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## China blacked out Mumbai in Oct

### Amid LAC face-off, cyberattacks caused massive power outage: NYT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the middle of the stand-off in eastern Ladakh last year, China unleashed coordinated cyberattacks on India's power facilities that may have triggered the massive power outage in Mumbai in October 2020.

The outage led to a county-wide uproar as India's financial capital came to a grinding halt on October 12. Mumbai lifeline local trains were shut, hospitals could not carry life-saving operations and stock exchange remained out of gear for hours.

The cyberattack on power facilities may have been initiated by a group of Chinese hackers, according to a study that first appeared in the *New York Times*.

China-linked threat activity group RedEcho may have planned malware in key power plants in India, said the study.

The Mumbai power cut provides additional evidence suggesting the coordinated targeting of Indian Load Dispatch Centres, said the study.

The study also suggested that some of the country's most sensitive infrastructures are vulnerable to cyberattacks from Chinese hackers.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Power on Monday said there is no impact on operations of Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO) due to any malware attack and that



A Mumbai local train stranded due to a sudden and unplanned power outage

File photo

prompt actions are taken on advisories issued against such threats.

However, the Ministry did not mention about the Mumbai outage in its statement.

Responding on the findings of the study, the Ministry said, "There is no impact on any of the functionalities carried out by POSOCO due to the referred threat. No data breach/data loss has been detected due to these incidents."

The Ministry further said, "Prompt actions are being taken by the CISOs (chief

information security officers) at all these control centres under operation by POSOCO for any incident/advisory received from various agencies like CERT-in, NCIPC, CERT-Trans etc."

The CERT-in (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) is the nodal agency to deal with cyber security threats like hacking and phishing.

The National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIIPC) is national nodal agency for critical information infrastructure

protection.

Confirming the possibility of the cyberattack, Maharashtra Energy Minister Nitin Raut on Monday said the *New York Times* report claiming that the massive power outage in Mumbai last year might have been due to a cyber attack from China was true.

"There is truth in the claims made by the NYT. We had formed three committees to enquire into the matter. We will receive a detailed report this evening from the cyber department," Raut said.

The Maharashtra cyber

department had initially suspected that a malware attack could be responsible for Mumbai's power outage in October last year, which stopped trains and shut down hospitals and the stock exchange for hours. Some areas in suburban central Mumbai suffered outages for almost 10 to 12 hours.

Recorded Future, a US-based company that analyses online digital threats, first detected the flow of malware. Recorded Future's Insight Group observed that from early 2020 there was a large increase in suspected cyberattacks against Indian organisations from Chinese state-sponsored groups, said the report.

From mid-2020, Recorded Future's midpoint collection revealed a steep rise in the use of infrastructure tracked as AXIOMATICAS-YMPTOTE, which encompasses ShadowPad command and control servers, to target a large swathe of India's power sector.

10 distinct Indian power sector organisations, including four of the five regional load dispatch centres responsible for the operation of the power grid through balancing electricity supply and demand, have been identified as targets in a concerted campaign against India's critical infrastructure. Other targets identified include two Indian seaports, the report said.

## Modi takes Covid jab; 1 mn register for shots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Minister for External Affairs (MEA) S Jaishankar received the Covid-19 jab even as more than one million citizens registered themselves on the CoWIN portal till 1 pm on Monday with India opening up vaccination drive for those over 60 years and within the age bracket of 45 to 59 years with specified comorbidities.

AIIMS chief Dr Randeep Guleria said the Prime Minister's move to take the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine on the very first day of the inoculation drive should eliminate any hesitancy from the minds of people about the vaccine.

Vaccines provided to beneficiaries at the Government health facilities will be entire-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi is administered a Covid-19 vaccine in New Delhi on Monday

ly free of cost, while private facilities cannot charge the beneficiary a sum above ₹250 per person per dose (₹150 for vaccines and ₹100 as operational charges).

As the vaccination programme got underway in other places across the country, Venkaiah, Shah, Jaishankar too was vaccinated on Monday.

### Delhi Govt fought pandemic well, says Jain

New Delhi: Delhi fought the coronavirus well and brought down both the positive as well as death rates, said Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain on Monday. There are challenges but the Delhi Government is ready to deal with it, be it vaccination or health infrastructure.

### Not afraid of Covid, won't take jabs: Farmer leaders

New Delhi: Protesting farmer leaders in the vulnerable age group on Monday said they are not afraid of coronavirus and won't take vaccine jabs, even as the second phase of vaccination drive got underway to inoculate senior citizens and those above 45 with underlying medical conditions.

### PM jokes: Politicians thick-skinned, do you plan to use thick needle

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the nurses administering the Covid-19 vaccine to him on Monday whether they were planning to use some special thick needle as politicians are known to be "very thick-skinned", drawing laughter from the medical staff who immediately felt at ease.

## 2022 ASSEMBLY POLLS

### Amarinder inducts Prashant Kishor as principal adviser

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With high hopes to repeat the 2017 success story in Punjab, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh succeeded in inducting India's most-sought-after political strategist Prashant Kishor in his team for his 2022 electoral campaign.

A year before Punjab goes to polls in January-February 2022, the Chief Minister on Monday announced to appoint the election strategist as his "Principal Adviser", giving him the status of a Cabinet Minister.

"Happy to share that @PrashantKishor has joined me as my Principal Adviser. Look forward to working together for the betterment of the people of Punjab!", Capt Amarinder broke the news on Twitter.

At present, Prashant Kishor is heading the Trinamool Congress' campaign for the 2021 West Bengal elections, his growing closeness to the party chief Mamata Banerjee becoming a sore point for many senior leaders in the party.

Kishor had first made a name for himself as a poll strategist for Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his maiden



Happy to share that @PrashantKishor has joined me as my Principal Adviser. Look forward to working together for the betterment of the people of Punjab! CAPT AMARINDER BROKE THE NEWS ON TWITTER

Lok Sabha election in 2014. After that, Capt Amarinder had employed Kishor's Indian Political Action Committee (IPAC) to handle his poll campaign in Punjab in the 2017 Assembly polls — which led to a resounding victory for the Congress in the State.

The Congress in 2017 had stormed to power by bagging 77 seats in the 117-member assembly. In fact, Kishor was the brain behind Punjab Congress programmes like



"Coffee with Captain" and "Punjab Da Captain" to drum up support for the party.

Last year, Kishor had reportedly told Capt Amarinder that he would be "quite happy" in handling the election campaign of the Congress in Punjab for the 2022 Assembly polls.

"Before the Covid-19 (crisis), I met him (Kishor). I did ask him are you interested in handling the Punjab Congress campaign. He was very inter-

ested," the Chief Minister had stated in June 2020.

Prashant Kishor has become a much sought after figure for most non-BJP parties to bolster their chances of winning elections. He has previously handled election campaigns for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, and RJDP's Tejashwi Yadav.

He also assisted Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and joined the JD(U) but quit the party later over differences. He has also worked on various election campaigns for the Congress.

The 2022 Punjab elections will be crucial for all players involved as the months-long protest against the farm laws have had a huge impact on the politics of the State.

The Congress' support for the farmers' protest helped it sweep the recent urban body polls in Punjab — winning six municipal corporations, emerging as the largest party in the seventh and bagging most of the 109 municipal council and nagar panchayats.

## North, east India to be hotter till May: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a harsh winter for the northern States, most parts of the country should brace for a hotter than usual summer this year.

In its summer forecast, India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday forecast that day temperatures are likely to be above normal in north, northeast, parts of east and west India except for south and central India.

Representing the pre-monsoon season for the country. "The maximum temperatures will be as high as 0.86 degrees Celsius higher than normal across northern, eastern, and western India," the IMD said.

However, the pre-monsoon months of March, April,



and May will provide some respite for the other regions, especially south India, where the mercury is likely to dip as much as 0.57 degrees Celsius from its normal. There is a probability forecast for above maximum temperatures in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Gujarat, coastal Maharashtra, Goa and coastal Andhra Pradesh.

and Chhattisgarh, where maximum temperatures will deviate 0.86-degree Celsius from their usual averages.

Last week, Bhubaneswar was the first region to record 40 degrees Celsius anywhere in India this year. North Indian States such as Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh should brace for summer temperatures anywhere from 0.46-degree Celsius to 0.71-degree Celsius above normal.

"During the upcoming hot weather season (March to May), above normal seasonal maximum temperatures are likely over most of the subdivisions of north, northwest and northeast India, a few subdivisions from Eastern and Western parts of Central India and few coastal subdivisions of north peninsular India.

## NH construction touches record 33 km a day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Road, Transport, and Highways Ministry has achieved the enviable target of constructing record 30 km highway a day. The feat could be achieved after the construction of 11,035 kilometres of national highways this fiscal so far.

Union Road Transport, Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said highway building has achieved a new feat, with the construction touching record 30 km a day. "We have built 11,035 km of highways till date this year. This comes to 32.85 km a day of highway building, which is a record," Gadkari said on the sidelines of an event talking to the media.

Gadkari said that at the end of this financial year, the construction could go up to 40 km a day.

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# Punjab Assembly Budget Session starts on stormy note

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

An Opposition party rally gave a new meaning to the idiom "to pull the rug from under" by removing the red carpet in Punjab Vidhan Sabha meant for Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore. And, that was just one incident in the series of protests that marked day one of the budget session.

From move to gear the assembly to setting ablaze the copies of Governor's Address because of the burning issues affecting the State, it all unfolded like a screenplay.

If the Congress rode high on the popularity wave by driving a tractor to the India Gate during the initial days of farmers' protest, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) rode high to the assembly to demand protest note — both inside and outside the House, is also expected to be a stormy affair as it was being held under the shadow of the farmers' agita-

tion. The session is also expected to set a tone for the campaign of the major political parties, including the ruling Congress, which is likely to present a populist budget mainly aimed at fulfilling its remaining promise it made before coming to power.

Right from the morning, the opposition parties like Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and AAP — switched into protest mode. AAP MLAs reached the Vidhan Sabha on bicycles in protest against Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh's "Jale" promises made to the people of the state.

