driver or, in the extreme, claim the latter's life. However,

Govt should strengthen intel



It refers to the editorial 'R-Day SHAME' (January 27). Calling it shameful would be an understatement. The chaotic events that took place during the farmers' rally in the Capital were quite unfortunate. Violence in all forms needs to be condemned. The farmers were given a designated path to hold the rally after the conclusion of the Republic Day events. But their storming the Red Fort and unfurling their religious flag is an act of treason. One wonders

whether they are farmers or goondas in the garb of growers.

The Supreme Court should have banned the rally on Republic Day. Now, after the sanctity and decorum of R-Day has been violated by the farmers, hopefully the Government and Delhi Police would have learnt their lessons and will allow the next march scheduled on Budget day only after ensuring that it will remain peaceful. Protest is a fundamental right but radical, uncompromising politics from the streets, based on hooliganism and chaos, sets the wrong precedent and open the Pandora's box of violence.

The Government should also strengthen its Intelligence network and make it more robust. We have often seen that Intelligence inputs are brushed aside. A high-level probe should be ordered and the culprits who indulged in the violence should be brought to book and punished severely. No one should be spared as nobody is above the law.

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

it is true that most road rage cases do not reach the police. This boosts the morale of habitual offenders. On the other hand, as the number of motor vehicles increases on roads, so does the risk of accidents, crashes and deaths. While the latter is an eventuality, we can certainly avoid an untimely death caused by vehicular accidents. Road traffic rules aren't as strict as needed in India. The Government must frame strict rules and legislations so that the incidents of road rage are brought under control. Further, there is a need to ensure honest implementation of the existing rules. One should wear seat belts and helmets, follow lane driving and never drink and drive.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

IRAN CAUTIOUS V/S-A-V/S THE US

Sir — This refers to the report 'Iran says Biden won't have infinite time to rejoin nuke deal' (January 27). With the Biden-Harris team now in the White House, there are plenty of issues to resolve. The

most pressing issue that the Biden Administration faces is America's relations with Iran, given the concern that the present scenario may upend Washington's non-proliferation strategy and increase tensions in the energy-rich Gulf region.

In 2018, Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and imposed sanctions on Iran. It is noteworthy that Trump's policy of exerting maximum pressure has forced Iran to increase its weapons stock which is alarming for all the nations. Once bitten twice shy, Iran now seems to be more vigilant and has rightly cautioned Joe Biden for rejoining the nuclear deal shortly. After four years of Trump's egregious policies and isolationist rhetoric, the general public can now breathe a sigh of relief.

Tushar Anand | Patna

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

This undesirable conduct is a serious breach of privilege and warrants strong displeasure of the House. In future, such conduct will not be tolerated. This is the last warning.



Goa Speaker —Rajesh Patnekar

As long as political stability is not guaranteed, Tunisia will not be able to get out of the crisis. It is necessary to listen to young people who have expressed discontent.



Tunisian PM —Hichem Mechichi

In so many years, I have seen the industry go mad. They have been trying just about anything, making any kind of songs and remixes. No head or tail in any song.



Singer —Daler Mehndi

CA confirms that members of the Indian cricket team were subjected to racial abuse. CA's own investigation into the matter remains open.



Cricket Australia —Sean Carroll

Driven by video conferencing platform Teams, more than 200 mn students and educators now rely on Microsoft education products for remote learning.



Microsoft CEO —Satya Nadella



FIRST COLUMN

SELECTIVE SYMPATHIES

TN netas must lead policy directives that ascertain economic independence among Lankan Tamils



VIJAY SAPPANI

The recent killings of four fishermen from Tamil Nadu (TN), allegedly by the Sri Lankan Navy, brought into focus the age-old tensions between India and the island nation over their respective fishing communities and their activities in the Palk Bay. The positions of the Centre and the TN Government run contrary to their publicly championed cause of Sri Lankan Tamils. Even as they highlight the excesses of Colombo's Sinhalese-majority Government against Tamils, Indian leaders have remained silent on another issue that has dire economic costs for Tamil fishing communities there: The poaching of fish in Lankan waters by TN fishers. This conflict between the two fishing communities is a deep-rooted one. Indian and Lankan Tamils have been fishing in the Palk Bay's shallow waters for centuries. In 1974 and 1976, India and Lanka signed pacts demarcating the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the Bay of Bengal, the Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar. India also ceded the Katchatheevu island to Lanka, which caused heartburn in TN fishing communities. The bilateral move made it effectively illegal for Indian fishermen to access areas they were used to operating in. In the 1960s, the Centre subsidised powerful motorboats that could drop weighted nylon nets to the seabed. This method, called trawling, created a lucrative fishing business and helped boost India's seafood export. It also depleted fish habitat on the Indian side of the IMBL. By the 1980s, at the height of the Sri Lankan civil war, Indian trawlers were commonplace in the island country's waters where fish were still plenty. At the time, the Lankan Navy restricted fishing activities in established security zones to prevent rebel takeover.



As the war ended and Lankan fishermen ventured again into the Palk Bay, they were challenged by the far superior Indian trawlers who cost Lanka approximately \$40-\$60 million each year. The Sri Lankan Navy was quick to defend the country's sovereignty and over 10 years it apprehended hundreds of Indian fishers who "infiltrated" its maritime territory. This issue has been a constant thorn in Indo-Lankan ties and between the Centre and TN. However, with careful deliberation and stakeholder involvement, constructive solutions can be reached. First, the Indian Navy should increase patrolling on its side and Lanka should unconditionally release arrested Indian fishers as a goodwill gesture. Second, India, Sri Lanka, TN, leaders of the fishing community and union representatives across the Bay must engage with each other to develop alternatives to trawling. A ban on decades-old methods will be ineffective without other options to rely on. Third, India and Lanka could establish a framework to licence fishing in each other's waters for a fixed period. This, however, depends on the ban on trawling so that Indian and Lankan fishers are on a par. Last, both countries can turn to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to resolve outstanding disputes, like they did in the past. At the crux of the issue rest important questions of Tamil identity. Indian leaders never waste an opportunity to defend Lankan Tamils for political gains, but they actively and vociferously opposed Tamil actor Vijay Sethupathi playing the role of Lankan cricketer Muttiah Muralitharan in the latter's biopic. Sadly, Lanka has accused Muralitharan, an Indian-origin Tamil, of being complicit in the killing of Tamils even though he has been vocal about his painful experiences during the civil war when he lost his father. The Sethupathi controversy was only the most recent example of selective sympathies politicians and the TN film industry harbour for their Lankan brethren. The absence of indignation at the loss of Lankan livelihood reflects contemporary Indian grandstanding: Convenient opposition to perceived subjugation of identities. Instead of endlessly criticising Lanka's Sinhalese majority, TN politicians must lead credible policy directives that encourage trade, promote quality education, cater to healthcare needs, and ascertain economic independence among Lankan Tamils. The Tamil film industry, on the other hand, can simply let actors act.

(The writer is a Board member at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Canada. The views expressed are personal.)

India must avoid the retrospective tax mess

Other countries have also tried taxing MNCs retrospectively, but this ends up destroying these firms to the extent that the domestic economy and employment suffer



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

In the McCulloch vs Maryland case, 1819, while asserting that the Government had implied powers not explicitly enumerated in the Constitution, US Chief Justice John Marshall had famously warned governments against their arbitrary use: "That the power to tax involves the power to destroy; that the power to destroy may defeat and render useless the power to create." Governments nevertheless use such powers. However, the mature ones hold back while immature governments exercise their powers arbitrarily, which hurts businesses and enterprise. The retrospective taxation legislation was one such arbitrary measure introduced by the Government, that India is still paying a price for.

The telecom sector was India's success story as it had attracted multiple national and international giants as well as small operators. The global major Hutchison was one of the first telecom companies to enter India. Collaborating with its Indian partner Essar, Hutchison-Essar expanded its operations pan-India to become a leading market player. It got new licences for some telecom circles and operated in others by acquiring smaller telecom entities with licences for those circles. This led to a very complex ownership pattern, which, as Harish Salve pointed out, was not unusual for such global operators. The Hong Kong-based Hutchison held shares in downstream companies in the Cayman Islands, like CGP Investments, which in turn held shares in downstream companies based in Mauritius which in turn held shares in an Indian holding company that controlled Hutchinson's subsidiaries in the country. Through the CGP, Hutchinson held 67 per cent stake in Hutchison-Essar. Cayman Islands and Mauritius, being tax havens, attracted multinational (MNCs) with the operational flexibility of relocating their units to avoid taxes; this was also not unusual.

In December 2006, Hutchison decided to exit India and sold their operations to the Netherlands-based Vodafone at \$10.8 billion in May 2007. Vodafone acquired CGP Investments whose acquisition gave them control over all downstream companies and hence control over its Indian operations. Taking advantage of the loopholes in Indian tax laws which did not make such transactions taxable even though the assets were located here, the entire deal and payments were transacted outside the country. Hutchison-Essar thus became Vodafone-Essar. The capital gains that accrued upon the acquisition of CGP was shown in the Hutchinson accounts as "profit from discontinued operations" which was not taxable in India under the extant laws; besides, it was also not the first time that such transactions were executed without attracting any tax liability.

But the Income-Tax Department (I-T Department) under Pranab Mukherjee reckoned the capital gains as taxable and in September 2007, raised a demand of ₹7,990 crore from Vodafone. The I-T Department later admitted that it was a "test case" to make such transactions taxable. Vodafone challenged it before the Bombay High Court (HC) on the ground that Hutchison had sold a foreign company, CGP Investments, to another foreign entity, Vodafone, and a transaction between two foreign entities conducted and concluded outside India cannot be taxable here as it would amount to applying Indian law to a commercial transaction outside the country between two non-Indians. In December 2008, the HC ruled in favour of revenue which was overturned by the Supreme Court in January 2012 which absolved Vodafone of all tax liability, holding that the sale did not amount to tax avoidance. That should have closed the matter once and for all, with the legal loophole being plugged for the future. Instead Mukherjee introduced retrospective taxation by amending the I-T Act in the 2012-13 Union Budget to override the top court's order. This not



IN SEPTEMBER 2020, THE PCA RULED THAT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S RETROSPECTIVE DEMAND OF \$2.7 BILLION ON VODAFONE WAS 'IN BREACH OF THE GUARANTEE OF FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT' UNDER THE BIT, WARNING THAT ENFORCING THE TAX DEMAND WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF INDIA'S GLOBAL OBLIGATIONS. INDIA SHOULD HAVE GRACEFULLY ACCEPTED THE VERDICT AND MOVED ON, EARNING THE GOODWILL AND CONFIDENCE OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND INVESTORS. INSTEAD, IT WENT ON TO APPEAL

The writer is a former Director-General with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, an author and academic. The views expressed are personal.



only defied economic logic but also went against the counsel of then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Sonia Gandhi, P Chidambaram and other Cabinet colleagues who cautioned that it would adversely impact the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that India needed so much. In his autobiography 'The Coalition Years 1996-2012', Mukherjee justified this by saying that concerns about the potential effect of the amendment on FDI, "which might have persuaded them to give a decision against the revenue department, were unfounded", because, first, this was not a case of FDI, and second, the FDI policy was entirely the executive's prerogative. "Just because some foreign investors choose to structure their investments through tax havens, they should not, as a matter of policy, get away without paying any taxes", he wrote, repudiating the apex court's ruling that creation of a structure driven by commercial considerations was not a tax avoidance device.

The I-T Act was amended "with retrospective effect from 1962 to assert the Government's right to levy tax on merger and acquisition (M&A) deals involving overseas companies with business assets in India" which was "an enabling provision to protect the fiscal interests of the country and avert the chances of a crisis." Actually it was done to override every single argument of the top court.

The FDI inflow indeed fell sharply soon, reversing a growth rate of 64 per cent registered in 2010-11, from \$37 billion in 2011-12 (two per cent of the GDP), it came down to \$24 billion in 2012-13. It would take another three years to reach the 2011-12 level and in 2018-19 it stood at \$51 billion, or 1.8 per cent of the GDP. Successive governments did nothing

to change the law. The amendment forced Vodafone to approach the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at the Hague, under provisions of the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between India and the Netherlands signed in 1995. Under Article 9 of this treaty (which lapsed in 2016), both countries guaranteed each other fair and equitable treatment requiring any dispute to be settled amicably through arbitration.

