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BHUBANESWAR, THURSDAY MARCH 4, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹4

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## Covaxin efficacy 81%: Biotech

Ph 3 study involved 25,800; it can neutralise UK variant strains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech on Wednesday said its Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin has demonstrated an interim vaccine efficacy of 81 per cent in phase 3 clinical trials. "Analysis from the National Institute of Virology also indicates that vaccine-induced antibodies can neutralise the UK variant strains and other heterologous strains," Bharat Biotech said in a statement.

The trial process involved 25,800 subjects, the largest ever conducted in India, in partnership with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the pharma firm said adding that the phase 3 study enrolled participants between 18-98 years of age, including 2,433 over the age of 60 and 4,500 with comorbidities.

The first interim analysis is based on 43 cases, of which 36 cases of Covid-19 were observed in the placebo group versus 7 cases observed in the Covaxin group, resulting in a point estimate of vaccine efficacy of 80.6 per cent, Bharat Biotech explained.

"Today is an important milestone in vaccine discovery, for science and our fight against coronavirus. With today's results from our Phase 3 clinical trials, we have now reported data on our Covid-19 vaccine from Phase 1, 2, and 3 trials involving around 27,000 participants," Bharat Biotech Chairman and Managing Director Krishna Ella



People register their names to receive the Covid-19 vaccine at Sola Civil hospital in Ahmedabad on Wednesday AP

said. Covaxin demonstrates a high clinical efficacy trend against Covid-19 but also significant immunogenicity against the rapidly emerging variants, he added.

In January, drug regulator DCGI had approved Oxford Covid-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country, paving the way for a massive inoculation drive. Covishield had shown an effi-

cacy rate of 70 per cent after two full doses. However, one of the regimen with a half dose and a full dose showed 90 per cent efficacy against the virus.

Bharat Biotech said the interim analysis of its vaccine included a preliminary review of the safety database, which showed that severe, serious, and medically attended adverse events occurred at low levels and were balanced between vaccine and placebo groups, the company said. The trials conduct and monitoring are as per good clin-

ical practice guidelines and have been outsourced to IQVIA, it added. The company expects to share further details of the trial results as additional data becomes available, it noted.

Additional interim analysis is planned for 87 cases, and the final analysis is planned for 130 cases, the company said.

All data from the second interim and final analyses will be shared via pre-publication servers as well as submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication, it added.

Eligible citizens  
can take Covid  
jabs 24x7, says  
Health Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eligible citizens can take Covid-19 vaccine round the clock as per their convenience, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday. The Ministry also permitted all private hospitals to give Covid vaccine if they adhere to the laid down norms.

"The Government has ended the time constraint to increase the speed of vaccination. Citizens of the country can now get vaccinated 24x7 at their convenience," Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said on twitter.

A senior official from the Union Health Ministry in a meeting chaired by Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and other officials said it was decided that "all Government health facilities, including all private hospitals empanelled under Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS), Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB-PM JAY) and similar State Health Insurance Schemes can function as Covid Vaccination Centres (CVCs), subject to them mandatorily adhering to some specific norms."

AAP wins 4 of 5 wards  
in Capital, Congress 1BJP fails to  
retain seat

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday won four of the five municipal wards in Delhi in the bypolls. The Congress managed to win one seat by defeating the AAP candidate from the minority-dominated Chauhan Bangar ward.

The AAP retained three wards — Rohini-C, Trilokpuri and Kalyanpuri — and also snatched the Shalimar Bagh ward from the BJP which failed to open its account.

AAP's Dhirender Kumar won the Kalyanpuri ward by 7,043 votes, Vijay Kumar from Trilokpuri by defeating the BJP's Om Prakash by a margin of 4,986 votes, Sunita Mishra defeated Surbhi Jaju of the BJP in Shalimar Bagh ward by 2,705 votes, Ram Chander defeated BJP candidate Rakesh Goyal by 2,985 votes in Rohini C ward.

However, the AAP suffered a defeat in Chauhan Bangar ward, where Chaudhary Zubair Ahmad of the Congress defeated the party's candidate Mohammad Ishraq Khan by a whopping margin of 10,642 votes. "The people of Delhi have once again voted in the name of work. Congratulations to all.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy CM Manish Sisodia with AAP candidates after results of bypolls to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in New Delhi on Wednesday Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

The people are fed up with misrule of the BJP at MCD for 15 years. People are desperate to bring the AAP to rule the MCD," Kejriwal tweeted after the party's victory.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said, "Today's result shows that the people of Delhi have immense faith in party and the Government led by Arvind Kejriwal."

The BJP had termed these by-elections as 'semi-finals' to the 2022 MCD elections, the people have shown that the result of the 2022 elections will be a unanimous verdict in favour of the AAP."

However, Delhi BJP general secretary Harsh Malhotra said, "No doubt that the results of municipal by-elections are

not up to our expectations but we respect the verdict of the people. We will deeply study the election results, identify the reasons for defeat and will surely win the 2022 municipal elections of Delhi."

"We honour the mandate given by people. Losing Shalimar Bagh North is a matter of introspection. The shortcomings will be removed and I am sure the BJP will win the 2022 elections for three municipal corporations," said Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta.

AAP national spokesperson and MLA Raghav Chadha said, "The AAP wins semifinal decisively with roughly one year to go for MCD finals in 2022."

SSB to raise 12 more battalions  
New formations to fortify Sikkim tri-junction bordering Bhutan, Tibet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has sanctioned raising of a dozen new battalions (about 13,000 personnel) for the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) over the next four years. The SSB guards the frontiers along Nepal and Bhutan.

The new battalions will mostly be deployed to fortify the defences at the tri-junction area in Sikkim that adjoins Bhutan and Tibet and other such vulnerable posts along the two open borders.

The SSB with a present strength of about 90,000 personnel is the lead intelligence agency along 1,751 km open border with Nepal and 699 km boundary with Bhutan.

The 12 new battalions will be raised in phases. Three battalions each will be raised over the next four years.

"The Government has sanctioned to raise new battalions and related establishments for the SSB. The additional manpower will boost border security," a senior Union Home Ministry official said.

The Centre has also sanc-



tioned 548 posts to the force for deployment at four ICPs (integrated check posts) along the Nepal frontier out of which two are already operational at Jogbani and Raxaul (in Bihar).

The new battalions will be used to reduce inter-border outpost distance, strengthen trade and transit routes along Nepal and Bhutan and fortify the paramilitary's deployments at the tri-junction area in Sikkim. The tri-junction area

is the plateau between India, Bhutan and Tibet and the SSB is deployed just below it on the southern side, being the designated border force for Bhutan frontier.

In 2017, the Armies of India and China had engaged in an over 70-day standoff in Doklam at this tri-junction.

The additional manpower will also be deployed for upgrading the existing border posts at strategically important

locations along the two frontiers besides bolstering the security at the eight ICPs.

The sanction of new battalions and establishments was granted as a follow up to Union Home Minister Amit Shah reviewing the operations of the SSB in October, 2019 and subsequent directions to the paramilitary to conduct a "vulnerability assessment and gap analysis" of the two borders, officials said.

IT raids Kashyap, Taapsee's  
assets, questions 2 laterTN RAGHUNATHA ■  
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

The Income Tax (IT) department officials on Wednesday carried out searches at 30-odd properties and locations linked to Anurag Kashyap and Taapsee Pannu in Mumbai and Pune for alleged tax evasion, while the filmmaker and actress were questioned by the IT officials in Pune.

In a development that is being seen as an act of vendetta against Kashyap and Taapsee who have been vociferous critics of the Narendra Modi Government, the IT officials simultaneously zeroed in on several premises in Mumbai and Pune which are linked to erstwhile Phantom Films that was co-promoted by Anurag Kashyap, producers Vikas Bahl and Madhu Mantena, an event management company and a talent management company.

Kashyap and Taapsee were questioned by the IT department officials in Pune in connection with the searches conducted at various places.

Official sources attributed searches to the available information that the IT department



had received that the movies made by the productions were showing disproportionately low income, in spite of the fact that their films were hits at the box-office. The premises of Exceed Entertainment, which is being managed by actor Saif Ali Khan, were searched, while some executives of Kwan Talent Management that manages actor Deepika Padukone and other actors were questioned.

When asked about the IT raids conducted on premises linked to Kashyap and Taapsee, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said at a news briefing in New Delhi: "The Income Tax department probes someone



based on whatever information they get. The issue goes to court later."

On allegations that the searches on premises belonging to Kashyap and Taapsee were an off-shoot of criticism of the Government, Javadekar said: "This is too much."

Known for his anti-establishment views, Kashyap has long been a critic of the Narendra Modi Government, while Taapsee has minced no words when it came to the criticism of the Centre on social media platforms.

Both of them have supported the formers' agitation which has been going on the outskirts of the national Capital since November 26.

Pari case accused  
moves HC against  
charge-sheet

Saroj Sethy, a minor has prayed High court to quash charge-sheet

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Challenging the charge-sheet filed against him and the cognisance taken by the Children's Court for holding trial in the case, the accused in the sensational kidnap and murder of five-year-old girl Pari of Nayagarh district approached the Orissa High Court on Wednesday.

In a petition, accused Saroj Sethy, a minor, has prayed the court to quash the charge-sheet and restrain the Children's Court from holding trial in the case, said Saroj's counsel Manas Chand.

The petitioner has maintained that without any oral and documentary evidence against him, he has been named as the single accused in the case by the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

He has also pointed out that since he is a minor, the Children's Court does not have any jurisdiction to take cognisance of the matter.

97 new Covid cases  
reported in State

TOTAL RISES TO 3,37,448

64 MORE PATIENTS RECOVER

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

There was an uptick in the Covid-19 positive cases on Wednesday in the State with 97 new cases being detected in 18 districts and the State pool.

With new cases, total positive tally rose to 3,37,448. Of new cases, 58 were reported from quarantine while remaining 39 were local contact cases. Khordha district recorded day's highest 14 cases followed by Sambalpur with 13 and Sundargarh 11. Besides, three cases were reported from State pool. On Tuesday, 74 positive cases had been registered in State. Currently, number of total active cases in State stood at 775 and cumulative samples tested were 83,83,192. However, another 64 patients recovered on day, taking total active cases rose to 3,34,767 in the State.

State seeks full data access  
to PM-KISAN portal

Agriculture Min Sahoo  
writes to Union Min  
Pradhan

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Just a day after Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan wrote a letter to CM Naveen Patnaik seeking inclusion of more number of farmers and hassle free disbursement of financial assistance to the beneficiaries under PM-KISAN, State Agriculture Minister Arun Sahoo retorted by seeking full data access to the PM-KISAN portal by the State Government.

Sahoo in his letter to Union Minister Pradhan said, "I would also like to say the technical team of the Government of Odisha has been working closely with the technical team of PM-KISAN. Substantial progress has been made and around 2.77 lakh

mis-matches of the Aadhaar name / Aadhaar numbers has been corrected, 66,662 transaction failures have been rectified and 9.77 lakh farmers whose payments had been stopped for different reasons, the stop payment has been revoked. I hope all the pending issues are resolved by the PM KISAN technical team, with our support, by March, 31, 2021."

Sahoo further said even though the entire data of the registered farmers on the PM-KISAN Portal is uploaded by the State Government only very limited access to the Portal is being given to the State Government.

Thus, issues like bulk bank details correction and bulk rectification is not possible to be done by the State Government. Sahoo urged that the team handling PM-KISAN give full administrative and editing rights to the State Government so that

any discrepancies can be rectified. He further stated that the total beneficiaries registered by Odisha on the PM-KISAN portal is 43.17 lakhs (and not 40.5 Lakhs).

Based on the number of potential farmers indicated by Government of India this translates to a saturation level of 83.5% which is much higher than the national saturation level. However, against the 43.17 lakh registered farmers, only 38.65 lakh farmers have been approved for receiving benefits.

He urged Minister Pradhan to ensure that the balance 4.52 lakh farmers are also considered for support under PM-KISAN. Besides, Sahoo stated that out of the 38.65 lakh registered farmers accepted for receiving benefits, 37.19 lakh farmers (96.22%) have received one or more instalments. He urged Pradhan for early steps to sort out the technical glitches.

## Similipal wildfire: 10 days on, no end in sight

PNS ■ BARIPADA

A major wildfire has razed a part of Asia's second-largest biosphere, the Similipal Sanctuary, and there seems to be no end to it in sight. Efforts of forest officials and fire personnel have reportedly yielded no tangible results as the fire is yet to wane.

The devastating fire in the protected area has majorly affected the biodiversity with extinction of plants and wildlife and also affecting the forest cover. Seven out of the total 21 forest ranges, Chandanchhuri, Digdiga, Dukura, Podadiha, Thakurmunda, Barehipani and Astakuan, are in the grip of the fire for the last 10 days.

Residents in the area allege that poachers are setting the forests on fire to trap endangered animals. Scared of the fire, wild animals are moving into human habitats and falling into poachers' trap. "There is a need to raise awareness among

the people. We are not receiving proper cooperation from the locals. Some antisocial elements are involved in the forest fire for their personal benefits," said Baripada Additional Conservator of Forests (ACF) Dilip Kumar Barik.

Mayurbhanj Princess Akshita M Bhanj Deo alleged that this is a conspiracy to destroy the flora and fauna of the Similipal sanctuary. She also requested the Central and State Governments for their intervention in the matter.

Reacting to the situation, Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha said a team has been sent to take stock of the situation and submit a report on Thursday.

Union Forest and Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar has directed officials concerned to take immediate steps to control the wildfire. Responding to a tweet by Union Petroleum Minister

Dharmendra Pradhan on the issue, Javadekar said he has sought a report on the forest fire from the authorities concerned.

Notably, Similipal is Asia's second largest biosphere covering a vast area of 2,750 square km, out of which 303 square km from the core area and thick biosphere reserve is a sanctuary and one of the tiger projects and national parks of India.

The Similipal National Park is a part of the Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve, which includes three protected areas, Similipal Tiger Reserve, Hadgarh Wildlife Sanctuary with 191.06 square km and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary with 272.75 square km.

The park is home to Bengal Tiger, Asian elephant, gaur and Chausingha along with some of the beautiful waterfalls like the Joranda and Barehipani Falls. This protected area is part of the UNESCO World



Network of Biosphere Reserves since 2009. The park is a treasure house of 1,076 species of plants belonging to 102 families and 96 species of orchids. A total of 42 species of mammals, 242 species of birds and 30 species of reptiles have been recorded in the Simlipal National Park.

If the wildfire is not controlled on time, it can cause a major loss to the forest cover also endangering various species of flora and fauna.



# Kotia row: Odisha seeks opinion from SC ex-judge

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In its ongoing legal battle with Andhra Pradesh over the Kotia jurisdiction dispute in Koraput district, the Odisha Government has sought legal opinion from former Supreme Court Judge Justice Aanga Kumar Pattanaik.

In this regard, the State Revenue & Disaster Management Department directed the Koraput Collector to proceed to New Delhi with all relevant documents for briefing Justice Pattanaik on the Kotia issue. Additional Government Advocate Suman

Pattanayak has been requested to accompany the district Collector to Delhi for obtaining advice from Justice Aanga Kumar Pattanaik.

The dispute over Kotia situated under Pottangi block in Koraput district is currently sub-judice in the Supreme Court as the Odisha Government has filed a contempt petition stating that Andhra Pradesh is interfering in the Kotia area's administration.

Recently, the court has granted a four-week time to Odisha to file a rejoinder to the affidavit made by Andhra

Pradesh in response to the contempt petition against it. During a hearing on February 19, the counsel for Andhra Pradesh argued that by no stretch of imagination can it be stated that there was a breach of undertaking of any order passed by the Supreme Court and Odisha's contempt petition should be junked.

Later, Odisha's counsel senior advocate Vikas Singh sought a four weeks' adjournment, to which advocate Mahfooz Nazki for Andhra Pradesh said that he has no objection. The apex court then adjourned the matter for

# Koraput DM to go to Delhi with documents

four weeks. Notably, both Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have been claiming jurisdiction over 21 villages out of 28 in Kotia panchayat since years by extending various benefits to over 5,000 residents in the region.

Repeated media reports claim that the Andhra Pradesh Government has been attempting to win villagers over to its side by alluring them of basic services under various welfare schemes.

The Andhra Government even conducted panchayat elections in some of the disputed villages.

# K'pada girl does tuition to treat ailing father

## Seeks help from dist admn

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

She is only 18 years old and studying in plus three second year, but she is shouldering the burden of collecting bread for her poverty stricken family. She is also buying medicines for her sick father by conducting tuition.

Reshma has proved for her parents that she is no less than a son for them. Her father, Niranjana Sahu, of Deogaon village under Rajkanika block was a daily wage. The three-member family of Reshma ear-

lier managed to live happily with the limited earnings of her father. She had a dream to go for higher education, after completing her graduation.

But as ill luck would have it, her father became sick as he developed neurological problem in last some years.

As her father was the only earning member of the family, so when he became sick the family members struggled hard to get two squares meal along with providing treatment to Niranjana. Her mother later went to do menial job to run the family. The savings of Niranjana were spent in his treatment. Reshma decided to shoulder the burden of her ailing father's treatment and run the family by doing private

tuition to the school students of her locality. "We need much money for the treatment of my father. My father cannot walk or do anything individually without the support of my family members," said Reshma seeking financial aid from the



# 'Love marriage not against law of land'

## Brahmapur cops' silly questioning decried

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Freethought Party of India (FPI) said that police officers in have not yet been adequately educated and oriented about the full import of the Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty).

Citizens of India do enjoy the freedom of choice in choosing their respective life partners thereby ignoring fully the caste, creed, community factors.

So love marriages are neither unethical nor against law, the FPI said referring to a case in which the AMOFOI organisation organising love marriages was harassed by Brahmapur police recently.

On February 24, Milli Pradhan of Khandayat caste, (23) of Sriram Nagar Adarsh Marg, under PS Bada Bazar, Brahmapur married her lover Uttam Kumar Sethi of SC Dhoba Caste, (22), of same locality after having a love affair with him over a period of 5 year. Since it was a case of high caste girl choosing to marry a young man of the Dalit family the old-fashioned parents lodged a police complaint against the Uttam.

On February 26 the Brahmapur Crime Branch Police Inspector investigating the case wanted to collect from the AMOFOI authorities the names of the witnesses of the marriage of Milli and Uttam. He was informed that in view of Corona pandemic the AMOFOI staff members are

acting as witnesses. Then the inspector asked the AMOFOI authorities as to how it was conducting the marriages without the permission of parents.

"This reveals the feudal attitude of the police personnel in Odisha and their abysmal ignorance about the laws of the land in favour of love marriage.

These officers should be given special training on Citizen's Right to Equality (Art.14) and Right to Life and Personal Liberty (Art 21)," said FPI. "Right to Personal Liberty" means the Right to love and the Right to have love marriage.

This basic knowledge of humanism has not been imparted to our police officers," said FPI general secretary B Ramchandra CST Voltaire.

Besides, parental permission is not at all necessary in such marriage as the Supreme Court has re-emphasized on this when it decided the Kerala Hadiya Case on March 8, 2018.

"This Constitutional position is not being respected by the police authorities till date. Lovers are being treated as criminals. FPI strongly condemns this approach of the police," added Voltaire.



# 'Odisha emerging as gateway of east India'

## Says Dharemendra at Maritime India summit

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha has been at the centre of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Purvodaya' vision. Odisha is emerging as the energy gateway of eastern India, said Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan at a special session on "Investment opportunities in Odisha" at the Maritime India Summit 2021 in New Delhi on Wednesday. Massive investment



is being made to promote infrastructure development activities across various industrial and commercial sectors in Odisha. The State's long coastline is going to be epicenter of development

and growth in the region, said Pradhan. He said more job opportunities and more entrepreneurial activities would enhance pace of economic empowerment. Odisha has a rich history of maritime trade and explorations and efforts are on to make Odisha a strong pillar of Prime Minister's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

"In 21st century, maritime economy is going to change face of world, especially Odisha and India. I urge all stakeholders to unite our efforts as a team to help create an Aatmanirbhar Bharat," said Pradhan.

# Power producers seek water charge reduction

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Association of Power Producers (APP), Odisha has urged the State Government to reduce water charges of thermal power plants.

The submission of energy producers said that thermal power plants in Odisha are facing burden of higher water charges in comparison to other States.

Several high-capacity independent power producers (IPPs) such as GMR-Kamalanga Energy Limited (1,050MW), Vedanta Limited (1,215MW) and Angul Thermal Power Station - JITPL (1,200 MW), etc., are really facing crisis in terms of water charges.

Demanding to do the billing following the Maharashtra policy, the association has requested the Government to do the billing on the basis of consumption rather than allocation which would result in significant cost savings for the power plants.

# Stir against farm laws Mahapanchayat in Chandikhol on Mar 19

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even though a peaceful agitation is being held for the last 100 days at the New Delhi borders for repealing of the three farm laws, the Central Government has turned a deaf ear to it.

Over 200 farmers have died during the peaceful agitation, but still the Government is not being sympathetic.

Instead, the Government is trying to defame the agitation and has launched a misinformation campaign to confuse the people, alleged Navnirman Krushak Sangathan (NKS) national convener Akshay Kumar here on Wednesday.

