

OPINION 6 JOE BIDEN'S BURDEN

WORLD 8 WILL NOT ATTEND BIDEN'S INAUGURATION ON JAN 20: TRUMP

SPORT 12 HALLER JOINS AJAX FROM WEST HAM

RANCHI, SATURDAY JANUARY 9, 2021; PAGES 12 13



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I AM BEING TORTURED: KANGANA 10 VIVACITY

## Farm talks fail; all eyes on SC

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

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

health workers have been trained adequately.

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

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

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

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

## Chaos at IGIA over unanticipated quarantine rule

7-day isolation must for all UK returns in Delhi; UK flights resume after 16 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even as 82 returnees from the UK have so far tested positive for a new mutant strain of coronavirus, flights between the United Kingdom and India resumed on Friday. As many as 256 passengers from the UK landed at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) and many of them complained of chaos and confusion at the airport over quarantine rules.

Several passengers took to

Twitter to highlight grievances and the situation, tagging Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in their messages.

Earlier on Friday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that the travellers coming from the United Kingdom (UK) to the national Capital will have to undergo a seven-day institutional quarantine. The CM said that the person had to go seven-day home quarantine even if they test negative for Covid-19 on arrival in the city.

"To protect Delhiites from exposure to the virus from the UK, the Delhi Government has taken important decisions. Travellers coming from the UK will have to mandatorily undergo a self-paid RT-PCR test on arrival at the airport," said the Chief Minister.

A passenger asked why his passport was being taken away. One person, who identified himself as Gouri Shankar Dash, posted a photo of his infant child sleeping on blankets spread out on the airport floor, and said that airport authorities had refused to let him get his daughter's stroller from their luggage.

"Just came from London A112, it's absolutely maniac at Delhi Airport. Asking us to go for institutional quarantine even with the negative PCR test. Didn't mention this in your SOP," another passenger Harjit Thakur who travelled in Air India flight shared a video

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of 'maniac' scenes at the IGIA airport.

The flights were resumed after a suspension for 16 days amid concerns about a mutant

strain that emerged in Britain despite Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asking the Government to extend the flights ban till January 31.

## 207 fresh Covid cases, 188 recoveries in State

Covid toll up at 1,043 with 2 deaths in 24 hours



A medic collects swab samples from a woman for Covid-19 test

PNS ■ RANCHI

Over 200 Covid-19 patients tested positive for the virus on Friday, taking the total number of Covid cases in Jharkhand close to 1,16,436 figures compiled by the National Health Mission (NHM) stated. Jharkhand's recovery rate on the day reached 97.84 per cent after 207 fresh cases of infection surfaced against 188 recoveries, a daily bulletin released by the NHM highlighted. The national Covid-19 recovery rate, as per government data, was 96.40 per cent on Friday.

While positive cases outnumbered the number of recoveries, the Covid toll in the state also increased as two more patients from Ranchi and Dhanbad died during treatment in 24 hours. As per government data, as many as 1043 people have died of Covid-19 in Jharkhand so far, and at least 222 of them were from Ranchi. The Covid mortality rate in Jharkhand was 0.89 per cent against the national average of 1.40 per cent.

According to the report in Jharkhand today 12 persons were found infected from Bokaro, 3 from Deoghar, 29 from Dhanbad, 1 from Dumka, 17 from East Singhbhum, 2 from Garhwa, 2 from Giridih, 6 from Godda, 3 from Gumla, 2 from Hazaribagh, 2 from Khunti, 3 from Koderma, 2 from Latehar, 2 from Lohardaga, 10 from Palamu, 102 from Ranchi, 3 from Seraikela, 2 from Simdega and 4 from West Singhbhum.

Around 707 people were battling the infection in Ranchi, while 165 were undergoing treatment in East Singhbhum on Tuesday. So far, the government has collected swab samples of 49.76 lakh people and tested 49.16 lakh of them. Of the over 49 lakh people tested, 1,16,436 were found infected. On Tuesday, health workers across Jharkhand tested swab samples of 13,870 people and more than one per cent of them were found infected. At least 1,465 people were battling the virus across the State by the end of Tuesday, Government data stated.

## Covid-19 vaccination dry run at 222 sites in State

DIVYA MODI ■ RANCHI

A day-long dry run of the Covid-19 vaccination was conducted as many as 222 sites across the 24 districts of Jharkhand on Friday. As many as 25 health care workers participated in the mock drill at each site.

In the State Capital the drive was conducted across 17 centres including Sadar Hospital, all community health centres as well as at additional CHCs at Khelari and Rahe. In West Singhbhum the mock drill was conducted across 16 centres while in East Singhbhum at 12, Bokaro had 10 sites whereas Daltanganj and Dumka had 11 each.

"The dry run was conducted smoothly across the State. In the first dry run on January 2, it was done

across six districts at 13 session sites. Out of the 222 sites on Friday, 158 were directly monitored by our development partners like UNICEF, UNDP and WHO," said Ravi Shankar Shukla, Mission Director, National Health Mission, Jharkhand.

"As such there has been no problem with respect to the Covid platform or the preparedness of the officials. Since all the districts have been covered so as of now a third drill will not be conducted. If a need does arise, a decision will be taken. In case of an untoward situation, there are protocols with respect to AEFI which have been communicated to the facilities across all the districts to deal with," added Shukla.

The beneficiaries participating in the dry run were vaccinated by



A nurse conducts the dry run for Covid-19 vaccine on a woman at a Government hospital, near Ranchi on Friday

injecting a fake syringe after their names were verified on the Covid application. A few participants also asked ministers, doctors and operators were basically made to understand what is to be done during the actual vaccination process.

"The dry run has been very successful. As a part of it every aspect has been dealt with in detail. All the health workers, vaccinators, data entry operators were basically made to understand what is to be done during the actual vaccination process. This was also undertaken as a mock drill regarding any adverse reactions," said Civil Surgeon, Ranchi VB Prasad.