Staging a cycle rally, starting from MLA Hostel and culminating at Vidhan Sabha, AAP legislators shouted slogans against Congress and Capt Amarinder Singh, carrying pamphlets pointing at Congress' unfulfilled promises during past four years.

"From drugs to farm loan-waiver and from post-matric scholarship to the Shagun Yojana, the government failed in fulfilling any of its promises. As today is the start of the budget session, we have started our protest against Capt Amarinder and his Government through this cycle rally and will not stop our protests till people's aspirations and hopes are fulfilled," said the leader of Opposition and AAP MLA from Diba Harpal Singh Cheema.

As the House proceedings

started on the first day of the budget session and the Governor began his address to the House, the members of the AAP and Akali Dal interrupted and started sloganeering also questioning the Governor for "not sending the amendments" passed by the Punjab Vidhan Sabha on the farm Bills to the President.

The House witnessed massive ruckus when SAD MLAs, led by Bikram Singh Majithia, came to the well of the House, shouted slogans and hurled papers in the air as the Governor began his address. They continued raising slogans during the almost 20-minute-long speech of the Governor.

AAP legislators too shouted slogans against the State Government for its alleged inaction in keeping its poll promises.

Later, SAD MLAs also shouted slogans like "Go Back Governor" when Badnore and Capt Amarinder were leaving the assembly.

**AKALI MLAS RAISE SLOGANS OF 'GOVERNOR GO BACK'**

SAD MLAs on Monday raised slogans of "Governor Go Back" for insulting Punjab Vidhan Sabha and for not sending farm Bills to the President. SAD MLAs also raised slogans like "Go Back Governor" when Badnore and Capt Amarinder were leaving the assembly.

The Governor VP Singh Badnore, while reading out his address to the House on the first day of the Budget session, chose to skip the sections relat-



Punjab Vidhan Sabha on Monday paid tributes to eminent personalities, including farmers and farm labourers, who died during the ongoing farmers' agitation, freedom fighters and political personalities besides unsung Covid warriors, who had passed away since the last Session of the Assembly

ed. Majithia also exposed the sham protest of the Punjab Congress and its president Sunil Jakhar saying that it was sheer hypocrisy that the Punjab Congress indulged in a farcical protest against the Governor in the morning and then laid out a red carpet for him to deliver his address to the House which vide jobs in the Congress government.

AAP MLAs, as a sign of protest against the "lies" of the Governor and the Chief Minister since past four years, burnt the copies of the Governor's address saying that it was for the fifth time that the Governor VP Singh Badnore

and Capt Amarinder lied to the people of Punjab. Lashing out at Capt Amarinder, Leader of Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema said that every year, Capt Amarinder writes a speech for the Governor and he just reads it out in the assembly, propagating the lies of the government. "We have been repeatedly saying that Capt Amarinder is a puppet of the Narendra Modi are in cahoots with each other. Today's Governor's address makes it amply clear," he added.

**BANDORE SKIPS HOUSE PAYS TRIBUTES TO 'MARTYRS', COVID VICTIMS, SARDOL SIKANDER, OTHERS**

Punjab Vidhan Sabha on Monday paid tributes to the farmers who died during the ongoing agitation against the Centre's farm laws, unsung COVID warriors, eminent and political personalities, besides freedom fighters, who had passed away since the previous session of the Assembly.

More than 200 farmers, who were part of the agitation against the three farm legislations, had died due to varied reasons, including health issues like heart attack.

Budget session, the House also remembered former Union Agriculture Minister Bha Singh, former ministers MS Gill, Singh Majithia, taking on the Governor, said: "The very fact that the Governor did not read out a portion of the Address which dealt with the agricultural laws indicated that this portion had not been approved by the Central Government." Leader of Opposition and AAP MLA Harpal Singh Cheema also stated that the sections, regarding agriculture and Punjab, were skipped by the Governor Badnore, proving that Capt Amarinder Singh and the Governor were mere puppets of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In addition, the House also paid tributes to the noted Punjabi singer Sardool Sikanter, renowned bhajan singer Narinder Chanchal, and journalist Satbir Singh Dardi. The House also remembered Martyr Naib Subedar Parwinder Singh, freedom fighters Ajit Singh, Jathedar Gopal Singh Tur, Balwant Singh and Harbans Singh.

On the request of Mansa MLA Nazar Singh Manishahia, the House also passed a resolution to the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee president Sunil Jakhar, state ministers, MPs and MLAs were not allowed by the Chandigarh police to go towards the residence of Punjab Governor V P Singh Badnore to start their protest march from the Punjab MLA Hostel here but a heavy police force and a water cannon vehicle was deployed outside. Addressing the protesters, Jakhar slammed the Modi regime, accusing it of "deliberately" letting the prices of essential commodities spiral.

"The BJP has shamelessly exposed itself in its utter failure to govern the country on each front," he alleged. The rise in prices of food and petrol had a deleterious impact that broke the back of those marginalised and poor households, which are finding it difficult to make their ends meet, Jakhar said, questioning the BJP's claim of being a vaccine while its cost was Rs 250 in the said private hospitals.

On the first day of the

## Punjab amends 1914 excise act, making illegal, spurious trade non-bailable offense

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Cabinet on Monday gave its nod to amend the Punjab Excise Act-1914 making the trade of illegal and spurious liquor a non-bailable offence, besides providing compensation to the victims' families by the manufacturer and seller of spurious liquor. The decision came in the wake of hundreds of unfortunate deaths due to hooch tragedy that had hit the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, and Tarn Taran in July 2020.

Aimed at eradicating the menace of illicit or illegal and spurious liquor in the State, the Cabinet decided a systematic change in the Excise Act to introduce deterrent punishment to anyone indulging in such malpractice by adding section 61-A and amendment of section 61 and section 63 and to introduce the Bill in the ongoing Budget session of the Vidhan Sabha.

As per the Cabinet decision, a new section 61-A has been inserted in Punjab Excise Act-1914 making it punishable for anyone who mixes or permits to be mixed with any liquor sold or manufactured or possessed by him any noxious drug or any foreign ingredient likely to cause disability or grievous hurt or death to human beings.

In case of death, such guilty shall be punished with death or imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to Rs 20 lakhs in case of disability or grievous hurt, the guilty would be punished with imprisonment for at least six years extendable up to life imprisonment, and with fine which may extend to Rs 10 lakhs.

Likewise, any other consequential injury is caused to a

person, the guilty shall be punished with the imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year and fine which may extend to Rs five lakh, and in case of no injury caused to a person, the guilty shall be punished with the imprisonment which may extend to six months and fine which may extend to Rs two lakh.

The Cabinet also made provision by amending Excise Act to provide compensation to the victims' families by the manufacturer and seller of spurious liquor.

**RESTRUCTURING OF FOUR KEY DEPT'S**

To bring far more efficiency and streamline the functioning in working, the Punjab Cabinet on Monday approved the restructuring plans of four government departments: Excise and Taxation; Town and Country Planning; Medical Education and Research; and Rural Development and Panchayats. With an aim to achieve more revenue collections, the Cabinet approved the creation of 110 new posts in the Taxation Commissionerate, and 59 new posts in Excise Commissionerate of the Excise and Taxation Department.

Notably, the implementation of GST has brought services under the ambit of the Department, and added a new feature of Audit, which involves examination of records, returns, and other documents maintained by GST registered persons. It also ensured correctness of turnover declared, taxes paid, refund claimed, input tax credit availed and assesses other compliances under GST Act, which are to be checked by an authorized officer.

Resultantly, the number of dealers registered has also

increased from 2.50 lakh to 3.55 lakh, thus increasing the workload, and, therefore, a large number of personnel required to be set up in Taxation Commissionerate to carry out these additional functions effectively.

The Cabinet also gave a go-ahead to the restructuring of the Directorate of Town and Country Planning. Now, there will be a separate position of Director, Town and Country Planning, who will be in charge of Planning alongwith Licensing, Regulatory and Enforcement functions in the State, which was earlier under the Chief Administrators.

With the restructuring of Government Medical Colleges of Patiala and Amritsar, along with attached hospitals besides Government Nursing Colleges and Government Dental Colleges of Patiala and Amritsar and attached Hospitals and Government Ayurvedic College, Hospital or Pharmacy, Patiala, as many as 1154 new posts of various categories for recruitment have been created while 606 posts have been surrendered or abolished under the restructuring.

To further streamline functioning of Rural Development and Panchayats Department, the Cabinet also accorded approval for its restructuring and recruitment plan against vacant posts. The step would be instrumental in ensuring smooth and effective implementation of government policies and schemes in the State.

**AMENDMENTS IN PUNJAB CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES ACT, 1961**

To streamline the functioning of cooperative Societies, the Cabinet gave approval to amend the Punjab Cooperative Societies Act,

1961. Spokesperson said that as the Act came into existence in 1961, some inadequacies have come to light in the past several years which have created practical difficulties for the field offices in the State.

As per the amendments, registration fees may be charged from the applicants for registration, imposed restriction on membership of an insured bank as a consequence under the order of RBI, restricts individual shareholding of a member in case of Urban Co-operative Bank (UCB) to maximum five percent of the share capital; giving more time to office bearers for effecting recovery of loans, among others.

**TRANSFER OF 507 VACANT POSTS FROM RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO HEALTH DEPT**

To achieve better operational efficiency through effective delivery of healthcare services to the people in the state, the Cabinet approved transfer of 507 vacant posts of Rural Medical Officers (RMOs) along with other posts of contractual para-medical and Class-IV of the Subsidiary Health Centre from the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat back to the Health and Family Welfare.

"In addition, the currently working RMOs of the Rural Development and Panchayats Department, who are desirous of merger in the Health and Family Welfare Department, shall be allowed to do so with the condition that their seniority shall be counted from the date of their joining in the Health and Family Welfare Department and not from the date of their regularization in the Rural

Development and Panchayats Department," said the spokesperson adding that all the employees shall be transferred to them from the date of their joining in the Health Department. The RMOs shall be merged only after prior written consent on these terms and conditions.