In view of this, the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha is trying to intensify the farmer's agitation in the whole country by holding



Mahapanchayats. In Odisha, a Mahapanchayat would be held at Chandikhol on March 19 which would be attended by Sanyukt Kisan Morcha leaders like Rakesh Tikait, Gurnam Singh Choudhini of Haryana and Balbir Singh Rajwala of Punjab, said NKS State convener Seshadev Nanda.

In the Mahapanchayat, farmers would be sensitised about the demand for withdrawal of the farm laws, the ill effects of privatisation of mandis and contract farming, added Nanda.

# Anjana spots Biban during TI parade!

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR



Following a test identification (TI) parade at the Jharpada Circle Jail here on Wednesday in connection with her sensational gang-raped case in 1999, Anjana Mishra refused to divulge the details on what happened in the jail. When Anjana came out of the jail after the TI parade, mediapersons waiting outside wanted to get her reaction. But she did not give any clear answer to the queries and said the TI parade outcome would be known incourt. Source, however, said Anjana identified the prime accused Biban Biswal during 10-minute TI parade. Her driver Nilakantha Rout was also present during parade. The TI parade was conducted at 2.30 pm in the presence of JMFC Srujan Mohanty and CBI officials.

A total of 11 persons were presented before Anjana to identify Biban Biswal. The Special CJM Court, Khordha had on Tuesday allowed the TI parade after the CBI, Kolkata sought permission for same. The CBI also prayed before the court for remand of Biban Biswal.

# 'Solve people's problems with empathy'

## CS tell OAS probationers

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Be close to the people, talk with them directly and listen to their issues caringly with empathy and respect for them," said Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra to the probationers in the Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) cadre.

Mahapatra said this while addressing them at the Gopabandhu Academy of Bhubaneswar here in the inaugural session of the Institutional Training Phase. He urged the officers to adhere to the golden principles of Mo Sarkar introduced by the Chief Minister.

Complimenting the probationers for their field level activities during the peak periods of Covid-19, the Chief Secretary said, "You have got the unique experience of handling an unprecedented pandemic at the beginning of your career. Odisha's model of Covid

management has got national and international appreciation. Capitalize your experience and apply it in mitigation of public health crises, if any in future."

He cautioned the officers that when repeated bad feedback about a particular officer comes through the techniques of Mo Sarkar, than the Government takes serious actions against that officer.

On the inaugural session, Director General of GAA SP Thakur shared his long experience in public service with the probationers.

He appraised that the present probationers belonged to 2018 batch. They completed their field training during Covid-19 operations. The institutional training will continue up to June 27. There are 62 probationers in this batch out of which 29 probationers are women.



# HITTING THE BULL'S EYE

# Vaccines perfectly safe: Technology, situation made invention possible



BISWARAJ PATNAIK

Thinking people posed a valid query: how is it possible that an effective Covid-19 vaccine is already in hand? When frightening scourges like AIDS are difficult to contain even after decades of discovery, corona had an antidote in under a year. The vaccines, therefore, look suspect.

Most ordinary people do not know the critical fact: the enormity of infection and the sudden severity of the ailment and some peculiarly unique structural pattern of the virus made it possible for researchers to figure out the strengths and

weaknesses and fatal flaws of the corona virus sooner than usual. So, medical scientists took only little time to zero in on what destroys or arrests the fast multiplication of the pathogen just too soon. Countless experiments across the medical scientific fraternity led to concocting highly-effective vaccines.

If the circumstances are suitable, vaccines are not as complicated or time-taking as for designing a rocket to go beyond the milk-way galaxy. Thus, effective vaccines came along fast and that is quite normal given the circumstances.

The Covid-19 vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna were created with a method that has been in development for years; so, the companies could start the vaccine development process early in the pandemic. China isolated and shared genetic information about Covid-19 promptly; so, scientists could start working on vaccines. The vaccine developers didn't skip any testing steps but conducted some of the steps on an overlapping

schedule to gather data faster.

Vaccine projects had plenty of resources as governments invested in research and/or paid for vaccines in advance. Some types vaccines were created using messenger RNA (mRNA), which allows a faster approach than the traditional way that vaccines are made.

Because Covid-19 is so contagious and widespread, it did not take long to see if the vaccine worked for the study volunteers who were vaccinated. Most companies began making vaccines early in the process, even before FDA authorisation; so, some supplies were ready when authorisation occurred.

All vaccines are effective. But handling issues are vastly different which make some vaccines unviable or difficult to apply. The American vaccine, though very effective, is nearly impossible to use in India as the coldchain logistics facility required for transporting the stuff is very cumbersome and expensive. The UK-grown, made in India vaccine 'Covishield' is much easier to

carry and use as it requires ordinary household fridge temperatures to maintain high potency and efficacy. The fully home-grown 'Covaxin' too has no coldchain transport issues. Quite evidently, both the vaccines available in India have been proven to be as good as the US invention.

All these vaccines will protect people from becoming sick even if they come in contact with the virus. As more and more people are vaccinated, families and communities will return to a more normal routine earlier than usual. Lisa Maragakis, MD, MPH, senior director of infection prevention, and Gabor Kelen, MD, director of the Johns Hopkins Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response have cleared a few doubts expressed by ordinary people:

-The research to date indicates the vaccines for Covid-19 have a very good safety profile.

-The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted emergency use authori-

zation (EUA) for Covid-19 vaccines.

-Most vaccines have been tested in large clinical trials. Data from the manufacturers show that the known and potential harms of becoming infected with the coronavirus disease outweigh the potential safety risks of the vaccines.

-Even though the coronavirus vaccines were developed more quickly than other vaccines in the past, they have been carefully tested and continue to be monitored. The US vaccine safety system works to make sure that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety has been a top priority as federal agencies work with vaccine manufacturers to develop and authorise a vaccine.

To get vaccinated immediately, the doubting people must know some key areas of vaccine development, review and authorisation that have not ever been compromised:

- Careful testing. All vaccines go through clinical trials

to test safety and effectiveness. For the Covid-19 vaccine, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) set up rigorous standards for vaccine developers to meet. This infographic from the National Institutes of Health shows the four phases a vaccine must go through before it is released to the public.

- Authorisation for emergency use: Vaccines that meet FDA safety and effectiveness standards can be made available in the United States by approval or by emergency use authorisation (EUA). An EUA provides temporary authorisation of a vaccine or medication under emergency situations, such as the coronavirus pandemic.
- Continuous monitoring for problems and side effects: Once a vaccine is authorized for use, monitoring continues, with systems in place to track problems or side effects that were not detected during the clinical trials. For the

Covid-19 vaccine, the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are expanding their vaccine monitoring. If there are problems with the vaccine, they are most likely to emerge early in the testing process when they can be identified and addressed.

No one will get Covid-19 from the vaccine. The vaccines do not have the original virus or other infectious material in them. They are designed to cause the body to make copies of a harmless piece of the coronavirus, so no one will get Covid-19 from the vaccine.

Side effects such as fever and soreness at the injection site have been reported, particularly after the second injection (both of these vaccines require a second injection three to four weeks later), but the reported vaccine side effects in the trials are not as severe or dangerous as having a bad case of Covid-19 illness. People who have already gotten sick with Covid-19 will doubtless benefit from getting vaccinated. Due to the severe health

risks associated with Covid-19 and the fact that re-infection with Covid-19 is possible, people are advised to get a vaccine even if they have been sick with Covid-19 before.

Early evidence suggests natural immunity from Covid-19 may not last very long. Scientists believe the available vaccines offer fairly robust protection against the coronavirus than natural infection that creates antibodies.

Lastly, one critical fact be made expressly clear: the sporadic reactions like in allergy conditions have been overblown. The percentage is too negligible and the issue be ignored.

It has been established conclusively now that in most cases of bodily reactions, of any kind, the individuals had some ailment developing already without showing symptoms. It is only coincidentally that they happened to manifest just after the vaccine was administered. That would have happened anyway. But the lifesaving vaccine took the blame. This truth be known well.



# Odisha moves to top 3 in employable talents' supply

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha is among top three States in the country that supply maximum employable talents in 2021.

As per the India Skills Report 2021 prepared by Wheebox in association with CII, AICTE and UNDP, Delhi/NCR, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh are the top three States with maximum supply of employable talent in 2021. Earlier in 2015, the three States had grabbed the top

three spots in this category. However, 31 per cent students in Odisha are not employable, which means skills acquired by them are not adequate for suitable jobs, the report said.

Be it skills in English as Second Language or computer skill, Odisha has not found a place in the list of top 10 States in terms of skills availability. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Assam, Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil

Nadu and West Bengal are the top 10 States with available skill in English as Second Language. Assam and Madhya Pradesh have also found place in the top-10 states' list in this category.

Though the Odisha Government, while presenting Budget 2021 in the State Assembly, allocated Rs 100 crore for setting up of a World Skill Centre in Bhubaneswar, the India Skills Report on the State's score in terms of students' employability has

become a major cause of concern. The report shows that Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Telangana, Gujarat, West Bengal and Rajasthan are the top 10 States with highest employable talents.

Odisha is also nowhere in list of top-10 States with available skills in Numerical and Critical Thinking. Surprisingly, poor-performing States like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have made

their way to the top 10 with highest employability whereas Odisha with Bhubaneswar as a Smart City has failed to occupy a spot in the race. In terms of cities, Hyderabad and Bengaluru topped the list with most employable talent. Last year, Mumbai was the city with the most employable talent.

The report revealed that employability of India's youths has decreased to 45.9% with the percentage of highest employable talent in the age

group of 18-21 years, at 40%. This is significantly lower than last year's analysis of youth employability in terms of overall employable youth, but a strong reflection of the average age group of India's emerging professional landscape.

This underscores the need for reformative measures at the roots of education to equip younger students with skills necessary for in-demand career opportunities in various industries.

# Man held for killing father in Baleswar

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The Sahadevakhunta police on Wednesday arrested a man and forwarded him to court on charges of killing his father. The accused was identified as Dibyajoti Patra. The mother of the accused had lodged an FIR with the police alleging the Dibyajyoti mur-

dered her husband Bharat . The complainant said following a domestic quarrel the accused got infuriated and showered kicks and blows on Bharat, following which he was critically injured.

Although Bharat was rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital, he was declared brought dead.

# 'Relax no-flying-zone norm for airport near Gopalpur'

Bharatiya Bikash Parishad writes to PM

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Bharatiya Bikash Parishad, led by its State president Surendra Panigrahi, in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister has demanded that the 'no flying zone' be reduced to 30 km instead of 75 km from Army AD College, Gopalpur, so as to pave the way for establishment of a cargo and domestic airport near there.

Referring to its earlier letter sent in September last, the Parishad reiterated that, keeping the importance and growing requirements of the Brahmapur city and its strategic location in mind, the British regime had established an airport with 750-long runway at Rangilunda (presently close to the Berhampur University campus, Bhaja Bihar) during the Second World War, but the same has been neglected by the successive Central and State Governments. As per the recommendation of the Government of Odisha, the



Union Government had declared four new airports under UDAAN scheme, namely, Rourkella, Jharsuguda, Jaipur and Utkela (Kalahandi district) to boost communication and economy of the region.

Similarly, the State Government subsequently recommended five more such green field airports, in Rayagada, Dhamara, Paradip, Angul and Kaling Nagar, to establish inter-State civil aviation facilities and to further boost their infra in the region.

The Parishad regretted that, the State Government had neglected Brahmapur which is a commercial, cultural, educational and health-care epicenter for the entire south Odisha in the matter of establishing an airport. Notably, during the visit of the

former Union Civil Aviation Minister Ashoak Gajapati Raju to Brahmapur in 2016, he had assured the public for establishment of cargo-based domestic airport at Brahmapur since there is no cargo airport between Kolkata and Hyderabad stretching almost a distance of 2,000 km, but in vain.

Keeping the public perceptions and growing strategic requirements in mind, the Government should make an amendment in the existing limit of the radius of flying zone, the Parishad maintained and also submitted a copy of the memorandum to the Union Defence and Civil Aviation Minister, the State Chief Minister, the Cabinet Secretary, the Union Defence Secretary and other relevant functionaries.

# In Brahmapur MP assures suburban areas' merger in BeMC

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Local MP Chandra Shekhar Sahu has assured that the suburban areas of Brahmapur would be merged into the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) before the next panchayat elections.

Sahu assured this in a meeting of the Sahar Tali Milita Kriyanusthan Committee when the organisation members drew his attention about the inordinate delay in the suburban areas'



merger into BeMC. The MP said he had promised about the

merger, but it was delayed due to the Covid pandemic. But he assured to resolve the matter in consultations with the Chief Minister's Secretary soon.

Among others, committee president Sanjeeb Kumar Patnaik, co-adviser Ajit Sahu, general secretary Dr Siva Prasad Mishra, organising secretary Bijay Chandra Mishra, members and office-bearers of Gobinda Bihar Nagarik Parishad were present.

Harihar Nayak offered a vote of thanks.

# Jharsuguda railway projects reviewed

Min Das, MP Pujari present

RAJ KUMAR SHARMA ■ JHARSUGUDA

A review meeting of various railway projects was held at the Jharsuguda Circuit House under the chairmanship of Health Minister and Jharsuguda MLA Naba Kishore Das on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by Bargah MP Suresh Pujari, SER Chakradharpur

Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vijay Kumar Sahu and CE Railway and other high level officers. On behalf of the district administration, Collector Saroj Kumar Samal, SP Bikash Chandra Das, Sub-Collector, Executive Officer, municipality officers, Tehsildar and other officers attended. Minister Das laid stress in the meeting for early construction of a new Jharsuguda railway station and proposed to give permission to the Jharsuguda municipality for undertaking welfare projects in

Wards-23 and 24, otherwise railway should take up these works itself. He requested the railway authorities to convene another meeting for other welfare projects. MP Pujari and Minister Das assured to work together for these projects.

DRM Sahu assured Das and Pujari that a new Jharsuguda railway station would be developed soon and it would become an ultramodern station within two years on a 70,000-square-meter land at a cost of Rs 70 crore to Rs 80 crore. The DRM assured



that the railway authorities would immediately give approval to any welfare projects undertaken by the Jharsuguda Municipality. Besides, a discussion was also

held for initiating a tender process for construction of Chowkipara railway over-bridge and Ghanashyam Hemlata ROB and in coming days.

# Cuttack man gets lifer for raping minor daughter

Also asked to pay ₹3 lakh compensation

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The ADJ and Special Court here on Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to man for raping his minor daughter.

Judge Bandana Kar also asked the convict to pay a fine of Rs 20,000. The court convicted the accused under Sections 376(2)(M), 376(N) and 376(3) of IPC and Section 6 of POCSO Act. Besides, the court ordered to pay Rs 3 lakh as compensation to the victim.

As per the court order, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) would take further initiative in this regard.

The accused person's name, address and other information were separately attached to the verdict in a sealed envelope during judgment in the case to avoid the possibility of the identity of the victim being revealed. According to reports, the 15-year-old victim was living with her family in a rented house in Cuttack city. On December 28, 2018, her mother had lodged a complaint

with the Mahila police alleging rape. Following investigation, the police had arrested the victim's father and forwarded him court. The medical examination revealed that the victim was pregnant. Later, she delivered a baby. The investigating officer took steps for the DNA test of the accused and the newborn and submitted it in court. During the trial, 23 witnesses testified.

# Baleswar man held captive in Kolkata rescued

Abductors demanded ₹8L ransom

PNS ■ BALESWAR

A man of Soro in Baleswar district, who was allegedly held hostage by some

unidentified miscreants in Kolkata demanding a ransom of Rs 8 lakh from his family, was rescued on Wednesday with the help of the Kolkata police.

According to reports, the victim Tapas Mohanty of Keshpur village under the Soro police station received a telephone call on February 28.

During the telephonic conversation, a person offered him

a job in Kolkata. On the very day, Tapas left for Kolkata. In the evening, an unidentified person telephoned his wife Sukanti and informed the woman that her husband was abducted.

The person demanded Rs 8 lakh from her for the release of Tapas and threatened her to kill her husband if the money is not paid to them. On March 2, the abductors sent a video of

Tapas being held captive at gunpoint to his wife. In the video, Tapas was seen being tied with rope and manhandled by the kidnappers.

On the basis of a complaint lodged by Sukanti, the Soro police had started an investigation into the incident. It is also reported that the family had deposited Rs 50,000 in the account number provided by the kidnappers.

# Balanga College holds meet on edu policy

PNS ■ BALANGA

The Balanga College Education Department organised a national-level seminar on the education policy on Tuesday.

Bhopal Maharana Pratap Education College Principal Dr Narendra Kousik, who inaugurated the programme, said India's human resource is best in the world.

So, the teachers and researchers should ensure that the country's human resource continues to excel in future. Bhopal Barkat Ullah University Education Department Head Prof Hemanta Kumar Khandoi joined as chief resource person in the programme. Among others, Kasarada College



Education Dept Head Dr Bijaya Kumar Mishra, Niali College Education Dept Head Pabitra Kumar Mohanty, Salepur College Prof Prasanna Kumar Mohapatra, Sohela College Prof Ramesh Kumar Supakar, Lecturer Menakshi Mishra, Swapna Mishra, Dr Srilekha Nayak, Dr Suchitra Sahoo, Dr Ajaya Kumar Penthoi, Sarojini Swain, Dr Dinesh Thakur, Dr

Archana Srivastav were guests of honour, who also expressed their views on the new education policy.

Balanga College Education Lecturer Sasmita sahu coordinated the programme under the guidance of college Principal Tapan Kumar Pattanaik. College Education Dept Head Dr Prados Kumar Pati gave a vote of thanks.

# 'Let tourist officers act as brand ambassadors'

Workshop held to boost tourism

PNS ■ KONARK

Odisha Tourism organised a workshop on "Contemporary Tourism Scenario - Strategies for Revival into the World of (New) Next Normal for the State of Odisha" at Eco-Retreat, Konark for the Tourist Officers of the State.

The workshop was organised in association with the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, Bhubaneswar to share the plans and strategies to revive and strengthen the sector over the next 3 years and expound on the vital role Tourist Officers in promotion, development and



sustainability of tourism in their respective districts. Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi highlighted the State's resilience in battling adversities and the good governance system that made a huge impact in changing people's lives. He emphasised on the significance of tourism for the socio-economic development of the State.

Urging the Tourist Officers to become the brand ambassador of their respective districts they represent, Principal Secretary Tourism and Sports and Youth Services Vishal Dev said, "Tourist Officers have a crucial role to play in the implementation of the revival

strategies. They need to act as facilitators in attracting private sector investments and work towards improving ease of doing business in the State." Dev emphasised on the changing paradigm in tourism sector and elaborated the vision of the department in coming years.

Director and Additional Secretary, Tourism, Sachin R Jadhav stressed on viewing the tourism sector as an industry. "Tourist Officers should take proactive steps to identify destinations with tourism potential and work towards maintaining a rapport with other Government departments to facilitate investments for sector development," he said. Chairperson, OTDC, Shreemayee Mishra, Joint Director-cum-Dputy Secretary, Manjulata Dalai, among others, spoke on development of the tourism sector.

# In Sambalpur Youth held for airing GF's obscene photos

They befriended through Facebook

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

A youth was arrested on Tuesday by the Sambalpur police for allegedly sending her girlfriend's obscene photos to her uncle after she refused to go on a long drive with him. The accused, identified as Manas Ranjan Das (23), belongs to the Barimula area in Kendrapada district.

According to reports, Manas and the girl, a resident of Sambalpur town, became friends on Facebook two years

ago. Later, they exchanged contact numbers and started chatting over phone. Gradually, they fell in love.

During a WhatsApp video call between the two, Manas allegedly asked the girl to expose her private parts, to which she agreed. The youth had taken screenshots of the video call.

A few days ago, he asked the girl to go on a long drive with him. As she rejected the proposal, Manas sent the screenshots to her uncle. Acting on a complaint lodged by the girl with the Sambalpur Sadar police, cops arrested the accused.

# Vedanta chief emphasises on startup mantra

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Vedanta Resources Chairman Anil Agarwal, who was chief guest at the convocation of The International Management Institute (IMI) Bhubaneswar recently, told the graduating students that they are the "torchbearers of modern India" and urged them to join the companies that pride themselves in running their operations on the foundation of technology and innovation and which have the potential to create great value.

He emphasised the importance of startups and entrepreneurship in building a new India. "Startup is the new mantra for you. There are



unprecedented opportunities in start-ups now that I have never seen in my life before. There are private investors, government support and ample opportunities available for you to become employ-

ment givers instead of employment takers," he said. Agarwal spoke of his humble beginnings and his early struggles.

He encouraged the students to never be afraid but to follow their heart while staying grounded. He mentioned that with the rapid advancement of technology and with the inherent ability of Indian students, the future of India was bright.

He said Vedanta is one of the largest investors in Odisha having made investments of over Rs 50,000 crore. This has resulted in an impetus to the socioeconomic development to the districts of Jharsuguda and Kalahandi where the company has operations.

# In Ganjam Class-X boy stabs classmate in school

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

A Class-X boy stabbed his classmate at the Badaborsingi High School under the Gangapur police station in Ganjam district on Wednesday.

According to reports, a heated altercation had taken place between the attacker and the victim allegedly over passing of comments between them in the classroom. The accused student lost his cool and attacked his classmate with a knife leaving the latter critically



injured. A teacher rescued the victim and admitted him to the Bhanjanagar Hospital. After primary treatment, the student was shifted to the MKCG Medical College Hospital in Brahmapur. Later, police detained the accused student for questioning and further investigations were on.