A nurse conducts the dry run for Covid-19 vaccine on a woman at a Government hospital, near Ranchi on Friday

## Banks should work for betterment of SHG women: CM

Soren inaugurates 2 branches of HDFC Bank

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren inaugurated two branches of HDFC Bank and other banks to provide loans and train members of women Self Help Groups in far flung areas to connect them with employment.

The CM said that the State Government is committed to provide scholarships to students studying in the State and pension amount to pensioners. The role of banks is



Chief Minister Hemant Soren receives a bouquet from HDFC Branch Banking Head (East) Sandeep S Kumar and Circle Head Kumar Abhishek in Ranchi on Friday

important in extending the amount of financial support to scholarships, pensions etc.

State is the priority of the State Government. HDFC Bank Limited should also formulate an action plan on providing Kisan Credit Card to farmers. HDFC Bank Limited should also do marketing and branding of the product made by the women self-help group. The CM inaugurated two new branches of HDFC Bank Limited at Line Tank Road Ranchi and Singh More Ranchi. With the inauguration of these two branches, 14 branches of HDFC Bank Limited will now be operational in Ranchi.

On this occasion, Sandeep Kumar, Branch Banking Head of HDFC Bank Limited apprised the CM about the work being done by HDFC Bank Ltd. Abhishek Kumar and other officials were present.

HDFC Bank Limited wants to participate in the development of the State.

The CM directed the officials of HDFC Bank Limited to prepare and make available the data of the work being done by the HDFC Bank Limited management in the development of the State under CSR. The CM said that HDFC Bank Limited should work in coordination with the State Government. By working in coordination, development works will be accelerated and there will be no hindrance in working with mutual cooperation.

On this occasion Chief Secretary of the State Sukhdev Singh, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Rajiv Arun Ekka, Jharkhand State Head of HDFC Bank Ltd. Abhishek Kumar and other officials were present.

## CAPSULE

UP HOCHS: 5 DEAD, 16 HOSPITALISED Bulandshahr/Lucknow: Five people have died and 16 more have been hospitalised after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh, police said on Friday. Four policemen were suspended after the incident came to light, and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued directions to initiate action under the Gangsters Act against the accused.

8.9% ECONOMIC GROWTH EXPECTED IN FY22 New Delhi: Indian economy is likely to rebound with an 8.9 per cent growth in the fiscal year beginning April 2021 after economic activity showed significant improvement in the last quarter, IHS Markit said on Friday.





# DGCA issues guidelines for Covid-19 jab transportation



PNB ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

## IMA urges members to come out, support vaccine rollout programme

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The IMA has 1,800 branches across the country, and has been vocal about representing doctors' needs through the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been reports and online surveys from across the country showing that there was considerable hesitation even among the medical community to take the vaccine as soon as it is available.

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

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

"The safety part is tested in phase 2, phase 3 is talking about efficacy. The efficacy part, 50 per cent is also pass mark. Anything above 50 per cent, we are wholeheartedly welcoming that," Jayal said, adding, "Covaxin has not completed the phase 3 trial, but still it is safe. We are expecting it to produce 62 to 63 per cent efficacy."

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

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

"Though there may be different refrigerant options, use of dry ice is the most commonly used, affordable and readily available in the country for transportation of per-

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

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

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The nasal vaccine is different from the two intramuscular vaccines which recently got approval, due to being non-invasive, needle-free, easier to administer, and healthcare workers eliminating needle-associated risks, and suitable for children and adults, having scalable manu-

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

The pharma major has tied up with Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis to develop novel "ch i m p - a d e n o v i r u s" (Chimpanzee adenovirus), a single dose intranasal vaccine for COVID-19.

According to the firm, an intranasal vaccine stimulates a broad immune response at the site of infection, in the nasal mucosa, which is essential for blocking both infection and transmission of Covid-19.

The preclinical trial of its intranasal COVID-19 vaccine was already completed for toxicology, immunogenicity and challenge studies.

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

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

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

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

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

## GURGAON SCHOOL MURDER CASE

# CBI files chargesheet against 4 cops

## Conductor Ashok Kumar of school cleared of charges

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

Kumar had said, "I was asked to parade before the media as they humiliated me in front of my family and pub-

lic. Since then, I have had sleepless nights and I am still trying to regain my lost self-esteem and reputation."

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

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

statement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

## Battle of Bengal

"It is a month-long drive to collect rice, which will then be used for a community meal for farmers, and the poor," he said. The BJP President would stress the government's policy of 'strengthening farmers' in the state.

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

"What the party president will initiate will be taken fur-

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

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

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

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

## Subodh Kumar Jaiswal new CISF DG

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

Maharashtra-cadre IPS officer Subodh Kumar Jaiswal on Friday assumed the charge of Director General, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). Prior to this, he was serving as Director General of Police, Maharashtra, since February 28, 2019.

On his arrival at CISF headquarters here on Friday, Jaiswal was received by Sudhir Kumar Saxena, SDG (HQ) and other senior officers of CISF and a Ceremonial Guard of Honour was presented to him.

Jaiswal holds a Master's degree in Business Administration. He had joined Indian Police Service (IPS) in 1985 at the age of 23 and was allotted Maharashtra cadre.

During his career spanning 35 years, he has held many important and sensitive positions in the state of Maharashtra and on Central Deputation.

In his earlier stint on Central deputation, Jaiswal served as Assistant Inspector General and Deputy Inspector

General in the Special Protection Group (SPG). He has also served as Joint Secretary and Additional Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat.

Jaiswal has been decorated with the President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service in the year 2001. President's Medal for Distinguished Service in 2009, Asadharan Suraksha Seva Praman (ASPP) in 2020, Internal Security Medal, Govt. of India and Special Service Medal, Government of Maharashtra, a CISF statement said.