**JOBS TO FAMILY MEMBERS/HEIRS OF 34 VICTIMS OF AMRITSAR RAIL TRAGEDY**

Punjab Cabinet on Monday gave approval to provide jobs to the family members or institutions to the family members or heirs of 34 deceased of Amritsar rail tragedy as per their qualifications by relaxing the existing norms as a special case. A rural train accident occurred on October 19, 2018, at Jaura Phatak in Amritsar district on the day of Dussehra festival, in which 58 persons had died and 71 persons had got injured.

**TOTAL PUNJAB INFRASTRUCTURE BILL IN ONGOING SESSION**

To boost the pace of infrastructure development in the state by levying special ID fee, the Cabinet also gave its approval to introduce Punjab Infrastructure (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2021, in the ongoing Budget Session.

For the purpose, an amendment bill was introduced in the existing provision by inserting a new section, according to which the State Government may impose Special ID Fee for which a special head shall be created under which the accrued fee shall be collected and deposited to the Development Fund created under the provisions.

## Alkali leaders face water cannons, court arrest in protest against Cong Govt

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

SAD's workers and senior leaders, collected under the slogan of the party chief Sukhbir, who also courted arrest in solidarity with the farmers, were arrested by the police. The 'Lok Lehar' against the Congress Govt from March 12 during the course of which rallies will be held in all constituencies.

The Chief Minister has not only insulted the people but also the holy Gufa Sahib by taking a false oath that he would implement a complete farm loan waiver once voted to power besides a host of other promises including eradicating drugs within four weeks, ensuring jobs to each household, giving unemployment allowance of ₹2,500 to youth, increasing the old age pension to ₹2,500 per month and increasing the Shagun outlay to ₹51,000 besides providing free houses to the houseless," said Sukhbir while addressing the gathering at Chandigarh's Sector 25 rally ground.

water for all 12,000 villages in the State.

Sukhbir, who also courted arrest in solidarity with the farmers, were arrested by the police. The 'Lok Lehar' against the Congress Govt from March 12 during the course of which rallies will be held in all constituencies.

The Chief Minister has not only insulted the people but also the holy Gufa Sahib by taking a false oath that he would implement a complete farm loan waiver once voted to power besides a host of other promises including eradicating drugs within four weeks, ensuring jobs to each household, giving unemployment allowance of ₹2,500 to youth, increasing the old age pension to ₹2,500 per month and increasing the Shagun outlay to ₹51,000 besides providing free houses to the houseless," said Sukhbir while addressing the gathering at Chandigarh's Sector 25 rally ground.

## No tussle with farmers, Govt is committed to protecting their interests and welfare, says Haryana CM

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

With the farmers agitating against three central laws on agriculture, Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday said that there is no tussle with the farmers and the State Govt is committed to protecting their interests and welfare. "The Govt has taken various initiatives to improve the income of people engaged in the farm sector," he said, adding that the Government is committed to protect the interests of farmers through policies and intentions.

Talking to reporters at his residence in Chandigarh, Khattar said that the Government has been making efforts to double farmers' income and strengthen the agriculture sector.

On no sign of any agreement between the Government

and the protesting farmers over farm laws and whether the government is making any effort to resume talks, the chief minister said, "Our nation has a very strong democratic setup. This allows everyone to express his or her view. Even today, whenever their response comes, the government is always ready to hold talks." Asked about the State's current economic condition, the CM said that in wake of the situation arising from the coronavirus pandemic, Haryana has suffered a revenue loss of nearly ₹7,000 crore in the financial year 2020-21.

## Third phase of Covid-19 vaccine begins in Chandigarh

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The first day of the third phase of Covid-19 vaccination kicked off in the union territory of Chandigarh on Monday with Punjab Governor and UT Administrator VP Singh Badnore among other prominent citizens receiving the first dose of vaccine.

A total of 493 beneficiaries above 60 years of age and 63 beneficiaries above 45 years with co-morbidities were inoculated on Monday. Prominent citizens above 60 years of age included UT Administrator VP Singh Badnore, his wife Alka Singh, Punjab ex-DGP NPS Aulakh, UP ex-DGP Harpal Singh Gill, Rajasthan ex-DGP Amarjot Singh Gill, Punjab ex-DGP PG Dogra, Punjab former Chief Secretary Sarvesh Kaushal, former UT Home Secretary Krishan Mohan among others.

A total of 1721 people



Punjab Governor and Administrator, UT, Chandigarh, VP Singh Badnore taking the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine at Sector 7 Dispensary in Chandigarh on Monday

were inoculated at 18 sites on Monday. This included 147 healthcare workers and 831 frontline workers, who got their first dose of vaccination, 187 HCWs who got second dose of vaccination, 493 people above 60 years of age and 63 people between the age group of 45-60 years with co-morbidities.

There were a few photos in the COWIN portal initially which was duly rectified at the backend and the processes got smoother as the day progressed, said Dr Amandeep Kang, Director Health Services, Chandigarh. Dr Kang said that the five private hospitals who have participated in the vaccination drive on Monday also

## Administrator Badnore among others takes first dose of vaccine

saw a good turnout of beneficiaries for the vaccine. The beneficiaries at most of the places availed the facility on spot registration.

The number of private hospitals will be upgraded from five to nine hospitals from Tuesday, she added.

Till now, 11083 healthcare workers against the target of 24516, accounting for an achievement rate of 45.21% and 8796 (37.30%) frontline workers against the target of 23584 have received the first dose of vaccination in the city. Apart from the public hospitals, the second dose of the vaccination. Notably, the Central Government has allowed the vaccination of citizens above 60 years and above and those above 45 years with co-morbidities during the third phase of vaccination drive.

The nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive was launched on January 16.

# Opp sees plot in PM taking Covid shot

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Politics erupted over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vaccination on Monday as the Opposition accused him of using the occasion for electoral gains while the BJP sought the nation to "speak in one voice" in the battle against coronavirus and sought the Opposition to not to come up with "wild theories" and politicise the vaccination drive.

Politicising Modi getting his first vaccine dose in the second-phase scheduled for senior citizens, Trinamool Congress MP Shantanu Sen claimed that the Prime Minister's jab was "publicity" adding, "Photograph is more important than protocol".

Commenting on Modi's "changed appearance", he claimed that the PM's "newly grown Rabinidrik beard" would have become invisible if he had worn a mask. Added, "God save India", the Trinamool MP added that Mamata Banerjee was "saving Bengal".

Several other politicians like Congress's Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and SP's Akhilesh

Yadav have politicised vaccination as a BJP "stunt".

Chowdhury said, "In PM's inoculation visuals, there was gamcha of Assam, and nurses who vaccinated him were from Kerala and Puducherry".

Kicking off part-2 of India's Covid vaccination programme, Prime Minister Modi received his first jab of the vaccine on Monday at All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, sporting an Assamese Gamcha.

He got a jab by nurses—Sister Niveda & sister Rosamma—hailing from Puducherry and Tamil Nadu respectively.

The event soon turned into political name calling in the backdrop of high pitch poll campaigns in five States, including Bengal, Assam and Tamil Nadu and Kerala, going for Assembly elections and will keep doing so in the next month.

BJP hits back with Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad saying the need to speak in one voice to battle-out coronavirus pandemic as BJP president JP Nadra deman-

ed that the Opposition should stop resorting to "wild theories" to criticise Indian achievement.

Prasad said Modi had worn Assamese gamcha and Mundu last year when he had appealed to light a lamp to fight corona. "Than there were no elections", Prasad said and taking a swipe at suggested to Chowdhury to "wear all Bengali symbols when he gets himself vaccinated".

BJP chief said that the Opposition party comes up with "wild theories" to ridicule India's achievements.

"Congress and the Opposition is not proud of anything Indian. They should introspect about how their lies on the COVID-19 vaccine will be used by vested interest groups for their own agenda. People of India have been rejecting such politics and will keep doing so in the future", Nadra tweeted.

Union aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri also took a swipe at the opposition leaders, saying they are on a quest for permanent political marginalisation.

# Maha, Kerala, 3 others lead Covid surge in country



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five States—Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat—continue to cause serious concern for the Centre by showing a consistent surge in new Covid-19 cases. Put together, they contributed 84 per cent of the 15,510 fresh infections reported in a day on Monday.

The Union Health Ministry said on Monday, India's total number of active Covid-19 cases was recorded at 1,68,627, comprising 1.52 per cent of the total infections.

Maharashtra alone accounts for 46.39 per cent of India's total active cases, followed by Kerala with 29.49 per cent. "A total of 15 states and union territories have registered more than 1,000 active

cases. Kerala and Maharashtra are the two states with over 10,000 active cases, while the rest of the 13 States and UTs have between 1,000-10,000 active cases", the Ministry said. The total number of cases with the UK, South Africa and Brazil variants of SARS-CoV-2 in the country as on date has reached 213, the Ministry said. A total 15,510 new cases were registered in a span of 24 hours. Maharashtra continues to report the highest daily new cases at 8,293, followed by Kerala with 3,254 cases while Punjab has reported 579 new cases.

The Centre is continuously engaging with the states and union territories manifesting higher number of active cases and those reporting a rise in the daily new Covid-19 cases.



States and UTs have been advised to maintain a continued rigorous vigil for containing the spread of COVID-19. Need for effective testing, comprehensive tracking, prompt isolation of positive cases and quick quarantine of close con-

tacts are strongly emphasised, the Ministry said.

"Eight states are displaying an upward trajectory in the daily new cases", it underlined. So far, a total of 1,43,01,266 vaccine doses have been administered to beneficiaries

**The total number of cases with the UK, South Africa and Brazil variants of SARS-CoV-2 in the country as on date has reached 213**

through 2,92,312 sessions. These include the first dose to 66,69,985 healthcare workers, second dose to 24,56,191 healthcare workers and 15,75,090 frontline workers who have taken their first dose.

"The next phase of COVID-19 vaccination has commenced from today for those who are over 60 years of age and for people aged 45 and above with specified comorbid conditions."