# JSW Steel observes Mines' Environ Week

PNS ■ BARBIL

To create awareness on conserving mineral resources and protecting environment associated with mining JSW Steel Limited observed the 23rd Mines' Environment and Mineral Conservation Week in its mines from February 22-28. The awareness campaign was organised in Jajang, Gonua, Nuagaon and Narayanposhi Mines.

The programme also attended by public representatives, employees, workers and local people. Special awareness activities were con-

ducted like drawing, slogan and quiz competition in schools. A plantation drive was also conducted during the week.

During the week, the mines were inspected by mining fraternity involving mining engineers, environment officers, mineral processing engineers and geologists from various mining companies who evaluated the mine wise performance based on systematic mining, environment protection and mineral conservation formed by the Organising committee with consent of Indian Bureau of

Mines (IBM). "It is a continuous endeavour to maximise the company's efforts towards creating a sustainable future, enhance green cover and encourage a culture of sustainability among our stakeholders," said JSW Steel Limited (Odisha) COO Ranjan Nayak.



MILITARY COMMANDERS' MEET

In a first, jawans to share views with PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major step to involve jawans in military matters including operational doctrine, some of them, for the first time ever, will share their views with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the forthcoming Combined Commanders' conference.

The top level meeting held annually will take place in Kevadia in Gujarat later this week where Chief of Defence Staff(CDS)and three Services chiefs besides other senior officers will discuss the entire gamut of issues pertaining to defence forces. They will stay in tents for the two-day meet to be held near Sardar Vallabhai Patel's statue.

Incidentally, this move to involve jawans in the conclave comes in the backdrop of Modi holding such high-profile meets outside the national capital since he assumed charge in 2014. One such conference was held some years back in the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya. Another combined commanders' conference was held at the Indian Military



Academy(IMA), Dehradun. As regards the first ever participation of the common soldiers, sources said here on Wednesday the idea came from the Prime Minister's Office(PMO).

They said a group of Junior Commissioned Officers(JCO) and non-commissioned officers(NCO) from the IAF, Army and Navy will give their suggestions on topics including operations and functioning of the forces.

This is the first time personnel below officer rank(PBOR) will take part in such a top level brainstorming session, they said. Moreover, bureaucrats heading several departments in the sensitive defence ministry are also likely to update the Prime Minister about issues relating to their wings, sources said.

The conference will see briefings by top officials on the ongoing projects of their respective departments along with future projects they would be undertaking.

Chief of Defence Staff(CDS)General Bipin Rawat, who also holds the post of Secretary, Department of Military Affairs, will give a presentation about status of various reforms initiated to achieve synergy amongst the three Services. He will also update the top-echelon regarding formation of new tri-services commands and the progress made in the existing structures.

Focusing on creation of theatre commands to fight modern day warfare, senior officers are likely to brief the commanders and the Prime Minister about the ongoing process, sources said.

The Combined Commanders' Conference will be attended by the commander-in-chief rank officers of the three services. This includes 20 officers from different commands and formations from across the country.

Modi: Need to overcome language barriers for allowing talent to flourish

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that the new National Education Policy (NEP) encourages the use of local languages, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday stressed the need for working in this regard on a mission mode to overcome linguistic barriers in the education system so that the talent of those from rural areas and the poor is allowed to flourish.

Addressing a webinar on the effective implementation of the provisions in the Union Budget for the education sector, Modi said it is the responsibility of the academics and experts of every language to make available the best content in the country and the world in Indian languages.

"Limiting knowledge and research is a big injustice to the country's potential. With this thinking, the doors of several sectors such as space, atomic energy, DRDO, agriculture, are being opened for our talented youngsters," the prime minister said.

Modi said education, skill, research and innovation were the second biggest focus of the budget after health. "The Union

Budget has broadened our efforts to link education with employability and entrepreneurial capability," he said. As a result of these efforts, he said, India is now among the top three countries in the world in terms of scientific publications, the number of PhD scholars and the start-up ecosystem.

Modi said India has joined the top 50 countries in the Global Innovation Index and is continuously improving. To build a self-reliant India, it is important that youngsters have confidence in themselves, he said, asserting that it comes only when they have complete faith in their education and knowledge.

Stressing the importance of local languages in the education system, Modi said experts know that language plays an important role in understanding a subject.

"From primary to higher education, we have to ensure that the best content is available to the youngsters of the country in Indian languages," Modi said. It is necessary to produce content in Indian languages? for every area of expertise, be it medical, engineering, technology or management, he added.

All private hospitals can give Covid shots with riders: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to speed up the pace of the coronavirus vaccination drive as well as ensure that vaccines are not left unutilized, the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday permitted all private hospitals to give Covid vaccine if they adhere to the laid down norms while allowing citizens to take vaccine round the clock as per their convenience.

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan shared this information on twitter, stating that : "The government has ended the time constraint to increase the speed of vaccination. Citizens of the country can now get vaccinated 24x7 at their convenience."

The move aims to ensure the maximum number of people who are eligible under the second phase of the vaccina-

tion drive are vaccinated. Those above 60 years and above 45 years having comorbidities are being inoculated under the second phase of the vaccination which was kicked off from March 1.

The Ministry has also given permission to private hospitals to administer the Covid-19 vaccine to those who are eligible.

A senior official from the Union Health Ministry that in a meeting chaired by Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and other officials, it was decided that "all government health facilities, including all private hospitals empanelled under Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS), Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM JAY) and similar State Health Insurance Schemes can function as Covid

Vaccination Centers (CVCs), subject to them mandatorily adhering to some specific norms."

The Ministry urged the states and Union territories (UTs) to utilise 100 per cent capacities of all private hospitals under the said category to enable them to effectively function as vaccination centres. They were also asked the states to regularly collaborate with the private hospitals to ensure that their optimum capacities for vaccination are fully utilised.

The Ministry also allowed private hospitals not empanelled with the Government to operate as CVCs "if they have adequate number of vaccinators, adequate space for observation of the vaccinated, adequate cold chain arrangement and adequate arrangement for management of AEFI."

Congress leaders target UP Govt over law and order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra hit out at the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh Government on Wednesday over the law and order situation in the State. "Under the BJP rule, Uttar Pradesh is becoming worse day by day. Such disorder in law and order spares none — it is a curse for every community," Rahaul Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi with the hashtags #Hathras #Bulandshahr.

He also tagged a photo of the funeral procession of a 50-

year-old man who was allegedly shot dead in Hathras district by a person out on bail in a case of molesting the victim's daughter. Priyanka Gandhi alleged one family or the other can be heard "screaming for justice" every day in Uttar Pradesh, contrary to Yogi Adityanath government's "propaganda".

Their attacks on the BJP dispensation came in the backdrop of the Hathras shooting as well as an incident in Bulandshahr where the body of a 12-year-old girl was exhumed from a pit days after she went missing. "The father of a girl who did not take back a case

of molestation was murdered in Hathras. The body of a girl, who had been missing for several days in Bulandshahr, was found buried in a house," Priyanka said in a tweet in Hindi.

"Contrary to the UP government's false propaganda on crime, every day one family or the other is screaming for justice," she said. Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and other Congress leaders have been attacking the Adityanath government over law and order situation in the state, alleging that criminal activities were on the rise, a claim denied by the state government.

BJP VICTORY IN GUJ LOCAL POLLS

Voters' confidence rising each year: Javadekar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar on Wednesday described the sweeping BJP victory in Gujarat local polls as peoples' vote of confidence in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development and reform policies including the new farm laws.

"If we convert massive victory into 182 Vidhan Sabha segments in Gujarat it comes to 155 assembly seats" said the senior BJP leader adding "confidence of voters" is rising each year even after BJP's "uninterrupted 38 years rule" in the State.

Addressing a press conference here after the win in local polls, Javadekar said rural farmers have voted for "Modi's Vikas mode, his leadership and reforms including in the farm sector..this is the message.." he said.

The Minister said Congress had made farmers and governance an issue as their main poll planks and "even spoke from LPG shaped platforms and stages".

The BJP won all 31 Zila Parishads and Congress drew a zero. "Out of the 879 seats, the BJP which had last time won 368 has now won 800 seats," said Javadekar pointing to massive surge in numbers.

He said th Congress defeat is stark as even their MLAs and their sons and relatives standing for municipal elections bit dust and lost polls. He cited the example of MLA Niranjal Patel contesting from two seats and losing both of them.

Javadekar said at Taluka level, the BJP won 196 seats out of 231 seats while the Congress won only 18 seats.

In the municipalities, the BJP won



72 out of the 81 seats with Congress winning only one.

"Congress drew zero seats in 18 municipalities and even Congress MLA lost poll", said BJP leader

He said BJP's sweep in tribal areas was also quite marked. He pointed out that the son of Bhartiya Tribal Party also lost his seat.

Asked about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's comment that the BJP was attacking institutions which Congress did not fill even in Emergency, BJP leader said it was laughable as the Congress had hit all institutions including the media.

On Rahul comparing RSS with madrasas, Javadekar said, "Rahul will take time to understand RSS. RSS is the biggest school of patriotism and inspiring nationalism is it's task"

On the question of Income Tax department raiding film stars 'not cosying up' to the BJP, the Minister said "investigating agencies take up cases on merit and investigate".

BJP to finalise first list of candidates for 5 Assembly polls today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Election Committee (CEC) of the BJP will meet on Thursday to finalise its first list of candidates for the upcoming five assembly polls.

The party is likely to clear its candidates for the first phase of the polls, scheduled for March 27, in Assam and West Bengal.

The Party President headed meet is also expected to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is to begin his poll campaign, post the announcement of election dates, from Kolkata's Parade ground on March seven.

The BJP core groups of West Bengal and Assam will deliberate with the central leadership, including party president JP Nadda, to whet the list of probable candidates. Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and state party chief Ranjeet Kumar Dass will be part of deliberations for their state, while key organisational leaders from West Bengal, including state party chief Dilip Ghosh, will attend the meeting to discuss the names of candidates for their state.

Elections in Assam will be conducted in three phases on March 27, April 1 and April 6, while polling in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry will take place in a single phase on April 6.

Elections for the West Bengal assembly will be held in eight phases, up from seven last time, beginning with polling for 30 seats on March 27.



IAF chief visits Colombo to mark Sri Lankan Air Force's 70th anniv



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IAF chief RKS Bhadauria arrived in Colombo on Wednesday on an invitation from Sri Lanka Air Force chief Sudarshana Pathirana. The Lankan air force is celebrating its 70th anniversary on March 2 and presentation of the President's colours to two of its Units on March 5.

Giving details of Bhadauria's schedule, officials said here on Wednesday he attended the inaugural ceremony on Wednesday during which a Flypast and Aerobatic Display was scheduled.

The air show at Galle Face Colombo saw the participation of an IAF contingent comprising Suryakiran and Sarang Aerobatic Display Teams and Tejas Light Combat Aircraft(LCA). The IAF contingent arrived in Colombo on February 27. The flypast was significant and reminiscent of the IAF's Suryakiran Display Team performance at the Golden Jubilee celebrations of SLAF, two decades ago.

CBI arrests J&K Govt official in bribe case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested a Patwari, Bemina, Budgam (J&K), for accepting a bribe of ₹13,000 from the complainant.

A case was registered against the Patwari Mohammad Afzal on the allegations of demanding a bribe of ₹35,000 from the complainant for mutation of the land. It was further alleged that the bribe was negotiated to ₹23,000 out of

which an amount of ₹10,000 was already paid.

The CBI laid a trap and caught the Patwari red handed while demanding and accepting the remaining bribe amount of ₹13,000.

Searches were conducted at the residence of the accused which led to recovery of incriminating documents.

The arrested accused was produced before the Competent Court and remanded to three days police custody.



A Chin refugee from Myanmar tries to tear apart Chinese flag during a protest against military coup in Myanmar in New Delhi on Wednesday

ECI organises briefing meeting for poll observers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission(EC) on Wednesday organised a briefing meeting for Observers who would be deployed for the upcoming assembly polls in five States—West Bengal, Kerala, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

The meeting was a virtual cum physical gathering which saw the participation of more than 1650 General, Police and Expenditure Observers joining virtually from 120 locations across the country. Officers from IAS,

IPS, IRS and other Central Services have been included to be deployed as General, Police and Expenditure Observers.

Addressing the Observers, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said observers will have additional role in randomization of forces and its deployment. Arora asked the observers to visit the Polling Booths to check due facilitation to senior citizens, Persons with Disabilities and women voters to ensure the Commission's commitment to the principle of inclusive elections.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court will hear on Thursday the plea of Amazon Prime Video's India head Aparna Purohit challenging the Allahabad High Court order rejecting her anticipatory bail in connection with the FIRs lodged against her over web series "Tandav".

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R Subhash Reddy, which was to hear Purohit's plea on Wednesday, listed it for consideration on Thursday as the bench was sitting till 1

PM only.

She has been accused of inappropriate depiction of Uttar Pradesh police personnel, Hindu deities and an adverse portrayal of a character playing the prime minister in the web series.

Earlier, the apex court, on January 27, had declined to grant interim protection from any coercive action to Ali Abbas Zafar, Director of the web series, Purohit, producer Himanshu Mehra, the show's writer Gaurav Solanki and actor Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub.

SC seeks response of NIA on Gautam Navlakha's bail plea in Bhima Koregaon case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought a response from the National Investigation Agency on the bail plea of activist Gautam Navlakha in the alleged Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case.

A bench comprising Justices UU Lalit and KM Joseph issued notice to the probe agency on the plea of the activist against the Bombay High Court order of February 8 dismissing his bail plea.

Initially, the bench, which was hearing some other matter even after 4.30 pm, was of the view that the hearing on Navlakha's plea be fixed for consideration on Thursday.

However, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the activist, said that he has been waiting for the case for few hours.

In the brief hearing conducted through video conferencing, the bench issued notice to NIA and sought its response by March 15.

"Gunnam of Congress too care about democracy", Khurshid said in the letter.

The senior Congress leader said the growing dark footprint of communal forces has pushed the party into "forced errors" of becoming self conscious.

"As a result we shy away from speaking about minorities and put on a public display of identifying with the cultural symbols of the majority that have largely been appropriated by the BJP. We have been forced to accept 'mistakes' made by our heroes because public mood appears to require it. Obviously this calls for careful balancing of reality and perception, strategy and ideology," he noted.

Is it fair to kick the ladder you climbed to reach in life: Khurshid asks G-23

New Delhi: The disquiet within the Congress continues to grow with senior party leader Salman Khurshid asking 'Group of 23' leaders in an 'open letter' if they were changing their goal posts and whether it was fair on their part to kick the ladder that they climbed to reach the top storey of life.

Khurshid, a former Union minister, asked them to worry about how they would be judged in history than to seek a better place in the present.

He said they along with other Congress leaders must show the ordinary party workers across the country the path out of the present darkness towards sunshine instead of raising concerns about what they received, while noting that sacrifice cannot come with pre-conditions of success.

He also quoted former US President John Kennedy's words "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country (read party)", to say that the thousands of unnamed Congress cadres, who gave to the Congress, but unavoidably received little or nothing in return, too believe in democracy unlike the G-23 leaders who have an impressive history of achievements.

"We thought the G-23 made their point and were suitably informed that party elections will be held when appropriate (something they agreed to in their interaction with the Congress president and later at the CWC). But are they changing the goal posts once again with the public display of disquiet (or reservations) in Jammu and as we are being told, very soon in Haryana," he asked in the open letter.

"Gunnam of Congress too care about democracy", Khurshid said in the letter.

The senior Congress leader said the growing dark footprint of communal forces has pushed the party into "forced errors" of becoming self conscious. "As a result we shy away from speaking about minorities and put on a public display of identifying with the cultural symbols of the majority that have largely been appropriated by the BJP. We have been forced to accept 'mistakes' made by our heroes because public mood appears to require it. Obviously this calls for careful balancing of reality and perception, strategy and ideology," he noted.



# DMK-Cong ties on verge of collapse

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI**

The time-tested ties between the DMK and the Congress is on the verge of collapse and there are strong indications from the Grand Old Party of dumping the Dravidian major and launching a Third Front. “The Congress High Command is thoroughly unhappy with the intransigent attitude of the DMK. It has so far offered as 20 seats while we have sought at least 25 seats,” a senior Congress leader told *The Pioneer*.

The leader said on condition of anonymity that one cannot rule out the possibilities of the Congress parting ways with the DMK. “For us self-respect is important than a few seats. We know well that the DMK is out to throttle us,” said the leader. He disclosed that Rahul Gandhi MP, who campaigned in southern Tamil Nadu for the last three-days returned to Delhi disappointed with the approach of the DMK.

Meanwhile sources close to chief minister Edappadi Palaniswamy told

The Pioneer that there was no chance of V K Sasikala, TTV Dhinakaran and the AMMK getting accommodated in the AIADMK front. “Our alliance partners are the BJP, the PMK, the Tamil Maanila Congress and Puthiya Tamilakaam. We have kept the doors opened for Vijayakanth too,” said the source.

Rahul Gandhi drew unprecedented crowd during his three-day visit to southern Tamil Nadu which concluded late Monday evening at Kanyakumari. Thousands participated in all the public meetings he addressed in these districts. “What stood out this time was his mingling with the common man and this prompted more and more people to gather in all the venues,” said a security professional who had accompanied the leader in his campaign trip.

“We did not organise any crowd for Rahul Gandhi. The crowd turn out in all these places were spontaneous. It was a morale booster to the Congress cadre in the State. We ourselves were surprised with the ease

with which he communicated and exchanged ideas with grassroot level workers and cadre. If the party could sustain this tempo, I am sure we will register impressive wins,” said C D Meyyapan, AICC secretary who accompanied Rahul Gandhi in his tour.

There is general agreement that the crowd turn-out for his meetings has surprised even the DMK leadership. But the DMK-Congress seat sharing talks remained inconclusive as the Dravidian major was not willing to make any compromise than what it had offered to the Grand Old Party, 21 seats. That all is not well within the two alliance partners was known for some time.

As the time for filing the nomination is drawing closer, there are talks of a Third Front featuring actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan, AISMK of another actor R Sarath Kumar and the Indian National Congress. Sarath Kumar and his wife Radhika called on Kamal Haasan and expressed their solidarity with

the latter who has declared himself as the future chief minister of the State.

Wednesday saw V Ponraj, former technical assistant to late President A P J Abdul Kalam joining Haasan’s MNM. Ponraj, a former scientific officer at one of the DRDO laboratories was the technical assistant to the former president, he describes himself as scientific advisor to the President.

There were reports that another film actor -turned-politician Vijayakanth is likely to join either the DMK-led front or Haasan’s MNM. “The AIADMK has not responded to Vijayakanth’s demand for more seats. Chief Minister Palaniswamy and his deputy Panneerselvam were upset over the parallel discussions being held between Vijayakanth’s DMDK and the DMK, Vijayakanth is known for his simultaneous secret parleys with political rivals even as he holds seat sharing discussions with others,” said a senior AIADMK leader.

# Maha hostel girls forced to dance naked by cops, probe ordered

**ANS ■ MUMBAI**

In a shocker, girls in a Jalgaon hostel were allegedly forced to strip naked and dance before some police personnel, the Maharashtra legislature was informed here on Wednesday.

Taking cognizance of the issue raised by the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Maha Vikas Aghadi government announced a time-bound probe into the incident.

BJP legislator from Chikhli Shweta Mahale who raised the matter, said the women inmates who did not cooperate with the police were told to remove their clothes and dance naked.

“The women in the hostel now live in sheer fear. They must be made to feel secure. The incident is a blot on the face of the state. The police who are supposed to protect have become aggressors,” Mahale said.

“This is a shameful incident. A video clip shows police making the girls nude. This must be thoroughly investigated. We must deal with this matter sensitively,” said Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis, as some members demanded sacking of the MVA government and others shouted ‘shame, shame’ in the House.

They urged Home Minister Anil Deshmukh to order an inquiry and immediately suspend the police officials involved in the incident.

“This is a very unfortunate incident. We have appointed a four-member committee to probe the incident and submit its report within 48 hours. Necessary action will be taken as per the rules after the probe report is received,” Deshmukh informed the House.

Minister for Women & Child Development (Mrs) Yashomati Thakur said that all the evidence would be collected and probed and

those found guilty would not be spared.

The incident allegedly took place on March 1 at the government-run Ashadeep Women’s Hostel in Ganeshnagar area of Jalgaon and a video of the dance party went viral.

A local NGO, Jananayak Foundation, complained to Collector Abhijit Raut and demanded a probe into the matter, as the hostel falls under the Women & Child Welfare Department.

According to the complaint, some local police personnel and others reportedly entered the hostel premises to ‘investigate’ certain things and coerced the women inmates to undress and dance before them.

When the girls refused to do so, they were threatened with dire consequences like murder. The inmates later narrated their plight from the hostel windows.

# Didi may file nomination from Nandigram on Mar 11

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

The once hotbed bed of Mamata Banerjee’s land movement that helped her overthrow the world’s longest surviving democratically elected Marxist Government in 2011 Nandigram is once again ready to hog the national limelight with two of State’s tallest leaders preparing to face each other in the coming Assembly elections.