In September 2020, the PCA ruled that the Indian Government's retrospective demand of \$2.7 billion on Vodafone was "in breach of the guarantee of fair and equitable treatment" under the BIT, warning that enforcing the tax demand would be a violation of India's global obligations. India should have gracefully accepted the verdict and moved on, earning the goodwill and confidence of foreign countries and investors. Instead, it went on to appeal.

The retrospective amendment also entangled another MNC, the UK-based Cairn Energy. The Cayman Island-based Cairn India Holdings (CIH) was a fully-owned subsidiary of Cairn UK Holdings (CUH), which in turn was a fully-owned subsidiary of Cairn Energy. CIH owned the India operations of Cairn Energy in the Rajasthan oil field, the country's biggest onshore discovery in two decades, and wanted to transfer its ownership to a new local entity, Cairn India, to prepare for the latter's Initial Public Offering (IPO). In 2006-07 CUH transferred shares of CIH to Cairn India, acquiring 69 per cent of its stakes in the exchange. The share transfer was made prior to the Cairn India IPO, which gave rise to differing interpretations on whether CUH had made capital gains in the transfer. Taxmen held that CUH had made capital

gains of ₹24,500 crore and slapped a tax demand of ₹10,247 crore on it in January 2014. In 2011, Cairn Energy had sold majority stakes of Cairn India to the mining conglomerate Vedanta. Exercising coercive power, the Government froze payment of dividend by Cairn India to Cairn Energy and also seized Cairn India shares transferred to CUH.

In 2015, Cairn Energy approached the PAC under the 1994-BIT between India and UK. The PAC ruled that India's demand of retrospective tax was "in breach of the guarantee of fair and equitable treatment." It also awarded damages to the firm worth ₹8,842 crore. The court noted that during the 2014 general elections, the BJP had criticised the UPA Government for the amendment which had "negatively impacted the investment climate" and promised to end "tax terrorism." It further cited Narendra Modi's assurance that the NDA Government will not resort to retrospective taxation and will make the "tax regime transparent, stable and predictable." The \$4.3 billion final assessment order for Cairn Energy came in February 2016 after the NDA had been in power for almost two years.

No doubt both Vodafone and Cairn took advantage of the tax loopholes using tax havens. Other countries have also tried taxing MNCs retrospectively, but eventually this ends up destroying these firms to the extent that the domestic economy and employment suffer. It also erodes the confidence of foreign investors who want a predictable tax regime. If our snail-paced justice delivery system did not corrode that confidence completely, a legislation to overturn a judgment given by the apex court certainly did. The result is the dismal telecom scenario and a once-vibrant sector now gasping for breath.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I THINK THE GOVERNMENT'S EVENTS SHOULD HAVE DIGNITY. IT DOESN'T SUIT YOU TO INSULT SOMEONE AFTER INVITING THEM.

—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

MAMATA BANERJEE



I FAIL TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS THE PROBLEM IN CHANTING JAI SHRI RAM. I THINK THE SLOGAN WAS RAISED IN HER HONOUR WHEN SHE STOOD UP.

—BJP GENERAL SECRETARY

KAILASH VIJAYVARGIYA



Budget must put the environment front and centre

It is time to rebuild the economy besides focusing on the environment which has been relegated to the background since March 2020

The fall in India's daily COVID-19 caseload has been reinforced by the launch of the vaccination drive. Assuming that the core phase of India's fight against the virus is over, it is time to rebuild the economy besides focusing on burning issues such as the environment which have been relegated to the background since March 2020. The Union Budget 2021-22 is an opportunity for the Centre to right this wrong.

The Budget that will be presented on February 1 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to focus on the manufacturing sector, AtmaNirbhar Bharat and the healthcare sector to fire up the economy. According to those in the know,



KOTA SRIRAJ

The writer is an environmental journalist. The views expressed are personal.

the Budget is likely to give environmental issues and conservation a slip.

Apparently there is no exclusive focus on the environmental woes of the nation or measures to resuscitate the failing ecology and address climate change. The pandemic has taught us that a resilient environment, coupled with an ecologically sensitive humanity, could have watered down the impact of the virus. But if the environment is again relegated to the sidelines by this year's Budget, we would not have learnt our lessons yet.

In order to ensure a balanced Budget that not only gives impetus to the economy but also puts a priority on envi-

ronmental conservation, core urban issues pertaining to pollution need to be addressed first. Ever since the National Green Tribunal put a ban on petrol and diesel vehicles that are older than 15 and 10 years respectively, there is an express need to accelerate the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric (FAME) Vehicles initiative of the Government. As a part of the same, it is also essential to focus on the rapid setting up of the planned 2,636 charging stations across 62 cities. This will ensure the setting up of the EV ecosystem in India and will also reduce the massive energy import bill as a growing green vehicle industry will reduce dependence on fos-



sil fuels.

In order to boost the EV industry which is at a nascent stage, start-ups involved in this sector need to be encouraged further. In this regard, the Budget needs to examine the tax structure and reduce the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on raw material which is anywhere between 18 per cent to 28 per

cent. This high tax rate is acting as a deterrent for growth and creating working capital problems for EV manufacturers and start-ups. Bringing down the GST rates on raw material will allow business sustainability and encourage viability. Using the Budget as a platform, the Government must provide incentives to spur the growth in demand for EVs in the commercial and passenger segments. These incentives can take the shape of compelling retail finance schemes besides lucrative exchange schemes for old vehicles.

The Budget must also provide the long overdue push to the green energy sector. Under the present economic condi-

tions, the renewable energy sector, which was already on the back foot, has suffered further setbacks. The sector needs a renewed policy that encompasses both tariff and non-tariff barriers, long-term financial support and direct incentives so that the domestic renewables industry is viable, competitive and cost-effective. The Government can consider a five per cent interest subvention on long term loans and working capital, upfront Central Financial Assistance of 30 per cent of the CAPEX and increase export incentive to eight per cent under the Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product. It is time to put the environment front and centre.

FOREIGN EYE



PUTIN ATTACKS NAVALNY, AGAIN

Politicians know that they have a problem when they have to deny it. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his allies have preferred to publicly ignore Opposition leader, Alexei Navalny. Now, they are attacking him and his claims head-on, and denouncing the protests he has inspired as "illegal and dangerous." (The Guardian editorial)

TCS 3rd most-valued IT services brand globally: Brand Finance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been ranked third most-valued IT services brand globally, after Accenture and IBM, according to a report by Brand Finance.

Four Indian IT services companies -- TCS, Infosys, HCL and Wipro -- secured spots in the top-10 globally tally.

"Third-ranked TCS is rapidly closing the gap with IBM following a healthy 11 per cent brand value increase to USD 15 billion," the report by Brand Finance said.

TCS has celebrated strong

revenue growth as demand grows for its core transformation services and through winning deals - worth over USD 6.8 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020 alone, it added.

"With the brand benefitting from the long cycle of technology spending in its overseas markets, and the increase in spending from the financial sector in the US and European markets as the road to recovery begins, TCS will be hoping the coming year will prove even more fruitful," the report said.

Accenture retained the title of world's most valuable

and strongest IT services brand with record brand value of USD 26 billion, while IBM continued at the second place with brand value of USD 16.1 billion.

The report said "Brand value" refers to the present value of earnings specifically related to brand reputation.

"With what was a very tough 2020, led so ably by its CEO Rajesh Gopinathan, TCS has excelled itself once again. Along with 10 per cent growth in its brand, its market cap also hit pole position in its industry and it is increasingly closing in on the top two in the IT ser-

vices sector table," Brand Finance CEO (Chief Executive Officer) David Haigh said.

Rajashree R, Chief Marketing Officer at TCS, said this recognition of TCS' brand strength is a stellar reaffirmation of the continued trust that customers have placed in the company.

"We are proud and excited to embark on the next phase of our growth, building on our beliefs, and harnessing the passion, dedication and strength of our 469,000 associates who are the true custodians of Brand TCS," she added.

The report noted that

Infosys has overtaken Cognizant at the fourth spot, following a 19 per cent brand value increase to USD 8.4 billion. Cognizant has suffered a 6 per cent brand value loss of USD 8 billion. The Bengaluru-based company has entered the "Big 4 of IT services brands globally and making it the fastest growing brand in the top 10," it added.

"Even before the pandemic, Infosys' leadership recognised the importance of focusing on its service offering, including data security and cloud services. This focus, paired with key acquisitions to

bolster the brand's end-to-end customer experience offerings, has propelled

Infosys to a position where it consistently wins larger consulting, data management and cloud service projects," the report said.

Infosys CEO Sail Parekh said the execution of the company's 'Navigate your Next' strategy over the last three years, has strengthened the brand, positioning Infosys as the industry's leading digital services provider.

"Continued strategic investments in building differentiating digital capabilities

along with increased sales and marketing effectiveness have amplified our ability to grow in client relevance and deepen partnerships with global businesses," he added.

HCL was at the seventh spot, while Wipro ranked 9th in the tally.

Tech Mahindra saw 11 per cent brand value growth to USD 2.3 billion that has enabled the brand to jump to the 15th spot in this year's ranking as it continues to work towards accelerated growth through building on its healthy pipeline deals and embracing new 5G opportunities, the

report said.

"Being recognised as one of the fastest growing organisations globally is a true testimony of our collective spirit of resilience... At Tech Mahindra, we took this challenge on war footing to ensure business continuity and enhanced customer experience through innovative and purpose-driven initiatives, while also living up to our promise of delivering 'Connected World and Connected Experiences'," Harshendra Soin, Global Chief People Officer and Head of Marketing at Tech Mahindra, said.

Sensex tanks 938 pts; Nifty crashes below 14,000-level

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BSE benchmark Sensex crashed 938 points to slip below the 47,500-mark and the NSE Nifty plunged below the psychological 14,000-level due to rampant selling across counters amid foreign fund outflow.

Marking its fourth straight session of loss, the Sensex tumbled 937.66 points or 1.94 per cent to settle at 47,409.93 - taking the aggre-

gate four-session loss to 2,382.19 points or 4.78 per cent.

Intraday, the BSE gauge swung 1,117.65 points.

Likewise, the NSE Nifty plunged 271.40 points or 1.91 per cent to close the session at 13,967.50. Over the last four sessions, the 50-share index has lost 677.20 points or 4.62 per cent. On the Sensex chart, 24 shares closed in the red and 6 in the green.

Axis Bank, Titan, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Dr

Reddy's, HDFC and Asian Paint were major losers, shedding up to 4.05 per cent.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, ITC, PowerGrid, UltraTech Cement, HCL Tech and Nestle India rose up to 2.57 per cent.

Of the 19 sectoral indices, barring FMCG index all ended with losses.

Among the major losers were banking (2.93 per cent), finance (2.72 per cent), metal (2.54), realty (2.28) and auto (2.11 per cent).

FDI into India up 37% to \$43.85 bn during Apr-Nov 2020

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investment (FDI) into India increased by 37 per cent to USD 43.85 billion during April-November 2020, according to data by the commerce and industry ministry.

Total FDI inflows (including reinvested earnings) during the eight-month period of the current fiscal grew by 22 per cent to USD 58.37 billion, the ministry said on Wednesday.

Budget 21-22 must set aside threat for India becoming dumping ground for global AI scrap

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

India has been caught in a pincer by a torrent of cheap inflow of aluminum and scrap imports majorly from China as well as the United States.

In FY20, there has been a 327 per cent increase in the imports of aluminium scrap from US into India compared to the levels in FY15.

India has overtaken China as the world's largest importer of aluminium scrap, and the country has been adversely impacted due to recent global devel-

opments and US-China trade war further fuelled by China's National Scrap Policy measures to cut Scrap Imports substantially with stringent scrap standards and inclusion in restricted list of imports, government quota for import, and 25% tariffs aluminium Scrap imports from USA.

As India is a natural market, entire global chain of scrap has virtually shifted to India in the absence of any quality/BIS standards for recycling that most countries have established to protect the environment. The

absence of any stringent tariff and non-tariff barriers to check scrap imports are created a precarious situation for Indian aluminium industry and challenging its sustainability. Such high level of imports despite domestic capacity is also not in the spirit of country's vision to become an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

India is the third largest producer and consumer of aluminium globally, still Indian aluminium industry is currently plagued by increasing aluminium and scrap imports. Despite having sufficient

domestic production capacity of 4.1 mtpa to cater country's aluminium demand of around 3.7 mtpa, currently 60 per cent of country demand is being met through imports primarily scrap imports.