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## CANCELLATION / PARTIAL CANCELLATION / DIVERSION / REGULATION OF TRAINS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD UNDER BRIDGE

In order to further strengthen the existing infrastructure and to enhance rail and road users safety, Northern Railway will undertake the construction work of Road Under Bridge between Samalkha-Bhodwal Majri stations on Delhi-Ambala-Kalka section. To execute this work, power and traffic block will be taken on 11.01.2021. Consequently the following train will temporarily be affected as under:-

CANCELLATION OF TRAIN		
Train No. & Train Name	Date from originating station	
REBD (Staff Shuttle) Panipat-New Delhi-Panipat	11.01.2021	

## SHORT TERMINATION & SHORT ORINATION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Train Name	Train to short terminate at/originate from	Train Partially cancelled between Stations	Date from originating station
04508/04507 Fazilka-Delhi-Fazilka Express Special	AU/From Ambala Cantt Jn.	Ambala Cantt Jn.-Fazilka	11.01.2021
02715 Nanded-Amritsar Jn. Sackhand Express	At New Delhi	New Delhi-Amritsar Jn.	10.01.2021
02716 Amritsar Jn.-Nanded Sackhand Express	From New Delhi	Amritsar Jn.-New Delhi	11.01.2021

## DIVERSION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Train Name	Diverted Route	Date (from originating station)
02926 Amritsar Jn.-Bandra Terminus Paschim Express	via Panipat Jn.-Gohana-Sonapat	11.01.2021
02925 Banda Terminus-Amritsar Jn. Paschim Express	via Sonapat-Gohana-Panipat Jn.	10.01.2021

## REGULATION OF TRAIN

Train No. & Train Name	Regulation of Train
02057 New Delhi-Una Himachal Janshatabd Spl.	Train commencing its journey on 11.01.2021 will be regulated for 01.15 hrs. enroute

NOTE: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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## Forest staff in Maha have 'lathis' to defend: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Forest staff in Maharashtra have 'lathis' to defend themselves while in Karnataka they are seen roaming in 'Chappals' (slippers), the Supreme Court on Friday said while expressing concern as how they will protect the law and environment

against heavily armed poachers. The top court wondered as to how forest rangers in Assam are well armed while in other States they are not even adequately dressed and said that it may pass orders to provide arms, bullet proof vests and helmets to officers above a certain rank to defend themselves from poachers.

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## ED attaches ₹20.26 cr FD of Gujarat-based firm

PNB ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets in the form of fixed deposit worth ₹20.26 crore of Gujarat-based Crystal Crop Protection P. Ltd. under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Investigation under PMLA was initiated by ED on the basis of FIR registered by CBI (Gandhinagar) for commission of offence under Indian Penal Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy and cheating besides provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act against AK Singh, then Joint Director, DGFT, Ahmedabad, Nand Kishore Agarwal, Ankur Agarwal, Mohit Kumar Goel, directors of Crystal Crop Protection P. Ltd. (CCPL) and others for committing fraud of Rs 20.26 crore with the government exchequer in connivance with the concerned public servant, the ED said.

The accused firm CCPL purchased duty free import authorisation (DFIA) license from an exporter and used the same for claim of refund of terminal excise duty (TED) on local procurement of insecticides from Modern Papers, a Jammu-based unit.

"The investigation revealed that the said DFIA license entitled them to refund of the terminal excise duty in case of local procurement. However, since CCPL had procured goods from the Jammu-based unit, and since excise duty was exempted on the said goods, CCPL was not entitled for payment and subsequent refund of TED," the ED said in a statement.

Moreover, CCPL had claimed refund of TED on such goods which were purchased by them prior to issuance of the advance release order by the DGFT. Thus, by making fraudulent claims, CCPL got a refund of TED to the tune of ₹20.26 crores from the DGFT, Ahmedabad.

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# Spurious liquor kills 5 in Bulandshahr, 1 held

**Bulandshahr/Lucknow:** Five people have died and 16 others hospitalised after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district, police said on Friday.

The authorities have suspended four personnel and removed three senior Meerut zone excise officials from their post for laxity. An excise inspector and three other members of the department have also been suspended.

Police have also arrested the main accused, identified as Kuldeep.

According to a government spokesperson in Lucknow, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to identify and remove from the National Security Act and the Gangsters Act in the case.

Bulandshahr Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Santosh Kumar Singh said some 16 people were arrested from Jeet Garhi village of the district on Wednesday night after con-

suming liquor purchased from Kuldeep.

They were admitted to a hospital, where five of them, aged 45 to 60, died till Friday morning, he said, adding that 16 people are currently undergoing treatment. The SSP said it has surfaced that the liquor being sold in the area for some time. Therefore, the Sikandrabad police station in charge, the Anokhepur chowki in charge and two constables have been suspended, he added.

Meanwhile, Additional Chief Secretary (Excise) Sanjay Bhooresdy removed Meerut zone Joint Excise Commissioner Rajeshmani Tripathi. Deputy Excise Commissioner Suresh Chandra Patel and Bulandshahr District Excise Officer Sanjay Kumar Tripathi for laxity in supervision. They have been attached to the Excise Commissioner's office.

Sikandrabad Excise Inspector Prabhat Vardhan,

Chief Constable Ram Babu and two other constables Srikant Som and Salim Ahmed have also been suspended, Bhooresdy said, adding that they have prima facie been found lacking in discharge of their duties and departmental action has also been ordered against them.

Four of the deceased were identified as Satish, Kalua, Ranjit and Sukhpal, police said.

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav attacked the state BJP government for 'frequent' Hooch tragedies.

"Similar cases have been reported from Lucknow and Barabanki in the past," he told reporters in Banda.

UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu too cited recent hooch tragedies and demanded strict measures to ban the sale of spurious liquor.