"A simplified process of registration has been set up, whereby potential beneficiaries can have the option of advance self-registration, on-site registration or facilitated cohort registration", the ministry said.

The top states account for 86.79 per cent of the new deaths. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties of 62 deaths. Kerala followed with 15 daily deaths and Punjab has reported seven fatalities in a span of 24 hours.

A total of 20 States and UTs have not reported any Covid-19 deaths in the last 24 hours.

# FPOs will prevent rural migration to cities: Tomar



Union Ministers of State for Agriculture & Farmer Welfare Parshottam Rupala and Kalish Choudhary giving the FPO Registration Certificate to a woman FPO on the occasion of anniversary of the Central Government Scheme FPO of the Union Ministry of Agriculture. Union Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Agrawal and Additional Secretary Agriculture Dr Akhilesh Likhri were also present on the occasion on Monday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Farmer Processing Organisation (FPO) "Krishak Utpadak Sangathan Evam Audyayik Viparan Sahkari Samiti" from Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi, Prime Minister's Parliamentary Constituency has become the country's first agricultural entity to be registered under the ambit of the Cooperative Societies Act.

Generally, the FPOs are registered under the Companies Act. But, this is the first time that such an entity has been established under the Cooperative Societies Act as the part of the Government's Central Sector Scheme titled "Formation and Promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)" to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs. More FPOs are on the way under the scheme.

One of the implementing agencies of the scheme, the National Cooperative Development Cooperation (NCDC), an apex finance entity under the Union Agriculture Ministry, will handhold the Varanasi-based FPO for next five years in helping it setting up the multi-service center

facilities for mushroom production, cultivation while the green chilli drying system will be equipped with dryers with vacuum nitrogen drying capacities. It was registered on February 26, 2021, as part of the "Formation and Promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)" scheme which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 29, last year.

It aims at bringing small and marginal farmers on a bigger platform and cash in by to help them become "atmanirbhar" (self-reliant) in the long run.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the scheme on Monday, Union Agriculture Minister, Narendra Singh Tomar tweeted that FPOs will help to improve the rural economy and create employment opportunities for rural sector in the villages itself and this will prevent migration to cities. Later at an event online, Parshottam Rupala, Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare termed the FPOs' scheme as a game changer in the country's agriculture ecosystem and said that FPOs will make farming more viable

by aggregating land."

Formation of FPOs is not just a scheme but it is a plan to give a new dimension to Indian Agriculture in a new India. We will ensure that each FPO is a role model in itself," he said at the event which was also attended by Kalish Choudhary, Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare besides senior officials from the concerned department and implementing agencies like NABARD.

Sanjay Agrawal, Union Agriculture Secretary said that in each block there should be an FPO which acts as catalyst for institutional infrastructure while Sandeep Nayak, Managing Director of the NCDC, said that the farmers in the country are keen to set up FPOs as it will help them boost their income and make them self-sustaining.

"This is just the beginning", he said adding that more than 2200 FPOs produce clusters have been allocated for the formation of FPOs in the current year. "The Government aims at transforming agriculture into a sustainable enterprise through FPOs," Nayak said.

# 6th Swachh Survekshan launched to foster healthy contest among cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With 2,000 assessors who will go on the field to assess the performance of cities this time, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MHUA) on Monday launched the 6th Swachh Survekshan (SS) 2021, which is dubbed as the world largest cleanliness drive.

Launching the sixth edition of the SS 2021, Durga Shankar Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs said that this year Swachh Survekshan will get over 3 crore citizen feedback through various platforms and focus would be on parameters pertaining to wastewater treatment and reuse along with local sludge management, the crucial issues of legacy waste management and remediation of landfills have also been brought to the fore in this edition of Survekshan.

Every year, the on-field assessment for SS takes place between January 4-31. However, the same had been delayed by two months due to the COVID pandemic and will now be conducted between 1-28 March 2021. The second phase of SBM-U for a period of 5 years (2021-26) has recently been announced in the Union Budget of 2021.

Speaking at the webinar, Mishra said, "SS has led to a spirit of healthy competition among cities and towns of India. The journey that started in 2016 with only 73 cities with million plus population has grown manifold, with 434 cities in 2017, 4,203 cities in 2018, 4,237 cities in 2019 and 4,242 cities in SS 2020, including 62 Garment Producer Cities have been regularly finding their data, updating their progress in the MIS along with running several citizen centric campaigns in preparation of SS 2021. Today, we are happy to formally kick-off the survey as more than 2,000 assessors get ready to go on the field to assess the performance of cities".

The Swachh Survekshan was introduced by MoHUA in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve status of urban sanitation while



encouraging large scale citizen participation. Since its launch in 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) has made significant progress in the area of both waste management and management. 4,360 Urban ULBs have been declared ODF, 2158 cities certified ODF+ and 551 cities certified ODF++.

Moreover, 66 lakhs individual household toilets and over 6 lakhs community/public toilets have been constructed/are under construction. Additionally, nearly 60,000 toilets across 2,900+ cities have been made live on Google Maps. In the area of solid waste management, 97% of wards have 100% door-to-door collection while 68% of the total waste generated is being processed. A total of six cities have been certified 5 Star, 86 as 3 star and 65 as 1 star under the Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free Cities.

The next phase of the Mission will focus extensively on aspects of sustainable sanitation including faecal sludge and wastewater management, along with holistic solid waste management with a focus on curbing and ultimately eliminating the use of single-use plastic (SUP), reducing air pollution through effective management of construction & demolition waste, and reducing soil pollution through remediation of legacy dumpsites.

# SC denies relief to married Govt servant accused of rape

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

"Are you willing to marry her," was the question posed to a public servant, who is accused of repeatedly raping a minor girl but when the Supreme Court on Monday was told that he is already married he was asked to seek regular bail from the court concerned.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde was hearing a plea filed by the accused who is serving as a technician in Maharashtra State Electricity Production Company Ltd and has moved the apex court against the Bombay High Court February 5 order which had cancelled the bail but she had refused and now he was married to someone else.

When the hearing commenced, the bench also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, asked the accused "Are you willing to marry her then we can consider it, otherwise you will go to jail," observed the bench adding "We are not forcing



you to marry."

After taking instructions on the query posed by the bench, the counsel appearing for the petitioner, said the accused was initially willing to marry the girl but she had refused and now he was married to someone else.

As the counsel said that the accused is a public servant, the bench said, "You should have thought this before seducing and raping the girl. You knew that you are a government servant". The counsel said that charges in the case are yet to be framed.

"You apply for regular bail. We will stay arrest," the bench said.

The apex court granted the accused protection from arrest for four weeks.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by the accused against the Bombay High Court's February 5 order cancelling the anticipatory bail granted to him by the trial court in January last year.

He has also been accused of offences punishable under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

# Plea in SC against EC call to hold poll in Bengal in 8 phases



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A plea challenging the Election Commission's decision to conduct Assembly elections over eight phases in West Bengal was filed in the Supreme Court on Monday.

The plea, filed by lawyer M L Sharma, seeks the apex court's direction to the poll panel to stop it from conducting eight-phase elections in the State as it violates Article 14 (right to life) and Article 21 (right to life) of the Constitution.

On February 26, the Election Commission announced the schedule for assembly elections to be held in West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and in Puducherry. While the Trinamool Congress Party-led West Bengal will have elections over eight rounds from March 27-April 29, polling in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry will be held in one phase on April 6 and in Assam over three phases.

The plea, which may come up for hearing in few days, also seeks a direction to the CBI to register an FIR into the alleged chanting of religious slogans during electioneering in West Bengal.

# Coal mining: SC to deal with legal issue if intra-court appeal can be filed in HC in criminal cases

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, hearing an appeal against a Calcutta High Court order allowing CBI probe into an alleged coal mining and transportation case, Monday said it would first examine a legal issue whether an intra-court appeal can be entertained by the high court in a criminal matter against an order of a single judge bench.

A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud, meanwhile, granted time to CBI to file its response to the appeal of Anup Majee, the director of a company engaged in purchase and sale of the dry fuel, which is an accused in a case of alleged illegal coal trading in the Asansol-Raniganj belt of West Bengal.

Majee, in his plea, has challenged the Calcutta High Court order which allowed the CBI to investigate a case of alleged illegal mining and transportation of coal in West Bengal without the State's consent.

In the proceedings conducted through video conferencing, the bench, also comprising Justice M R Shah, asked the CBI to file a petition in which it was held that a letter patent appeal (LPA), also known as intra-court appeal, would lie in the high court against the order of a single judge bench in a criminal case.

"We are concerned with the issue of maintainability of LPA before the division bench. We are not concerned with subsequent development," the bench

said.

It adjourned the hearing on Majee's plea to March 10 after accepting the request of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta who was representing the CBI. Earlier, the bench had issued notices to Centre and CBI and had sought their response by March 10 on the plea which claimed that the central probe agency lacked jurisdiction to lodge an FIR in the case after the withdrawal of general consent by the West Bengal Government in 2018.

It, however, had refused to grant protection to Majee. Senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for West Bengal government, had said that he supported the contention of Majee on the question of law as there was no consent given to the CBI to investigate the case after West Bengal withdrew its general consent.

On February 12, a division bench of the Calcutta High Court had stayed a single bench order that had restricted a CBI investigation into alleged illegal mining and transportation of coal to just "railway areas" of the state and rejected the plea of Majee for grant of protection from any coercive action against him.

It has been observed that if the process of investigation is stalled at this stage, material evidence which may have to be collected can get lost and the accused may be able to achieve the objective for which "frivolous litigation" has been filed.

# NIA arrests four drug traffickers from Srinagar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Monday arrested four alleged drug traffickers from Srinagar in connection with the Handwara Narco-Terrorism Case.

The arrested accused are Altaf Ahmed Shah (Dangherpora), Kheer Bhawani, Ganderbal, Jammu and Kashmir) Showkat Ahmad Parray (Parray Mohalla, Wangipora Sumbal, Bandipora, J&K), Mudisar Ahmad Dar (Wanduna, Shopian, J & K) and Amin

Allaie alias Hilar Mir (Near Petrol Pump, Shan-e-Kashmir National Highway Sangam, Bijbehara, Anantnag, J&K).