The Import share in the last two fiscals increased from 54 per cent in FY18 to 58 per cent average in FY19 and FY20, also there has been a substantial increase in Scrap imports as evident by share of Scrap in total aluminium imports increased from 52 per cent to 67% in last 5 years.

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	14237.95	14237.95	13929.30	13967.50	-271.40
TECHM	978.00	1004.90	973.65	997.55	25.50
SUNIFL	865.30	885.00	859.10	883.00	20.15
WIPRO	480.30	454.75	437.25	446.00	8.75
ITC	208.00	212.65	207.10	210.75	2.95
ULTRACEMCO	5380.00	5519.90	5330.35	5430.00	61.60
HCLTECH	952.10	963.25	942.50	957.40	9.90
NESTLEIND	17472.95	17599.70	17340.25	17525.00	109.75
POWERGRID	190.00	194.35	189.30	191.00	0.80
HDFCLIFE	685.00	695.00	673.05	683.20	2.80
CIPLA	839.90	856.45	825.20	830.70	2.90
BRITANNIA	3613.55	3649.90	3593.80	3619.50	5.45
INDUSINLV	2425.00	2425.00	2335.00	2403.00	3.40
TCS	3300.00	3306.45	3227.00	3263.00	-28.30
GRASIM	1063.95	1114.35	1051.05	1060.00	-9.75
BAJAJ-AUTO	4133.40	4236.65	4108.10	4130.00	-38.95
BAJAJFINSV	9165.00	9284.95	9042.05	9169.20	-99.70
ADANIPTS	528.25	528.95	519.00	525.65	-7.00
SHREECEM	23270.00	23399.55	22742.00	22919.00	-366.65
MARUTI	792.95	809.00	782.50	786.15	-12.05
BKPL	385.55	392.35	379.75	381.45	-5.85
KOTAKBANK	1798.00	1823.45	1746.35	1767.00	-27.40
ONGC	91.40	91.75	88.90	89.95	-1.40
BHARTIARTL	580.00	580.00	575.35	570.00	-9.85
BAJFINANCE	4921.30	4945.60	4811.00	4825.00	-83.70
INFY	1319.60	1327.55	1285.10	1300.50	-24.60
NTPC	95.00	93.00	90.80	91.40	-1.80
COALINDIA	132.00	132.55	128.70	129.25	-2.60
IOC	93.00	93.80	90.25	91.50	-1.95
SBIN	280.20	284.85	272.70	275.00	-5.95
GAIL	130.70	131.65	126.90	127.65	-2.80
JSWSTEEL	380.60	382.00	371.55	374.00	-4.45
UPL	588.15	601.15	569.00	575.00	-13.15
DIVISLAB	394.90	390.00	349.00	349.00	-89.05
RELIANCE	1925.00	1925.00	1888.00	1890.00	-51.00
ICICIBANK	537.80	539.20	519.10	522.75	-15.30
SUNPHARMA	585.90	585.90	563.75	569.20	-7.20
EICHERMOT	289.95	293.40	276.90	278.50	-85.05
HDFC	2546.30	2546.30	2458.25	2470.00	-81.40
ASIANPAINT	2425.00	2525.00	2430.50	2433.00	-80.95
HDFCCL	168.00	171.90	160.15	161.25	-5.10
DREDDY	505.40	505.40	483.20	490.20	-18.40
M&M	797.00	817.00	763.40	765.15	-29.40
AXISBANK	699.95	663.80	627.40	633.55	-24.85
HEROMOTOCO	2400.00	3484.00	3329.95	3341.00	-133.95
HINDALCO	240.00	240.00	229.75	230.75	-9.55
INDUSINDBK	840.00	860.00	800.00	815.00	-34.15
TITAN	1505.00	1505.00	1432.00	1470.00	-62.85
TATASTEEL	650.90	651.15	623.80	624.05	-27.90
TATAMOTORS	274.90	275.00	266.75	267.50	-12.40

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	33113.90	33113.90	32511.80	32642.55	-437.9
UBI	128.60	131.15	124.55	131.00	61.4
LIT	3913.70	4115.00	3850.00	4028.00	134.15
CONCOR	43.7	44.3	42	42.7	11.45
COLPAL	1520.00	1555.00	1515.85	1549.00	24.85
INDUSTOWER	236	247.25	235.5	241	3.75
MCDOWELL-N	637.95	647.95	629.6	644.6	9.55
MARICO	412	417.6	402.25	414	3.85
ABBOTINDIA	1460.00	1466.00	1420.10	1453.00	5.35
DMRT	2850.70	2889.55	2793.00	2835.00	-2
ADANIGREEN	1030.20	1050.00	1020.80	1030.30	-0.8
TATACONSUM	573	585.55	566.57	573	-0.6
HAVELLS	1129.00	1129.00	1114.00	1121.10	-1.3
PGHIL	11348.95	11348.95	11051.75	11250.00	-23.95
INDIGO	1595.00	1627.45	1574.65	1582.45	-5.1
GODREJCP	782	786.8	765	776.1	-3.15
TORNTPHARM	2640.90	2657.30	2602.50	2620.15	-15.1
ICICIPRULI	506.9	507.25	497.6	498.95	-2.95
IGL	536.1	546.85	526	531.1	-3.35
LUPIN	1089.00	1092.00	1061.30	1074.95	-6.95
DABUR	533.9	537.5	525.65	528.5	-4.1
MOTHERSUMI	152.6	153.8	147.25	151.3	-1.25
GICRE	134.3	134.4	131.35	132.5	-1.25
BIOCEN	380	386.95	368.55	378.5	-4.2
HINDZINC	265.4	266.85	261.15	264.5	-3.55
ADANTRANS	468.35	487.45	461	465.35	-6.25
BAJALHNDG	3290.00	3298.25	3208.00	3255.00	-45.3
OFSS	3283.45	3340.55	3210.00	3270.00	-45.95
BANKBARODA	73.55	75.5	72	72.8	-1.05
BANDHANBANK	309.85	315.4	302.1	307.47	-4.85
CADILAC	467.85	472.65	459.1	460	-7.4
ALKEM	3119.00	3151.50	2999.55	3061.90	-49.3
HDFCAMC	2954.45	2973.40	2891.70	2900.00	-53.15
BERGEPAINT	748.45	755.6	729.35	734.95	-13.5
AMBUJACEM	250	260.15	251.2	252	-5
HINDPETRO	221	221.15	214.5	215.85	-4.35
PETRONET	243.7	247.45	236.2	236.95	-4.95
ACC	1657.70	1675.95	1624.20	1628.20	-34.95
PNB	34.1	34.25	33.05	33.3	-0.85
BOSCHLTD	15900.00	15900.00	15415.00	15465.00	-411.4
PIDILITIND	1775.70	1776.65	1695.05	1711.00	-46.5
PCF	114	114.25	111	111.1	-3.15
NMDC	109.3	111.2	106.1	106.65	-3.45
SIEMENS	1671.40	1671.40	1607.55	1612.00	-52.45
PEL	1464.10	1497.40	1411.80	1420.00	-47.55
MOOTHFOON	1170.00	1172.80	1130.00	1131.70	-41.85
SBICARD	1008.85	1012.95	990	976.95	-45.55
ICICIIG	1438.30	1438.20	1367.70	1375.00	-63.25
DLF	269.65	269.65	257.15	258	-11.95
AUROPHARMA	998.6	1000.00	948.25	952.05	-46.55
NAUKRI	5025.00	5125.80	4677.00	4714.00	-271.85

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	HDFCLIFE	MOTHERSUNMI
RELIANCE	1930.20	1930.20	1888.00	1895.25	1930.20	1930.20
TCS	3300.00	3305.30	3227.15	3261.05	3300.00	3300.00
TATAMOTORS	278.00	278.00	265.75	267.40	278.00	278.00
IDEA	11.69	11.98	11.35	11.60	11.69	11.69
INDUSINDBK	849.50	861.05	806.15	820.50	849.50	849.50
ITC	207.90	212.60	207.00	210.70	207.90	207.90

Biden's UN pick says US will counter China

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Linda Thomas-Greenfield says that if confirmed by the US Senate as America's ambassador to the United Nations she will vigorously counter China's authoritarian agenda and engage in "people-to-people diplomacy."



Linda Thomas-Greenfield

al issues at the United Nations and elsewhere.

Beijing also has come under sharp criticism from the US and many other nations for its treatment of more than 1 million Uighurs and members of other Chinese Muslim minority groups and for its delayed announcement of Covid-19, which was first diagnosed in Wuhan.

"We know China is working across the UN system to drive an authoritarian agenda that stands in opposition to the founding values of the institution — American values," Thomas-Greenfield says. "Their success depends on our continued withdrawal. That will not happen on my watch."

If confirmed by the Senate, Thomas-Greenfield would be neither the first African American nor the first woman, nor even the first African American woman, to serve as US ambassador to the United Nations. But she is a groundbreaking diplomat nonetheless.

The veteran foreign service officer, in prepared remarks, speaks of China's diplomatic inroads during the Trump administration, which pursued an "America First" policy that weakened international alliances.

And she makes clear there will be a change under President Joe Biden to re-engaging internationally and promoting American values, according to excerpts of her Wednesday testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee obtained by The Associated Press.

"When America shows up — when we are consistent and persistent — when we exert our influence in accordance with

our values — the United Nations can be an indispensable institution for advancing peace, security, and our collective well-being," she says.

Alluding to the absence of US global leadership during Donald Trump's four-year presidency, Thomas-Greenfield says: "If instead we walk away from the table, and allow others to fill the void, the global community suffers — and so do American interests."

She then turns to China, which has become a major player on the global stage in recent years and much more outspoken on a range of glob-

Philippines protests new China law as 'verbal threat of war'

AP ■ MANILA

The Philippines has protested a new Chinese law that authorises its coast guard to fire on foreign vessels and destroy other countries' structures on islands it claims, Manila's top diplomat said on Wednesday.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr said in a tweet that the new Chinese law "is a verbal threat of war to any country that defies" it. Failure to challenge the law "is submission to it," he said.

"While enacting law is a sovereign prerogative, this one — given the area involved, or for that matter the open South China Sea — is a verbal threat of war to any country that defies the law," Locsin said.

China's Coast Guard Law, which was passed on Friday,

empowers the force to "take all necessary measures, including the use of weapons, when national sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction are being illegally infringed upon by foreign organisations or individuals at sea."

The law also authorises the coast guard to demolish other countries' structures built on reefs and islands claimed by China and to seize or order foreign vessels illegally entering China's territorial waters to leave. The Chinese law raises the stakes and the possibility of clashes with regional maritime rivals.

China and the Philippines, along with Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, have been locked in territorial rivalries in the South China Sea in tense decades-long standoffs.

Nepal launches Covid vaccination drive with vaccines gifted by India

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal on Wednesday launched a nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive with the one million doses of vaccine provided by India under grant assistance in sync with its "Neighbourhood First" policy. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli inaugurated the vaccination campaign at the Prime Minister's residence at Baluwatar on Wednesday morning.

At the same time, government hospitals across the country vaccinated doctors and front-line health workers actively engaged in the field.

Speaking at the inaugural programme, Prime Minister Oli said that all Nepalis would get the vaccine free of cost within three months.

Dr Sagar Rajbhandari, director of Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital, Teku was the first

among the front-line workers to receive the job, according to Health Ministry sources.

According to officials, around 4,30,000 frontline workers—health workers, supporting staffers at health facilities, female community health volunteers, security personnel, sanitation workers, elderly people living in care homes, and prisoners — will be inoculated in 65 districts across the country.

One million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine donated by India last week was jointly developed by the University of Oxford and the pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca and produced in India by the Serum Institute of India.

Prime Minister Oli last week thanked the Indian government for sending one million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine.

"I thank Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji as well

as the Government and people of India for the generous grant of one million doses of Covid vaccine to Nepal at this critical time when India is rolling out vaccination for its own people," Oli tweeted.