"After all, who is responsible for these deaths? The chief minister should answer," he added. **PTI**

# Bengal Guv to meet Shah, submit reports on State

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

The Governor who has been highly critical of the way the Bengal Government functions and who has often expressed his apprehensions about possible bloodshed in coming elections, may talk in favour of hastening up the imposition of model code of conduct so as to bring the allegedly deteriorating law and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Drinking on Goa beaches to attract ₹10,000 fine: Official

State Tourism Director Menino D'Souza told PTI that boards cautioning people against drinking on beaches have been installed.

**Panaji:** The Goa Tourism department has decided to impose a fine of Rs 10,000 for drinking on beaches after several areas were found littered with bottles post new year celebrations, an official said on Friday.

The State Tourism Director Menino D'Souza told PTI that boards cautioning people against drinking on beaches have been installed.

The state government, in January 2019, amended the Tourism Act imposing a fine of Rs 2,000 for individuals and Rs 10,000 for groups drinking on beaches, he said.

"The tourism department will enforce the amended Act through police. Once we have our Tourist Police Force, we will be able to do it on our own," he added. **PTI**

# Kerala Speaker's assistant secretary questioned on hawala transaction

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Kyappan, assistant secretary to Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly P Sreedharan Pillai, is being questioned by the Customs Department at Thiruvananthapuram on Friday.

Though Sreeramakrishnan tried all 'weapons' in his armoury to prevent the Customs officials from summoning his assistant secretary, the legal advisors of the department told the former "point blank" that there were no provisions in the rule book which made Kyappan above the law.

Sreeramakrishnan's contention was that any staff members of the Speaker's office could be questioned by the agency only with his permission.

"We told the Speaker that even he could be summoned for questioning," said a senior Customs official. The assistant secretary is being grilled by the Customs in connection with the hawala transactions in which Sreeramakrishnan is alleged to have played a major role.

The Customs Department has zeroed in on charges of US Dollars worth crores of Indian rupees were illegally sent from Thiruvananthapuram to a West Asian nation with the concurrence of the UAE Consulate in the capital city.

The Customs Department hit upon the hawala deal while probing the gold smuggling scam which was busted by it in last July. Swapna Suresh, Sarath and Sandeep Nair who were arrested by the NIA in connection with the gold smuggling are believed to have spilled the beans about the role of "persons in higher places" in the scam.

Ramesh Chennithala, leader of the opposition and K Surendran, BJP Kerala chief said that there were enough evidences linking Sreeramakrishnan with Swapna Suresh, the kingpin in gold scam. Though the Speaker denied the reports as mere allegations, the details of the telephonic calls between him and Swapna and the videos featuring the duo demolished his alibi.

Once Kyappan's questioning is completed, the Customs will summon Sreeramakrishnan himself for grilling, making him the first Speaker of the Legislative assembly to be questioned by a central agency on charges of smuggling and hawala.

The CPI(M) leadership in Kerala has told the Speaker to delay his appearance before the Customs till the assembly session which commenced on Friday concludes after the passing of the State Budget 2021-22.

# Kerala Guv gives anti-farm laws speech in Assembly

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

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

Referring to the arrest of M Sivasankar, the former principal secretary to Chief Minister M Sivasankar in connection with the gold smuggling scam and the questioning of C N Ravendran, the chief minister's all powerful additional secretary, the Governor lam-

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

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

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

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

# Moradabad woman raped at gunpoint, thrown off terrace on raising alarm

PTI ■ MORADABAD, JAN 8 (PTI)

A 19-year-old school student was allegedly raped by her neighbour in her house at gunpoint and thrown off the terrace as she tried to raise an alarm over the incident, police said on Friday.

The girl suffered severe injuries from the fall and is undergoing treatment at Deendayal Upadhyay Government Hospital in Moradabad. District Police station SHO Satraj Singh said.

The incident occurred in a village under Dilari Police station area on Tuesday night when woman's neighbour Arvind Singh sneaked into her house through terrace and allegedly raped the girl at the gunpoint. When the girl sought to raise an alarm to awaken her sleeping family members, Arvind allegedly pushed her off the terrace, said police.

The woman's family members, who rushed her to a nearby government hospital in Thakurdwara, said the local police initially did not register the charge of rape in the First Information Report lodged over the incident.

The police only included charges of outraging modesty, trespass and causing hurt in the FIR lodged on the day of the

incident, but they included the rape charge after the intervention from Moradabad's Senior Superintendent of Police Prabhakar Choudhury.

SSP Chaudhary said the victim after gaining consciousness, recorded her statement before a magistrate under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code, in which she accused her neighbour of raping her.

Accordingly, the rape charge too was added in the FIR and the accused arrested and sent to jail under judicial custody, the SSP said.

SHO Singh denying the allegation of the woman's father saying that the police performed its duties properly and all charges of the incident were included in the FIR while the rape charge was added after the victim's mother had her statement under section 164 of the CrPc.

The victim too was shifted to Deendayal Upadhyay Government Hospital in Moradabad, he said. The charges of the incident were included in the rape and other injuries in the hospital, but the hospital's chief medical officer, Dr Sunita, did not disclose the findings of the medical examination, including the details of the woman's various physical injuries.

# 2 boys who inadvertently crossed over into Indian territory repatriated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

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

Defence PRO in Jammu said, "On 31 December 2020, Master Ali Haider, a 14-year old boy from Mirpur district of Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (POJK) had inadvertently crossed over to India in the Poonch District of Jammu and Kashmir. He seemed innocent and was immediately provided with clothing, food and shelter." According to him, "On 03 January, a request was quickly



made to Pakistan Authorities to repatriate him on humanitarian grounds."

"Pakistan authorities were also reminded of our Indian request to repatriate an Indian boy named Mohammed Bashir who had inadvertently crossed over to Pakistan from the Poonch Sector on 24 December 2020". Defence PRO said, "Pak Authorities finally accept-

ed the proposal on 06 January 21. With the support of J&K Police and Civil administration, Ali Haider was repatriated to Pakistan via Poonch Rawalakot Crossing Point on Friday. Pakistan Authorities also handed over Shabir s/o Mohammed Bashir after 16 days of staying in Pakistan custody". The officials said they received the custody of young boys and handed them gifts as a token of gesture while their custodies were handed over at the line of control.