The case relates to seizure of 21 kg of heroin and cash amount of Rs 1,35,89,850 from the members of a drugs syndicate operating in the Valley.

The case was initially registered as FIR No. 183/2020 dated June 11, 2020 at Handwara in Kupwara district wherein during checking of vehicles at Kairo Bridge, Handwara, accused Abdul



Momin Peer's Hyundai Creta vehicle was intercepted by police at a naka and during

search Rs 20 lakhs along with two kg heroin was recovered and seized.

# Yogi: Jewar airport Govt's top priority

**Lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Monday that his Government has accorded top priority to the development of the Jewar International Airport in Noida.

He said that despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the speed, transparency and execution as per the schedule of this project has demonstrated the new work culture of the state. It has been decided to increase the number of airstrips from two to six at this airport, he informed.

The Chief Minister also appreciated the work of the Zurich Airport International AG, a developer of Jewar airport, and assured their representatives of all possible help to be provided by the government.

International Airport Private Limited and Noida International Airport Limited, constituted by Zurich Airport International AG, the chosen developer for Jewar airport.

The Chief Minister recalled that the Jewar airport project was lying pending with the previous governments for almost 30 years.

"We decided in March 2017 that this project would be completed on priority in the interest of the country and the state," he said.

In 2017, Lucknow and Varanasi had the only operational airports in the state. In just three years, five airports, including in Gorakhpur, Hindon, Agra, Prayagraj and now Bareilly, have become operational.

There were only two international airports in the country's largest state (Lucknow and Varanasi), but now there will be five international air-

ports with the addition of Jewar, Kushinagar and Ayodhya to the list.

The Chief Minister said that he was of the view that good connectivity expedites the development process. "The process of operationalisation of 21 airports and seven runways is underway. The effort is to make Uttar Pradesh soar in the field of civil aviation," he stated.

Reviewing the displacement and subsequent rehabilitation of the families affected by the construction of Jewar airport, the Chief Minister said that dialogue should be established with these families so that they should have a better displacement mechanism.

He directed the concerned officials to address this issue within one week, saying that the process of allotment of plots to the displaced population should be conducted with complete transparency. **IAN S**

## Around 64% voting in local body polls in Gujarat; counting today

**Gandhinagar:** There was an average of around 64 per cent polling in the local body elections for municipalities, district and taluka panchayats in Gujarat on Sunday. Voting for 8,473 seats in municipalities, 980 in district panchayats and 4,773 in taluka panchayats took place across 36,008 booths. The counting of votes will take place on March 2.

According to the State Election Commission (SEC), around 64 per cent voter turnout was recorded in the elections to Gujarat's 81 municipalities, 31 district panchayats and 231 taluka panchayats which were held in a largely peaceful manner.

As per the figures provided by the State Election Commission (SEC), there was 58.82 per cent voter turnout in 81 municipalities, 65.80 per cent in 31 district panchayats, and 66.60 per cent in 231 taluka panchayats.

The average voting percentage across all these local bodies together was around 63.74 per cent.

The SEC officials said voting for 8,473 seats, including 720 in 81 municipalities, 31 district panchayats, 4,773 in 231 taluka panchayats took place across 36,008 booths.

Out of them, 237 seats remained unopposed, and no forms were filled for two seats in taluka panchayats.

The elections were held on a total 8,235 seats for which the BJP had fielded 8,161 candidates, Congress 7,778, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) 2,090, among others, said the SEC.

Besides these, by-elections for two seats in taluka panchayats and 24 seats in municipalities, was also held on Sunday, where there was 47.63 per cent voter turnout in municipality by-elections and 68.65 per cent in taluka panchayats by-elections.

Gujarat BJP president CR Paati led a road show in Navsari, while Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Pooja Patel, took part in a motorcycle rally in Amreli. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief minister Arvind Kejriwal took part in a road show in Surat on the last day of campaigning on Friday.

For the first time, the All India Majlis-e-Itehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) has fielded candidates in minority-dominated seats in Godhra, Modasa and Bharuch municipalities.

According to the Director General of Police Ashish Bhatia, over 40,000 policemen along with 54,000 Home Guards were deployed to ensure incident-free voting on Sunday. **IAN S**

## Interfaith couple's 'marriage' put on hold endlessly

**IAN S ■ BAREILLY**

Four months ago, a 27-year-old Muslim man had allegedly 'eloped' with a girl from another faith to get married, which had created a lot of sensation. The man was later caught and jailed for over a month.

The couple has since been waiting for permission from the sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) to get 'legally' married but has been asked to wait for another month.

The couple has an Allahabad high court order, giving them freedom to get married and an exemption from notice period under special circumstances by the marriage officer.

SDM Sadar area, Vishu Rajan said, "The court order, giving them freedom to get married, but they would have to wait for a police report to ensure there is no law-and-order issue. The couple had come with their friends who agreed to sign as witnesses on Saturday but the girl's family is still against the marriage."

The SDM said that the couple represented themselves personally, as well as through their legal counsels, for the application of marriage under the special act. They produced an Allahabad high court order, which stated that days of notice period can be exempted under special circumstances by the marriage officer.

"The judgement favours them. However, we are seeking a verification report on 12 points to ensure that neither of the persons is already married, their actual place of residence, possibility of law-and-order issue, etc. Police report is crucial here as well. This process may take less than 30 days to complete and the permission would be granted to the couple for marriage after that," said the SDM.

## Youth held for raping 3-yr-old girl in Bihar

**Patna:** A 20-year-old youth has been arrested by the Bihar police for allegedly raping a three-year-old girl in the state's Jamui district on Monday.

The accused has been identified as Hareram Manjhi, who is a native of Dhamana village near the Aliganj police station in Jamui district.

He had come to Khatuana village to attend the marriage of his cousin brother. Manjhi spotted the victim who was playing outside her house at nearly 9 a.m. He lifted her and took her to a nearby deserted house and raped her. The victim's screams were not heard by anybody due to the loud music being played at the marriage venue nearby.

After committing the crime, Manjhi tried to flee from the village but the vil-

**SP of Jamui district said, "We have registered an FIR under the POCSO Act and arrested the accused. He has been sent to judicial custody."**

lagers became suspicious and caught him.

They found the girl lying in the deserted house, bleeding profusely. Following this, the 25 days yatra being organised by the Gramodaya Chamber of Commerce and Technology will cover 5000 km before concluding in Haridwar.

"Started from Kanyakumari, the Rath Yatra will travel via all four corners of the country, the yatra is held, including Nasik, Ujjain, and Prayagraj and reach Delhi and later to Haridwar," said Haridwar-based Divya Prema Service Mission president Ashish Gautam. **PNS**

## Kumbh Sandesh Yatra from Kanyakumari to Haridwar starts

**Kanyakumari:** Kumbh Sandesh Yatra, aimed at spreading the message on the significance of Kumbh Mela, started from Vivekananda Centre in Kanyakumari on Saturday. The yatra was flagged off by Swami Chaitanyananand Maharaj, Vivekananda Ashramam, Kanyakumari and Pongulati Sudhakar Reddy, BJP national co-ordinator, Tamil Nadu.

The 25 days yatra being organised by the Gramodaya Chamber of Commerce and Technology will cover 5000 km before concluding in Haridwar.

"Started from Kanyakumari, the Rath Yatra will travel via all four corners of the country, the yatra is held, including Nasik, Ujjain, and Prayagraj and reach Delhi and later to Haridwar," said Haridwar-based Divya Prema Service Mission president Ashish Gautam. **PNS**

## UP girls to train in self-defence

**Lucknow:** Under the ongoing Mission Shakti programme, girl students in more than 40,000 upper primary schools will learn self-defence techniques between March 1 and 31.

According to Vijay Kiran Anand, Director-General of School Education, "These classes will help rural students boost their self-confidence and self-esteem. It is time for the responsibility to train girl students."

The department has made a provision of Rs 3,000 per school for the purpose.

The trainers will train girls in their own school and a nearby school, said the official. He said that the main purpose of self-defence training is that it is to make the girls physically and mentally self-dependent so that they can face any situation. **IAN S**

## J&K Police arrest JeM terror associate

**Srinagar:** The Jammu and Kashmir Police have arrested a person, who was helping the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists, at Awantipora in South Kashmir's Pulwama district and recovered incriminating material from his possession, police said on Monday.

Police said following specific information about presence of terrorists in Larow Jager Tral was arrested. "Incriminating material of proscribed terrorist outfit JeM has been recovered from his possession. On his disclosure, one hand grenade was also recovered which he had concealed in the compound of his home," police said.

Police said preliminary investigation has revealed that the arrested person was in contact with JeM commander in Tral. **IAN S**



Students wearing masks attend a class after schools resumed for students of classes 1st to 5th, with certain Covid-19 safety guidelines, in Mirzapur on Monday

PTI

## Girl knocks at court door after tolerating torture of child marriage for 12 yrs

**IAN S ■ JAIPUR**

After suffering for 12 long years subsequent to marriage at the tender age of seven, 18-year-old Mansi Gurjar has finally summoned courage to initiate steps to annul her child marriage.

A resident of Palodi village of Rajasthan's Bhiwara district, Mansi knocked the doors of Bhiwara's Family Court and filed the case for annulment of her child marriage on which Family Court Judge Mukesh Bhargava has issued summons to her so-called husband.

Mansi elicited the support of Dr. Kriti Bhatti, Managing Trustee and Rehabilitation Psychologist of Sarathi Trust, Jaipur, in her quest to break free from child marriage. Dr. Bhatti, known for launching a campaign that facilitates annulment of child marriages, said that Mansi, 18, was married at the age of seven in 2009 to a young man from Banera tehsil.

The child bride is busy pursuing her first year of graduation. Her marriage took place in 2009 under social pressure. All of seven years, old, Mansi realised what had happened only a few years ago.

After Mansi became an adult, she refused to accept the marriage. Since then, her in-laws have been putting pressure on her family and Mansi. They've even threatened the family with dire consequences. Certain caste panchs have also been threatening the family of penalty and social boycott if the child marriage was annulled.