"Nepal appreciates this gesture from a friendly neighbour," he added.

Responding to his tweet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India remains committed to assist the people of Nepal in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. "The vaccines being made in India will also contribute to the global efforts to contain the pandemic," Modi tweeted. Nepal has so far registered 2,70,375 Covid-19 cases while 2,020 people have died. Nepal has so far recorded 2,65,069 recoveries.

India, one of the world's biggest drugmakers, has been approached by numerous countries for its anti-coronavirus doses.

Vladimir Putin warns of worsening global instability

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin warned on Wednesday that the world risks sliding deeper into instability as the coronavirus pandemic combines with global rivalries and other international tensions.

Speaking by video link during a virtual meeting of the World Economic Forum, Putin

pointed at growing inequality and unemployment and a rise of populism as potential triggers for new conflicts that he said could plunge the world into a "dark anti-Utopia."

"The pandemic has exacerbated the problems and disabilities that have been accumulating," the leader said. AP

Police raid Russian Opposition leader's apartment, offices

Moscow: Police on Wednesday searched the Moscow apartment of jailed Russian Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, another residence where his wife is living and offices of his anti-corruption organisation.

Navalny's aides reported the raids on social media. AP

Report: Israeli settler population surged during Trump era

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's West Bank settler population has grown at a far higher rate than the country as a whole over the last four years, a pro-settler group said Wednesday, a period that coincides with the Trump administration's unprecedented acceptance of settlement activity. The report by West Bank Jewish Population Stats

shows the settler population growing by around 13 per cent since the start of 2017 to reach 4,75,481. During the same period, Israel's population grew by around 8 per cent to reach nearly 9.3 million, according to the Government. The group's report, which is based on official government data, does not include annexed east Jerusalem, home to more than 2,00,000 settlers.

Iran, Taliban officials say US pushing war in Afghanistan

Tehran: Iranian and Taliban officials met in Tehran on Wednesday and accused the US of provoking the continuation of war in Afghanistan, Iranian State TV reported. Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told visiting Taliban political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar that the US seeks to continue the war in neighbouring Afghanistan. "The US strategy supports the continuation of war and bloodshed among various Afghan groups in the political spectrum," Shamkhani was quoted as saying.

He said the US tries to blame insecurity and instability in the country on individual Afghan groups. There was no immediate comment from the US, which signed a peace agreement with the Taliban last February and met its goal this month of reducing the number of troops in Afghanistan to about 2,500.

Taliban representatives and the Afghan government earlier this month resumed peace talks in Qatar, the Gulf Arab state where the insurgents maintain an office.

GLOBAL TROTTERING

B' DESH LAUNCHES COVID VACCINATION DRIVE

Dhaka: Bangladesh on Wednesday launched its nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive with AstraZeneca-Oxford University vaccine Covishield, a week after the first vaccines were delivered by India.

BUS CRASH IN CAMEROON KILLS OVER 50 PASSENGERS

Yaounde: At least 53 people have died and 21 others were injured in Cameroon when a bus collided with a truck early on Wednesday in a village in the western part of the country, officials said.

FROM PAGE 1

2 FARM UNIONS END PROTEST, CONDEMN R-DAY VIOLENCE

Addressing a Press conference, Singh also accused Tikait of not raising the issue of sugarcane farmers. He said there is no point in staying in the movement that makes the farmer ashamed. On Wednesday, the number of farmers at UP Gate decreased significantly.

The administration closed Ghazipur Mandi, National Highway-9 and National Highway-24 in view of the situation.

"He took youth towards the Red Fort by misleading them. We never allowed people like Deep Sidhu at our stage. We knew that he could bring disrepute to the agitation. We never trusted him," he further said.

Bhartiya Kisan Union (Chaduni) leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni also condemned the action of Deep Sidhu, saying there was no plan of the farmers to go to the Red Fort.

"Whatever Deep Sidhu has done, we condemn it in the strongest possible words and we feel that he was an agent of the government. He always speaks against the farmer leaders and incites people against them," said Chaduni in a video message, stressing that farmers did not have any plan to go to the Red Fort.

Before associating himself with the farmers' agitation, Sidhu, hailing from Punjab's Muktsar district, had acted in a few Punjabi films. He has also studied law.

The model-turned-actor made his debut in Punjabi romantic film "Ramta Jogi", which was directed by Guddu Dhanoa in 2015. He has also acted in Punjabi movies "Jora Dus Numbaria", "Saade Aale" and "Jora the second chapter."

He got into the limelight when he joined a dharna at Shambhu near Haryana border in support of the protesting farmers last year. The dharna received massive support from farmers especially the youth who favoured the demand for roll-back of the three new agril laws introduced by the Central Government.

Sidhu was also a close aide of BJP MP Sunny Deol, who contested from the Gurdaspur seat in Punjab during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. He remained with Deol during the poll campaigning.

Deol had distanced himself from Sidhu in December last year after he joined the farmers' agitation.

SC STAYS HC ACQUITAL ORDER UNDER POCSO ON LACK OF SKIN TOUCH

The verdict said that groping a minor's breast without "skin to skin contact" cannot be termed as sexual assault as defined under the POCSO Act.

It said that since the man groped the child without removing her clothes the offence cannot be termed as sexual assault but it does constitute the offence of outraging a woman's modesty under IPC section 354.

The High Court had modified the order of a sessions court, which had sentenced a 39-year-old man to three years of imprisonment for sexually assaulting a 12-year-old girl.

Meanwhile, a lawyers' body the 'Youth Bar Association of India' have also filed a plea in the top court challenging the high court. The plea filed through advocate Manju Jetley states that the observations made by the high court in its verdict would have a wide impact in the society and public at large.

The verdict further held that mere groping will not fall under the definition of sexual assault.

As per the prosecution and the minor victim's testimony in court, in December 2016, the accused, one Satish, had taken the girl to his house in Nagpur on the pretext of giving her something to eat.

Once there, he gripped her breast and attempted to remove her clothes, the high court had recorded in her verdict.

However, since he groped her without removing her clothes, the offence cannot be termed as sexual assault and, instead, constitutes the offence of outraging a woman's modesty under IPC section 354, the High Court

had held. While IPC section 354 entails a minimum imprisonment for one year, sexual assault under the POCSO Act entails a minimum imprisonment of three years.

The sessions court had sentenced the man to three years of imprisonment for the offences under the POCSO Act as also under IPC section 354. The sentences were to run concurrently.

The High Court, however, acquitted him under the POCSO Act while upholding his conviction under IPC section 354.

"Considering the stringent nature of punishment provided for the offence (under POCSO), in the opinion of this court, stricter proof and serious allegations are required," the HC said.

"The act of pressing of breast of the child aged 12 years, in the absence of any specific detail as to whether the top was removed or whether he inserted his hand inside the top and pressed her breast, would not fall in the definition of sexual assault," it said.

It further said "the act of pressing breast can be a criminal force to a woman/ girl with the intention to outrage her modesty". The POCSO Act defines sexual assault as when someone "with sexual intent touches the vagina, penis, anus or breast of the child or makes the child touch the vagina, penis, anus or breast of such person or any other person, or does any other act with sexual intent which involves physical contact without penetration is said to commit sexual assault".

The court, in its verdict, had held that "physical contact" mentioned in the definition of sexual assault must be "skin to skin" or direct physical contact.

"Admittedly, it is not the case of the prosecution that the appellant removed her top and pressed her breast. As such, there is no direct physical contact i.e. Skin to skin with sexual intent without penetration," the High Court had said.

SC REJECTS PLEA TO STAY TANDAV MAKERS' ARREST

A battery of senior lawyers — Fali S Nariman, Mukul Rohatgi, Siddharth Luthra and Siddharth Agrawal — represented Zafar and others.

They primarily sought reliefs as granted to TV anchors Arnab Goswami and Amish Devgan in criminal cases, saying the cases lodged in various states against them was clubbed and they are granted interim protection from arrest otherwise they will be made to run from one place to another in the country for the same alleged offence.

"At the end of the day this is a single offence. If a murder is reported for 100 times then there cannot be 100 offences. It is a genuine innocent case. Everyday there is an FIR where will a man go? At least club them in one place," Rohatgi argued.

In response to a question as to why the pleas have not been filed in a high court, Nariman said that FIRs have been filed several States and the number is rising every day.

Agrawal, appearing for Ayyub, defended the alleged objectionable part of the web series saying that as an actor, he has no artistic control over dialogues spoken by him.

"You cannot take up role without reading script. You cannot play role hurting religious sentiments of others," the bench remarked. Rohatgi said petitioners needed protection as they might be arrested by six different state polices.

"People are now offended by everything. The Petitioners reside in Bombay. Why will they go to different states? In Arnab Goswami case, the court had said that violation of 19(1)(a) could allow us to approach the Supreme Court," he said, adding that the freedom of speech and expression is the most zealously guarded right.

Even though the right to freedom of speech and expression is not absolute, the petitioners should not be subjected to this kind of harassment, Luthra argued and referred to judgements to highlight the argument that there cannot be "more than one FIR" for the same allegations.

"The series is an analytical series about political issues, social issues. Even though there was no objectionable con-

tent, we removed them after complaints. People when they see the series on the OTT platform, they consent to see it," the senior lawyer said.

The bench said it cannot decide under writ jurisdiction whether any offence is made out or not.

Earlier, the Bombay High Court had granted a transit pre-arrest bail to Zafar, Purohit, Mehra and Solanki against whom a case was registered in Lucknow for allegedly hurting religious sentiments through the web series.

The four have been booked in Lucknow under sections 153 A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race and so on), 295 (injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class), 501 (1)(B) (public mischief with intent to cause fear or alarm) of the IPC and under relevant sections of the Information Technology Act.

At least three FIRs have been lodged against the makers and artistes of "Tandav" in Uttar Pradesh — at Lucknow, Greater Noida and Shahjahanpur — for the alleged inappropriate depiction of UP Police personnel, deities, and adverse portrayal of a character playing the role of PM in the show.

Similar FIRs have been lodged against people associated with the making and airing of the web series in states like MP, Maharashtra and Karnataka. "Tandav", a nine-episode political thriller starring Bollywood A-listers Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia and Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub, started streaming recently.

CINEMA HALLS TO FILL OVER 50% SEATS, SWIMMING POOLS OPEN FOR ALL: MHA

"Swimming pools have already been permitted for use of sports persons. Now swimming pools will be permitted for use of all, for which a revised SOP will be issued by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYA&S) in consultation with the MHA," said the new guidelines.

MHA Guidelines for Surveillance, Containment, and Caution, which is valid up to February 28, also allowed the Civil Aviation Ministry to take appropriate decisions to start more international travel operations.

"Social/ religious/ sports/ entertainment/ educational/ cultural/ religious gatherings have already been permitted up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity, with a ceiling of 200 persons in closed spaces; and keeping of the size of the ground/ space in the view, in open spaces. Now such gatherings will be allowed subject to SOP of the State/UT concerned," said the guidelines.

SHAH REVIEWS DELHI'S SECURITY, OPP DEMANDS HIS RESIGNATION

Taking to Twitter, he also shared a quote by Mahatma Gandhi -- "In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

"Once again, I appeal to the Modi Government that the anti-agriculture laws be taken back immediately," Rahul said in a tweet in Hindi. A day earlier Rahul Gandhi said that violence is not the solution to any problem and sought repeal of the three farm laws in "national interest".

Surjewala said it was on second occasion that Amit Shah failed to stop violence in the national Capital and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi sack him immediately from the Union Cabinet. "If Prime Minister Narendra Modi fails to expel Shah, it would be clear that he too was part of the conspiracy," alleged Surjewala.

"This is the first time that any Government has failed to protect Red Fort," the Congress said, alleging that "a few vandals were allowed to enter the Red Fort while the Delhi Police was sitting on their chairs".

The tractor parade that was to highlight the demands of the farmer unions to repeal three new farm laws dissolved into anarchy on the streets of the city as a section of protesters broke through barriers, fought with police, overturned vehicles, and hoisted a religious flag from the ramparts of the iconic Red Fort. One farmer was killed allegedly in firing, while over 1,000 farmers and over 300 cops were injured, reports said.