Come March 11, the Bengal Chief Minister is likely to return to file her nomination from the Nandigram Assembly seat. And according to inside reports she will face none other than her once blue-eyed boy and former Bengal Minister Suwendu Adhikari who left the TMC last November to join the BJP.

The TMC sources said the Chief Minister would file her

nomination for the Nandigram seat either at Haldia or Tamluk. Nandigram in East Midnapore will go to polls in the second phase.

Banerjee is currently an MLA from Bhawanipore Assembly seat in South Kolkata from where her party trailed by a few thousand votes in the 2019 parliamentary elections.

The Chief Minister had during a mass rally at Nandigram offered to contest from the seat saying “Nandigram has always been lucky for me ... it gave me overwhelming support in my land movement ... and so I will like to contest this time from this seat. For me Nandigram and Bhawanipore are like two sisters.”

Apart from being a son of a former Union Minister and TMC MP Sisir Adhikari, Suwendu is the elder brother

Dibyendu Adhikari also an MP.Suwendu Adhikari had openly dared Banerjee to contest from the seat and face defeat. “I challenge Didi to fight from Nandigram ... Of my party gives me a ticket from this seat I will take her on ... even if someone else contests from here I vouch for that possible BJP candidate that if I cannot defeat the Chief Minister by at least half-a-lakh votes then I will leave politics,” Adhikari said.

Nandigram has a healthy share of minority votes pegged at about 23.5 percent. Though the TMC is confident of polling the entire minority vote from this area, local sources say the Indian Secular Front --- founded by Muslim cleric Abbas Siddiqui --- which has tied up with the Left Front and the Congress may queer the pitch for her.

On the other hand the Adhikari whose family has a long political history from the area looks more comfortable in the current polarized atmosphere in Bengal politics.

Sources in the BJP said Adhikari’s name had been finalized for Nandigram seat adding other TMC leaders who had quit that party join the saffron outfit would also be given tickets.

Accordingly former Minister Rajib Banerjee will be fielded from Domjur in Howrah district whereas Chandramani Shukla the father of slain BJP leader Chandramani Shukla will be fielded from Bhatpara or Naihati, sources said.

Former TMC MLA, and Asansol Mayor Jitendra Tiwari who on Tuesday joined the BJP will also be fielded from his old constituency Pandaveshtar,

sources said . The central election committee of BJP is likely to finalise its candidate list for the first phase on March 5,

## TMC wants PM posters removed

**Kolkata:** The ruling Trinamool Congress has raised objections to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s pictures being used for advertisements of various Central schemes.

A delegation of TMC leaders on Wednesday met Election Commission officials and alleged that the use of the Prime Minister’s pictures on advertisements of central schemes including the vaccination certificates --- distributed by the Union Health Ministry --- went against the model code of conduct.

Seeking the intervention of the ECI so that the posters and

sources said adding each district committee has been asked to send 4-5 probable names for the purpose.

hoardings carrying the Prime Minister’s photograph could be removed Bengal minister Firhad Hakim on Wednesday said

“Prime Minister Narendra Modi happens to be the main campaigner of the BJP in this Assembly elections. Apart from being the Prime Minister he is also a politician who is seeking support for his party during rallies. In this situation, using his photo in vaccination certificates is akin to influencing voters and violates the model code of conduct ... we have requested the EC to remove his photo in hoardings promoting central schemes at petrol pumps.”



Naga sadhus participate in a procession ahead of Kumbh Mela 2021, amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, in Haridwar on Wednesday

## Akrabad case: Important clues found in teenager murder case, police very close to crack it

**Aligarh:** The police have almost come close to the revelation in the murder case of a 14-year-old Scheduled Caste girl from Akrabad area during the attempted rape. By the third day, till Tuesday late night, everything was clear to the police.

Earlier, the SSP reached the village and worked for hours to find clues with the entire team at the scene and the surrounding fields. As per the information received till late night, the police has given confession in the statements and some evidence has also been recovered. The police is working on linking these evidence. At the same time, evidence from the accused has also been sent for forensic matching.

SSP Muniraj ji reached the spot and all the five teams

involved in the investigation were also present there. During this time, the police, considering the site as the center, searched every single piece of the field in its 500 meter radius and worked on the evidence there. During this time, what the police got and what they did not get, the police will tell at the time of the revelation. But it is so sure that the police team kept searching till late night under the leadership of SSP.

SSP Muniraj Ji said, “It is true we have been under suspicion in probe that has been going on for three consecutive days, due to which the interrogation was going on till late in the night. The work of matching some facts remains. As soon as something is clear, only then something can be told. **PNS**

## On Women’s Day, CM Yogi to focus on women farmers

**Lucknow:** The Yogi Adityanath Government will celebrate International Women’s Day with a special focus on women farmers.

The department of agriculture will be organising about 250 seminars with a special focus on women farmers and groups and more than 30,000 women farmers and entrepreneurs will be imparted training.

For promoting women farmers, the department of agriculture will also be holding interactive sessions with scientists and officers who will be sharing new techniques of progressive farming.

To be conducted virtually, the programme will be held on March 8 for three .

For imparting technical knowledge and solution to the agricultural problems, special interactive programmes will be held with women scientists and experts of universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Lucknow.Under the first module of Rabi Session 2020-21, a three-day Kisan Pathshala with a total of 5 lakh participants will be organised in 8000 gram panchayats.

In addition, five tehsildars will be awarded by the revenue department on March 8 for the

disposal of grievances of women.

Along with this, tehsildars and revenue inspectors who have made maximum registries of women account holders under the Varasat campaign will also be awarded.

The chief minister, meanwhile, has directed all government departments to organize programmes related to women empowerment on the occasion of international women’s day on March 8.

These programmes will be held under the ongoing Mission Shakti and will continue till April. **IANS**

## J&K clocks 104 fresh Covid cases; no death

**Jammu:** J&K on Wednesday reported 104 new Covid-19 cases, even as 49 were discharged after recovery, health officials said.

The Union Territory has recorded zero death in the last 24 hours.

An official bulletin said 104 tested positive on Wednesday, 17 from Jammu division and 87 from Kashmir division while 49 patients were discharged from hospitals after recovery.

So far, 126,693 people have been infected with coronavirus in J&K out of which 123,860 have recovered and 1,958 patients have succumbed to the dreaded virus. **IANS**

## Police announce ₹1L reward on prime accused in Hathras farmer murder case

**PRADEEP SAXENA ■ HATHRAS**

Police has announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh on accused Gaurav Songra, who shot and killed a farmer in broad daylight in village Naujalpur of Sasni area of Hathras district. The police has also announced a reward of Rs 25 thousand each on the other two accused. One accused has been arrested in the case so far.

It may be recalled that on Monday, a farmer who was digging potatoes in the field was shot dead in broad daylight. About two and a half years ago, the farmer filed a lawsuit that Gaurav entered his house and molested his daughter. Now Gaurav was pressing to withdraw the suit and marry his younger daughter. The

deceased’s daughter lodged a police complaint against six people, including four nominees, on the basis of which a case was registered and the police arrested one of the accused. The remaining accused are being searched.

The dead body was handed over to the family members after immediate postmortem by the police administration. On Tuesday, the nephew offered fire to the body. The atmosphere of the village and family is inconsolable. On the other hand, the police has arrested one of the accused.

On receiving information, the elder brother of the deceased also came to the village. He lives in Mumbai. He and other relatives got angry after seeing the dead body. He refused to cre-

mate the body until the arrest of the accused. After much persuasion, he prepared for the last rites. The younger daughter was crying bitterly, demanding an encounter of the accused.

Gaurav wanted to marry younger daughter forcibly.

The wife of the deceased wept, saying that Gaurav, along with his companions, killed her husband. Gaurav was adamant about forcibly marrying her younger daughter. Though Gaurav is already married. He had threatened her husband that if he did not marry the daughter, he would kill him.

The molestation case was refused to be withdrawn.The farmer had filed a report against accused Gaurav on 16 July 2018, accusing him of sneaking into the house.



Anganwadi workers participate in a protest rally demanding equal pay as Government employees, in Bengaluru on Wednesday

## Goa Port to set up special ferry service for inbound cruise tourists

**Panaji :** Goa’s only major port, the Mormugao Port Trust, operated by the Centre is planning to develop a ferry circuit to cater to the international cruise ship tourists visiting the State.

Speaking virtually at the Maritime India Summit 2021, Chairman of the Trust E. Ramesh Kumar said that the ferry service would connect several beach destinations in the coastal states, both in North Goa and South Goa districts.

“The ferry service that we are planning is designated to be on three or four identified routes whether from South of

Goa to Dona Paula and onwards, South of Goa to Captain of Ports jetty at Panaji and onwards to Old Goa or from South of Goa to any of the beach destinations like Candolim, Calangute, Baga and so on,” Kumar said.

“With a dedicated colour-coded ferry service, we are also contemplating to receive passengers on the other side with hop-on-hop-off buses, with the same colour codes with refreshments served en route, multilingual audio commentary,” he also said.

The top official also said that the Port Trust was also in

the process of setting a commercial hub spread over 4,000 sq mt area near the port terminal itself for visiting cruise-ship holidayers.

“There is a unique feature of this commercial hub which is going to be primarily designed to depict the old Goan culture imbued with modern facilities. It also embodies in it the rich culture of various states and exhibiting three essential ingredients whether it is handicraft, handloom or the cuisine of various states or the cultural forms including music and dance.” **IANS**



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Split house

The Congress rift, already out in the open, is only widening ahead of the crucial Assembly polls

At a time when leaders belonging to other political parties are upping the ante against their opponents in a bid to be successful at the hustings and form the Government in the five States/Union Territory going to polls soon, the Congress biggies are busy sparring among themselves. The fault lines run deep and, in all likelihood if one goes by its current state of inertia, the ‘Grand Old Party’ is heading towards yet another poll drubbing. The G23 (Group of dissenters) is clearly pitted against the “loyalists” on the issue of the Congress tying up with the Indian Secular Front (ISF) of Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui for the battle royal in politically-sensitive West Bengal. Deputy leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma, who is part of the G23, objected to the party aligning with the Islamic outfit and asserted that the tie-up “militates against the core ideology” of the Congress and that the alliance needed to be endorsed by the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the party’s highest decision-making body. Recently, Ghulam Nabi Azad — who is a prominent leader of the dissenting group — heaped praises on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. These senior leaders are making all-out efforts to stay relevant and they don’t want to lose their hold on the party. On the other hand, the Congress joining hands with a fundamentalist group in West Bengal ought to raise the question whether the party has compromised on its secular credentials?

The “soft Hindutva” card played by Congress leaders, including the Gandhi scion, has failed to elicit the desired outcome in a series of elections. Further, the Congress has been selectively applying the policy of minority appeasement but, apart from a few stray successes, it has failed to make any major breakthrough. The BJP has proved to be too formidable for the Congress and the regional parties have expanded their base at the cost of the ‘Grand Old Party’. This time, too, the Congress seems to have selectively played the appeasement card by aligning with Pirzada, who wields considerable influence among Muslims in South Bengal. Despite the fact that Pirzada has a dubious record of making controversial remarks, the Congress leaders shared the stage with him at a joint rally on Sunday. The Congress aligning with a fundamental party will either increase its vote percentage or it will prove counterproductive to its image in the long run; we’ll know in due course. Moreover, Rahul Gandhi’s foot-in-mouth disease has only added to the party’s miseries. The differences within the party point to the fact that Rahul’s leadership is not strong enough to bind the members together and settle their disputes. West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has accused Sharma and Azad of playing to the BJP’s gallery, saying that they are serving the polarising agenda of the saffron party. Well, whether these “dissenters” are pushing for reforms or only serving the BJP’s agenda, the Congress’ internal fight only weakens it and further damages its prospects in the forthcoming Assembly elections. It is time for the Congress leaders to resolve the internal feud and steer the party out of the ongoing crisis.



Workers at the Bhaglanwala dumpsite in Amritsar clear out waste on Wednesday

PTI

## Mea culpa

Rahul is not responsible for the actions of his forebears, but he cannot escape his legacy for better or for worse

Political legacies and succession are not a uniquely Indian thing. The success of leaders like Justin Trudeau, Shinzo Abe and even Xi Jinping for that matter are demonstrable proof that even today, family political legacies are a giant step up the political ladder. A name, a family name in politics and the subsequent recognition is a powerful tool. But it can also be a huge burden, a cross to carry. And the prime example of someone who carries both the blessing and the curse of political recognition is Rahul Gandhi. The past and, in all likelihood, future president of the Indian National Congress, India’s only national Opposition party of relevance, is led by this scion of the Nehru-Gandhi family whose history every Indian knows. No matter where he goes. Rahul’s rallies and road shows are well-attended. But it is the curse, that means that many of the millions who might attend his rallies in a year, will not vote for the Congress in elections; such is the legacy of that party and its dominant family.

There is no insinuation here that Rahul is responsible for the actions of his great-grandfather, grandmother or father. Jawaharlal Nehru, a convenient whipping boy for some these days, died even before Rahul was born. He was five years old when his grandmother, Indira Gandhi, declared the Emergency and a teenager when his father, Rajiv Gandhi, was caught up in the Bofors scandal. He has also suffered more than most, to suffer two violent deaths in the family in full public gaze is not something any of us will endure. The scale of that suffering is something we will never comprehend and, thus, never truly empathise with. Yet, because he, and even his sister Priyanka, ask for votes in the name of the positive aspects of that legacy, they cannot escape the ills and mistakes. Yes, Rahul should attack the Narendra Modi Government on the engagements with China in Ladakh, but he must acknowledge the mistakes of 1962 as well. He cannot proclaim that democracy is under threat without admitting that he senses this because of the Emergency his grandmother declared. Acknowledging this fact now is a huge step by the Congress leader. He was not responsible for the mistakes of the past and admitting that fact is something that should mark an improvement in the way he is perceived among the electoral public.

# The missing culture of strategic thinking

India’s restive relationships in the neighbourhood and its own internal governance parameters remain worryingly underleveraged and skittish



BHOPINDER SINGH

In the early 1990s, American thinker George Tanham had set the cat among the pigeons by mentioning “India’s relative lack of strategic thinking”. His observations suggested minimal preparedness in terms of an “active” vision or pre-emptive doctrines, as opposed to an inherently “reactive” instinct, that rattled Indian apologists who pointed to the civilisational literature on statecraft, strategy and philosophy of governance.

However, “nonalignment” (not “neutrality”, as commonly misinterpreted) was a definitive and unique aspect of Independent India’s foreign, commercial and military thinking. The admixture of “morality” into its strategic decision-making process differentiated India from the co-timed trajectory and outcomes of China, which also played a similar game of balance of power, albeit with hard-nosed realpolitik. The metamorphoses of a bipolar world to a polycentric order further blurred India’s strategic choices, as it continued sounding preachy, platitudinous and verbose. On the other hand, the conjoined nature of the “military-industrial” establishment under a single-party rule in China afforded it to chisel a seamless national vision and an uninterrupted strategic process to fructify the same.

Further, India’s obsessive passion for electoral politics, combined with structural silos of bureaucracy, diplomacy and the military ensured a sub-optimal and fractured approach towards possible self-realisation. Ironically, India’s restless democracy, regional parties with narrow agendas and increasingly disinterested politicians who mistook “India’s arrival on the world stage” to equal strategic thinking, continued to let it down. Even now, political brouhaha and grandstanding aside, India’s restive relationships in the neighbourhood and its own internal governance parameters remain worryingly underleveraged, incoherent and skittish.

The Indian system has failed to allow nonpartisan and “heeded-to” platforms of specialists who could formulate and advo-



cate strategic outcomes beyond petty partisan comeuppance. The recent Indo-Sino dissonances on the Line of Actual Control have yet again exposed the “reactive” nature of Indian governance and politics, irrespective of the dispensation in power. Rote insistence of Chinese “deceit”, while true, should not have been unexpected. Getting tripped by the Chinese is an inadvertent admission of the absence of strategic foresight that cannot be contextualised to the past only. An unbudgeted ₹20,775 crore was spent to buy emergency hardware in the recent standoff!

Strategic thinking necessitates lateral thinking and specialist angularities but the recent events suggest the clear under-appreciation of the security sensitivities. Unlike other participative democracies like the US, the UK and so on, the direct “voice” of Indian security must navigate through the labyrinth of filters, priorities and disinterested politico-bureaucrats. Though countries like Pakistan, where the military is considered a “State within a State”, are reflective of the other side of extremity, which has even more debilitating consequences. Simplistic arguments of the “guns over

“SIMPLISTIC ARGUMENTS OF THE ‘GUNS OVER BUTTER’ NATURE HAVE LED TO THE MISPLACED NOTION THAT SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRESS, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY CAN BE MANAGED ONLY AT THE COST OF OPTIMUM INVESTMENTS IN SECURITY

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BRACE FOR A GRUELLING SUMMER

Sir — This refers to the editorial ‘Scorcher ahead!’ (March 3). Going by the India Meteorological Department’s (IMD) forecast, we have to brace for temperatures several notches higher than usual this summer. It is really disheartening as many people, including the homeless, don’t have the resources to beat the heat. Gadgets like electric fans, coolers, fridges, air-conditioners (ACs) and water coolers, besides power generators or inverters are not available to the poor.

Further, power cuts will add to the woes of the common man. We have not been able to generate electricity from solar and wind power for large-scale public distribution. Ironically, climate change and atmospheric imbalance have caused natural calamities like drought, floods, storms and inclement weather causing huge loss to flora, fauna and human lives. It is incumbent upon us to fight climate change so that we may have a greener and cleaner planet for future generations.

However, the Government must take adequate measures to provide relief to the homeless in the summer. Shelter homes should be provided with water coolers, if not ACs, and fridge for cold drinking water. It is also the responsibility of all of us to make arrangements for drinking water for birds and stray animals. An earthen pot or utensil full of water outside the door or window will help the avian and animal species in quenching their thirst. We must also not forget to water the plants regularly.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

### WE CANNOT LOSE BATTLE AGAINST COVID

Sir — We should be really thankful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking the jab as it will inspire millions of others to get themselves inoculated. It is important that more private hospitals and even small private dispensaries be allowed to vaccinate, as these will be closer to homes and allow the elders to get vaccinated without the trouble of covering long distances.

In the next phase, vaccination should be carried out in remote villages and tribal areas inside forests. Further, it has come to light that the provisional certificates

## Plight of mohajirs in Pakistan



The plight of mohajirs in Pakistan is hard to explain in words. The mohajirs are Muslim immigrants of multi-ethnic origin and their descendants, who migrated from various regions of India to settle in Pakistan following the Partition. However, Prafull Goradia’s lucid article ‘Beware of Pak’s softening stand’ (March 2) mentions their plight and states that they “find themselves not only unwelcome but also targets of eth-

nic hostility in the newly-created country”. Successive Pakistani Governments have remained indifferent to the woes of the mohajirs and even the courts in Pakistan are of no help. The author has lamented that he was personally witness to this discrimination when he visited Pakistan to conduct a two-week international course on short-wave radio broadcasting for countries of the sub-Asian region, extending from China to Iran. The enthusiasm for the creation of Pakistan in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar was noted by the then Viceroy Lord Wavell in 1945 and communicated to the Secretary of State for India in England, saying: “The idea of Pakistan was stronger in the Muslim minority provinces than in Pakistan’s provinces”. The fate of the mohajirs is, therefore, a lesson for all those who wish to divide any country on religious or any other basis. Further, the Governments of both the countries and the United Nations must take steps to change the situation on the ground and help those who are discriminated.

BP Srivastava | Noida

issued to the people who got vaccinated carry the PM’s image and that, too, without a mask, which is unethical. If at all any image is necessary, it should be that of Corona warriors or of the scientific community who the PM has been appreciating. India’s vaccination programme has brought laurels to itself. We have supplied indigenously-developed vaccines to the world when other countries needed it the most. India’s reputation has increased manifold. We cannot afford to lose this battle at this juncture and we all must wear masks and sanitise our hands regularly.

N Nagarajan | Secunderabad

### PRONOUNCE THE NAME CORRECTLY

Sir — A parent has complained that her child’s teacher does not pronounce the child’s name correctly. The teacher shortened the name as the full name was apparently difficult to say. I have myself faced this problem a number of times over my 35 years of teaching. Some names, when pronounced

correctly, sounded the same as English swear words, so roll call could be challenging. Some were just too long or contained too many consonants for me to pronounce easily and I always prefaced any roll call with the statement that I would do my best.

I know that a mispronounced name can be annoying although not offensive if they try to do their best, but many students found ‘Fitzgerald’ difficult to pronounce. Apparently the “tz” sound is difficult in many languages. Some of the mispronunciations were actually funny but I tried not to laugh at my own name. The main consideration is that people should do their best and that we should be willing to accept these efforts. Teachers already find the job challenging and most find that the parent feedback/complaints only add to the stress. The world as a whole needs to relax in these times of difficulty.

Dennis Fitzgerald | Melbourne

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

process remains unknown. There is no direct participation of the Armed Forces in its decision-making process. Routine media reporting of the “hand” of the National Security Advisor in resolving security situations notwithstanding, it belies the moot question as to why such a situation evolved in the first place?