Mansi and her family became depressed for a long time owing to pressure and personal fear of caste panchayats. Now, with help from Dr. Kriti Bhatti of Sarathi Trust, Mansi has shown courage to annul her child marriage. Dr. Bhatti helped Mansi file a child marriage annulment case in the family court of Bhiwara District. In the petition, Dr. Bhatti pleaded on behalf of Mansi and presented the facts related to her age and other facts in the court.

## Centre owes ₹29,290 cr to Maha as GST compensation: Maha Gov

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:**

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari said here on Monday that the Centre owed a sizeable sum of Rs 29,290 to the Shiv Sena-led MVA Government as GST compensation.

Addressing a joint sitting of the Maharashtra Legislature on the first day of the State Legislature, Koshiyari said: "By the end of February 2021, out of the Rs 46,950 crore due to my Government as Goods and Services Tax Compensation, the Central Government has paid just Rs 6140 crore and Rs 11,520 crore as loan for Goods and Services Tax Compensation. Goods and Services Tax Compensation to the tune of Rs 29,290 crore is overdue from the Centre."

Lamenting that the State economy had slowed down because of the Covid lockdown, medical emergency and natural calamities, the Governor said: "Of the revenue collection target of Rs 3,47,456 crore, the State has collected just Rs 1,88,542 crore at the end of January 2021. This is 35 per cent less than the budgetary estimate and 21 per cent lower than the collection in the same period in the previous year."

The Governor said that the state government was pursuing with the Government of India for increasing the grant in aid receivable to my State in accordance with the recommendations of the Central

Finance Commission.

"Last year was not only a year of medical emergency but also presented several economic challenges. As jobs and livelihoods were affected, my Government undertook massive humanitarian aid programme to help the Government. He said that in view of the pandemic situation and the economic condition, the State government is pursuing with the Centre to increase the latter's contribution to central schemes.

"To stimulate the economy, my government has provided for 75 per cent of the budgetary provision for capital expenditure and released 100 per cent money to the Local Development Fund, DPC schemes and Dongri Vikas Niyam, the Governor noted.

"To succeed in the success 'My Family, My Responsibility' scheme of the chief minister, Koshiyari said that through an 'innovative health checkup mission in the country', the state government had carried out two rounds of surveys, the stage government had reached out to all the families in the state. During the survey, it had examined high-risk persons and senior citizens and detected many Covid-19 cases which helped chart out the state health map. "By participation of citizens in the management of Covid-19 pandemic, our state ensured successful control of this epidemic. But the battle against Covid-19 is still on and now the 'Me Jabardar' (My Accountability) mission has been

launched," the Governor said.

Koshiyari said that the state government had effectively combated the pandemic by reducing the number of active cases, dealing successfully with problem areas like Dharavi (Mumbai slum), first to set up private hospitals at affordable rates, for public benefit, he said.

Stressing on the need for "constant Vigil" on safety measures as the Covid-19 dangers have not passed with the imminent possibility of a second wave, the Governor stressed on physical distancing norms, face-masks, washing hands, etc.

The Governor said that the State was also implementing the Covid-19 vaccination programme and investing in public health infrastructure by approving new medical colleges, hospitals, and health centres and Osmanabad, with plans for more in future. Chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, his deputy Ajit Pawar, Leaders of Opposition in the Assembly and Council respectively. Devendra Fadnis and Pravin Dandekar, ministers and legislators from both the houses were present at the joint sitting of members from both the Houses of the State Legislature.

## Stalin turns 68, DMK releases campaign song

**Chennai:** DMK President MK Stalin turned 68 on Monday and the party marked the occasion by releasing a campaign song for the April 6 Assembly elections.

The song titled "Stalin dance varu, vidyal than poraru" (Stalin, come to come dance, education dawn) was released by senior DMK leader Duraimurugan.

On Monday, Stalin paid floral tributes at the memorials of his father and former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Muthuvel Karunanidhi, the founder of Dravidian politics, C.N. Annadurai, besides visiting the memorial of E.V. Periyar, the rationalist leader of Tamil Nadu. While addressing a DMK leadership meet, Stalin said that he wished to make Tamil Nadu the best state in all spheres of life.

Several programmes, including sporting events, were organised by the DMK youth wing across the state to mark the occasion.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, BJP leader Kishbu Sundar and MNM leader and Tamil superstar Kamal Haasan extended their wishes to the DMK leader on his birthday.

With DMK out of power in Tamil Nadu since the past 10 years, the onus is on Stalin to script a grand comeback for the party in the coming Assembly elections. And the party is celebrating his birthday celebrations as an opportunity to connect with the masses with programmes held across all the 284 constituencies in the state. **IAN S**

## Arunachal reports zero Covid cases for 10 days

**Itanagar/Agartala:** Arunachal Pradesh has reported zero Covid cases during the last ten days, even as the state's recovery rate stands at 99.67 per cent, the second highest in the country after the Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Diu. The state is having a recovery rate of 99.82 per cent, health officials said on Monday.

According to the data released by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Monday, the total Covid-19 positive cases in Arunachal Pradesh were 16,836, while the number of recoveries stood at 16,780.

In all, 56 patients have succumbed to the coronavirus in the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, while the fatality rate of 0.33 per cent. As per the information released by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the recovery rate of seven of the eight northeastern states excluding Sikkim is above 98 per cent.

Sikkim's recovery rate is 97.05 per cent and mortality rate is 2.20 per cent, the third highest in India after Punjab (3.20 per cent) and Maharashtra (2.42 per cent).

The northeastern state of Mizoram among the 28 states in India has the distinction of having the lowest death rate of 0.23 per cent and the state's recovery rate is 99.21 per cent.

Mizoram was the lone state in India where there was no Covid-19 related death until October 28 last year even as the first death was reported in India on January 30, 2020.

According to the health

officials in Aizawl on Monday, Mizoram has so far reported 4,423 Covid-19 cases with ten people having died.

While 4,393 people have recovered from the infectious virus, there were 20 active cases as on Monday. The officials said Daman & Diu had a recovery rate of 99.82 per cent, health officials said on Monday.

Meanwhile, in a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus, officials in Meghalaya said that the night curfew (11 p.m. in the night to 5 a.m. in the morning) would remain in force in Shillong and other adjoining areas under the East Khasi Hills district for the next seven days from Monday.

Beside Shillong, the night curfew is being extended from time to time in Mizoram capital Aizawl.

According to the officials of the Health and Family Welfare Department of Assam, the state had reported its first death due to coronavirus on April 10 last year.

The first death in Assam, as well as in the northeastern region, was reported from Hailakandi district in southern Assam where a middle-aged man, who had gone abroad, succumbed to Covid-19 at the Silchar Medical College and Hospital.

In Assam, 2,17,537 people have so far been infected by the dreaded virus and 2,14,830 people recovered from the disease with the recovery and mortality rates are 98.76 per cent and 0.50 per cent respectively. The state's active cases on Monday were 1,615. **IAN S**

## Bovines smuggled in water tanker rescued by Kathua cops

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU**

Alert jawans of Kathua police in Jammu region late Sunday night foiled a cow smuggling bid after intercepting a water tanker near Satkesh Chak and rescued nine bovines packed inside the modified cavity.

However, the driver of the water tanker managed to give a slip to the police party deployed at one of the security checkpoints along the national highway. In the last one month Kathua police has successfully foiled 16 bovine smuggling bids and rescued over 200 bovines.

At present Kathua police is catering for over 500 bovines, kept in a cowshed in Kathua. These bovines were rescued by the police teams while they were being illegally transported towards the Kashmir valley.

Senior Superintendent of Police,



Kathua Shailendra Mishra said, "Late Sunday night a rare type of bovine smuggling bid was noticed in which a

water tanker was being used for illegal transportation of animals".

He said a water tanker bearing Reg No. JK02AD-5569 was intercepted by the police teams. When the driver was directed to stop for checking, the driver of the water tanker parked the vehicle way behind the naka point and fled away from the spot taking advantage of the darkness.

During checking of the said tanker 09 bovines were found loaded inside the tanker.

According to a written statement issued by the Kathua police, "A case vide FIR No. 100/2021 Under Sections 188

## Congress appoints 7 new dist chiefs in UP

**Lucknow:** The Congress has appointed seven new presidents for district unit in Deoria, Maharajganj, Jalaun, Kanpur, Bulandshahr, and Lucknow City (South).

An official statement from the All India Congress Committee said that the Congress President has approved the proposal of the appointment of presidents of seven district unit Congress committees in Uttar Pradesh with immediate effect.

Ramji Hari has been appointed president of Deoria district, Sharan Singh Babloo for Maharajganj district, Rajiv Narayan Mishra for Jalaun district, Amit Kumar Pandey for Kanpur Nagar.

The DCC of Unnao district will have Arti Baijai as its president and Bulandshahr District and Lucknow City (South) will have Sheopal Singh and Dilpreet Singh, respectively. **IAN S**



Members of Karalaka sheep and goat breeders during a protest to demand the implementation of Sadashiva Commission recommendations, in Bengaluru on Monday

PTI



## Taming the virus

The second phase of the vaccination drive began with the PM and his ministerial colleagues taking the jab

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the way, a battery of eminent political leaders on Monday took the anti-COVID shot as the country saw the launch of the second phase of vaccination drive and reports of a successful start to the campaign coming in from across India. Prominent among those who took the first dose on the first day of the second phase were Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Jitendra Singh, S Jaishankar, Som Prakash, Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and NCP president Sharad Pawar. Kickstarting the second phase of the immunisation programme, the Prime Minister received his first dose of Covaxin at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi. In a light vein and seeking to put them at ease, the Prime Minister asked the nurses administering him the vaccine whether they planned to use "some special thick needle" as politicians are known to be "very thick-skinned". People above 60 years of age and those above 45 with comorbidities are eligible to get the jabs in this phase. The second phase of the vaccination drive will cover 10 crore people across the country. So far, 1.45 crore people in two priority groups, healthcare and frontline workers, have received the shots of Covishield and Covaxin in the first phase.