CB arrests Bengal man for uploading fake application forms on NSP in J&K

Jammu : A sensational case of fraudulent loot of 1.34 crores from the Ministry of Minority Affairs has come to light after a team of Jammu and Kashmir Crime Branch Wednesday arrested one of the accused hailing from West Bengal.

"A team headed by a Deputy Superintendent of Police proceeded to West Bengal and arrested accused Selim Sekh of Tinsatabighi Berabad village in Malda district. He was wanted in many FIRs pertaining to fraudulent siphoning of Government funds," a Crime Branch statement said. "The investigations were going on in the case FIR no 04/2020 U/S 420,468, 120b-RPC, 66(D)IT Act, 5(2) PC Act of Crime Branch Kashmir.

Sharing details of modus operandi of the accused, the crime branch statement said, the accused in criminal conspiracy

with co-accused uploaded fake application forms on the National Scholarship Portal for Merit cum Means Scholarship under the Minority Quota for Jammu and Kashmir students during 2018-19 for Kulgam district. Subsequently, fake verifications were conducted from institutes that did not exist in states mentioned in the application forms.

The accused allegedly showed fake beneficiaries as residents of Kulgam district and thus got it verified by the district Social Welfare Officer through deceit and managed to transfer Rs 1.34 crore from the Ministry of Minority Affairs into accounts of 463 fake beneficiaries in branches of State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, United Bank of India (now PNB), Allahabad Bank, IDFC Bank and Bangiya Vikas Gramin Bank in different districts of West Bengal. PNS

ED arrests Rana Kapoor in Mack Star-PMC Bank scam case

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a second arrest in less than one year, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested former chairman of Yes Bank Rana Kapoor in a money laundering case linked to the Mack Star Group-Rs 4300 crore PMC Bank scam case.

Rana Kapoor is the third person to have been arrested in the Mack Star Group-PMC Bank scam case. On January 23, ED had arrested Mehul Thakur and Madan Gopal Chaturvedi in this year. A day ahead of these arrests, the ED conducted raids at ten premises including the residence of former underworld don Bhai Thakur and offices of Viva Group which is controlled by his family.

Sixty-three-year-old Rana Kapoor -- who had earlier been on March 8 last year for alleged money laundering involving Yes Bank and scam-hit reality company Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL) -- is currently in jail in the DHFL case.

Rana Kapoor, who faces the charge of sanctioning a Rs.200-crore loan to Mack Star Marketing Pvt. Ltd (a group of the HDIL promoters Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan), was produced before a PMLA court which remanded in ED cus-

tody till January 30.

The ED's charge against Rana Kapoor is that he had siphoned off the loan amounts and given a lifeline to HDIL's group companies to settle their outstanding with Yes Bank to prevent them from becoming NPAs. HDIL's Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan, who are also prime accused in the PMC Bank scam, held a stake in Mack Star which is under the ED scanner for a Rs.200-crore loan given by Yes Bank for renovating its premises. This is the second time Kapoor has been arrested in less than 10 months. It may be recalled that on March 8 last year, the ED had arrested Rana Kapoor on March 8 this year for alleged money laundering involving Yes Bank and scam-hit reality company Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL).

The ED's contention was that the value of the property mortgaged with DHFL was inflated to Rs.750 crore against the cover-up loan of Rs.600 crore to M/s DOIT Urban Ventures (India) Pvt. Ltd (DUVPL). The money allegedly laundered by Kapoor was used for personal purposes and hence alleged that there was a criminal conspiracy between Kapoor and the DHFL in the deal.

Bihar BJP spokesperson shot at by 3 unidentified assailants in Munger

Patna: Bihar Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson Afzar Shamshi was shot at by three unidentified assailants from close range in Bihar's Munger district on Wednesday. Munger Superintendent of Police (SP), Manavjit Singh Dhillon, told IANS that Shamshi received a gunshot injury in the lower back side of his head and was referred to Patna for treatment.

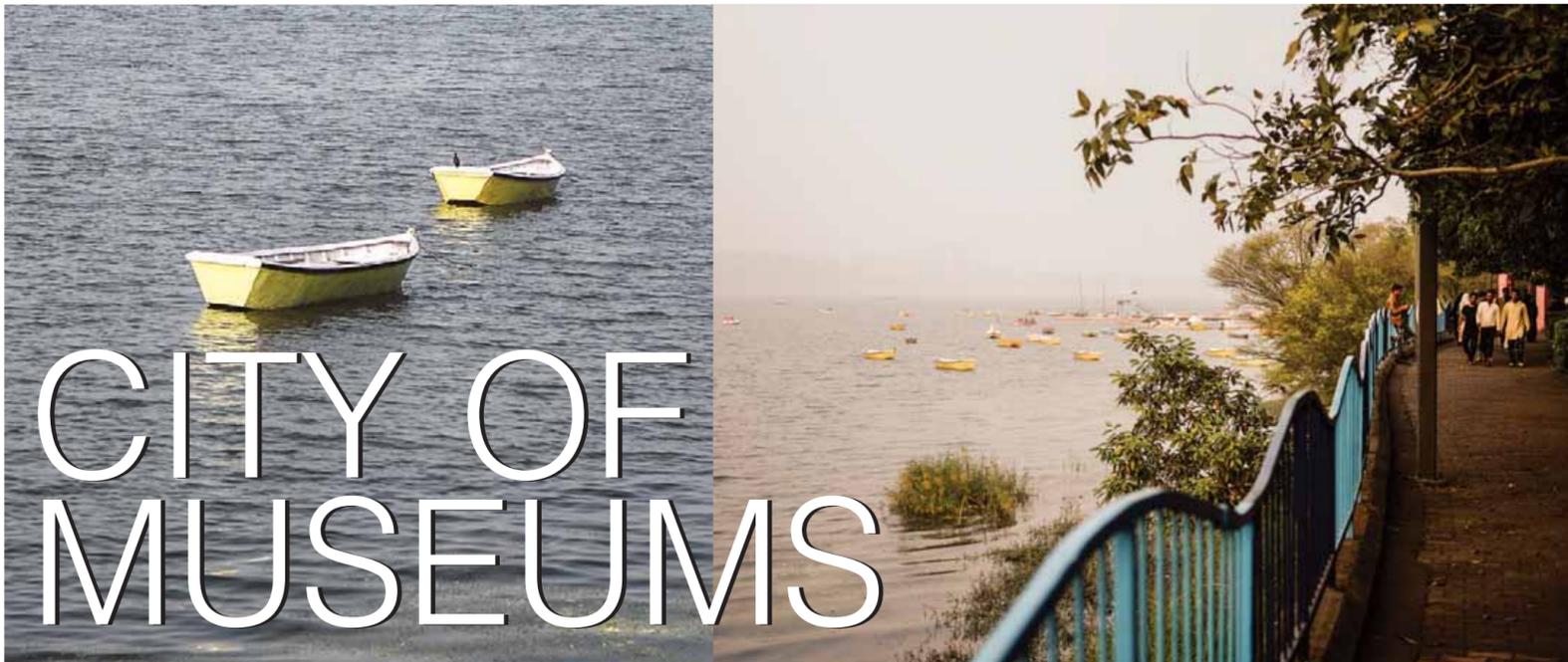
"We have arrested one person identified as Lalan Kumar Singh in connection with the case," Dhillon said.

The incident took place at nearly 12.30 p.m. when Shamshi was on his way to Ramsakha Satyabhama Evening Inter College at Munger. Shamshi is a professor in this college and also has an influential role in its administration.

After reaching the college gate, Shamshi stepped out of his car and entered the college. At the same time three assailants fired three to four times at him and one of the bullets hit him in the lower back side of his head.



Bollywood
 I do what I feel is right.
 I am not scared to
 walk on the new path
 and take risk.
 —Aamir Khan



CITY OF MUSEUMS

Bhopal might be known for its lakes but even the way its galleries document the history and culture of the country is exemplary, says KUSHAN MITRA

As you drive into Bhopal from the airport road, you enter the city driving along the northern shore of the Upper Lake. At night, with the beautifully-lit waterfront and the bright lights of the small but impressive Raja Bhoj Setu, the city looks wonderful. It also helps that the wide boulevard of VIP Road has relatively orderly traffic by Indian standards. Across the water on the Upper Lake, you see a neon sign that reads 'Welcome to the city of lakes'. And with the Upper Lake and several other large reservoirs which dot the city and the surrounding countryside, Bhopal indeed is one of the prettiest cities in India. And it is taking advantage of all the water features by training the next generation of Indian water sports' athletes in kayaking and rowing. And every evening on the southern bank of the Upper Lake, thousands of locals gather to walk up and down the shore front, with street food vendors, performers and horse-drawn buggies all competing for one's attention (and money).

Yet, at the end of the shore front on the southern bank lies the lower entrance to the Rashtriya Manav Sanghralaya, which translates as the 'National Museum of Man' although a more appropriate English translation should be the National Anthropological Museum. Whatever the name, this



is an eye-popping place and not just because it offers an idyllic location for jogging and walking. It has one of the largest and most impressive collections of any museum in India. Painstakingly put-together replicas of houses of various regions across India and a wonderful collection of sculptures depicting traditional tribal myths of India's myriad indigenous peoples

make the several outdoor sites a must-visit for every Indian. This is particularly true at a time where we worry about homogenisation in this vast country when it comes to culture, food and languages.

It is such a vast space that it makes one return for a second time just to see the fabulous indoor collection. Let me just talk about one room in the indoor museum. That

is the reserve collection room. The collections in this one room can fill up entire museums in other nations. If you travel abroad you would happily spend tens of Dollars or Euros to visit such a place, yet in Bhopal one room in a museum outdoes entire museums. This room is fantastic and you can see aspects of life from across the country, from clothes, cookware,

sickles, threshers and weapons. Of course, there are separate individual rooms in the museum where specific collections are kept and often rotated, like the room of masks right now. This is where you can see the role masks have played in story-telling across different regions of India. You see how different, yet how similar masks across this vast nation of ours are. Visiting this museum is a truly humbling experience and you would be happy if this was the only major museum in this city.

But no, after driving out in the all-new Hyundai i20 from the upper exit of the Manav Sanghralaya, a quick drive takes you to the twin state museums. The Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum and the Madhya Pradesh State Museum. In an ideal world, each of these should have a story of its own, but the twin museums run by the state are both extraordinary as they are different. First, the more modern Tribal Museum, in one of India's larger states and one that has historically had a huge number of indigenous tribes, is a celebration of tribal culture. What is remarkable about the collection here is that few pieces are ancient but most of the artifacts are newly created by tribal artisans and, on that front, the museum doesn't just bring these stories to life but it ensures the continuity of the knowledge, the legends and the skills required

in making sure that these traditions sustain. Sure, the lights inside the museum are a bit funky and there are times you think that you could be a fancy nightclub of sorts, but some of the pieces -- such as the exaggerated ceremonial bangle and the amazing story of ancestors, the so-called 'Bbilala Myth' -- are pieces that could adorn any modern art museum in the world.

The second museum, the Madhya Pradesh State Museum, rather the third one, is another brilliant museum. It isn't modern and the entire place could use a lick of paint and better lighting as well as more information about the artifacts, but what a collection. It reminds us that history is all around us everywhere in India and we just have to scratch the surface to see what all there is. The vastness of the collection at this third museum means that you cannot really finish it off in a single day but, if you have any interest whatsoever about the history of our great country and landmass, this is one museum you must come and visit.

There are a lot of things to do in and around Bhopal other than museums, the city has some fantastic sites and in the Old City, there are some great places to eat as well as more contemporary historical sites to visit. It isn't the most 'happening' city when it comes to nightlife, but it is one that every Indian should make a point to visit.

TRENDTOOL



Key to fitness

Whether you are trying to continue your pre-pandemic workout now, lose weight, maintain a lifestyle or just lead a healthier lifestyle, follow these five fitness mantras by actor and fitness enthusiast Rajeev Pillai.

DISCIPLINE: The first mantra has to be discipline, in the sense that you have to workout whenever possible. If you are getting a chance to workout twice a day or once in five days, do that. Just do.

EXTREMELY STRICT DIET: It's important to follow a strict diet. If someone is saying my intake is less, still my fat is not getting reduced, you need to understand that your intake is more for your body. So, take the right food at the right time.