# 42-year-old arrested for raping minor Dalit girl in Amethi

**Amethi (UP):** A 42-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly raping a minor Dalit girl in a village under the jurisdiction of the Shukul Bazar police station here, a police official said. The 15-year-old girl had gone to attend nature's call on Wednesday evening when the man who lives in a neighbouring village raped her, said SHO Bazar Shukul Ravindra Singh, citing the complaint given by the girl's father.

An FIR has been lodged on the basis of the complaint under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, he said.

The accused has been arrested and the girl has been sent for medical examination, the SHO said. **PTI**

# 319 new Covid cases, 308 recoveries in AP



**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh reported 319 fresh Coronavirus cases, 308 recoveries and one death in 24 hours ending 9 am on Friday.

The cumulative confirmed positive cases so far touched 8,84,490 after 1.22 crore sample tests, with an overall infection positivity rate of 7.24 per cent, a health department bulletin said. The total recoveries stood at 8,74,531 and deaths 7,127, leaving 2,852 active cases, it said.

Krishna district reported 46 fresh cases and one death in a day. Chittoor added 44 and Guntur 39 new cases while 10 other districts reported less than 30 fresh cases each. After a lull for several days, wherein it saw daily new COVID-19 cases below 10, Kurnool added 26 anew in 24 hours, pushing its active caseload upwards to 197. **PTI**

# Raj: Revenue Dept to conduct Special Girdawari

**Jaipur:** Revenue Department on the instructions of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the last days in the State Special Girdawari will be conducted in the affected hailstorm, cold wave and Patra affected areas.

Principal Secretary, Revenue and Disaster Management Shri Anand Kumar informed that January 2, January 3

And on January 4, 2027, due to hailstorm, cold wave and Patra fall in the state, the districts in which the crop

Has been harmed, their preliminary notice has been obtained. Kota, Alwar on 2 January and 3 January

Information has been received about the crop in Bundi and Bundi district, while the crop in Bundi and Nagaur district on 4 January.

# Haryana CM meets Shah amid farmers' stir, expresses hope for early resolution

**New Delhi:** Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar expressed hope that the demand of various farmers' organizations regarding the new farm laws can only be resolved through the medium of mutual dialogue.

The Chief Minister said this while interacting with media persons after meeting Union Home Minister, Mr. Amit Shah late evening in New Delhi today.

The Chief Minister said that a solution will definitely be reached through a round of discussions. He said that now when various issues are being discussed together, the possibilities of resolving the matter pertaining to the said acts is now stronger, which is why the plan for the forthcoming meeting has also been fixed.

The Chief Minister said



that apart from the three Farm Reforms Acts, there are many other topics on which discussions are also going on.

Responding to a question regarding the demands of farmers' organizations for repealing of the said Acts, Chief Minister said that if that had been the case then the negotiations would have already ended.



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



**FIRST COLUMN**

# A united India in the making

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



MARKANDEY KATJU

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



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

—SPEAKER, US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES NANCY PELOSI

# New role for CSR

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



MOIN QAZI

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

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

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

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

The report also mentions how the public sector can potentially provide just about 60,000-70,000 healthcare inoculators, as against the minimum one lakh professionals needed.

CSR is the acronym for how a business relates to the broader cultural, economic and polit-

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Politics can also skew priorities, with companies looking to gain goodwill by backing Government-led projects rather than initiating more socially relevant initiatives. Despite all the hyperbole, the great economist Milton Friedman argued in the year 1970: "The doctrine of social responsibility is frequently a cloak for

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is a well-known donor and professional in international relations. The views expressed are personal.)

# Amend COTPA to make curbs on tobacco more effective

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



ASHOK PATIL

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

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

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) nearly 1.35 million people die each year in India due to tobacco use. Worldwide, tobacco causes more and seven million deaths per year from diseases related to tobacco use by 2030. The WHO has been at the forefront of the fight against tobacco and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) was the first coordinated global effort to reduce its use. The WHO FCTC entered into force on February 27, 2005 and has since become the most evidence-based measures to reduce tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke. When effectively implemented, the WHO FCTC is a

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

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

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

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

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

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

Drawing from best international practices, it is imperative to fix the existing loopholes in the Indian legal framework on regulation of tobacco. For this purpose, the following recommendations are suggested for amending the COTPA 2003 by experts on consumer law. Currently, Section four of the COTPA Act states: "No person shall smoke in any public place. Provided that in a hotel having 30 rooms or a restaurant having seating capacity of 30 people or more and at the airports, a separate provision for smoking area or space may be made." It is recommended that the provision be deleted as it provides exemptions contrary to the WHO FCTC to which India is a signatory. It is also contrary to the Supreme Court judgement in the *Murli Deora vs Union of India* case 2001 and thus needs to be done away with.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Mkt cap of BSE-listed cos soar to record ₹195.66L cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies zoomed to a fresh lifetime high of over ₹195.66 lakh crore on Friday as markets returned to winning ways after two days of decline...

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

global tech 'S' Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities, said. Maruti was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 5.94 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Infosys, UltraTech...

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

TCS Q3 net profit rises 7.2% to ₹8,701 cr; growth strongest Q3 logs in 9 years. Mumbai: The country's largest software services firm TCS on Friday reported a 7.2 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹8,701 crore for the December 2020 quarter...

'Indian economy to rebound with 8.9% growth in FY22'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian economy is likely to rebound with an 8.9 per cent growth in the fiscal year beginning April 2021 after economic activity showed significant improvement in the last quarter, IHS Markit said on Friday. The National Statistical Organisation (NSO) on Thursday predicted that the economy will contract 7.7 per cent in the current financial year ending in March...