The second phase of vaccination comes at a time when India's active COVID cases are largely under control, but eight States — Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir and Madhya Pradesh — have been a cause of concern, reporting an upswing in daily cases in the last two weeks. India's COVID-19 tally rose above the 11 million-mark on Monday as the country logged in 15,510 new cases in a span of 24 hours. A total of 106 fatalities were reported on Sunday, taking the death toll to over 1.57 lakh. The number of active cases currently stands at 1,68,627, a level last seen at the end of January and pointing to the re-emergence of the virus after a period of containment of the COVID outbreak. After months of staying indoors and strictly practising social distancing and hygiene norms, the number of cases had finally come under control but suddenly the pandemic outbreak has spiralled out of hand. Perhaps, the eagerness to get back into action or the reports of a declining caseload are offering a false sense of security and pushing an increasing number of Indians into vulnerability, which shouldn't be the case. If we let down our guard now, India with its population may find it nigh impossible to break free from the clutches of this virus.

### PICTALK



A mural depicting Pope Francis in Baghdad, Iraq

AP

## Overt bonhomie

By praising Modi, Azad is consolidating his position within the dissenter group

There is nothing unusual in leaders of rival parties having a cordial relationship despite serious political differences. But what makes such "friendships" different from the others is their public display. The bonhomie between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad is a case in point. Recently, the manner in which Azad heaped praises on Modi indicates that it is something more than just geniality.



Everybody appreciated when the PM first displayed it while bidding an emotional farewell to the Congress stalwart on his retirement from the Rajya Sabha. Azad echoed the sentiments as the occasion called for it. However, Azad heaping praises on the PM in Jammu, that too, a day after a few senior Congress leaders reiterated their call for leadership change, has a political message. Being one of the most senior members of the group of 23 Congressmen — unofficially termed "G23" — Azad wants to carve a space for himself within this faction and also tell the party that it must go by the advice of its "elders". It seems that this group is sending a message that sidelining the old guard will only prove counterproductive to the party's interests. Azad is sending a clear message to the party high command that if tall leaders like former Union Ministers Kapil Sibal, Anand Sharma, Manish Tewari, former Haryana CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda and others can stand by his side even if he heaps praises on Modi, they can also go the extra mile and stand in complete defiance of the leadership. He is increasing his bargaining power within the Congress.

By praising Modi, Azad is basically consolidating his position within the dissenter group. Modi, being an astute politician, must be aware of what Azad is up to. With the Congress old guard speaking out against the leadership, it is clear that all is not well within the "Grand Old Party". Moreover, the G23 leaders are trying to stay relevant by upping the ante against the party leadership. They don't want to loosen their hold on the party. The BJP has already parted ways with many of its tall leaders by creating a "Margdarshak Mandal" and these seniors are now just in an advisory role. The Congress old guard must be apprehensive of meeting the same fate. At least the restlessness shown by these Congress leaders points to this line of thought. On the other hand, it would not suffice to blame the Gandhis alone for the electoral losses that the Congress has suffered in the past few years. It was a failure on the part of these veteran leaders also. However, whether these veterans would be successful in bringing about reforms in the party, saving their positions, influencing party decisions, increasing their bargaining power or will Rahul Gandhi give an opportunity to the youngsters to lead the party and gradually do away with the "rusted bolts", only time will tell. Well, as we eagerly wait for what Modi or Azad say next on their bonhomie, we shall continue watching the high-voltage Congress drama.

# Beware of Pak's softening stand

It is a temporary move to tide over the crises Pakistan is facing. The moment its rulers find some relief, the agreement will turn into a mere piece of paper

One mistake Indians must not make is to read Pakistan through Indian eyes.

Normally, anything that leads to peace should be welcome. Similarly, we should welcome the fact that Pakistan has agreed to cessation of the ongoing hostilities with us and honour the ceasefire pact of 2003.

Yet, one must inject a note of caution here. This is because quite a few Indians, including expert observers, have interpreted the venom from Islamabad on Kashmir for years as revenge for India dismembering their country in 1971. In actual fact, as soon as the anger of the defeat was forgotten, the Pakistanis were relieved that the "dark short people" — as the Bengalis are contemptuously referred to by Pakistanis — who were a majority of their population, were finally gotten rid of.

Poet Mohammad Iqbal, who was also a leading light of the Muslim League, as its president had in 1930 at Prayagraj (then Allahabad) proposed a separate Muslim homeland which comprised only the north western provinces. He made no mention of Bengal or any part thereof. The larger Pakistan was for MA Jinnah's glorification; he began by dreaming of six provinces, four in the west and two in the east, including Assam. Through his League colleague who was the Premier of Assam for several years after 1939, Mohd Saad Ali, he had nearly succeeded in recording that the *advisis* were not Hindu but animists. This was to bring down the Hindu percentage of population and draw Assam into Pakistan when the moment of decision came. When Jinnah could not get Assam, except the district of Sylhet, Bengal and Punjab were divided by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the lawyer dispatched by London. Jinnah was sorely disappointed at getting what he called "a moth-eaten Pakistan".

Here, it has to be iterated that Jinnah did not represent the ultimate choice of any Pakistani except the Gujarati-speaking businessmen like the Khojas and Memons who wanted to get



rich quickly by avoiding competition against Indian business communities and crossing over to the new State, where they would have to compete only against the Punjabi and Sindhi farmers. For the rest, Jinnah pleaded brilliantly for those Muslims who wanted or half-wished a separate homeland. This was Jinnah's role in actuality; his fee was his place in history's hall of fame. Fortunately for him, he died within 13 months of Independence. The word *mohajir*, a term for Muslims from Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar migrating to Pakistan, came into circulation soon thereafter. But *mohajirs* soon found themselves not only unwelcome but also the target of ethnic hostility in the newly carved out Muslim homeland. Jinnah's deputy Liaquat Ali Khan, from UP, was assassinated a mere four years after Pakistan had been carved out.

What prevails in Pakistan now is the will of the West Punjabis who are two-thirds of the country's population. Their need for Kashmir has been to keep the country together and paper over their dominance of everything, which is now a bone of contention. Plus, they portray India as a great threat to the

WHAT PREVAILS IN PAKISTAN NOW IS THE WILL OF THE WEST PUNJABIS WHO ARE TWO-THIRDS OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION. THEIR NEED FOR KASHMIR HAS BEEN TO KEEP THE COUNTRY TOGETHER AND PAPER OVER THEIR DOMINANCE OF EVERYTHING

survival of Pakistan and thus justify the indispensability of the Army as the country's guardian.

If one looks at the latest ceasefire agreement, one would conclude that for Islamabad, it is a temporary move to hopefully tide over the crises the country is facing. The moment Pakistan's rulers are able to find some way of relief for these crises, the current agreement will turn into a mere piece of paper. One reason for Pakistan's softening could be that its rulers realise that China has overplayed its hand, whether with India, Taiwan or the South China Sea, and that the US has reacted strongly, though so far only in words. Otherwise, there is no explanation for Beijing to kick off a confrontation in Ladakh during the winter. It could have waited until after the spring to exercise its options which were three: To try and grab some strategically useful land points, to ease off by extracting some other concessions or by continuing to harass the Indian forces by creating local points that would pose a threat. Similarly, Islamabad wants to cool off vis-à-vis New Delhi until China warms up again after, say, arriving at

some settlement with the US. If not, the rulers would wait for circumstances to change; for a true *momin*, his faith in Allah the Merciful is infinite.

We must not compare it with the mind of a thinking or reticent Hindu. Another possibility might be that Pakistan's real ruler, General Bajwa, wants to ease India's pressure on his eastern Indian front and use it to settle his scores with Baluchistan, like General Tikka had tried to do in East Pakistan in 1971. Bajwa may have been advised that the Baluch province is so rich in resources that it could greatly help in solving Pakistan's economic problems. But to exploit these resources would take time, peace and complete control. I concede that this possibility may sound too farfetched, but unless Islamabad takes some drastic steps, how can it keep the economic wheels of Pakistan rolling? If it depends on Chinese loans, Pakistan could become a Beijing protectorate inch by inch, as we have already begun to see with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor coming into play. (The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### HAIL INDIA'S VACCINATION DRIVE

Sir — The second phase of India's vaccination drive has been rolled out and Prime Minister Narendra Modi got the first shot of COVAXIN, the India-researched and produced COVID-19 vaccine (produced by Bharat Biotech) at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi. The drive aims to cover 10 crore people across the country. So far, more than 1.5 crore people have received the jabs.

Mostly the elderly would benefit in the second phase. This phase is a nationwide drive to inoculate people above 60 years of age and those above 45 years with co-morbidities. Several old people were seen at the centres to get themselves inoculated. The self-registration process in Co-WIN module has allowed people to get as many as four people registered, pick slots at their nearby vaccination centre and reschedule the appointment. Thus, the vaccination pace is expected to increase in the coming days.

A lot of hard work has gone into reaching this phase wherein the Government has started to vaccinate general population. We must rely on our vaccinators as they are absolutely safe and are being used all over the world. In the coming days, we hope that the process will pick up pace and get completed in record time. On the other hand, there is also the need to worry as the country reported a single-day rise of 16,752 cases in the last 24 hours, the highest in the last 30 days, taking the overall tally to 1,10,96,731 on Sunday.

CK Ramani | Mumbai

### PINK-BALL TEST MATCH MAGIC

Sir — When cricket matches like T-20s and ODIs are making life hell for the bowlers with batting-friendly surfaces, Test matches of late, especially pink-ball day-night Test matches, have come like a whiff of fresh air for the bowlers. The pink-ball Test cricket is still evolving and teams are still getting to grips with the ball that was tough to handle for a spinner due to the extra

## Win-win situation for India, Pak



The ceasefire between India and Pakistan is a win-win situation for both the nations and for the border population in the two countries. A renewed pledge last week by both the neighbours to adhere to a ceasefire pact along the Line of Control (LoC) and international border in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is working on the ground.