The national “shaper” of strategic thinking is usually the political leadership of the day — today, the assertive and challenging voices within the ruling party, like a Jaswant, Shourie or Yashwant (who were given a free rein in the earlier NDA Governments), are clearly missing. The impact of domestic politics is supreme even in our international relations: Trump-backing, for example, exposed the predominance of partisanship. Institutions need to be strengthened, not diluted; specialists need to be empowered and not controlled, and only then will the latent potential of India truly fructify. The know-all attitude does incalculable harm to the culture of strategic thinking.

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

## SOUNDBITE

Nirmala Sitharaman is leading from the front and using her officials for political needs. What’s happening is a clear violation of the election norms.

Kerala Finance Minister — Thomas Issac

Active vigilance is pivotal to thwart any attempt to disrupt the efforts by the armed forces in rooting out terrorism from the troubled tribal regions of North and South Waziristan.

Pakistan Army chief — Qamar Javed Bajwa

Sholay is a cult movie but I must add that it was one of the toughest roles I have done because of various conditions. I was shooting barefoot, and that too in Bangalore, in the month of May.

Actor — Hema Malini

I don’t understand why a cricket ball or cricket pitch is brought into focus. Why don’t we just focus on the fact that the batsmen were just not skilled enough to play on the pitch.

India cricket captain — Virat Kohli

A new tradition of ‘Hackathons’ for start-ups has been created in the country, which is becoming a huge force for both the youth and industry of the country.

Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



FIRST COLUMN

THE CROWN PRINCE OF AMATEURS

MBS is frightening but a Saudi leader that the US President won't even talk to does not have a great future



**GWYNNE DYER**

If Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the *de facto* ruler of Saudi Arabia, were a burglar, he wouldn't be George Clooney in 'Ocean's Eleven.' He'd be a cartoon burglar in a carnival mask and a top with black-and-white horizontal stripes, carrying a sack labelled 'SWAG.' He's not a burglar, of course. And 'MBS', as he is universally known, was back in the news when the US Government released a declassified assessment by US Intelligence agencies confirming his responsibility for the murder of dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018. Donald Trump sat on the report, defended MBS, and said his own experts were wrong. "I saved his ass!" Trump boasted to *Fox News*. But Khashoggi was working for the *Washington Post* when he was killed and Joe Biden takes a dim view of foreign leaders murdering American journalists even if they aren't citizens. It must be bewildering for MBS as two months ago the US President was his best buddy, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu was his second-best buddy and Russia's President Vladimir Putin had honorary buddy status too. Now Biden has replaced Trump, Netanyahu may also be out after this month's elections and Putin isn't answering his texts.



Biden didn't just publish the report on Khashoggi's murder. He ended US support for MBS' foolish, futile war in Yemen, put US arms sales on hold and refused to speak to MBS. Biden finally called Saudi Arabia, but would only talk to MBS' 85-year-old father, King Salman. So there's been much speculation about what Biden can or should do next about the Mad Killer of Riyadh, and the answer is — nothing at all. Just give him enough rope and he'll hang himself. He's ruthless but he is also ignorant about how the rest of the world works and certainly not smart.

If my pipes burst, I call the plumber. If my car breaks down, I take it to the garage. If I'm very rich and I want somebody killed, I find a hit-man and have the job done professionally. I don't get a few of my mates to do it; I hire an expert. MBS sent a team of 15 men — 15 — to Turkey on a private plane, bringing the tools to kill and dismember Khashoggi with them. It was one of Istanbul's smaller airports, but the Turks were certainly going to record when they landed and when they left. Then they lured Khashoggi to the Saudi consulate to pick up some papers so he could marry his Turkish fiancée. Wait a minute. MBS thought it would be a cool idea to kill Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in a country that is hostile to the Saudi regime? He sent seven members of his own personal security force as part of the team. And they didn't even sweep the consulate for Turkish bugs in the room where they killed and dismembered Khashoggi? It was an amateur night for slow learners. The hit team even sent a Khashoggi body double dressed in his clothes out the back door to be seen leaving the consulate by the security cameras. The Turks had the whole story in 24 hours, with the Saudi regime retreating from one lie to another before blaming it on "rogue operators" three weeks later. By then you'd think MBS would have seen the error of his ways. But not our boy. Two weeks later, MBS sends another Saudi hit team to Canada to kill another self-exiled critic of the regime, Saad al-Jabri. Amateur night again. The novice assassins deny knowing one another and are refused entry to Canada by immigration officials. This attempted hit has never been officially confirmed but a document published by *Public Safety Canada* in August 2020 comes very close indeed. The fact that Prime Minister Trudeau was the first leader who received the Turkish recordings of the Khashoggi murder to go public with them just around that time adds weight to the allegation. MBS is frightening but he's really not very bright. And a Saudi leader that the US President won't even talk to does not have a brilliant future.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work.' The views expressed are personal.)

# India badly needs a uniform law on bail

The country cannot continue to rely on the conscience of its judges without going into the root of the problem

Disha Ravi, an Indian youth climate change activist, was granted bail recently by a Delhi court in connection with a case where it was alleged that she was involved in the making of an online toolkit related to the ongoing farmers' protest last month. Additional Sessions Judge Dharmendra Rana granted her bail, holding that "citizens are conscience keepers of a Government in any democratic nation and they cannot be put behind bars simply because they chose to disagree with the State's policies." In a landmark order on bail, Judge Rana went on to state that "the offence of sedition cannot be invoked to minister to the wounded vanity of the Government" and that "difference of opinion, disagreement, divergence and dissent are signs of a healthy democracy." He added, "An aware and assertive citizenry, in contradistinction to an indifferent or docile citizenry, is indisputably a sign of a healthy and vibrant democracy."

This is, without doubt, a brave verdict. Little did anyone expect that a judge from the lower judiciary in Delhi would red flag the police and stand up to the State, thereby upholding basic constitutional values of liberty and freedom.

But, here's the catch! Not everyone in the judiciary is Judge Rana and neither is everyone as lucky as Disha. Munawar Faruqi, a stand-up comedian, was arrested on January 1 this year in a case where he was alleged to have insulted and outraged the religious feelings of a particular community. The Supreme Court granted him bail after more than five weeks of imprisonment noting that the evidence against him was "vague." The court also said that none of the procedural requirements of arrest, as laid down by the Supreme Court in the 2014 landmark judgment of Armesh Kumar vs the State of Bihar case, was followed by the police.

These are, however, only a few examples. The likes of Safoora Zargar, Siddique Kappan, Meeran Haider, Shifa Ur Rehman, Gautam Navlakha, Stan Swamy, Akhil Gogoi and many other common citizens have suffered the uncertainties that involve bail petitions. They were either denied bail for months (in some cases years) or were not granted one at all. This is a big problem! If citizens in this country can be easily put behind bars without a trial, only to be released months later with the help of a delayed intervention by the courts, then constitutional principles will easily turn to dust. Such a situation is even more dangerous when the courts have, in a majority of these cases, eventually ruled that the arrests were either illegal, unwarranted or not necessary. It is, therefore, significant for us to understand that the law on bail in India is highly oppressive. In fact, so much so that it manifests itself in the form of three-tier layered oppression.

Advocate Abhinav Sekhri who happened to argue Disha's bail plea states that the age-old saying "Bail, not Jail" is in fact a myth. Let us see how. At the bottom of this layer is the State or the executive that has the power to categorise and classify crimes as bailable and non-bailable. So, if tomorrow the State decides that begging is a non-bailable offence — resultantly, all beggars on the streets will be immediately arrested with-



ONCE WE HAVE REVIEWED AND RECLASSIFIED OUR LAWS INTO BAILABLE AND NON-BAILABLE OFFENCES, FIXED THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL POLICE OFFICERS, LET THE COURTS BE GUIDED BY OBJECTIVE STATUTORY CRITERIA AND NOT BY THEIR SUBJECTIVE CONSCIENCE

Tiwary and Singh are from the National Law University, Visakhapatnam. The views expressed are personal.



out a warrant and put behind bars. The trial will go on at its own pace and the accused will spend years in prison without being proven guilty. It isn't shocking, therefore, that India is the only country where 70 per cent of prisoners are undertrials, most of whom are poor and are languishing in jails for years.

In the middle of this layer is the police that has the power to invoke a non-bailable offence against an accused. Even though the law grants certain procedural safeguards, the police has to work at the whims and fancies of its political masters.

Lastly, at the top of the layer is the judiciary, which, in bail petitions, is completely guided by the conscience of the respective judges. There are no statutory objective criteria and individual judges are required to judge each case on its own merits. Such a situation poses itself as an irony as well as a set of contradictions. On the one hand where the Constitution grants essential rights such as "equality before the law" and "equal protection of the law", procedural due process and substantive due process, liberty and right to life to every citizen of this country, bail petitions, on the other hand, are heard with no objectivity or set criteria. Cases of identical nature are dealt with differently by different courts and different judges.

Therefore, a solution lies in

getting to the root of the problem. If we have to reduce the arbitrary power of the State, we need to review our antiquated laws on arrest and custody that were enacted by an oppressive British regime to control Indians and curb dissent during the freedom movement. An 1861 Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) cannot continue to decide the fate of millions of Indians in Independent India. Laws of sedition that give unbridled rights to the executive to act arbitrarily need to be done away with. At his sedition trial, even Mahatma Gandhi had unequivocally pointed out that Section 124-A was a "prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen." Countries like New Zealand, the UK and Australia have already gotten rid of their sedition laws and it is time India follows suit.

At the second level, we need to fix individual responsibility of police officers who, under the CrPC have been given the powers of arrest and detention. An analogy can be drawn with International Humanitarian Law. During the war crimes trials that took place after World War-II, many defendants invoked superior orders as a defence, claiming that they could not be held accountable for the crimes committed because they were only following the orders of their superi-

ors. The case law of these trials eventually resulted in the development of a customary rule applicable in all armed conflicts, whereby obeying a superior order does not relieve a subordinate of criminal responsibility, if the subordinate knew that the act ordered was unlawful, or if he should have known so because of its manifestly unlawful nature. Where an order is manifestly unlawful, all combatants have a customary duty to disobey. Similarly, in domestic laws, the police officer carrying out an illegal arrest without following due process of law needs to be held accountable even if he was following the orders.

Once we have reviewed and reclassified our laws into bailable and non-bailable offences, fixed the accountability of individual police officers, let the courts be guided by objective statutory criteria and not by their subjective conscience. The reason why we have to thank the conscience of judges like Rana is because of the subjectivity that pervades our bail laws.

The optimism that our judiciary has and will continue to have the likes of Judge Rana is a hope and hope alone cannot be our saviour in times of extreme distress. We have to act. As Benjamin Franklin rightly said, "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are."

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

DEMOCRACIES FUNCTION BECAUSE INSTITUTIONS OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY. THAT IS BEING ATTACKED IN INDIA (BY) ONE BIG INSTITUTION CALLED THE RSS. —CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



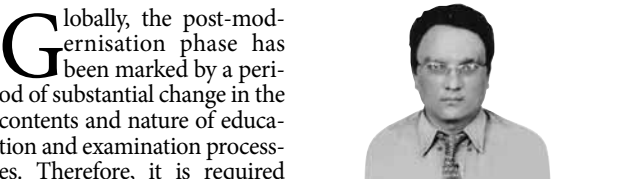
IT WILL TAKE RAHUL GANDHI A LOT OF TIME TO UNDERSTAND THE RSS. THE RSS IS THE BIGGEST SCHOOL OF PATRIOTISM IN THE WORLD. —UNION MINISTER PRAKASH JAVADEKAR

# A move towards self-reliance in the education system

Integrated academic programmes are needed to provide supplemental support to teaching and learning in various disciplines, making it relevant in current circumstances

Globally, the post-modernisation phase has been marked by a period of substantial change in the contents and nature of education and examination processes. Therefore, it is required that the focus should be on demonstrating how new models of reform and education can be used in real life experiments with democracy, the environment, globalisation and governance. There's a need to show how new ways of higher education will drive change and instill confidence among the masses and explain how latest research and happenings in the field of education across the globe can be disseminated so as to upgrade research and teaching accordingly.

Plus, we have to find ways to do away with manipulation and nepotism; ensure policy brings good change and frame ways to reform the examination



**SUDHIR HINDWAN**

The writer is a professor and expert on strategic affairs. The views expressed are personal.

system to ensure that only talent gets selected.

The higher education system's recent attempt to ensure a high level of partnership among institutions through equity and access to all, shows the level of insight in empowering and motivating students and faculty members across the board. Besides, the pursuit of the National Education Policy (NEP) to cover school, adult, higher education and efforts towards promotion of Indian languages and online education exhibit tremendous effort towards enhancement of the overall educational scenario. The sum and substance of the argument is to ensure that the new educational changes have brought in clean governance and accountability in education through a fresh perspective and a framework for key demands of higher education, while maintaining a synergy

among various stakeholders, particularly the youth. The provision to lay norms for designing new required structures is to ensure affordability to social justice. It goes without saying that many positive changes have been ensured through positive perspectives.

Another welcome regulation is to monitor institutes mainly on the basis of research, academic excellence, its linkages and employability. There appears to be a clear framework of defining how the process of segregation of monitoring and financial powers in opening and shutting down of an institute would ensure transparency in the decision-making process. There have been lots of arguments among academicians about selection in higher education; and in this regard perhaps the main challenge is the pattern of selection in the contemporary context of increasing



international, inter-dependence and global change.

Recent developments have established a new basis for understanding the changing nature of polity and community. Perhaps there may be some modification in the examination system without which the process of reform may only remain a chimera. We ought to bring in changes to test the potential of students by testing the ability not only on academic excellence but also by judging their ability and knowledge about new information and

comprehending their level of social responsibility. The strength of the higher education system lies in creating its internal dynamism by ensuring inclusive growth. Even an excellent system is influenced by the people who make a difference. Human and financial relations and dealings are not as simple as they appear to be and require constant monitoring by competent authorities.

The provisions of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) on par with the IITs, IIMs, the National Research Foundation, the National Educational Technology Forum and Indian Institutes of Translation and Interpretation would create an environment for students to reach their potential by encouraging academic excellence of a global level, embracing new information on the one hand and

opening new areas of job-oriented courses on the other.

Besides, it would help in understanding social responsibility. In addition to this, a new approach can also provide a clear way forward for students in multidisciplinary studies. Tremendous efforts have been made for making the entire apparatus of higher education foolproof, yet there are always a few takeaways to new vistas of aggrandisement and making the entire process low cost and more people-intensive.

There is always scope to improve course contents through academic discourse by bringing about changes through cognitive discourse, plus seeking multiple options and viewpoints in order to help in forming an integrated team consisting of only meritorious members for holistic development of social sciences.

Plus, there is a need for

introducing new innovative mechanisms in social sciences designed to help students identify career goals available in the field of social sciences.

More integrated academic programmes and services are needed that provide supplemental support to both teaching and learning in numerous and diverse disciplines making it more relevant in the current circumstances.

Growth and enrichment of students and the community, both inside and outside of the classroom through community development exercise; more research centres to ensure academic excellence in many disciplines; exclusive intellectual skills designed to prepare students to engage in nuances of socio-economic and political issues related to the global order are the way forward to help our students carve out a niche for themselves.



# Trump’s cash plea could complicate GOP fundraising

AP ■ ORLANDO

Trump needs you,” one fundraising email implored.

“President Trump’s Legacy is in your hands,” another pleaded.

Others advertised “Miss Me Yet?” T-shirts featuring Donald Trump’s smiling face.

While some Republicans grapple with how fiercely to embrace the former President, the organisations charged with raising money for the party are going all in.

The Republican National Committee and the party’s congressional campaign arms are eager to cash in on Trump’s lure with small donors ahead of next year’s midterm elections, when the GOP hopes to regain control of at least one chamber of Congress.

But there’s a problem: Trump himself. In his first speech since leaving office, the former president encouraged

loyalists to give directly to him, essentially bypassing the traditional groups that raise money for GOP candidates.

“There’s only one way to contribute to our efforts to elect America First’ Republican conservatives and, in turn, to make America great again,” Trump said Sunday at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference in Orlando, Florida. “And that’s through Save America PAC and donaldtrump.Com.” The comment was particularly notable because Trump is generally loath to ask for money in person.

It amounts to the latest salvo in the battle to shape the future of the GOP, with Trump making clear that he holds no allegiance to the party’s traditional fundraising operation as he tries to consolidate power.

That could help him add to an already commanding war chest, aiding his effort to influence the party. Save America

has more than USD 80 million cash on hand, including USD 3 million raised after the CPAC speech, according to a person familiar with the total.

Some of that money could help Trump settle scores with incumbent members of Congress who have crossed him.

In his Sunday speech, Trump read aloud the names of every Republican who voted against him and called for them to be defeated. He’s already endorsed a Republican challenger to GOP Rep. Anthony Gonzalez of Ohio, who voted to impeach him over the U.S. Capitol riot.

“Trump’s call to give directly to him shows that the normal organs of the party ... Are going to have to fight for relevance in the 2022 cycle,” said Dan Eberhart, a longtime Republican donor who has given large sums to all three as well as to Trump’s campaign.

## US will engage China from position of strength: Blinken will say in foreign policy speech

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Secretary of State Antony Blinken in his first major foreign policy speech on Wednesday would describe the US’ relationship with China as the “biggest geopolitical test” of the 21st century and say that Washington will engage Beijing from a position of strength.

In his speech, Blinken would spell out eight aspects of how American diplomacy will carry out the strategy of President Joe Biden, including plans to restore America’s global leadership.

“We will manage the biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century: our relationship with China,” Blinken will say, according to the excerpts of his speech released by the State Department. “China is the

only country with the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system — all the rules, values, and relationships that make the world work the way we want it to,” Blinken will say.

Asserting that the US relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be and adversarial when it must be, the top diplomat will say that the US will engage China from a position of strength.

“That requires working with allies and partners, not denigrating them. It requires engaging in diplomacy and in international organizations, because where we have pulled back, China has filled in,” he will say.

## Kuwait swears in new Govt amid mounting crises

AP ■ DUBAI

Kuwait’s new Cabinet was sworn in Wednesday, state-run media reported, weeks after the government quit amid a deepening deadlock with parliament that has blocked badly needed reforms in the tiny oil-rich Gulf Arab state.

Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al Hamad Al Sabah swapped out four ministers whose selections had angered various lawmakers for less contentious, veteran politicians, an apparent gesture to appease parliament.

The worsening rift between Kuwait’s emir-appointed government and elected parliament presents the first significant challenge to Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who ascended the throne last fall.

The infighting has diminished public confidence, caused instability and hastened the country’s worst debt crisis since the 1990 Iraqi invasion. As

Kuwait’s general reserve fund runs out of cash, lawmakers skeptical of deep-rooted corruption have prevented the government from borrowing as other Gulf states have done in response to the coronavirus pandemic and low crude prices.

Kuwait stands out among the hereditary sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf for its ram-bunctious parliament and robust political debate.

## ISIS claims killing of 3 female media workers in Afghan

AP ■ KABUL

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for the killing of three women working for a local radio and TV station in eastern Afghanistan, the latest in a spike in targeted killings across the war-torn country.

Dozens of people gathered Wednesday for the funerals of the three media workers.

The women were gunned down on Tuesday in separate attacks, according to the news editor of the privately owned station and officials in Nangarhar province.

Afghan officials said police arrested the alleged killer of the

three, identifying him as Qari Baser and insisting he was a Taliban — a claim promptly denied by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.Nangarhar police chief, Gen. Juma Gul Hemat, said Baser had used a pistol with a silencer in the attacks.

He was arrested shortly after the attacks by police in Jalalabad, the provincial capital. The IS claim, posted late Tuesday, contradicted the Afghan government’s accusations against the Taliban.

The militants said the three female journalists were targeted because they worked for one of the “media stations loyal to the apostate Afghan government” in Jalalabad.

## Kenya receives 1 million vaccines from COVAX

AP ■ NAIROBI

Kenya has received just over 1 million doses of a Covid-19 vaccine in the first batch from the global COVAX initiative that was created to ensure that low- and middle-income countries have fair access to vaccines.

Some 1.02 million doses of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, arrived in Nairobi early Wednesday, according to a joint statement from UNICEF, the World Health Organization, international vaccine alliance GAVI and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.

Kenyan Health Minister Mutahi Kagwe expressed excitement and optimism that the vaccines would help stop the spread of the coronavirus that has forced the East African country to partially lock down its economy with devastating consequences for many citizens.

# Biden health pick taking heat for support of abortion rights

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden’s pick for Health Secretary is taking heat from Republicans for his actions in support of abortion rights. They want to define him — and the new administration — as out of the mainstream.

The nomination of Xavier Becerra faces a key vote Wednesday in the Senate Finance committee. It’s a test, too, for national groups opposed to abortion, trying to deny a president who favors abortion rights his choice to run the Department of Health and Human Services.

Becerra is paying a price for defending, as California attorney general, some of the nation’s most liberal laws and policies on abortion rights.

“It goes to show that California abortion policies are progressive enough that

being associated with them is something that anti-abortion lawmakers want to make disqualifying for a Cabinet position,” said Mary Ziegler, a law professor at Florida State University, who specializes in the legal history of reproduction.

Nationally, the abortion issue appears in flux. Lawmakers in 19 state legislatures have introduced almost 50 bills this year to ban most or all abortions, according to the nonpartisan Guttmacher Institute. In South Carolina, Republican Gov. Henry McMaster signed a measure banning most abortions, though it was almost immediately suspended by a federal judge.

Abortion opponents are hoping that litigation over a state law will reach the Supreme Court, now clearly leaning to the right.