BE CAREFUL: If you have an injury, do not exercise for that particular part and do the rest of the exercise using the other body parts.

WHAT DOESN'T MATTER: Your place of exercise and the equipments doesn't matter at all. The basic idea is to just exercise.

ENCOURAGE OTHERS: When you are exercising, encourage others around you. Knowingly or unknowingly this will help you perform better.

Explore Indian destinations for shoots: Anand Pandit

In 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Indian film industry economically and emotionally and stalled the frenetic pace with which it usually works. The lockdown also brought with it a renewed appreciation for the familiar and the local among the industry professionals.

Veteran producer Anand Pandit recalls how the year brought his attention to the richly detailed and nuanced beauty of Indian stories and locations. He says, "The trend to shoot abroad even if it is not contextually needed in a film, has been overdone. When I shot *Chehre* in Slovakia, the script demanded a certain kind of an atmosphere but there is so much in India that hasn't yet been explored by us, be it in the North-East, Kerala or the far-flung regions of Himachal Pradesh. Hence, I look forward to doing justice to our own locations and milieus through cinema."

Talent search

BAFTA set to push Indians to create world-class games

As India witnesses more and more game developers going mainstream, along with a thrust on creating a new gaming ecosystem in the country, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) has taken up the cudgels to find and nurture talent in the field of gaming.

Driven by smartphones, the online gaming industry in India is expected to grow

at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 40 per cent to \$2.8 billion by 2022, up from \$1.1 billion in 2019, according to a Deloitte India report that came out last week.

India is one of the top five mobile gaming markets in the world, with a 13 per cent share of global game sessions. The online gaming industry in India is expected to add 40 million online

gamers during the 2020-22 period.

According to Jodie Azhar, winner of the 2016 BAFTA Breakthrough Initiative and currently games director at Teazelcat Games, the biggest challenge is to make right connections with the people who can help you get your games onto various online platforms where people can buy it, and help you market it to

the audience that will be interested in your games.

"I think that's where organisations like BAFTA can really help because they have such a wide network, both in the video games industry as well as film and TV. It is really interesting to see the merging industries and making those connections, to help you develop games and get it in front of people who want to play it," Azhar said.

The applications for 'BAFTA Breakthrough India', supported by Netflix, are currently open and the entry window has been extended to February 8.

As part of the initiative,

a jury of the British and Indian industry experts will select five talents from across India to take part in the year-long mentoring and guidance programme.

"Game developers from India should apply right now as it is a brilliant initiative. People who have worked on AAA games, who have worked on independent projects, they all have a wealth of knowledge and by being part of BAFTA through this initiative, you get access to that knowledge," she elaborated.

AAA (or Triple-A) video games are to the gaming world what blockbusters are for the film industry. Just

like blockbusters, they usually involve huge teams working for months to years to make a finished product, employed by a big studio.

According to Azhar, they are seeing more virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) games, like *Pokemon go*, where you leave your house and move around.

"But we still see people who want to play games sitting on their sofa sets, just to find a kind of escape from their everyday lives. What we're seeing is different types of games, dictated by the kind of hardware that's available and popular with consumers," she said.

The games professionals chosen by the 'Breakthrough' initiative will receive one-to-one mentoring, global networking opportunities, free access to BAFTA events and screenings for 12 months, and full voting BAFTA membership.

The chosen talent will also connect with and learn from some of the best in the British and Indian creative industries, share their expertise with peers around the world, gain access to opportunities beyond geographical borders, and be promoted as BAFTA Breakthrough artists globally. Charu Desodt, games producer and 2014 Breakthrough Brit said, "Being named a BAFTA Breakthrough in 2014 was a career highlight for me.

People recognise the BAFTA name and, in turn, it makes people pay more attention to you and your artistic vision." The BAFTA Breakthrough initiative has been running in the UK since 2013, China since 2019 and launched in the US and India in 2020, supporting over 160 emerging talents to date.

—IANS

'Theatres are safe'

Actor SHARAD KELKAR questions that if people are partying big time, why are they hesitant to return to cinema halls?

Actor Sharad Kelkar is surprised that the audience is still hesitant to return to the cinema theatres, although other areas of the hospitality and entertainment industry have started to open up, post-COVID lockdown.

"People have started going to pubs, coffee shops, restaurants, weddings and even to places like Goa on vacation. People are partying big time, so I don't know why they are not going to the theatres," Sharad said.

"Theatres are much safer, and also there is 50 per cent occupancy. Theaters are regularly cleaned and sanitised. This is one of the biggest industries we have, and it is dependent upon the audience. So I'd request everyone that if you can party, you can also go to the theatre," he added.

Quizzed about how the pandemic and lockdown have affected him, the actor said: "I am known as a workaholic in my friend circle. I am active and love to run around all the time. This pandemic taught me patience. Sitting at home doing nothing was a new experience for me for the first time in the last 18 years that I started working. Not going out to work and not meeting people was initially a little depressing but ultimately I understood that in life you need to be a little patient!"

Sharad, who impressed all playing Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Ajay Devgn's blockbuster film *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior* last year, reveals he had rejected historical roles for almost 15 years of his acting career.

"I have been getting offers for historical shows right from my initial years when I started doing TV, due to my voice, height and physical structure. But I was always afraid of doing it. There was a fear of having to wear a lot of costumes,



which I thought would be tedious. So I almost avoided historical roles for 15 years," he said.

About *Tanhaji* and his role in the film, he said: "I never knew a historical film would give me so much appreciation and establishment in the industry. So, I proved myself wrong!"

On the work front, Sharad turns narrator for the forthcoming animated series, *The Legend Of Hanuman*. He will also feature in the Ajay Devgn-starrer *Bhuj: The Pride Of India* and the forthcoming web series *The Family Man 2*.

—IANS





Towards more inclusivity

DEPwD's tableau on Indian sign language was a special attraction at the 72nd Republic Day Parade



The Tableau of Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment showcased the theme - *Bhartiya Sanketik Bhasha: Ek Rashtra, Ek Sanketik Bhasha* at the 72nd Republic Day parade. It highlighted the unifying nature of Indian sign language (ISL) in a nation, where there is a great diversity in spoken languages. The aim was to raise awareness and highlight the commitment of the government towards creating a barrier-free environment for people with hearing disabilities. There were 12 artists on the Tableau, who performed the theme song in Indian sign language. With a view to enhance accessibility for the hearing impaired, a need was felt to set up an institute focusing on the development and furtherance of Indian sign language. That is why Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) was set up on September 28 2015, as an autonomous body under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (*Divyangjan*), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. ISLRTC conducts courses for developing Indian sign language (ISL) interpreters and teachers and provides interpretation services to organisations for various programmes and events. It has developed a dictionary of ISL containing 6,000 academic, medical, legal and agricultural terms in addition to terms of everyday use. The centre also provides Short Term Training Programmes on basic ISL communication skills. To make educational materials accessible for children with hearing disabilities, ISLRTC has signed an MoU with National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). As part of this MoU, educational print materials such as school text books of Classes I to XII of all subjects (both Hindi and English medium) are being converted into ISL.

WITH PRIDE

The General Manager of Western Railway, **ALOK KANSAL**, hoisted the national flag on the occasion of Republic Day

On the occasion of the 72nd Republic Day, the General Manager of Western Railway (WR), Alok Kansal, hoisted the national flag. He also inspected the ceremonial parade at WR HQs at Churchgate and took salute of the march past. Kansal addressed the gathering by extending his greetings to the Railway men and their families. He also appealed to them to accept challenges and convert them into opportunities. At the start of the ceremony, PC Sinha, Principal Chief Security Commissioner of WR, welcomed Kansal.

On this occasion, Kansal stated that in spite of toughest challenges and adverse circumstances due to COVID-19 pandemic, it was possible for WR to surpass last year's loading in the first week of January, 2021. WR has also emerged as 'Numero Uno' on Indian Railways in generating revenue through advance booking of parcel space as well as in e-commerce traffic. He apprised that Western Railway's contribution is almost 21 per cent in total parcel loading and revenue of Indian Railways. To facilitate farmers to have cheaper, cleaner and faster mode of transportation for their produce, WR has operated 15 kisan rails to different parts of the country. He apprised that various incentives and schemes were offered to attract freight customers, besides providing customised facilities in line with the mantra of *Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka*

Vikas aur Sab Ka Vishwas!
 The GM of WR stated that enhancement of line capacity by addition of infrastructure to improve mobility is one of the thrust areas of Western Railway. The work has been completed on 157 km of new lines, gauge conversion and doubling in the current financial year. Almost 64 roads under bridges/limited height subways and 26 road over bridges were constructed in this year so far. To improve safety, 12 new foot over bridges and one skywalk was constructed over the Mumbai suburban section. Approximately 15 speed restrictions have been lifted this year, while sectional speed has been increased in 714 track km. He informed that under Mission 2024, WR is focusing on improving the infrastructure of those routes which carry 60 to 80 per cent of its total traffic. The speed on Mumbai-Nagda section is planned to be increased to 160 kmph by upgrading the infrastructure. Kansal apprised that Western

Railway swept the National Energy Conservation Award 2020 by Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Power, by winning 1st prize in Transport Category and 1st and 2nd prize for Divisional Railway Manager's office at Bhavnagar and Rajkot respectively in Buildings-Govt Offices Category. Electric Loco Shed, Vadodara won the National Level Silver Award announced by Quality Council of India for its 'Push-Pull Operation'. To save water, automatic coach washing plants have been commissioned at Vadodara and Mumbai Central in the current year. A Waste Water Treatment Plant is installed at Bhuj railway station for recycling of water. The GM apprised that Western Railway has always been in the forefront in adopting various initiatives in a major push to the 'Digital India' campaign. A QR code based e-patrolling, Beat Management System for staff management and security monitoring has been recently implemented by Railway

Protection Force of Mumbai Central Division on pilot basis for the first time on Indian Railways. It is planned to further extend it across all divisions. A specialised cyber cell has been set up at zonal level for expert assistance in cyber investigations, crime detection, preservation of digital evidence and social media analysis. The GM further said that, to keep the passengers connected with the world and updated with all necessary information, a free and fast Wi-fi facility is being provided at 29 more stations this year, taking the total to 453 stations over Western Railway.

He said that with an aim to provide improved and better amenities, Valsad, Vadodara, Ratlam, Ahmedabad, Rajkot and Bhavnagar Terminus stations have been developed under a soft redevelopment scheme for stations. To provide more seats, especially for *divyangjan* and to increase the luggage space, 26 LSLRD coaches are provided in 12 of WR's trains. Seven escalators and five lifts have been provided in the current year for the convenience of passengers. Kansal also spoke about how aesthetics has been linked with cleanliness. And keeping this in mind, many of WR's stations are beautified with attractive paintings and artworks on the theme of local art as well as on applauding the Corona warriors. An awareness film *Bharat Badlo, Aadaat Badlo* was made on cleanliness to

motivate people to bring positive changes. The problem of trespassing deaths in the Mumbai suburban section has been WR's mission. Due to various measures taken in this direction, there has been a significant reduction in the number of cases of fatalities from 2.55 per day in 2019 to 1.07 in 2020. For the safety and security of women commuters, *Meri Saheli* programme has been implemented by the Railway Protection Force. The force has reunited 125 lost children with their families, while the lives of 11 passengers were saved by the alert RPF Personnel.

Kansal emphasised on how proud we are of our doctors and medical staff who rose to the occasion and did a praiseworthy job in the most challenging environment of COVID-19 pandemic. The patients admitted in the railway hospitals were looked after well and provided best treatment, medical facilities and care, thereby garnering an excellent recovery rate of 92 per cent. While congratulating WR sportspersons for their remarkable feat and achievements, he proudly informed that Western Railway has once again established its supremacy in the arena of sports by winning prestigious Kaul Gold Cup for the 29th year in a row.

After the Republic Day event, Kansal and WRWVO President-wife Tanuja Kansal also visited the Heritage Gallery.



Punjab National Bank (PNB) celebrated the 72nd Republic Day with lots of patriotism and fervor. The PNB MD and CEO CH SS Mallikarjuna Rao hoisted the national flag at headquarters in New Delhi. The ceremony was attended by the EDs, CVO, CGMs and senior officials of PNB.