7.5 per cent in the September quarter.

"During the fourth quarter of 2020, India's industrial production and consumption expenditure have shown a rebound. "October data showed that industrial production grew by 3.6 per cent year-on-year compared with a steep contraction of -55.5 per cent in April 2020," IHS said. Stating that there has been a marked improvement in business conditions across the manufacturing sector, it said factory orders increased during December on the back of the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions, strengthening demand and improved market conditions...

for India is that the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is already being manufactured in the country by the Serum Institute of India, which produces that it will be able to manufacture 100 million COVID-19 vaccine doses per month by April 2021.

"With the Indian economy already showing a significant improvement in domestic economic activity in the fourth quarter of 2020, the outlook is for Indian GDP growth to rebound by 8.9 per cent year-on-year in the 2021-22 fiscal year," IHS said. India Ratings & Research said the NSO projections for GDP growth in FY21 mean that the size of the Indian economy is expected to shrink to Rs 134.40 lakh crore in FY21 as against Rs 145.66 lakh crore in FY20. "From the demand side except government consumption all other components namely private consumption, investment, exports and imports are estimated to contract in FY21," it said. An important advantage

GDP estimates: Industries showing signs of recovery, says Niti VC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Niti VC Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar on Friday said industries are showing signs of recovery and fiscal measures announced by the government are projected to offset the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Kumar was commenting on the first advance estimates (AE) of national income released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Thursday, which projected 7.7 per cent contraction in GDP for the current fiscal year. "While the first advanced estimates report a contraction of -7.7%, industries, both contact-intensive & non-contact, are showing signs of recovery. "From the demand side except government consumption all other components namely private consumption, investment, exports and imports are estimated to contract in FY21," it said. As per the GDP esti-

mates, all sectors are expected to post a contraction for the full fiscal, except agriculture. "Real GDP or GDP at Constant Prices (2011-12) is likely to attain a level of ₹134.40 lakh crore as against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2019-20 of ₹145.66 lakh crore... "The growth in real GDP during 2020-21 is estimated at -7.7 per cent as compared to the growth rate of 4.2 per cent in 2019-20." The NSO had said in a statement. In the current fiscal, manufacturing sector is likely to see a contraction 9.4 per cent whereas growth was almost 10 per cent in the year ago period. The NSO estimates significant contraction in 'mining and quarrying', and 'trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting. PTI

Sensex rallies 689 pts to end at fresh high; Nifty closes below 14,350

Mumbai: Equity benchmark Sensex soared 689 points to end at a fresh all-time high on Friday, led by Infosys, TCS and Reliance amid strong buying sentiment in global equities.

The 30-share BSE index closed 689.19 points or 1.43 per cent higher at 48,782.51. It touched an intra-day record of 48,854.34. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rallied 209.90 points or 1.48 per cent to close at its record high of 14,347.25. During the day, the index scaled a life-time peak of 14,367.30. Maruti was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 6 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Infosys, UltraTech Cement, PowerGrid and NTPC.

On the other hand, Hindalco, Bank, Bharati Airtel, SBI, ITC and HDFC were the laggards. According to Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities, growing expectations of stronger fiscal stimulus in the US after Congress confirmed President-elect Joe Biden's victory have fuelled equities rally globally. "Markets completely downplayed earlier concerns of reversal of lower tax rates in the scenario of Democrats taking control of both the houses of Congress," he added. A sustained rebound in key economic data for December 2020 and likely commencement of vaccination drive shortly in India augur well for domestic equities, he said, adding that the underlying strength of domestic equities is intact, which essentially can propel benchmark indices to witness fresh highs in coming weeks. "FPIs are unlikely to turn net sellers barring select weeks of days considering the status of global economy, stance of global central bankers and weak dollar," he stated. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended with significant gains, while Shanghai was in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading on a positive note in early deals. Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.59 per cent higher at USD 54.70 per barrel. PTI

Gold prices fell ₹614, silver tanks ₹1,609. New Delhi: Gold prices fell ₹614 to ₹49,763 per 10 gm in the national capital on Friday, tracking a weak global gold market according to HPC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹50,377 per 10 gm. Silver prices also plunged ₹1,609 to ₹67,518 per kilogram from ₹69,127 per kilogram in the previous trade. In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,889 per ounce, while silver was quoting flat at USD 26.68 per ounce. PTI

USD 54.70 per barrel. PTI

Rupee rises 7 paise to close at 73.24 a dollar. Mumbai: The Indian rupee staged a smart recovery from the day's lowest level to end 7 paise higher at 73.24 against the US dollar on Friday, up 7 paise from its previous close. For a better part of the session, the rupee remained under pressure due to stronger American currency against key rivals and evening crude oil prices, which eventually capped its gains.

No new KYC disclosure norm for jewellery purchase; KYC only for high value cash purchases. New Delhi: No new KYC disclosures have been mandated for cash purchase of gold, silver or precious gems and stones and on high-value cash transactions continue to require the filing of documents such as income tax PAN or biometric ID Aadhaar, finance ministry sources said Friday. Clarifying a December 28, 2020 notification, the Department of Revenue in the ministry said cash purchase of jewellery, bullion and precious gems and stones of value more than ₹2 lakh is not allowed without KYC in the country for the past few years. This continues. The notification issued under PML Act, 2002 on December 28 stated that only persons or entities buying gold, silver, jewellery or precious stones in cash transactions worth Rs 10 lakh or above need to file know your customer or KYC documents. This is a requirement of FATF (Financial Action Task Force) the global money laundering and terrorist financing overseer, they said. FATF is an inter-governmental body that sets international standards aimed to prevent illegal activities on terror funding and money laundering. India is a member of FATF since 2010. PTI

Sebi permits transfer of bourses' excess contribution from core SGF of one clearing corp to another

New Delhi: Markets regulator Sebi on Friday allowed transfer of excess contribution made by stock exchanges from core settlement guarantee fund (SGF) of one clearing corporation to another one in inter-operable scenario.