# Yemen’s rebels say latest US sanctions will prolong war

AP ■ CAIRO

Yemen’s Iran-backed rebels on Wednesday warned that the U.S. Sanctions imposed the previous day on two of their military leaders would only prolong the conflict in the improvised Arab country.

President Joe Biden’s administration slapped sanctions on Tuesday on two Houthi leaders, citing their alleged roles in cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia and shipping vessels in the Red Sea.

Rebel leaders Monsour al-Saadi and Ahmed al-Hamzi were responsible for attacks “impacting Yemeni civilians, bordering nations, and commercial vessels in international waters,” the departments of State and Treasury said.

They said the Houthis play “a significant role in the conflict in Yemen and exacerbate the dire humanitarian plight of the Yemeni people.”

Mohammed Abdul-Salam, a spokesman for the Houthis, said the sanctions have shown the U.S. “does not attempt to stop the aggression and lift the siege on Yemen.”

The sanctions have also shown that the U.S. “is responsible for prolonging the war and worsening the humanitarian crisis,” according to al-Saadi.

Al-Saadi heads the Houthis’ naval forces and masterminded attacks on ships in the Red Sea, while al-Hamzi supervised missile and explosive-laden drone attacks in Yemen and on Saudi Arabia, the Treasury Department alleged.

The sanctions came came just weeks after the Biden administration removed the Houthis from a broader terrorism blacklist in a bid to ease civilian suffering in the country.

However, since the reversal of that designation, which was made in the waning days of former President Donald Trump’s administration, the Houthis have stepped up attacks in Yemen and on Saudi Arabia, mainly with ballistic missiles and explosive-laded drones. Yemen’s war started in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of the country’s north.

## US forces: Rockets hit airbase in Iraq hosting US troops

AP ■ BAGHDAD

At least 10 rockets targeted a military base in western Iraq that hosts US-led coalition troops on Wednesday, the coalition and the Iraqi military said. It was not immediately known if there were any casualties.

The rockets struck Ain al-Asad airbase in Anbar province at 7:20 am, spokesman Col. Wayne Marotto said.

Later, the Iraqi military released a statement saying the attack did not cause significant losses and that security forces had found the launch pad used for the missiles. An Iraqi military official said they had been found in the al-Baghdadi area of Anbar, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not permitted to brief media.

It was the first attack since the U.S. Struck Iran-aligned militia targets along the Iraq-Syria border last week that killed one militiaman.

## Ambedkar International Centre moves California court to join caste discrimination case

**WASHINGTON:** The Ambedkar International Center (AIC), a US-based organization fighting against caste discrimination on Tuesday approached the California Supreme Court to be admitted as an amicus curiae in a case that involves caste discrimination in the workplace.

Amicus curiae, literally meaning “friend of the court”, is a person or organization who is not party to the litigation at hand, but is allowed to advise the court on a point of law or fact directly concerning the lawsuit.

The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) vs Cisco Systems Inc, Sundar Iyer and Ramana Kompella case of caste discrimination in the workplace is scheduled for hearing on March 9.

California regulators last year sued Cisco Systems, saying an engineer faced discrimination at the company’s Silicon Valley headquarters because he is a Dalit Indian.

The State of California alleges that a major tech-industry employer violated civil rights laws by discriminating against a worker of Indian-origin because he was born into a lower caste. **PTI**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Public at large is hereby informed that my clients Sh. Rajesh Kumar S/o Sh. Tek Chand and Smt. Renu W/o Sh. Rajesh Kumar both R/o RZ-17/290, Gali No.5, Geetanjali Park, New Delhi, West Sagar Pur, South West Delhi, Delhi-110004 have severed all their relations with their son namely Ashish Kumar S/o Sh. Rajesh Kumar Aged about 23 years resident of RZ-67, Gali No.2, Block-K, Harjan Basti, West Sagar Pur, South West Delhi, Delhi-110046 due to acts, conduct and behaviour. My clients have no control over him. My client disinherited him all their moveable and immovable properties. Anybody dealing with him shall be doing so at his/her own cost, risk and consequences.  
Sd/- P. Sharma (Advocate)  
Seat No.28, Hall No.2, Dwarika Court Complex, Sec.-10, New Delhi-110075

**WESTERN RAILWAY**  
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Tender Notice Nos.: BCT/20-21/365 & BCT/20-21/366, dt. 01.03.2021 DOP 06.04.2021 Existing as (Date of Opening) for both tenders: 06.04.2021 To be read as (Date of Opening) for both tenders: 26.03.2021. All other terms & conditions remain the same. 0704  
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**Public Notice: Loss of ID card:**  
This is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID Card of Mr.RAVI PANKAJ, issued by ICICI Bank Ltd, having ID card no. 06090 has been found lost on 25/02/2021. Anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to The Manager, Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Ltd., S.D.Tower, Rohini, Delhi-110085.  
Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Ltd., are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID card no.-06090. Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.  
Date: 04.03.2021 Sd/-  
Place: Delhi For ICICI Bank Limited

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
I on behalf of my client Mrs. Poonam Balli W/o Late Naveen Balli R/o B-18, 3rd floor Moti Nagar, New Delhi do hereby serve notice to the public at large that my client above said is the sole and exclusive owner of properties i.e. 1) LIG FLAT NO.576, FIRST FLOOR, PCKET 13, DWARKA, NEW DELHI 2) PLOT NO.136, K-1, VILLAGE HASTAL 80 SOYDS MOHAN GARDEN, NEW DELHI 3) LOCKER NO.321, STATE BANK OF INDIA, RAJOURI GARDEN, NEW DELHI. And have lost/misplaced the original Letter of Administration P.C. No.21/11 dated 05-02-2013 issued by the court of Sh. Alok Aggarwal, ADJ, Dwarka, New Delhi. Anybody dealing with the property(ies) or the said document without my client shall do so at his/her risk and responsibility and shall also be liable for civil and criminal action.  
Anjum Kumar (Advocate)  
Ch.No.X-9, Civil Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

# Myanmar security forces kill at least 6 protesters



Anti-coup protesters run as one of them discharges a fire extinguisher to counter the impact of tear gas fired by riot policemen in Yangon, Myanmar, Wednesday

AP

AP ■ YANGON

Myanmar security forces shot and killed at least six people on Wednesday, according to accounts on social media and local news reports, as authorities extend their lethal crackdown on protests against last month’s coup.

Multiple reports from several cities and towns, difficult to independently confirm, said police used live ammunition as well as tear gas and rubber bullets to violently disperse protesters.

In Myingyan in central Myanmar, multiple social media posts reported the shooting death of a 14-year-old boy. A second death was reported later.

At least four other deaths were reported elsewhere. Demonstrators have regu-

larly flooded the streets of cities across the country since the military seized power on Feb. 1 and ousted the elected government of leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Their numbers have remained high even as security forces have repeatedly fired tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds to disperse the crowds, and arrested protesters en masse.

On Sunday, the U.N. Human Rights Office said it believed at least 18 people were killed that day.

The escalation of violence has led to increased diplomatic efforts to resolve Myanmar’s political crisis.

The U.N. Security Council is expected to hold a closed meeting on the situation on Friday, council diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity ahead of an official announcement.

# Japan weighing extension of coronavirus emergency in Tokyo

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said

Wednesday he is considering extending a coronavirus state of emergency in the Tokyo region for about two weeks because of

**म.प्र. मध्य क्षेत्र विद्युत वितरण कंपनी लिमिटेड**  
**कार्यालय महाप्रबंधक (सं./सं.), शिवपुरी वृत्त**  
**क्र./महा.प्र./सं.सं./क्रय/शिव./2020-21/7421 शिवपुरी, दिनांक : 02.03.2021**

**संशोधन आदेश**  
इस कार्यालय के ई-निविदा क्रमांक NIT/03/7200 शिवपुरी दिनांक 18.02.2021 एवं टेण्डर आईडी क्रमांक 2021\_MKVVC\_130388 1 (Outsourcing of Manpower required for Miscellaneous Works in O&M, Circle Shivpuri under the Jurisdiction of MPMKVVCL, Bhopal) में निम्नानुसार आंशिक संशोधन किया जाता है। टेण्डर फीस वृटिवश Exemption Allowed किया गया था जिसके स्थान पर टेण्डर फीस राशि रु. 2000/- जीएसटी राशि रु. 360/- कुल राशि रु. 2360/- का डिमाण्ड ड्राफ्ट A.O.(A.U.) MPMKVVCL Shivpuri के नाम अनिवार्य रूप से जमा कराना होगा। ई-निविदा की शै श्रेय यथावत रहेंगे।  
म.प्र. माध्यम/100141/2021 महाप्रबंधक (सं./सं.)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
NOTICE is hereby given that I, Suraj Sharma is purchasing the House No. A-267, MIG Flat on Ground Floor at Distt Vihar Sector-8, THA, Tehsil & Brij, Ghaziabad, (U.P) from Rohit Bandhu, Akshay Bandhu, Kamna Vedh Arya and Kamlesh legal heirs of Late Prakash, Mr. Prakash was the absolute owner of the same vide Transfer Deed dated 03.05.2002 (Doc. 2649)  
All person/s having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage(equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.  
Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)  
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, 9810063351

**Govt. of Bihar**  
**Department of Science and Technology**  
**Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul**  
Beena Road, Ward No.-24, Supaul-852131  
Website:- www.scesupaul.org and E-mail:- supaulcollege@gmail.com

**Corrigendum**  
With reference to the notice no. **SCE/E-TEN/01/2020-21** and PR. No. 013216 (SCI.&TECH) 2020-21 inviting e-tender, published in the different newspapers on 23.02.2021, the following amendments are being hereby notified therein:  
1. The date and time of Opening of Technical Bids should be read as **12.03.2021 at 10.30 AM.**  
2. The e-procurement website address should be read as **https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in**and the concerned **eProc 2.0 Help Desk** address/contact details can be accessed from the “**Contact Us**” section of the **eproc2** website.  
All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.  
**Principal**  
PR. No. 013799 (Sci. & Tech.) 2020-21 **Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul**  
नोवल कोरोना के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सख्यो हेतु Toll Free No. **104** पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।



# India's services sector expands at fastest rate

Employment falls further, says survey

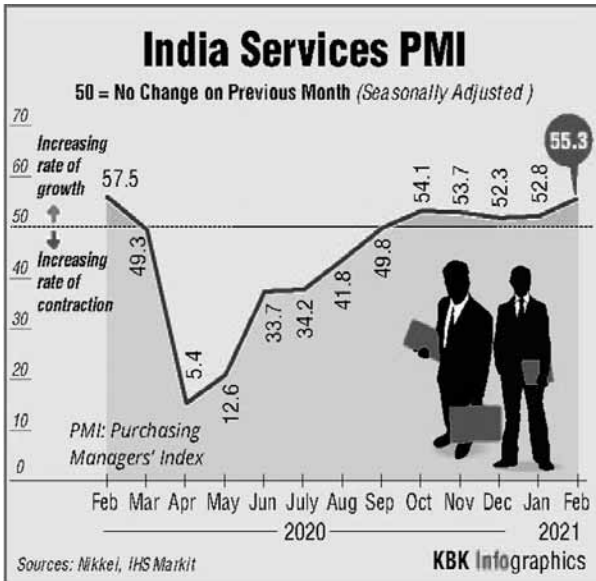
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's services activity expanded at the fastest rate in a year during February, while employment fell further and companies noted the sharpest rise in overall expenses, a monthly survey said on Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index rose from 52.8 in January to 55.3 in February, pointing to the sharpest rate of expansion in output in a year amid improved demand and more favourable market conditions.

The index was above the critical 50 mark that separates growth from contraction for the fifth month in a row during February as the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines led to an improvement in business confidence towards growth prospects.

While, new work intakes expanded for the fifth straight month, panellists continued to indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restric-



tions curbed international demand for their services.

"New export orders declined for the twelfth month running, albeit at the weakest rate since last March," the survey noted.

Meanwhile, Indian private

sector output rose at the quickest pace in four months during February. The Composite PMI Output Index, which measures combined services and manufacturing output, increased from 55.8 in January to 57.3 in February.

## Need to ensure India is recognised as a quality conscious nation at global level, says Goyal

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday stressed on improving Indian quality standards to ensure that India is recognised as a quality-conscious country with which people can do business

### Need of the hour is to reduce logistics cost: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday said the need of the hour is to reduce logistics cost in the country as India cannot be competitive if this cost remains high.

He also said the investments in the Sagarmala project will boost the country's maritime infrastructure, expand freight corridors, make freight more cost-effective and bring down the current logistics cost, which is estimated to be about 13-14 per cent. The investments would help in reducing this cost to a more acceptable benchmark of 8 per cent, and that is "the need of the hour today and India cannot be competitive as long as our logistics cost remain so high," he said at the Maritime India Summit.

PTI

with confidence.

"We must work towards ensuring India's recognition at the global stage as a quality conscious country, as a country with which people can do business with the confidence that they will get what we say, they will receive what they require. And they can be assured that an Indian product is a high quality product," the Food and Consumer Affairs Minister said.

Speaking at a virtual Workshop on Easing Compliance of BIS Certifications, Goyal said that quality is profit, and it prepares businesses for greater profits and quality speaks for itself, and is not expensive.

"It adds to the productivity, helps businesses to get bigger markets so that they can get economies of scale and helps to eliminate wastage," he pointed out.

"I think now with the onset of an Indian standard one national standard representing quality, productivity, affordability, accessibility, which should truly make the Indian standard a world-wide accepted standard. And when we go anywhere in the world, a standard that we make in India should be respected, recognised, appreciated and be the gold standard of quality," he said.

Goyal called for more and more use of artificial intelligence, big data and other technology-related solutions to help resolve standardisation issues facing industry and other entrepreneurs.

"I do believe that this is a dawn of a new era of an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', where digitalisation and efficiency are going to determine India's success in the future... More and more use of artificial intelligence, big data. All of these technology driven solutions will help our industry in a big way," he added.

The certification process will be simplified, stating that BIS should ensure the cost of testing never becomes a detriment to conforming to quality and getting certification, the minister said, adding that there will be reduction of fee for the certification for MSMEs.

Goyal also suggested that the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) should operate on the 'QUICK' Model - Quality, Uniformity through One Nation One Standard, Conformity Assessment and Knowledge Sharing.

"Our mantra for the day should be Quick Action, Quick Response, Quick Absorption of best practices and Quicker Ways of Working," he added.



## INBRIEF

### GHAZIABAD TO FLOAT BONDS WORTH ₹150 CRORE

Ghaziabad: The Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation will issue Public Municipal Bonds worth ₹150 crore in the first week of April. For this, the Mumbai Stock Exchange has completed all preparations for listing the municipal public issue on BSE. This information was given by Municipal Commissioner Mahendra Singh Tanwar during the executive meeting to the Municipal Corporation House.

### GOYAL FLAGS OFF SIDDHABALI JAN SHATABDI TRAIN

New Delhi: The Union Minister of Railways, Commerce & Industry and Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Piyush Goyal flagged off Kotdwar-Delhi Junction-Kotdwar Siddhabali Jan Shatabdi Special train through video conferencing on Wednesday along with Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and other dignitaries present at the event site.

### CLW PRODUCES 40 PLUS LOCOMOTIVES PER MONTH

Chittaranjan: CLW once again proved its capacity and commitment towards production of locomotives for Indian Railway. From March onwards new challenge in form of Covid-19 has engulfed the entire world and CLW was not untouched with. Due to nationwide lockdown the material supply of different components used in production of locomotive became irregular. The working hours has also restricted. This has impacted the production of locomotives at CLW. Initially production was slow in first quarter of Financial Year 2020-21, yet CLW managed to gain the production figure of 40+ locomotives per month since September 2020.

### AYURVEDA BEAUTY PRODUCTS LAUNCHED

New Delhi: After intensive research to meet the increasing demand for the chemical free beauty products based on time-tested ayurvedic system, Kannauj-based Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFC) in Uttar Pradesh under the Union Ministry of Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSME) has recently prepared a natural face Serum and fragrance, a technology which has been transferred to Delhi-based firm AIMIL Pharma. Using this technology, the herbal pharma manufacturer has now launched a range of quality beauty products under the brand 'AyouthVeda' for the health conscious beauty market.

### JIO, FIREWORK TEAM UP TO OFFER VIDEO STORIES

Mumbai: Reliance Jio has roped in Firework Short Video Platform to offer vertical video "stories" to its 100 million plus KaiOS users in India. "Jio has created a new category of connected users by bringing the KaiOS ecosystem to India and then pioneering app development on these phones, meant for an untapped audience. To have them join the portfolio of Firework publishers is a significant reassurance towards Firework's business leadership as a short video network platform, globally," said CEO of Firework India Sunil Nair.

### ZIPAWORLD FORAYS INTO OCEAN FREIGHT

New Delhi: Logistics startup Zipaworld announced its foray in the ocean freight booking segment and expects at least three-fold growth in its turnover in the next financial year on the back of the expansion in its business. Ambrish Kumar, founder of Zipaworld and Group CEO of AAA 2 Innovate Private Ltd, said that the company also plans to come up with an intercity courier service in 2021, which would give further boost to its revenues.

## Govt can cut excise duty on petrol, diesel by ₹8.5 a litre without hurting revenues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has room to cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by up to ₹8.5 per litre without impacting its target for revenue from the tax on the two fuels, analysts said.

Petrol and diesel prices hover at a historic high following a relentless increase in rates over the past nine months. There have been calls by opposition parties as well as sections of society to the government to reduce excise duty to ease consumer pain.

"We estimate excise duty on auto fuels in FY22 (April 2021 to March 2022), if it is not cut, at ₹4.35 lakh crore versus budget estimate of ₹3.2 lakh crore.

"Thus, even if excise duty is cut by ₹8.5 per litre on or before April 1, 2021, FY22E

budget estimate can be met," ICICI Securities said in a note. It expressed optimism for an excise duty cut given demand recovery, impending privatisation and inflation concerns but expected it to be more modest than ₹8.5 a litre.

## Crude oil futures decline on low demand

New Delhi: Crude oil futures on Wednesday fell 1.81 per cent to ₹4,387 per barrel as participants reduced their positions on low demand. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for March delivery eased by ₹81, or 1.81 per cent, to ₹4,387 per barrel with a business volume of 5,366 lots.

PTI

## Sensex, Nifty spurt over 2% on global rally

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Continuing their winning run for the third session in a row, the BSE Sensex surged nearly 1,148 points to breach the 51,000-level and the NSE

### Rupee logs best single-day gain in 6 months on forex inflows, stocks rally

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee on Wednesday surged by 65 paise — its biggest single day spike since September 2020 — to end at 72.72 against the US dollar on the back of weakness in the American dollar and rise in risk appetite in the global markets.

A rally in domestic equities, foreign fund inflows and positive macro data also boosted the rupee sentiment.

Nifty recaptured the 15,200-mark on Wednesday, propped up by intense buying in financial and energy stocks.

At the closing bell, the 30-share Sensex was up 1,147.76 points or 2.28 per cent at 51,444.65 — the biggest single-day rise since February 2. Intraday, the index swung 1,243 points. Likewise, the NSE Nifty climbed 326.50 points or 2.19 per cent to end at 15,245.60 with 43 of its constituents closing in the green. Over the last

three sessions, the Sensex has risen by 2,344.66 points or 4.77 per cent while the Nifty has added 716.45 points or 4.93 per cent.

The Sensex rally was driven by Bajaj FinServ, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, HDFC and Axis Bank. Of the 30 Sensex constituents, 27 closed in the green.

Bajaj Finserv rose the most by 5.15 per cent. Reliance Industries rose by 4.52 per cent a day after its telecom arm

emerged as lead buyer in spectrum auctions. Reliance Jio picked up 488.35 MHz of spectrum in bands such as 800 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2300 MHz for ₹57,122.65 crore.

Analysts said strengthening of spectrum footprints by Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio in the auctions is expected to yield market share gains for the two telcos. Bharti Airtel, which bid about ₹18,699 crore to pick up 355.45 Megahertz, rose by 0.92 per cent.

## IEA chief backs India on coal, says no exit without financial support

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lending his weight to India's stand on coal as an energy source, International Energy Agency (IEA) chief Fatih Birol on Wednesday said it won't be fair to ask developing nations to stop using coal without giving international financial assistance to make up for the economic challenge from such a move.

Developing nations like India depend on coal for 60 per cent of their energy, and coal and associated sectors are major employment generators, he said at the Energy Horizons Leadership Dialogue organised by Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

Endorsing the Indian stand of it not being responsible for global pollution, Birol said, "climate change issue we have today, (that is) concentration of carbon in the atmosphere is not an issue of today. It is an issue of almost last 100 years."