GAIL India Limited celebrated 72nd Republic Day at its corporate office in New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, Manoj Jain, chairman and MD, GAIL said that it is appropriate time for the company to augment natural gas infrastructure by revisiting scale, speed and scope. He mentioned the relentless efforts of GAIL work force in executing natural gas pipeline projects and enhancing the reach of infrastructure to provide cleaner energy and reduce pollution levels in various CGD cities. He appreciated the Government of India's vision for adopting a development path of carbon neutral energy.



Republic Day was celebrated with great pomp in the GDA campus. On this occasion, Vice chairman of the Ghaziabad Development Authority Krishna Karunesh hoisted the flag and administered an oath to all employees and officials to follow the rules of the Indian Constitution. The GDA chairman addressed the staff and said that the development of the city has to be done at a rapid pace. This will be possible only when all the employees and officers of GDA work like a team. In the same sequence, GDA Secretary Santosh Kumar Rai said that the grievances coming to the campus should be resolved on the basis of priority. He said that we will also have to make meaningful efforts to strengthen the financial position of GDA. A large staff and officers and police force were present on this occasion.



National Voters' day celebrated

Eleventh National Voters' day (NVD) was celebrated in East District. On January 25, 1950, the Election Commission of India was commissioned under the first Chief Election Commissioner Sukumar Sen. The first general election in India was conducted in the year 1951-52, including both men and women in the electoral list. Earlier, in European countries and America, the women had to earn the voting right with consistent battle against the social inequality.

The theme for this year's National Voters' day was *Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed*. It also focuses on ECI's commitment towards conducting elections safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main purpose of the NVD celebration is to encourage, facilitate and maximise enrolment, especially for the new voters. Dedicated to the voters of the country, the day is utilised to spread awareness among voters and for promoting informed participation in the electoral process. The NVD celebration is followed by the extensive special summary revision every year to enroll young electors of the age group 18 to 19 years. New voters are felicitated and handed over their Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) in the NVD functions.

In East District, the cultural programme was organised in eight categories and winners were felicitated by District Magistrate on virtual mode.

India's 72nd Republic Day was celebrated with fervour and gaiety by BHEL at all its offices across the length and breadth of the country. Dr Nalin Shinghal, CMD, BHEL, unfurled the Indian tricolour at a function at the company's township in Noida. He addressed a gathering of BHEL employees and their families. A cultural programme was also organised by the employees and their families on the occasion.

Saluting the warriors, he said, "PNB Parivar salutes the innumerable sacrifices the Armed Forces have made for our well-being. The pandemic had brought the toughest time across the globe, but we now see the positivity and improvement in the economy. With the advent of the vaccine, the impact is receding. We salute the contribution and responsibility taken by our frontline warriors, medical fraternity and the healthcare industry for bringing a ray of hope." During the celebrations, the bank generously donated through their PNB Prerna initiative to four organisations working for the welfare of various sections of the society. The initiative was headed by Janaki Chamarty, the wife of Rao.



UP Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath and Union Minister for Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi formally inaugurated 24th Hunar Haat of indigenous products of artisans and craftsmen. UP Dy CM Dinesh Sharma, BJP UP president Swatntra Dev Singh, chairman KVIC VK Saxena, UP Ministers Suresh Khanna, Sidharth Nath Singh, Aushutosh Tandon, Nand Gopal, Mahendra Kumar Singh, Baldev Singh Aulakh and Mohsin Raza were also present.



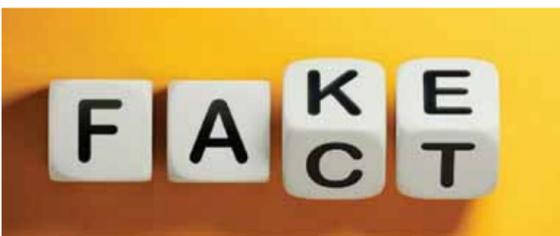
On the occasion of 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the National Book Trust of India has announced the institution of Annual Netaji National Reading Promotion Recognition Awards. The award will seek to recognise the outstanding contribution of institutions, trusts/foundations, organisations, NGOs as well as state governments, CSR supported schemes, working with sustained commitment, innovation and inclusive vision to promote a culture of reading and empowerment among the youth and other reading communities.



Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying, Government of India, visited ICAR-CMFRI, Mandapam to oversee technical support provided for sea cage farming and seaweed farming activities. He embarked onboard Indian Coast Guard Hovercraft H-197 to venture into the Gulf of Mannar sea and reviewed support provided by ICG towards safety of fishermen. On completion of hovercraft sortie, he appreciated hovercraft and its crew for its precise maneuvering capabilities and maintaining high standard of safety and security in the area.

NTPC Tamil Nadu Energy Company Limited (NTECL), a Joint venture company of NTPC Limited and TANGEDCO (50:50) paid interim dividend of 47,55,59,335/- (forty seven crore fifty five lakhs fifty nine thousand and three hundred thirty five) for the year 2020-21 towards NTPC's 50 per cent share. The company has paid the dividend for the first time since inception. It has also been paid to other joint venture partner viz TANGEDCO on its shareholding of 50 per cent in NTECL. Ramesh Babu V, chairman, NTECL and director (operations), NTPC presented the cheque to Gurdeep Singh, chairman and MD, NTPC Ltd.

SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur clarifies that the fake circular doing rounds on WhatsApp asking all girl students to have at least one boyfriend is fake. The note which was circulated on social media platform was brought to the notice of the institute's authorities and the administration clarified it as a fake. A message from the SRMIST's registrar office read: "This is to bring your kind attention that there is a couple of fake and inappropriate circulars being sent under the name and designation of SRMIST's administration/Registrar. These circulars contain false information and spoil the image of our institute. Hence, any person/student attempting to send such unauthorised letters will be dealt with firmly and expelled from the Institution." However, to ascertain the source of the message, the institution has filed a complaint with the cyber crime police.



The officials of Delhi Fire Service have been recognised by the Government of India for high degree of commitment and dedication for saving lives. Above mentioned are the awardees:

PFC receives appreciation

Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC), NBFC in the power sector, has been recognised by the Government of Haryana for exemplary work done under its Corporate Social Responsibility Practices (CSR) and the relief work undertaken during the pandemic. The Education Minister of Haryana, Kanwar Pal bestowed a 'Certificate of Appreciation' to the corporation during an event held on the Republic Day at Tau Devi Lal Stadium near Rajiv Chowk in Gurugram. P.K. Singh, Director (Commercial), PFC received the certificate on behalf of the Company. PFC has been significantly contributing through CSR for the development of various segments and communities in the State of Haryana which includes empowering the unemployed youth through job-oriented skill training programs. Apart from this, it has also sanctioned projects to supply, installation and commissioning of fully equipped Modular Operation



Theatre (OT) in Rotary Ambala Cancer & General Hospital (RACGH), Ambala along with providing 5 kWp standalone SPV Power Plants in three ASHA Schools (situated at Ambala, Hissar & Panchkula) supported by Army Wives Welfare Association (AWWA). Till date, PFC has sanctioned ₹ 1142 crore under its CSR initiatives across India.

Wade dropped for SA Tests

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Matthew Wade was axed on Wednesday for Australia's Test series in South Africa after failing to fire against India, while under-pressure Tim Paine retained the captaincy.

Wade played all four games in the tense 2-1 home summer series loss to India, including two as makeshift opener in place of the injured David Warner. But he managed just 173 from his eight innings, with some rash shots ultimately costing him his place in the side and seeing him replaced by Alex Carey as back-up wicketkeeper.

Instead, Wade will join Australia's T20 squad on their tour of New Zealand as vice-captain to the out-of-form Aaron Finch.

Australia are due to play three Tests in South Africa. The tour was originally scheduled for February and March, but the dates have yet to be locked in due to concerns over coronavirus.

Cricket Australia on Wednesday reiterated its commitment to making the trip, with the Tests expected to take place in March or April.

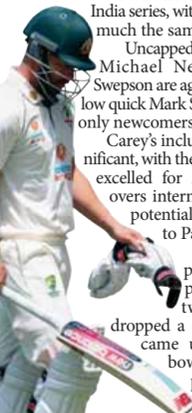
The five-game T20 tour of New Zealand runs from February 22 to March 7, clashing with South Africa, meaning a host of players including Warner, Steve Smith and Pat Cummins were not available.

Wade was the main casualty from the India series, with the squad otherwise much the same.

Uncapped bowlers Sean Abbott, Michael Neser, and Mitchell Swepson are again included, with fellow quick Mark Steketee and Carey the only newcomers.

Carey's inclusion was seen as significant, with the 29-year-old, who has excelled for Australia in limited overs internationals, tipped as a potential successor as captain to Paine, 36.

Paine had a sub-par series against India, particularly the last two Tests when he dropped a slew of chances and came under fire over his bowling changes, field placings and decisions on when to declare.



ALAM CENTURY PUTS PAK AHEAD

Fawad's 109, fifties from Azhar & Ashraf help Pakistan take 1st innings lead

AFP ■ KARACHI

Fawad Alam gave further evidence of his considerable patience with a grafting century which helped Pakistan take a useful first innings lead over South Africa on the second day of the first Test in Karachi on Wednesday.

The 35-year-old left-hander, who returned to the side last August after a decade in the international wilderness, scored 109 in almost six hours to anchor Pakistan's 308-8 at the National Stadium, lifting the team from a precarious overnight total of 33-4.

Azhar Ali and Faheem Ashraf also weighed in with half-centuries as Pakistan closed with a lead of 88 after bowling South Africa out for 220 on the first day.

Just four wickets fell on the second day which was in stark contrast to the opening when 14 wickets tumbled on the grassless pitch. It would have been different had South Africa not dropped four catches.

Fawad, relishing his first Test at his home ground, added 102 runs for the seventh wicket with Faheem who cracked a relatively rapid 64 from 84 balls.

Resuming on five and with Pakistan in serious trouble, Fawad led the recovery with an invaluable 94-run stand for the fifth wicket with Azhar, who played within himself for three hours 40 minutes for his 51.

Fawad had a life on 35 when Dean Elgar failed to cling on to a sharp edge off Keshav Maharaj in the slips but he and Azhar, who survived a tight leg before shout and review from left-arm spinner George Linde, battled right through the morning to take Pakistan to 104-4 at lunch.

Fawad added another 55 for the sixth wicket with Mohammad Rizwan who made a counter-attacking before edging Lungo Ngidi to Faf du Plessis at first slip.



Pakistan batsman Fawad Alam celebrates after scoring hundred on Day 2 of 1st Test against South Africa at National Stadium in Karachi

THIRD TEST CENTURY

Shortly after tea, Fawad opened his shoulders to hit a flighted delivery from spinner Keshav Maharaj for a six over long-on which brought up his third Test century in just his eighth Test.

"It was my dream to score a hundred at home and what better time to do it then when the team was in a difficult situation," said Fawad, who now has 38 hundreds in first class cricket.

"Azhar and I decided that we should bat long and take the total as close to South Africa as possible and I am happy that we have done close to that."

He was finally caught at mid-wicket off Ngidi after batting for six minutes under six hours, hitting nine boundaries and two sixes.

Fawad's ton marked yet another remarkable milestone in his return to international cricket.

After making a debut hundred in Sri Lanka in 2009, Fawad played just twice more that year before being dropped — for 10 years and 259 days.

Despite scoring heavily in Pakistan's domestic matches, he was constantly overlooked, primarily because of his peculiar stance — facing front-on to the bowler before turning side-on when playing the ball.

He was recalled for Pakistan's tour of England in August last year but his first innings back ended with a four-ball duck in Southampton.

But he followed up with another gutsy century in the first Test defeat by New Zealand in Mount Maunganui in December.

Ashraf's entertaining 64, which included nine boundaries, ended in unorthodox fashion when he jammed down on a yorker from Anrich Nortje only to see the ball backspin into his stumps.

1st Test, Day 3
Live from 10:30am IST
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK

Solanki stars in Baroda's final ball win

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Vishnu Solanki helped Baroda pull off a last-over heist against Haryana with a sensational 71, which included a six off the game's final ball, to fire his team into the semifinals of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Wednesday.

Baroda first restricted Haryana to 148/7 in the third quarterfinal, and then it was Solanki, who hammered four fours and five sixes in his 46-ball unbeaten knock to get his team over the line after 18 runs were needed off the final over.