This comes following requests made by the stock exchanges. "It has been decided to allow transfer of excess contribution made by stock exchanges from core SGF of one clearing corporation to the core SGF of another clearing corporation, in inter-operable scenario," Sebi said in a circular. However, stock exchanges and clearing corporations have been asked to ensure certain conditions. PTI

SBI announces up to 30 bps concession on home loans rates

Mumbai: State Bank of India on Friday announced an interest concession of up to 30 bps points on home loans and a 100 per cent waiver on processing fees.

The new home loan interest rates are linked to CIBIL score and start from 6.80 per cent for loans up to ₹30 lakh and 6.95 per cent for loans above ₹30 lakh, a bank release said. Women borrowers will get a concession of 5 bps, it said. "With an aim to offer attractive concessions to the home buyers, country's largest lender SBI announces further interest concession of up to 30 bps on home loans and 100 per cent waiver on processing fees," the release said. The bank said interest concession of up to 30 bps is also available in eight metro cities for loans up to Rs 5 crore. Customers can also apply from the ease of their home via YONO App and get additional interest concession of 5 bps, the release said. PTI

Paddy procurement double than last year in Chhattisgarh

Raipur: Paddy Procurement is going on Chhattisgarh is a systematic manner. Quantity of paddy procured this year till date is nearly double as compared to the quantity procured last year.

More than Rs 10 thousand crores have been paid to more than 15 lakh farmers against paddy procurement. 60 lakh metric tonnes of paddy has been procured at support price in the state so far, which is almost twice the amount of paddy procured in the same period last year. As State Government is constantly making arrangements and monitoring the process, farmers are facing no inconvenience in selling paddy. Paddy purchased from farmers is 40 kg 580 grams per bag including the weight of gunny bag i.e. 580 grams. Due to the shortage of gunny bags, there has been some inconvenience, which is being rapidly resolved. Continuous payment is also being made in lieu of paddy purchased from farmers at support price.

REPUBLIC DAY CAMP 2021 DG highlights achievements of NCC

New Delhi: The NCC Republic Day (RD) Camp 2021, commenced at the Cariappa Parade Ground, Delhi Cantt on 04 Jan 2021.

Gen. The Gen. The Director General National Cadet Corps, addressed the cadets and officials on the occasion. He called upon the cadets to participate wholeheartedly and derive maximum benefit from each activity in the Camp. The aim of the Republic Day Camp, is to provide the participating cadets, an exposure, to the rich culture and traditions of our nation, through a number of cultural events, that take place in the run up to the Republic Day and the Hon'ble Prime Minister's visit to NCC Camp for PM's Rally on 28 Jan 2021. The Republic Day Camp provides the cadets with a unique opportunity to improve their personal traits and value based skills. Cadets attending the camp, participate in a number of activities, like written test, arm drill, micro light flying and the best cadet competition. A total of 1000 Cadets, including 380 girl cadets, drawn from all 28 States and 09 Union Territories of the Country, are participating in this one month long Camp. The Camp, in fact portrays a reflection of 'Mini India'. While speaking to the media, the Director General highlighted the major achievements of the NCC in the areas of Youth Empowerment, Nation Building, Social Awareness Campaigns, Community Development Programmes, Environment Protection, Sports and Adventure.

Forex reserves swell by \$4.483 bns to record \$585.324 bn

Mumbai: The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by USD 4.483 billion to touch a record high of USD 585.324 billion in the week ended January 1, RBI data showed on Friday.

In the previous week ended December 25, the reserves had declined by USD 290 million to USD 580.841 billion. In the reporting week, the increase in reserves was on account of a rise in foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves. FCAs climbed by USD 4.168 billion to USD 541.642 billion, weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves rose by USD 315 million to USD 37.026 billion in the week ended January 1, as per the data. The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) remained unchanged at USD 1.510 billion.

Delhi Jal Board

OFFICE: OF THE EX. ENGINEER (NE II) R-POCKET DILSHAD GARDEN DELHI-110005

Table with 6 columns: Sr. No., Name of Work, Amount paid to tender, EMD Amount, Tender Fee, Date of release of tender, Last date of receipt of tender. Includes details for replacement of old deep and damaged 100mm dia water line and replacement of old deep and damaged water line at Block, Saket, under Katedel Nagar AC-70.

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT DISTRICT HOSPITAL PULWAMA

Tender No: DHP/RC/Canteen/2021/ Dated: Tender Name: Tender for the running of Hospital Canteen for Staff, Students, Visitors & Patients on contract Basis. Tender Subject: Tender for the running of Hospital Canteen for Staff, Students, Visitors & Patients on contract Basis. Minimum Reserve Price: Rupees 20.00 lakhs. Tender Registration Fee: Rupees 500/- EMD: 10% of minimum Reserve Price. Attention Catering Contractors Sealed tenders are invited for and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor UT of J&K by the Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama for running a hospital canteen for staff, Students, Visitors & Patients on contract Basis at District Hospital Pulwama for a period of 5 years from the date of approval of the contract. Tender documents containing all details can be obtained from the office of the medical superintendent District Hospital Pulwama on working days from 10 am to 4pm on the payment of Rs.500/- (Rupees five hundred only) by cash against the proper GR (non refundable) at our registration section. Cash receipt needs to be submitted to the office of the Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama for obtaining the tender documents. Sealed envelope super scried, tender for running a hospital canteen for staff, Students, Visitors & Patients for a period of 5 years addressed to the Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama should be delivered at the office of the undersigned at District Hospital Pulwama by or before 14 days from the date of publication of this notice in the news papers. Tenders will be opened on the next working day of closing date of above mentioned notice in front of those tenders who wish to be present. In case the date happens to be an unobserved holiday the next working day will be taken into account for purchase, submission and opening of tenders. Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama reserves right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. Sd/- Medical Superintendent No. DHPK-11440/20 Dated:-07.01.2021 D. H. Pulwama

कार्यालयक अखिया का कार्यलय वाद निवण एवं जल निरकरण प्रमडेर, छपरा. अति अस्यकालीन रात्रीय स्यदा निविदा आमरण. निविदा आमरण सूचना सं-02-SBD/2021. Table with 6 columns: Sr. No., Name of Work, Amount paid to tender, EMD Amount, Tender Fee, Date of release of tender, Last date of receipt of tender.