**UJVN LIMITED**  
H.O. : 'UJJWAL', Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun - 248006  
Tel.: 0135-2763508, 2763808 Fax: 0135-2763507  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvn.com

**Ref. No.: 189**  
**e-Tender Notice**  
Office of the Executive Engineer (Gen) Chibro Power House (Dehradun). Invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:  
Tender No. 26-e/EE(G)/CPH/2020-21 "Supply of mechanical Tool & Plant items at Chibro Power House".  
Tender No. 27-e/EE(G)/CPH/2020-21 "Supply of Slip Ring complete with all accessories of 63 MVA, generator at Chibro Power House".  
Estimated cost: ₹ 19,00,000/- GST Extra & ₹ 9,00,000/- GST Extra  
Date of availability of bid document on website: 04.03.21 11:00 Hrs.  
Last date for submission of bids on website: 24.03.21 up to 17Hrs.  
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "<http://uktenders.gov.in>"  
**E.E (G), Chibro**  
**"Avoid Wasteful Use of Electricity"**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
AMM/ETD/GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender against tender no. 44215042. The details are under:-

1	Description of Item	Supply, commissioning and testing of wheel set trolley towing equipment to RDSO TC No. ELSR/TC/0090 Rev 0 or latest along with accessories.
2	Quantity	07 Nos.
3	Tender due on	24.03.2021, 11:00 Hrs.
4	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>

**Note:-** 1) The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement System (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in E-tender system.  
2) For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.  
3) No manual offers are acceptable.  
No.: 16144215042/ETD/GZB Dated: 02.03.2021 477/2021  
Serving Customers with a Smile

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE							
SR. NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL	
1	PWD B&R, YAMUNA NAGAR	CONSTRUCTION OF CANTEN BLOCK & CYCLE STAND IN THE CAMPUS OF GOVT. ITI AT MUSTAFABAD IN YAMUNA NAGAR DISTRICT (REINITE)	08.03.2021 24.03.2021	27.31 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	97290-63221 pwd-eeepd-yamunanagar@hry.nic.in	
2	PWD B&R, REWARI	1. WIDENING OF T.P-53 (SUBANA KOSLI NAHAR KANINA ROAD) INCLUDING ALUMINIUM TOLL CABIN AT KM 69 OF VILLAGE GUJARWARAS AT KOSLI IN REWARI DISTT.	02.03.2021 24.03.2021	16.46 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01274253703 pwd-eeepd-rewari@hry.nic.in	
3	PWD B&R, AMBALA	CONST. OF CHC ALONGWITH RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION AT VILLAGE AMBLU (AMBALA) (PDG. INTERNAL EI) (RECALL) + 6 OTHER WORKS	08.03.2021 24.03.2021	117.59 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0171-2630877 pwd-eeed-ambala@hry.nic.in	
4	PWD B&R, KURUKSHETRA	UP-GRADATION OF SHC INTO HWC WAY OF SPECIAL REPAIR OF 4 NOS. SUB HEALTH CENTERS UNDER PROVINCIAL SUB DIVISION NO. 1, SHAHAD IN DISTT. KURUKSHETRA (UNDER HEALTH WELNESS SCHEME) (VILLAGES:- KHARINDWA, MOHRI, SUDHUPUR AND AJRAWAR)	02.03.2021 16.03.2021	16.02 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01744297271 pwd-eeepd2-kurukshetra@hry.nic.in	
5	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	INFLATABLE MOTOR RESCUE BOAT = 20 NOS.	27.02.2021 05.04.2021		<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in, dsndharyana.gov.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in, dsndharyana.gov.in</a>	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in	
6	DIRECTOR GENERAL, SUPPLIES & DISPOSALS, HARYANA	COTTON CLOTH FOR PREPARATION OF MASKS =67,000 METRE	27.02.2021 05.04.2021		<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in, dsndharyana.gov.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in, dsndharyana.gov.in</a>	0172-2570121-124,2584125,2585125 supplies@hry.nic.in	
7	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING,SIWANI	"UP GRADATION OF SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT (STP) OF 4.00 MLD CAPACITY BASED ON MOVING BED BIO REACTOR (MBBR) TECHNOLOGY LOCATED AT TOSHAM ROAD- SIWANI TOWN." & "UP GRADATION OF SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT (STP) OF 3.50 MLD CAPACITY BASED ON MOVING BED BIO REACTOR (MBBR) TECHNOLOGY TO TERTIARY TREATMENT LOCATED NEAR CREMATION GROUND IN LOHARU TOWN".	01.03.2021 10.03.2021	7.50 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	8221012343 eesiwani@phedharyana.gov.in	
8	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA,REWARI	PROVIDING OF UNSKILLED, SEMI SKILLED, SKILLED MANPOWER FOR WATCH AND WARD OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PUMP HOUSES FALLS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF WATER SERVICES MECHANICAL DIVISION, REWARI AS PER REQUIREMENT FOR THE YEAR 2021-22.	CLOSING DATE 16.03.2021	EMD 6.80 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01274256466 xennmech@yahoo.com	
9	PANCHAYATI RAJ,SONIPAT	CONST. OF BRICK ON EDGE RASTA WITH TOE WALL AT VILLAGE BUTANA JAFRABAD BLOCK SONIPAT AND OTHERS 5 NO. WORKS DISTT SONIPAT	02.03.2021 09.03.2021	53.67 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>		EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
10	PANCHAYATI RAJ,PANIPAT	CONSTRUCTION OF 400 CUM BIO GAS PLANT WITH 5 YEARS O & M AFTER COMPLETION OF PROJECT VILLAGE BHODWAL MAJRI BLOCK SAMALKHA DISTT. PANIPAT.	01.03.2021 15.03.2021	85.26 LAKH	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9355815400	
11	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING,YAMUNA NAGAR	DEODHAR GRAM PANCHAYAT - LAYING OF DI WATER SUPPLY PIPE LINE IN BALANCE STREETS AND PROVIDING BALANCE FHTC. "LAYING OF WATER SUPPLY DI PIPE LINE, PROVIDING BALANCE FHTC, CONSTRUCTION OF SLUICE VALVE HAUDI COMPLETE IN ALL RESPECT AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO". RS. 29.63 LACS	05.032021 15.03.2021	29.63 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9729265648 ee1ynagar@phedharyana.gov.in	
12	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING,YAMUNA NAGAR	NAGGAL PATTI MILK GRAM PANCHAYAT - LAYING OF DI WATER SUPPLY PIPE LINE IN BALANCE STREETS AND PROVIDING BALANCE FHTC. "LAYING OF WATER SUPPLY DI PIPE LINE, PROVIDING BALANCE FHTC, CONSTRUCTION OF SLUICE VALVE HAUDI COMPLETE IN ALL RESPECT AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO". RS. 22.62 LACS	05.03.2021 15.03.2021	22.62 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9729265648 ee1ynagar@phedharyana.gov.in	
13	HEALTH DEPARTMENT CIVIL SURGEON ROHTAK	E-TENDER NOTICE FOR PURCHASE OF MEDICINES, LAB ITEMS, DENTAL MATERIALS & CONSUMABLES ETC. FOR DISTT. ROHTAK	CLOSING DATE 15.03.2021	4 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01262282430 dhs.csrk@hry.nic.in	
14	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING,YAMUNA NAGAR	BHUD KALAN GRAM PANCHAYAT - LAYING OF DI WATER SUPPLY PIPE LINE IN BALANCE STREETS AND PROVIDING BALANCE FHTC. "LAYING OF WATER SUPPLY DI PIPE LINE, PROVIDING BALANCE FHTC, CONSTRUCTION OF SLUICE VALVE HAUDI COMPLETE IN ALL RESPECT AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO". RS. 19.68 LACS	05.03.2021 15.03.2021	19.68 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01732-266013 ee1ynagar@phedharyana.gov.in	
15	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA,NARNAUL	RATE CONTRACT FOR COMPREHENSIVE MAINTENANCE & SPECIAL REPAIR OF VCB PANELS & LT DISTRIBUTION PANEL OF DIFFERENT MAKES/COMPANY INSTALLED AT ALL P/HOUSES OF M/GARH CANAL UNDER M/GARH WS MECH DIVISION NARNAUL.	CLOSING DATE 08.03.2021		<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9467638473 xen-wsmnl.rrr@gov.in	
16	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA,CHARKHI DADRI	REMODELING OF DRAINAGE X-ING AT K.M. 17.435 OF AULANT DISTY +11 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 15.03.2021	25.50 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	8053659947 xenmgcdk11@gmail.com	
17	DISTT. FOOD CIVIL SUPPLIES & CONSUMER AFFAIR CONTROLLER, AMBALA	MANDI LABOUR AND CARTAGE TENDER WORK-2021-22 + 1 OTHER WORK	05.03.2021 14.03.2021	NIL	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	8901488344, dfscamb@hry.nic.in	
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : <a href="http://www.haryanaeaprocurement.gov.in">www.haryanaeaprocurement.gov.in</a> or <a href="http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in">www.etenders.hry.nic.in</a> RO NO. 2033							

## SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Jaikaran, S/o Rama Shankar Parsad, R/o Samalka Farm House Ramchandra Hajari, Near Narayan Ashram, NH-8, New Delhi, Age: 15 years, Height: 5', Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Build: Medium, wearing School Uniform, Sky Blue colour Dharidar Shirt, Blue Pant and Black Shoes in feet, has been missing from his house since 05.08.2019 at 11:00 AM. In this regard a FIR No. 345/19, dated 06.08.2019 has been registered at P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.  
Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax: 011-24368639  
Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641  
DP/316/SW/2020 Ph. No.: 011-25066105, 25063758

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**(Construction Organization)**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
The Deputy Chief Engineer /Const./ Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under One-Packet system for the following work:

1. Name of work and location	"Design and drawing of test piles, foundation (open/piles), substructure & super structure (PSC/Steel) in connection with construction of 07 nos. Road over Bridges on Jind-Panipat, Jind-Sonepat, Rohtak-Panipat and Delhi-Ambala section of Northern Railway".
2. Completion period of the work	12 (Twelve) Months
3. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 33.21 Lakhs
4. Earnest Money to be deposited	NIL (However Bid Security Declaration is Mandatory as per Annexure-T)
5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on 26.03.2021 on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs on 26.03.2021
6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	Tender document is available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 04.03.2021 to 26.03.2021. Above tenders document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 12.03.2021 to 26.03.2021 All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office

No 484-Acs-Design& Drawing-ROBs/RUBs-CSB Dated : 03.03.2021. 476/21  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one male namely **Unknown S/o Unknown R/o Unknown.** Age about 30-35 years, Height about 5'6", Complexion shallow wearing Grey colour checkdar shirt and Blue colour jeans pant was found dead due to train accident at Railway Track, ITO Bridge, Near Tilak Bridge Railway Station, Delhi on 27.02.2021.

In this regard a D.D. No. 39-A U/s 174 Cr.P.C. dated 27.02.2021 has been registered at PS New Delhi Railway Station, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this deceased person may kindly inform to the undersigned at the address or telephone nos. given below.

SHO  
PS New Delhi Rly. Station, Delhi  
Ph. 011-23744073, 23363622

DP/72/RLY/2021

## PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

**See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Mohan Parmar S/o Sultan Singh Parmar R/o C-79, Bhagat Singh Colony, Balabgarh, Haryana** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 84/15 U/S 408 IPC, P.S. Naraina, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Mohan Parmar** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Mohan Parmar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Mohan Parmar accused of FIR No. 84/15 U/S 408 IPC, P.S. Naraina, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **28.04.2021**.

By Order  
Mr. Himanshu Raman Singh,  
Metropolitan Magistrate, Room No. 20, Main Building,  
DP/351/WD/2021 Patiala House Court, New Delhi







# CELEBRATE LADAKH

The arts and crafts fair at Dilli Haat give a glimpse into the rich culture of the UT

At the second edition of *Enchanting Ladakh*, the annual art and craft fair organised by the Union territory's Department of Industries and Commerce, saw several people from the Dard Aryan tribe of Ladakh. There were stalls displaying Rajasthani *churan*, Madhubani paintings and Lucknowi *chikan* kurtas.

The event was inaugurated by Ladakh L-G Radha Krishna Mathur in the presence of MP Jamiyang Tsering Namgyal, Feroz Ahmed Khan of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Kargil, Tashi Gyalson of LAHDC, Leh, and senior officials from the Union Ministry of Textiles.

Visitors were offered a chance to dress up in the colourful costumes of the Dard Aryans for ₹50 or get pictured with them. Around 76 artisans with their *karigars* from the UT will stay put in Delhi over the next two weeks selling their uniquely crafted handloom and handicraft products such as *pashmi-*



*na shawls* (called *Lena*), clay models, dry fruits, hand-knitted items and seabuckthorn products.

The deputy secretary of Ladakh's Department of Culture,

Tsewang Paljor, who is a part of the organising committee, said, "We have got artisans from all corners of Leh and Kargil, making sure no unique product or art form is left behind."

He shared that the preference was given to rural artisans and craftsmen. All the proceeds will go directly to the artisans. At the inaugural event, Gyalson said that this is the second edition. "We didn't record good sales in the first edition of the festival. We wanted to make sure that the artisans from Ladakh get sufficient exposure on a national level," said he.

# Maharashtra Governor felicitates LIC

The Governor of Maharashtra, Bhagat Singh Koshyari, felicitated LIC of India at Raj Bhavan for the commendable work done during the pandemic. Vipin Anand, Managing Director, LIC, received the honour.

During the pandemic, LIC rendered exceptional services to its policyholders and the society as a whole. Death claims arising due to COVID-19 were treated at par with other causes of death and settled on priority. The insurance company has also ensured that other policy payments like Survival Benefit, Policy Maturity, Annuities and Loans were made to policyholders promptly by crediting the amount into the bank



account registered with LIC. For collection of premium, all digital channels were available 24x7 during the lockdown period to ensure that the policies do not lapse.

For combating the pandemic, the insurance company contributed to the PM Cares Fund and CM Relief Fund in different states. The organisation also contributed to the Tata Memorial Hospital and funded the purchase of ambulance with life saving equipment like ventilator, multi channel patient monitoring system and more.

The employees and agents of LIC also rose to the occasion and stepped in to combat the challenges posed by the pandemic. To encourage continuation of Risk Cover in the current circumstances of high risk, the company has provided another opportunity to policy holders to revive their lapsed policies by launching Special Revival Campaign. Till date more than 20 lakhs policies have been revived under this campaign.

# Delhi Govt GST revenue for Feb is 1,982 crore

The total revenue (GST+VAT) collected by Delhi Government for the month of February 2021 is ₹1,982 crore. Out of which SGST is ₹892.48 crore, IGST settlement is ₹606.23 crore and DVAT is ₹483.29 crore. In the previous month i.e. January 2021, SGST collection was ₹922.18 crore, IGST settlement was ₹562.67 crore and DVAT collection was ₹529.72 crore.

The total tax (GST+VAT) revenue of February is the second highest for the FY 2020-21. The combined monthly revenue has been around ₹2,000 crore consecutively for two months. This is approximately 30 per cent increase over the average monthly tax collection including last month (January). Further quarter wise, average monthly tax collection has shown increase and is around ₹2,000 crore in 4th quarter till now. This is about 12.6 per cent higher than the 3rd quarter (Oct-Dec 2020). This is excluding the compensation amount.

The department has taken various initiatives of sending alert SMS to the registered taxpayers for filing timely returns, issuing GSTR-3A notices to return defaulters by 25th of every month. With these initiatives, there is an improvement in the filing of returns over past five months and Delhi SGST revenues has been above ₹800 crore.

# MV Rao joins as MD & CEO of Central Bank Of India

Matam Venkata Rao has taken over the charge as Managing Director and CEO of Central Bank of India with effect from March 1, 2021. Prior to joining the current assignment, Rao was the Executive Director of Canara Bank for more than three years, where he played a pivotal role in the bank's progress. He is a Post Graduate in Agriculture from Sri Venkateshwara Agriculture College, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. He is a certified Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers.

He joined Allahabad Bank as Agricultural Field Officer in 1988 and worked in various capacities in different geographical areas of the country. As General Manager of Allahabad Bank, he headed bank's important verticals like



Wholesale and Retail Banking. He was also instrumental in launching a transformative project to bring focus on asset-centric banking.

# HUDCO organises DoPT training

Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, inaugurated a week-long in-service training programme- *Financing Urban Infrastructure and Services in India* for All India Service Officers. The Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India, sponsored the programme, which is organised by HUDCO's Research & Training Institute (HSMI). The training is designed to address key issues in financing urban infrastructure and impart necessary skills for successful execution of such projects.

Speaking at the inaugural function, he outlined the contours of urban infrastructure financing and explained how



the Government of India is leveraging its resources to generate more funds from other sources, including private investment in projects. Addressing the participants, Kamran Rizvi, Additional Secretary, MoHUA & CMD, HUDCO, highlighted the Government of India initiatives to tackle challenges in urban infrastructure financing.

# Tata Power-DDL organises power theft awareness session

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL) in collaboration with Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DLSA) organised an interactive awareness session on the consequences of electricity theft and its Penal impact for the consumers.

More than 100 Tata Power-DDL consumers participated in the awareness programme. A



number of topics such as power theft scenarios like tapping the electricity network, cable, service wires; tampering with the meter to abstract energy; damaging or destroying electricity meter; using tampered meter, and using electricity for unsanctioned purpose were discussed at length.

The consumers who attended the session were also informed that electricity theft is a cognizable and non-bailable offense with serious consequences (under the Section 135 of the Electricity Act, 2003). The convict shall be liable to pay theft/penalty bill twice the applicable tariff for a period of 12 months preceding the date of detection of offense and could also face imprisonment for up to three years.



# PFC extends financial support

Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) has extended its financial support for the construction of two-storied School Building at Dr KB Hegdewar School premises in Bambolim, Goa, as part of its CSR activities. The organisation has provided CSR fund of ₹3 crores for the construction of school, which was inaugurated by Dr Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa along with Ravinder Singh Dhillon, CMD, PFC.

The building block com-

prises of classrooms, laboratories, a multi-purpose hall, faculty rooms and washrooms. PFC hopes that this school building will encourage more parents from marginal sections of the local community to come forward and enroll their children into schools. During the last six years, as part of its CSR responsibility, PFC has also supported many unemployed youth of Goa by training them and helping them gain employment.

The signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the VIT-AP School of Business (VSB), VIT-AP University, Alphabeta Inc and Topxight Research Labs was held at VIT-AP University on March 3.

Dr SV Kota Reddy, Vice-chancellor of VIT-AP University said that Alphabeta Inc is a US-based company offering products and services to banks and financial services organisations. He told that FinTech is changing the business models and financial models in a never-seen-before avatar.

"There is a huge demand for qualified FinTech professionals across the globe. Our university addresses this demand through BBA programme with specialisation in FinTech. Our focus is on combining academic rigour with hands-on training. The students will work on real-life projects with latest technologies using the Alphabeta platform. They will get certification after completing the two courses 'FinTech Practice 1 & 2'. By the end of the programme, students will also be able to research on contemporary issues, develop new business/finance models and create patents," he said.

"Students completing BBA Fintech can get into banks and financial services such as Blockchain

# VIT-AP signs MoU



demand are — Personal Finance, Insurance, Wealth Management, Capital Markets, Lending, Billing/Payments, RegTech, Blockchain/Ledger and Cryptography," added he.

Dr S Jeyavelu, Dean, VIT-AP

School of Business shared the business school is offering BBA with specialisations in Business Analytics, Digital Marketing and FinTech. "Each specialisation has a partner who will provide real life practice and industry approved certification. These certifications will enhance the job opportunities of our students. We also have tie-ups with University of Michigan, Dearborn and Arizona State University, where students can study for two years in India and two years in the USA, and get a degree from our partner universities in the USA," he said.

Siva Visveswaran, Co-founder & CTO, Alphabeta Inc, stated that the growth in the FinTech sector will be primarily driven, not by cost or labour arbitrage, but by innovation using new technologies such as AI, Blockchain, 5G and Big Data Analytics.

"It will require an understanding of the financial ecosystem, analytic and quantitative programming skills, and the ability to solve problems using a design thinking approach," said he.

## IN BRIEF

Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) has been at the forefront of leading conversation around health, safety and growth of tourism sector amid the on-going pandemic. ITDC has been instrumental in charting precautionary directives, revival for hospitality sector and generating revenues during these unforeseen circumstances of lockdown and social distancing. Post the ease in travel guidelines and resumption of domestic tourism, ITDC along with other industry leaders participated in a webinar organised by Indo Sri Lanka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ISCCI) to discuss the overview of tourism industry in Sri Lanka. G Kamala Vardhana Rao, Chairman and Managing Director, ITDC, joined the discussion along with other eminent dignitaries including Dr Krishna Kumar, Former Union Minister, Government of India, Lt Gen Rakesh Kumar Loomba, PVSM, AVSM, Engineer Naseer Ahmed, Member, Parliament in Sri Lankan Parliament, Dushan Wickramasuriya, Director Marketing of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and Aamir Ali, ED, Sri Lanka Airlines.



The Regional Office of Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) celebrated the 65th Foundation Day of the corporation with full enthusiasm. The Regional Manager Rajeev Kumar Bansal and General Manager Rajeev Vinaiak congratulated the officials and motivated them to give their best to meet the corporate goals.

Delhi recently witnessed an evening of mystical Sufi music — *Shaa-e-Sufiyana* — hosted by Vandana and Praveen Gupta. The event was graced by the Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Science and Technology Dr Harsh Vardhan; S N Srivastava, Commissioner Police Delhi; Rajesh Aggarwal, Add. Secretary to GOI; Rajesh Aggarwal; DCP Sanjay Bhatia among many others. Soulful performances by Padma Shri Kailash Kher along with Tanura and Sufi dancers kept the audience glued throughout.