Haryana had brought down the equation to 23 off 12 balls for Baroda and their skipper Mohit Sharma (0/30) conceded only five runs in the penultimate over to make the equation tougher for Baroda.

However, 28-year-old Solanki had other plans and took on medium pacer Sumit Kumar (1/37) in the final over,



Baroda players Vishnu Solanki and Abhimanyu Rajput celebrate after win

hitting two sixes and a four, to script an eight-wicket win for his team.

The right-handed batsman fittingly finished the game with a six, a helicopter shot on the final ball to seal the game with

off 29 balls) rallied the innings with their 80-run third wicket stand. While Chauhan hammered three fours and a six, Rana's knock was laced with seven boundaries.

Baroda bowlers led by off-spinner Kartik Kakade (2/7) did well to restrict Haryana below the 150-run mark despite a 16-ball unbeaten 20 from Sumit. Chasing 149, Baroda lost opener Smit Patel (21) early as he became spinner Yuzvendra Chahal's (1/15) only victim.

Kedar Devdhar (43 off 40 balls; 2x4, 2x6) and Solanki added 68-runs for the second wicket as they took the game deep. The duo initially took time to settle, but then changed gears.

However, Sumit Kumar broke the stand by dismissing Devdhar. Solanki then took the onus on himself and took their side home in company of Abhimanyu Singh Rajput (13 not out).

Pant, Ashwin in contention for ICC player of month award

DUBAI: India's senior off-spinner R Ashwin and swashbuckling wicket-keeper-batsman Rishabh Pant would be in contention for the newly-introduced player of the month awards announced by the International Cricket Council on Wednesday.

Besides Ashwin and Pant, two other Indians — Mohammed Siraj and T Natarajan — are also in the fray. All of them played a stellar role in India's recent historic Test series

win against Australia.

The world body said the awards will recognise the best performances of both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year.

Other players named for the awards for January are England captain Joe Root, star Australia batsman Steve Smith, Rahmanullah Gurbaz of Afghanistan, Marizanne Kapp and Nadine de Klerk of South Africa and Nida Dar of Pakistan. PTI

Sindhu, Srikanth go down fighting

BANGKOK: Star Indian shuttlers P V Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth fought their hearts out before suffering close defeats in their respective group B openers at the \$1.5 million HSBC BWF World Tour Finals here on Wednesday.

A week after a demoralising defeat at the Toyota Thailand Open quarterfinals, world champion Sindhu produced a much-improved performance but still lost to world number one Tai Tzu Ying of Taiwan 21-19, 12-21, 17-21.

"It was a good match, there were no easy points. In the third game I came back and it was just one point difference at one stage. I broke my racket strings twice (during rallies) and that made a difference," Sindhu said. "It's a tough group. I have to give 100 per cent."

It was Sindhu's 16th defeat to Tzu Ying in 21 meetings.



to play as many matches as possible, because I haven't been winning matches over the last two years. So, I really want to play matches with the top-eight players."

Olympic Silver medalist Sindhu, who had won the prestigious title in 2018, will next play home favourite Ratchanok Intanon. PTI



Ibra sees red in Milan's exit



AFP ■ MILAN

Christian Eriksen scored a last-gasp winner as Inter Milan advanced to the Italian Cup semi-finals on Tuesday with a 2-1 victory over 10-man AC Milan in a fiery derby clash.

The quarter-final at the San Siro was overshadowed by a row between star strikers Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Romelu Lukaku, who both scored on the night, with the Swede later sent off in the second half.

Tensions were high with Lukaku missing the chance to put Inter ahead on 20 minutes as Milan goalkeeper Ciprian Tatarusanu, standing in for the suspended Gianluigi Donnarumma, saved with his foot.

And it was Ibrahimovic who grabbed the opener on the half-hour after connecting with Souhalho Meites' headed cross, firing in low from the right with the ball bouncing in off the far post.

Former Manchester United teammates Ibrahimovic and Lukaku then clashed angrily

before the half-time whistle. Ibrahimovic taunted Lukaku and infuriated the Belgian by laughing in his face with the pair going head-to-head.

The duo traded insults as they headed towards the tunnel with a furious Lukaku being restrained by his teammates. Both players were booked over the incident.

Ibrahimovic got his marching orders when he picked up a second yellow card 15 minutes after the break for bringing down Aleksandar Kolarov.

Rafael Leao's foul on Nicolo Barella gave Inter a penalty after 71 minutes with Lukaku stepping up to fire in via the underside of the crossbar.

Eriksen came off the bench with two minutes to go and the out-of-favour Danish midfielder scored the winner deep into stoppage time with a sensational free-kick after a change in referee because of injury.

Inter go through to meet either Juventus or Serie B side SPAL in the two-legged semi-final on February 3 and 10.



Tuchel takes Chelsea hotseat

London: Thomas Tuchel was appointed Chelsea manager on an 18-month contract on Tuesday, tasked with hauling the underperforming Blues back into the Champions League next season.

The 47-year-old German replaces the sacked Frank Lampard to become the 13th Chelsea boss since Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich bought the club in 2003.

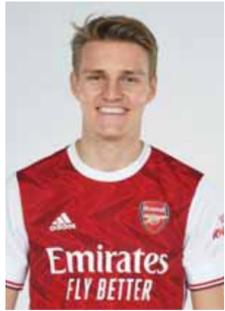
"I would like to thank Chelsea FC for their confidence in me and my staff," said Tuchel.

"We all have the greatest respect for Frank Lampard's work and the legacy he created at Chelsea."

"At the same time, I cannot wait to meet my new team and compete in the most exciting league in football. I am grateful to now be part of the Chelsea family — it feels amazing!"

Tuchel will take charge for the first time when Wolves visit Stamford Bridge in the Premier League on Wednesday.

Tuchel's task will be to get the best out of German compatriots Timo Werner and Kai Havertz, who have struggled to live up to their price tags in their first few months in England.



Man City go top of league

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City thrashed West Brom 5-0 to move back top of the Premier League on Tuesday as Arsenal aided their push towards the European places with a 3-1 win at Southampton.

City have now won 11 consecutive games since West Brom earned a shock 1-1 draw at the Etihad last month.

Pep Guardiola's men have hit top form since and did not miss the presence of the injured Kevin De Bruyne in blowing away the Baggies by scoring four goals before half-time.

Ilkay Gundogan opened the floodgates by curling home from the edge of the box before Joao Cancelo's controversial strike doubled City's lead.

The West Brom defence was distracted by a wrongly raised offside flag before the Portuguese full-back found the net, but the goal stood after a VAR review.

Gundogan then took his tally to seven goals in his last eight league games before Riyad



Mahrez and Raheem Sterling rounded off the scoring.

West Brom have now conceded 17 goals in Sam Allardyce's four home games in charge as they remain second bottom of the table, six points off safety.

Guardiola's former assistant Mikel Arteta is also enjoying a fine run of form as Arsenal have taken 16 from the last possible 18 points. The Gunners avenged their FA Cup to Southampton at the weekend despite falling behind after three minutes to Stuart Armstrong's sweet strike.

Nicolas Pepe quickly levelled before Bukayo Saka rounded Alex McCarthy and slotted home to give the visitors at half-time lead. Alexandre Lacazette sealed a vital three points 18 minutes from time as Arsenal moved up to eighth and within five points of the top four.

West Ham occupy the fourth Champions League place as Tomas Soucek scored twice in a 3-2 win at Crystal Palace. At the other end of the table, Newcastle lost 2-1 at home to Leeds to stretch their winless run to 11 games.

SINGLES

IPL AUCTION ON FEB 18 IN CHENNAI

NEW DELHI: The IPL players' auction ahead of the 2021 edition will be held in Chennai on February 18, the league organisers announced on Wednesday. The announcement was made via IPL's Twitter handle. "IPL 2021 Player Auction on 18th February," read part of the post. The "mini auction" will take place following the first two Tests between India and England in Chennai. The series begins on February 5 while the second Test will be played from February 13 to 17.

KERALA HC ISSUES NOTICE TO KOHLI

KOCHI: The Kerala High Court on Wednesday issued notice to Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli and the state Government in a plea seeking ban on online gambling in the state. Besides Kohli, a division bench, headed by Chief Justice S Manikumar, also issued notices to Malayalam actor Aju Varghese and South Indian actress Tamanna Bhatia. The celebrities are the brand ambassadors of online rummy games.

JAPAN MIDFIELDER KAGAWA JOINS PAK

THESSALONIKI: Former Manchester United midfielder Shinji Kagawa signed with Greek club PAOK Thessaloniki on Wednesday. The club, which won the Greek title in 2019 for the first time since the mid-1980s, said the Japan international signed an 18-month contract. PAOK is currently in fourth place in the 14-team Greek league with 36 points. Olympiakos leads with 48 points.

MURRAY ENTERS ITALY CHALLENGER EVENT

ROME: Andy Murray has entered a lower-tier challenger tournament in Italy next month after withdrawing from the Australian Open with the coronavirus. Murray is listed to play an indoor tournament in Biella starting Feb 15, the Italian Tennis Federation said on Wednesday. Also entered for the Biella tournament are 54th-ranked Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, No 74 Lucas Pouille, Sebastian Korda, Andreas Seppi and Lorenzo Musetti.

AHURA RACING'S ANUSHRIYA WINS DOUBLE

NEW DELHI: Ahura Racing's Anushriya Gulati scored a rare double in the JK Tyre FMSCI Indian National Racing Championship, claiming the LGB-4 Rookie crown as well as the women's category title over the weekend in Coimbatore. "I took up formula racing only one year back and am truly thrilled to win two titles in the national racing championship in just my second year," a delighted Anushriya said.

ENG CRICKET PLAYERS LAND IN CHENNAI

CHENNAI: Members of the England cricket team including captain Joe Root arrived in the city on Wednesday for the four-match series against India with the first two Tests to be played here. Some of the Indian players and members of the support staff also landed in this southern city, airport sources said. Root and Co flew in from Sri Lanka at around 10.30 AM and headed to the hotel where members of the two teams will be put up as part of the bio-bubble, a Tamil Nadu Cricket Association official said.

BARCA PREZ ELECTIONS ON MARCH 7

BARCELONA: Barcelona rescheduled its presidential elections to March 7 and members will be allowed to vote by mail amid the coronavirus pandemic, the club said. The elections had been originally scheduled for Jan 24 but Barcelona was forced to delay the vote because of mobility restrictions imposed by the Catalan government during the pandemic. Voting will take place at six polling stations and by mail after the Catalan Government made a change in the legislation "to allow for postal voting for sporting bodies," Barcelona said on Tuesday. Members who are over 65 will be allowed to vote from home. Agencies

Indian women lose 2-3 to World No 2 Argentina



PTI ■ BUENOS AIRES

The Indian women's hockey team put up a valiant fight before losing 2-3 to World No 2 Argentina in a thrilling match here.

Goals from Sharmila (34th) and Gurjit Kaur (40th) gave India the lead after the hosts had scored in the 25th minute via Micaela Retegui but Argentina came up with back-to-back strikes in the final quarter through Augustina Gorzelany (50th) and Granatto Maria (57th) to eke out the win on Tuesday.

"We were close to a win but against an opponent like Argentina, you have to stay concentrated till the final hooter. The biggest take away from this match is to keep up the consistency in all four quarters," said chief coach Sjoerd Marijne.

Though Argentina put India on the backfoot early in the match, it was Retegui who fetched the 1-0 lead for the home team in the 25th minute with a swiftly converted goal.

After the 10-minute half-time break, India's forward-line, in the meantime, hunted for goals and succeeded in the 34th minute when Navjot Kaur setup young forward Sharmila to make the strike.

In the 40th minute, India's lone drag-flicker Gurjit set up a crucial 2-1 lead with a powerfully struck goal.

In the following minutes, both India and Argentina traded a PC each, but none managed to convert. It was eventually a penalty stroke awarded to Argentina in the 50th minute that changed the course of the match.

"After we scored 2-1 lead, we were in a few situations where we could have stayed calmer and try to increase the goal-difference by scoring more," said Marijne.

"Against a team like Argentina, you have to lead by more than a goal to secure a win else they will catch-up. These are valuable lessons for us, and this is what we would like to improve in the next game," he added.