ICICI Bank PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER GUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET. Notice for sale of immovable assets. 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 Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited, Plot No. 23, Shal Tower 3rd Floor New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi - 110005 and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder.

SHORT CIRCUITS



ARJUN RAMPAL

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



MIKA SINGH

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



ATIF ASLAM

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



MRUNAL THAKUR

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

MILEY CYRUS

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



CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES

# THE CINEMA OF TOMORROW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

**Myna:** We thought much about our

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



CELEB TALK 15 MINUTES

## 'It's my good fortune'

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



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

Kaushik said that after the proposed Film City in UP, dreams of young artists to work with the top Bollywood directors and producers will now be fulfilled in their own state. "It is my good fortune that my first film *Kaagaz* released in the cinema hall after COVID-19 pandemic. As the film is based on a



real story of a man from the state, people will now get a chance to see the life of the rural areas of UP. Undoubtedly, there are a lot of beautiful locations in this state, and I personally believe that more films from Mumbai will be shot in UP once the Film City in Noida is built," he said. Kaushik's *Kaagaz* is also streaming on Zee 5 originals. Apart from Pankaj Tripathi, the film stars Monal Gajjar, Mita Vashtit and Amar Upadhyay in prominent

roles. Besides directing the film, Kaushik has also acted in it. He has played the role of Pankaj Tripathi's lawyer Sadhu Ram Kevat. "Talking about sharing the screen with Tripathi, Kaushik said, "When I was enacting scenes with him in the film, I tried to be as good as him. I think *Kaagaz* will be one of Pankaj's best films." *Kaagaz* was shot at Kanduni village in Sitapur district, about 60 km from Lucknow.

The film's story is based on the life of Lal Bihari, a farmer and social activist from a small village named Amilo in Azamgarh.

In the film, Tripathi plays a bandmaster who discovers he is officially dead in government records and decides to set things right and prove that he is alive. "I proceeded under the banner of Salman Khan Films and Satish Kaushik Entertainment Production, the film's screenplay is written by Imtiaz Ali. The filmmakers are holding a special screening using the mobile movie theatre technology in Sitapur district on Friday. "This mobile theatre format reaches viewers instead of viewers going to the theatre. I am so glad that the film will reach so many people through this release. Nothing makes me happier to know that *Kaagaz*, our labour of love, would reach a wider audience, especially in the interiors where watching cinema is still a far-fetched dream," said Kaushik. —JANS

STUDIO CHAT 15 MINUTES

## Chronicles of a life-long exile

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

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

Contending that the reporting on Kashmir has whitewashed the human tragedy of Kashmiri Hindus, *Kasheer* retells the tale in a fictionalised account which is all too real and catches the facts of deception, betrayal, propaganda and political ambitions that have all but erased the memories of oppression of Kashmiri Hindus from the nation's conscience. It extricates the truth of human tragedy and presents it with brutal honesty. Sahana undertook first-hand research during her visit to Kashmir and interviewed hundreds of locals for the book. According to her, the Kashmir issue cannot be understood without grasping the layers of traditional-



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

The bold narration uses multiple metaphors, including that of Aarti Kaul's unconceived womb to voice out what happened to Kashmiri Hindus. The book derives its name from Kosur language, in which Kashmir translates to *Kasheer*. Noting that the author has synthesised the historical perspective and the contemporary reality pertaining to Kashmir very well, renowned Kannada scholar S. J. Bhyrappa, who has written the book's foreword, said that she connected with the very few Kashmiri Hindus who have "returned home" and were living in ghettos, and witnessed all the places that bear testimony to thousands and thousands of religious conversions under intimidation, rape, murder and bloodshed.

IALOGUE 45 MINUTES

# TIMELY TONIC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For Ralph, a stage-trained actor who grew up in Scotland, it's a pinch-me start to his screen career. "I went to drama school because I wanted to be surrounded by the best and I wanted to train in that way,"

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

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

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



boost its appeal to a contemporary audience.

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

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

"What we wanted to do was bring to life the

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

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

—AP



# I am being tortured: Kangana

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

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

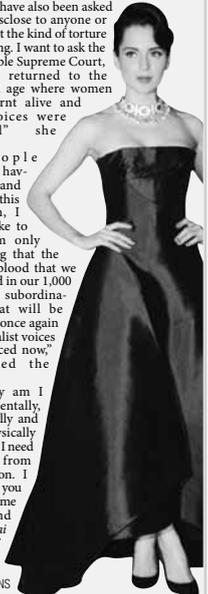
In the video, Kangana speaks in Hindi: "Ever since I have started speaking for the interest of the nation, the way I am being treated and tortured, the entire country can see that. My house was broken in an illegal manner. Everyday new cases are being filed against me because I have spoken for the interest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

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

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

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

—IANS



ARTS & CULTURE 30 MINUTES

# THE TREE OF LIFE

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The philosophy I refer to is *vasudeva kutumbakam*," says



Vriksham Acrylic on Canvas 48"x72"

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

habitat of humans, birds, animals and any living species." Vivek does not go into the details but creates sunken spaces that make us imagine that the



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

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



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

## JYOTI'S INTAGLIO

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

## ARPITHA'S PAINTING

Trained in the Gururwayoor School of murals and frescoes, Arpitha Reddy's *Kalpavriksha* created as the mascot and masterpiece for *Vriksha 2019* that was exhibited at India International

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

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

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