If everything goes well, the colour of Hindon river will be changed soon. Regarding this, the DM of Ghaziabad, Dr Ajay Shankar Pandey, held a review meeting with officials of the Municipal Corporation and other related departments regarding cleanliness and other arrangements of the Hindon River. In this meeting, the District Magistrate gave tips for rejuvenation of Hindon River to permanent beautification. He said that now a long-term action plan is being made for permanent beautification of the Hindon River so that the river can remain clean.

—Ashok Nirwan



# Empowering tribals

Under the village connect initiative of TRIFED, the officials have been visiting villages with a significant tribal population across the country. Being present on ground level has made TRIFED's officials aware of some remarkable success stories.

The programmes and initiatives have been implemented by TRIFED for making India self-reliant under the *Atmanirbhar Abhiyan*, with the motto *Go Vocal for Local Go Tribal* — *Mera Van Mera Dhan Mera Udyam*.

One such success story that has come to the fore is in Jawadhu Hills, Tiruvannamalai district, Tamil Nadu. The *Van Dhan* tribal start-ups programme, a component of the The 'Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP' Scheme, has emerged as a major source of employment for the local tribals.

The Malayali tribal people constitute 92.60 per cent of the total population in this block and their mainstay is through the non-timber forest produce and a variety of trees grown on this patta land such as tamarind, jackfruit, coconut, lemon and plantain and gooseberry.

To help these tribals empower themselves and gain better opportunities, the Jawadhu Hills Tribal Farmer Producer Company was formed in 2020. It falls under the State Balanced Growth Fund for value addition of non-timber forest product and agricultural products. The Company has been formed under the Companies Act 2013 (18 of 2013) and is limited by shares. It consists of members of farmers interest groups, producer groups and self-help groups that have been formed at community level.

In less than an year, four manufacturing units have already been set up for the processing and packaging of tamarind, minor millet, and honey and pepper. The units, which are being run by the tribals, have started the production in November 2020. The daily production capacity is one tonne. Up until now, in less than four months, the producer company has sold processed products up to ₹12 lakh. The FPO has already been registered as a seller in the Tribes India marketplace and has been selling nine of its processed produce through the platform, thus, gaining a wider market for its goods.

The Jawadhu Hills producer company has been formed with an aim improve the quality life of tribals. This is an example of how the *Van Dhan* tribal start-up has been successful in improving the livelihoods of the tribals.



# Match of high-stakes

With WTC final place yet to be confirmed, India ready to cook England's goose

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A ruthless India will not take their foot off the pedal while taking England for another “spin ride” in the high-stakes Test series finale starting Thursday, aiming to not just complete another dominant home performance but also realise their World Test Championship dreams.

Virat Kohli's men need at least a draw to maintain the current 2-1 scoreline to qualify for the Lord's final against New Zealand while England at best can heal Tim Paine's January scars by letting Australia a lucky passage to the summit clash with a win.

While a draw always seems a safe option in a game like this but Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri, with their attacking instincts, wouldn't like to play a defensive game which at times can be counter-productive.

India laid a venomous trap on the refurbished Motera and with the pink ball, demolished England inside two days, messing more with their minds than getting any tangible help from the track.

Axar Patel bowled ramrod straight and England had their heads “spinning” from the start. The ploy has worked well for the hosts since the second Test in Chennai.

Both Ajinkya Rahane and Zak Crawley felt that the track for the fourth Test looks “similar” to what they got in the previous two matches but the red ball which skids less off the surface compared to the pink one promises to make it a better contest between the two teams.

This is a Test match where England have little to gain save salvaging a bit of pride in a drawn series while India have everything to lose.

Despite being India's most prolific Test captain in terms of numbers, Kohli would be the first one to admit that he hasn't had the kind of success his illustrious predecessor Mahendra Singh Dhoni had with regards the ICC events.

While this is an ICC event of a different kind, no one more than Kohli would be itching for a course correction and build his own lasting legacy as a captain.



For that, he wouldn't pull back punches. And on another track that helps his ‘snipers’ Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin, Kohli would love to see an ‘inflation’ in their current cumulative tally of 42 wickets for the series.

With Indian spinners accounting for 49 of the 60 English wickets in the first three Tests, it was anybody's guess as how things will pan out in the final Test at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

Kohli wouldn't have any complaints with his spinners, who have delivered what was expected of them, but the batting has left a lot to be desired in the entire series. It's just that England have been worse in their last four innings.

But that is no sound explanation for Indian batsmen's failure to dominate the proceedings in their own backyard.

Rohit Sharma's 296 runs in three games is 120 runs more than second best Ashwin (176 runs), who got a hundred on a difficult Chepauk track.

Save Rohit, none of the Indian batsmen have felt too comfortable till now on the turners on offer.

Kohli, despite two fifties, hasn't

had the best of times while Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara and Shubman Gill have all had only one innings of note over three Test matches.

All Kohli would want is a steady, if not exceptional performance, in

games such as these where a failure can leave ‘many a slip between the cup and lip’.

While there won't be any Jasprit Bumrah for the final Test, one of the finest exponents of bowling on sub-continental tracks, Umesh Yadav, is

4th Test. Day 1  
Live from 9:30am IST  
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

expected to be back in action.

It remains to be seen whether Ishant Sharma or Mohammed Siraj partner him.

For England, poor team selection has also contributed to their shoddy batting where Joe Root (333 runs), with his first Test double hundred, managed to maintain a fair gap (187 runs) between him and the second highest scorer Ben Stokes (146).

Not having a second specialist spinner in Motera, didn't exactly make the team management look too smart, especially after Joe Root scalped a career-best 5 for 8.

Jack Leach (16 wickets) has done his bit but he does have his own set of limitations and with his pace, which is on an average 10km less than Patel, he is unlikely to always trouble the batsman.

But he would again play a significant role on a similar sort of track and may expect Dom Bess for company. Bess was impressive in the opening Test in Chennai but since then, has cooled his heels.

## Virat bats for rotation policy

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India skipper Virat Kohli feels rotation policy is the way forward in the age of bio-bubbles as mental fatigue caused by restrictive quarantines will make it extremely difficult for players to stay hungry.

England have been following a rotation policy in their ongoing tour of India, something that has drawn criticism from legends such as Kevin Pietersen.

Kohli, though, is convinced that as long as players are staying in bio-secure environments, taking intermittent breaks is not a bad idea.

“The kind of systems you have

to follow in the bubble, it can get very monotonous and it is very difficult to keep yourself excited about small things,” Kohli said.

“I feel any format of the game is right place for rotation. No human being can possibly go on for that many number of games throughout of the year. Everyone needs to find windows of having some time off.

“These are the things that need to be considered for as long as you play in the bubble, outside of that it depends on where you stand physically more than mentally. But till the bubble exists, we need to keep the mental factor in the picture as well, because mental fatigue would be a huge, huge factor,” he said.

Kohli said for such a policy to succeed, a solid bench strength is paramount. He was pleased that India do not lack in that aspect.

“Our bench strength becomes way more important because if you have guys hungry, ready, who understand where the game is heading and are brave enough to take on opportunities then you can rotate very easily.

“There are eleven more guys who are ready to win a Test match for India, or One-day or T20 and that is exactly what we are striving towards, we have a clear road-map as to where we need to go in the next four-five years, so that our transition is not difficult at all,” he said.

## Too much noise about spin-friendly tracks: Kohli

Ahmedabad: Stop the noise, tighten up that defence and get on with the game — a combative Indian skipper Virat Kohli said on Wednesday ahead of the fourth Test as he navigated persistent queries on the spin-friendly tracks in the country.

“There is always too much noise and too much conversation about spin tacks,” Kohli said at the pre-match press conference.

“I am sure if our media is in a space to contradict those views or present views which say that it is unfair to criticise only spin tracks, then it will be a balanced conversation.”

Kohli, at the end of the third Test, had blamed the batsmen's technique for their failure on the Motera track. “But the unfortunate bit is everyone plays along with that narrative (spinning tracks) and keeps making it news till the time it is relevant. And then a Test match happens, if you win on Day 4 or 5, no one says anything but if it finishes in two days, everyone pounces on the same issue,” he said.

Kohli cited one of India's losses in New Zealand when the team struggled on a seaming pitch. He recalled how it was the batsmen's technique, and not the track, that came in for scrutiny.

“We lost in New Zealand on day three in 36 overs. I am sure none of our people wrote about the pitch. It was how India played badly in N e w

zealand.

“None of the pitches were criticised, no one came and saw how the pitch was doing, how much the ball was moving and how much grass was there on the pitch,” he said. Kohli said his team has been successful over a period of time for adapting to conditions instead of complaining about them.

“The reason for our success is that we have not cribbed about any pitch we have played on and we will continue to play like that.

“We all need to be honest with ourselves what is the idea behind continuing this narrative and what purpose it serves people who keep continuing the conversation which is one-sided,” he said.

Now that the contest will be played with the red ball, he was asked if the pink ball made it tough for the batsmen, Kohli retorted with a firm no.

“I don't understand why a ball or a pitch, all these things are brought into focus why don't we focus on the fact that batsmen were not skilled enough to play on that pitch properly. It was bizarre display of batting by both the teams.

“...It's not (because) of change in ball-colour. If you make just a ball or a pitch helping the bowler, the focus, then you are not really reading the game properly in my opinion. I don't think the red ball is going to change that whatsoever.”

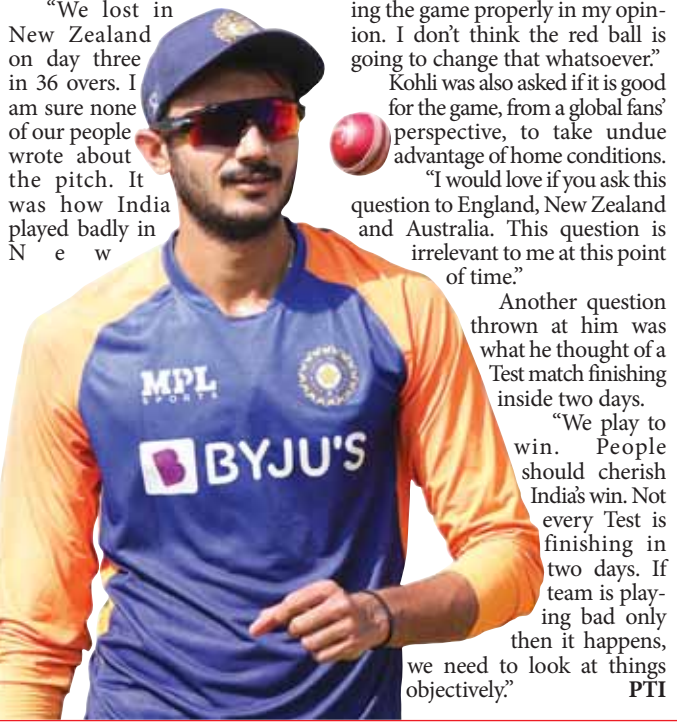
Kohli was also asked if it is good for the game, from a global fans' perspective, to take undue advantage of home conditions.

“I would love if you ask this question to England, New Zealand and Australia. This question is irrelevant to me at this point of time.”

Another question thrown at him was what he thought of a Test match finishing inside two days.

“We play to win. People should cherish India's win. Not every Test is finishing in two days. If team is playing bad only then it happens, we need to look at things objectively.”

PTI



## SINGLES

SANIA-ANDREJA ENTER QATAR SEMIS

DOHA: Indian tennis star Sania Mirza and her Slovenian partner Andreja Klepac sailed into the women's doubles semifinals of the Qatar Open with a straight sets win over their rivals on Wednesday. Sania and Andreja made short work of fourth seeds Anna Blinkova and Gabriela Dabrowski 6-2, 6-0 to reach the last four round. The Indo-Slovenian pair will next play top seeds Czech Republic's Barbora Krejickova and Katerina Siniakova.

MEDVEDEV, ZVEREV EXIT IN 1ST ROUND

ROTTERDAM: Top-seeded Daniil Medvedev's 12 aces weren't enough as the Australian Open runner-up was beaten 7-6 (4), 6-4 by Dusan Lajovic in the first round of the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament on Wednesday. It wasn't the day's only upset in Rotterdam, with third-seeded Alexander Zverev also losing. Alexander Bublik beat Zverev 7-5, 6-3 to set up a second-round meeting with Tommy Paul.

MARY ASSURES MEDAL IN SPANISH TOURNEY

NEW DELHI: Six-time world champion M C Mary Kom (51kg) was assured of a medal in her first competitive outing since qualifying for the Olympics when she entered the semifinal of the Boxam International Tournament in Castellon on Wednesday. The 37-year-old, who had not competed since her Tokyo qualification, defeated Italian Giordana Sorrentino with a split verdict in the quarterfinal stage of the event.

SHARATH OFF TO A FLYING START

DOHA: Ace Indian paddler Achanta Sharath Kamal advanced to the second round of the WTT Contender series with a hard fought 3-2 win over Czech Republic's Pavel Strizek here on Wednesday. Sharath toiled hard before defeating Strizek 17-15, 9-11, 11-6, 8-11, 11-9 in the first round. However, Sathiyan Gnanasekaran, made a first round exit after going down to world No 20 Aruna Quadri 7-11, 4-11, 8-11.

STEYN APOLOGISES FOR IPL REMARK

NEW DELHI: South Africa pace great Dale Steyn on Wednesday apologised for his criticism of the IPL, saying he never intended to “degrade or insult”. The 37-year-old pacer said his statement that cricket is sometimes forgotten amid all the money talk in the IPL was taken out of context. “IPL has been nothing short of amazing in my career, as well as other players too. My words were never intended to be degrading, insulting, or comparing of any leagues. Social media and words out of context can often do that,” Steyn tweeted. “My apologies if this has upset anyone.”

SONAM PULLS OUT OF ROME EVENT

NEW DELHI: A freak head injury while training with Sakshi Malik has forced young wrestler Sonam Malik out of the UWW ranking series event in Rome while Tokyo-bound Deepak Punia and Ravi Dahiya have also pulled out of the tournament for different reasons. The Indian squad left this morning for Rome, where the competition will begin on Thursday with Greco Roman wrestlers taking the mat first.

INDIA PLAY 1-1 DRAW AGAINST GERMANY

KREFELD: The Indian men's hockey team played out a 1-1 draw against Germany in the second game of its four-match tour of Europe. Jarmanpreet opened the scoring for India in the fourth minute, while Martin Haner scored the equaliser for Germany. “This match was a good experience for our players. It was a tough match and the team worked hard. Both teams created opportunities and I believe we will learn a lot from this game,” said India's chief coach Graham Reid. India will next play Great Britain on Saturday. Agencies



Ashton Agar celebrates with Matthew Wade after he takes wicket

@ICC/Twitter

## Agar's 6/30 keeps Oz alive

AFF ■ WELLINGTON

Spinner Ashton Agar produced the best bowling performance in Australia's T20I history in a 64-run win over New Zealand in Wellington on Wednesday.

Agar's match-turning six for 30, including three in one over, derailed a New Zealand fightback as Australia avoided a series loss in the third match.

Under-fire skipper Aaron Finch hit 69, his best T20I score for more than two years, and Glenn Maxwell smashed 70 from 31 balls.

The result leaves the five-match series at 2-1 in New Zealand's favour with two games to go.

Australia finished their 20 overs at 208/4 after losing the toss and being asked to bat. In reply, New Zealand were bundled out for 144 in 17.1 overs thanks to Agar's heroics.

“Once I started to have the courage to toss the ball up a little bit I got something out of it,” he said. “That was a good lesson I can take out of today moving forward.”

Only four players have taken six wickets in a men's T20I before, none of them from Australia.

“It was an all-round performance from them that was outstanding and it's important for us that we move on quickly,” New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said.

## Srikanth, Satwik-Ashwini start Swiss Open with win

PTI ■ BASEL

Top Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth staved off a spirited challenge from compatriot Sameer Verma to make a winning start to his campaign at the Swiss Open Super 300 tournament here on Wednesday.

The fourth seeded Indian, who had claimed the title in 2015, took little over an hour to see off 2018 winner Sameer 18-21, 21-18, 21-11 in a hard-fought men's singles opening round match.

Sourabh Verma also won his first round match against Switzerland's Christian Kirchmayr 21-19, 21-18. He faces eight seed Kunlunvit Vitidsarn next.

However, H S Prannoy made an early exit after losing to France's Mark Calijouw 19-21, 21-9, 17-21 in first round.

On Tuesday night, Indian mixed doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa notched up an upset 21-18, 21-10 win over the world No 8 and second-seeded Indonesian pair of Hafiz Faizal and Gloria Emanuelle Widjaja in the opening round.

The second seeded Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also won their first round men's doubles match against Christopher Grimley and Matthew Grimley of Scotland 21-18, 19-21, 21-16.

Another Indian shuttler, Pranaav Jerry Chopra, who was returning to action after a Covid-19 pandemic break, didn't have a good outing as he along with his mixed doubles partner N Sikki Reddy lost 18-21, 15-21 to the third-seeded English pair of Marcus Ellis and Lauren Smith in 39 minutes.

## Man City equal unbeaten record

AFF ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City equalled their club record of 28 games unbeaten on Tuesday, hammering Wolverhampton 4-1 to open up a gaping 15-point lead at the top of the Premier League.

Pep Guardiola shuffled his pack at the Etihad against the team who did the league double against them last season as he maintained his club's assault on an unprecedented quadruple.

The champions-elect were made to sweat after Conor Coady cancelled out an early own goal from Leander Dendoncker but two late goals from Gabriel Jesus and a Riyad Mahrez strike sealed the three points.

City's 28-match unbeaten run in all competitions equals their run from April to December 2017 and they are red-hot favourites to wrap up a third Premier League title in four years.

The victory was their 21st in a row and their 15th straight Premier League win.

City have not trailed for a single minute in any of their past 19 Premier League games — equalling Arsenal's record set in 1998/99. Guardiola hailed his “fantastic team” but said his only focus is on the next game, against cross-town rivals Manchester United, who are City's nearest challengers.

“After 1-1 we suffered but we created lots of chances in the end,” he told BT Sport.

“Manchester United. That's all we care (about now),” he added. “The champions is Liverpool, the crown belongs to them. We are in the best position right now to take them out and we are going to try but they are the champions.

“There is 33 points to play for. Tomorrow our opponents will play, we have one or two days off and prepare for Manchester United at home.”

## Pitch looks very similar to last Test: Root

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

England skipper Joe Root on Wednesday said the pitch for the fourth Test looks very similar to the one on which his team was decimated in the third game but the visitors have learnt their lessons to be ready for the challenge starting Thursday.

“It's (the pitch) looking very similar...I think the most important thing is that we learn all the lessons from the last two Test matches and make sure we're back for it,” Root said when asked about the raging debate over the pitch in the last Test and how this one was looking.

“It's important that if we get ourselves in a similar position in the first innings, we really make that count. And try and get some scoreboard pressure in the game, you know, early on,” he said on the eve of the game.

Root said the English batsmen will look to build partnerships.

“I think that as batters if you don't score runs, you will always look at yourselves, you'll always try and find ways to improve and we've certainly done that.



England coach Chris Silverwood, center, and players Ben Foakes, Dom Bess, James Anderson and Stuart Broad chat during team's training session

PTI

“We've looked at a couple of dismissals and how we're going to find ways of building big partnerships and getting some significant scores on it if it is a similar surface this time around,” he added.

‘EVERYONE TRAINED’

England skipper Joe Root also revealed that an illness hit the touring party earlier this week but all members of the squad trained ahead of the fourth Test and are available for selection. The English captain

did not specify the nature of the illness but said he has a full squad to choose from.

He also informed that the team has not finalised its 11 or 12 at this stage but made it clear that off-spinner Dom Bess was up for selection.

“...The guys are fit and available for the game tomorrow. That gives us a little more time to name the squad,” Root said.

“So, everyone in that way is as prepared how they would have liked it for the Test match,” he added.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA RURAL WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION ORGANISATION	
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RWS&S DIVISION, ANGUL :AT: TALCHER Al- Baghuabole, Po:- Hatatola, Talcher, Dist.- Angul, Pin- 759100 (Ph. No./ Fax - 06760-240762, E-mail : eervessang@gmail.com) :X:X:X:X:X:X:X:	
<b>National Competitive Bidding through e-procurement</b> <b>Bid Identification No. 14/EE/RWSS/ANGUL/2020-21 Dt. 02.03.2021 (JJM)</b>	
The Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Angul:at:Talcher on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Item Rate/Percentage bid through e-procurement in double/single cover system according to norm of e-Procurement system in on-line mode.	
Nature of Work : Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes.	
1. No. of Tenders	: 2 Nos.
2. Tender Paper Cost	: Rs. 10,000.00
3. Value of work	: Rs. 63.50 Lakhs to Rs. 91.22 Lakhs
4. Class of Contractor	: "B" & "A" Class
5. Date & time of availability of bid document in portal	: 06.03.2021 at 13.00 hours to 12.03.2021 upto 17.00 hours
6. Date & time of seeking tender clarification	: 09.03.2021 upto 17.00 hours
7. Date & time of opening of tender & verification of original document	: 15.03.2021 at 15.00 hours in the office of the Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Angul:at:Talcher
8. Time of completion	: 6 (Six) to 8 (Eight) Calendar Months
9. The bidders have to participate in online bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <a href="https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in">https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in</a>	
10. Corrigendum if any shall be publish in the above website only.	
OIPR-25019/11/0024/2021	
Sd/- Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Angul at Talcher	