We must hope that both the nations will stick to the agreed terms to address each other's core

issues and concerns which have the potential to disturb peace in the region and lead to violence. However, the peace agreement would face its biggest test over the next few months when the snow will melt. It is because terrorists' ranks might infiltrate through the routes which are inaccessible in winter as they are clogged due to heavy snowfall.

The adherence to the ceasefire agreement is a welcome proposition, as it will prevent the unnecessary loss of lives of soldiers and civilians residing in border areas. It will also bring some normalcy to the India-Pakistan bilateral ties. The easing of military tensions could also have a positive impact on the situation in J&K and all political parties there have welcomed the ceasefire agreement. If Indian and Pakistan are able to resolve their issues, it will send a message that bilateral issues could be resolved through talks and democratic means rather than through violence and terrorism.

P Senthil | Mumbai

old woman's alleged death by suicide in Pune. This will pave the way for an impartial enquiry in the case.

The audio clip which surfaced on social media two days after her death, in which two men are talking about the woman's death, should be sent to forensic science laboratory for examination. The BJP has claimed that one of the men in the audio clip is Rathod while the Shiv Sena leader has denied the charge. On the other hand, responding to the Opposition's demand for a case against the Minister, Chief Minister Thackeray said a First Information Report (FIR) can't be registered before investigation. The Maha Vikas Aghadi Government must take the case investigated by the Central agencies for a free and impartial investigation. The CM must act and think out-of-the-box to save his image.

MR Jayanthi | Coimbatore

### CONDUCT AN IMPARTIAL INQUIRY

Sir — It is good on the part of Maharashtra Forest Minister Sanjay Rathod to resign from his post after the Opposition BJP linked him to a 23-year-

## SOUND BITE

Overall, 192 hospitals have been prepared in Delhi, of which 136 are private and 56 are Government-run hospitals.

Delhi Health Minister

—Satyendra Jain

Workers across America are voting on whether to organise a union in their workplace. It's an important choice that should be made without intimidation by employers.

American President

—Joe Biden

I am very specific about the roles that I come on board with. It takes a lot of courage to say no but I am glad I have the privilege to do that.

Actor

—Vijayendra Kumeria

Landing in Bombay or Mumbai, as it is called now, was a total culture shock, there were just people everywhere, there were cars and bikes and animals and rats and cats running along the footpath.

Former Australia captain

—Steve Waugh

The Uttar Pradesh Government has accorded top priority to the development of the Jewar International Airport in Noida.

UP Chief Minister

—Yogi Adityanath

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

## FIRST COLUMN

## MANY FORTUNES AT STAKE

The forthcoming Assembly polls to five States will go a long way in shaping regional and national parties' future



KALYANI SHANKAR

The forthcoming Assembly elections to five States, three of which are in the South, will go a long way in shaping most regional and national parties' political future. The polls are crucial for the three national parties, the Congress, the BJP and the Left and for regional parties, too. The Congress lost its only foothold in the South, the Union Territory of Puducherry, last week. By citing Puducherry's example, the Congress' opponents want to show ahead of the polls that the party would not be able to hold its MLAs together even if they were voted for. The southern States have gone into the hands of regional parties because the people lost faith in the Congress which controlled almost all the States in the South at one point in time. An alliance with the JD(S) in Karnataka, the TDP in Andhra Pradesh and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu (TN) had helped the BJP extend its influence in the South. The Congress has found allies in the DMK, the JD(S) and the UDF's coalition partners in Kerala like the Muslim League.



The regional parties have strong leaders who can attract voters with their personality. There is JD(S) in Karnataka, the TDP and YSRCP in Andhra, TRS in Telangana, the AIADMK and DMK in TN which are shining examples of this. Except for the AIADMK, all these parties are essentially family fiefdoms of the Gowdas, Naidus and Raos. Some parties like the DMK, JD(S), TRS and the TDP have already transferred power to the second generation. Neither the BJP nor the Congress has cultivated leaders to match these regional satraps' aura. As for the Left, its ideology has no relevance for the present generation. The BJP's core agenda has no attraction for the South and the Congress is vague about its ideology. Nonetheless, the BJP is trying to spread its wings in the Southern States in the forthcoming elections. The latest toppling game in Puducherry shows that the defectors from the Congress and the DMK have joined the BJP including two Ministers. The BJP could only capture Karnataka in the South. This is because of many reasons, including an absence of strong local leaders. Plus, the BJP is also perceived as a North Indian party and then there is also the fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal in the South is relatively limited and his charm may not necessarily beat that of regional satraps. The BJP considers each election, even a panchayat poll, as crucial as the Lok Sabha polls. Hence, they have adopted several steps to seal their win in an increasing number of States. They include expanding the BJP's base, projecting Modi as a doer and wooing leaders from other parties. The Dravidian parties had held sway since 1967 when the DMK wrested TN from the Congress in 1967. Since then, the Congress has aligned with one Dravidian party or the other. The BJP has been accused of ruling the State by proxy after AIADMK chief Jayalitha's demise in 2016. TN alternates between the DMK and the AIADMK, and now it is the turn of the DMK.

Kerala is the only State under the control of the Left parties and it, too, alternates between the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-led UDF, and this time it is the turn of the UDF. The RSS has done a lot of work in Kerala and though the BJP has doubled its vote share since 1998, it has a long way to go. After getting its first-ever MLA elected on a BJP ticket in Kerala in 2016, the party is trying to become a reasonable force by cobbling together a coalition. But it's still some distance away from breaking the hold of the two other national parties and failed to open an account in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. To conquer the South, the three national parties must face the might of 15 regional parties or join them. For parties like the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, AGP in Assam, the AIADMK, and the DMK in TN and NR Congress in Puducherry, these polls will be a "do or die battle." A win in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, and TN will restore the Congress' fortunes. The CPI(M) has to protect its turf in Kerala. The BJP will shine with an improvement in all the five States. (The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)



KM CHERMAN

## AI making a place for itself in modern healthcare

AI-guided machines are capable of performing minute surgeries with accuracy and help in transporting substances which are unsafe for humans

In today's world we are surrounded by Artificial Intelligence (AI) which finds its application everywhere, from science fiction to local hospitals. AI helps medical professionals by relieving them of routine tasks and also makes medical procedures safer and pocket-friendly for patients.

Further, AI-guided machines are also capable of performing minute surgeries with accuracy and help in transporting substances, which are unsafe for humans to handle. In medical systems, call centre staff for websites has increasingly been replaced by chatbots that use Natural Language Processing (NLP) to provide callers with information and manage queries.

In various hospitals and other health institutes, AI technologies such as fuzzy

The writer is a Padma Shri awardee and cardiologist surgeon credited with India's first bypass. He is Chairman and CEO of Frontier Lifeline Hospital. The views expressed are personal.

systems, Bayesian networks, artificial neural networks and smart hybrid systems are being used.

AI in medicine can be differentiated into two subtypes — virtual and real. The physical segment deals with robotics that helps in procedures, for instance smart prosthetics for people with disabilities and the treatment of the elderly. The interactive components range from applications for electronic health record systems to neural network-based guide in care decisions for patients.

There is increasing use of AI-powered robots in the surgical environment. Robotics technology can be applied in many areas that directly affect patient care. Some of their applications include disinfecting patient rooms and operating sets and reducing the risks for

patients and medical personnel.

They can be used in laboratories to take samples and transport, analyse and store them. Also, the robotic lab assistant can exactly locate the vessel from which the blood is required to be taken and extract the sample without causing pain and anxiety to the patients, who are troubled a lot by the multiple pokes that a doctor or nurse makes for finding a good vein.

AI software also helps primary healthcare doctors in identifying patients who need additional treatment and have specific protocols. It will be used by medical practitioners for commenting, reviewing patient conversations and so on.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world and adversely affected multiple layers of our society. Frontline



workers and particularly those who have been in direct contact with patients are exposed to major risk.

To mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus and to protect healthcare workers and patients, medical services had been largely restricted, including the cancellation of elective surgeries. This result-

ed in a substantial burden for patients and economic loss for various hospitals. It is in situations like this that AI-robot surgeries could be a powerful tool to maintain surgical volumes while at the same time mitigating the fear of contamination by operating procedures on patients without healthcare workers coming in physical contact.

While talking about the Coronavirus, it is imperative to mention that using AI to predict its pattern was able to help mitigate the crisis to some extent. For instance — BlueDot — a Canadian organisation specialising in infectious disease forecasting, used AI to gather data from multiple points.

It was able to predict the COVID-19 outbreak and alert people around, even before the World Health Organisation (WHO) did so.

Similarly, an AI-powered chatbot, based in Singapore named SGDoormBot, helped in mass screening for symptoms among migrant workers.

The pandemic has also highlighted the need for rapid screening and testing of patients to improve treatment pathways and reduce the risk of cross-infection. The use of AI here, for accessing electronic health records (EHR) of routinely-ordered tests and vital signs can produce an effective tool to screen patients in emergency departments and hospital admission units.

Data collected from EHRs can be further supplemented with data from wearable technology such as smart watches or mobile health apps and medical devices.

With the potential application of AI within the

healthcare system, the question remains how this will affect the workforce. According to McKinsey Global Institute, 50 per cent of companies say that automation will decrease the number of full-time staff by 2022 and that by 2030, robots will replace 800 million workers across the world.

Also, automation of clerical processes could potentially have an impact on the non-clinical workforce of the healthcare system. Specialties such as radiology where imaging reports can be automated and produced by AI algorithms may well be the reality.

Of course, the ethics of data sharing and privacy implications for patients and their insurers is debatable. As we enter a brave new world with AI, it entails certain benefits and limitations.

## CPSU privatisation an uphill task

The Centre should de-bureaucratise the process of running PSUs. This should be done even before privatisation is taken up



UTTAM GUPTA



THE GOVERNMENT MAY SET UP A HOLDING COMPANY — ON THE LINES OF A BANK INVESTMENT COMPANY RECOMMENDED BY AN RBI COMMITTEE UNDER P NAYAK — WHERE ALL ITS SHARES IN PSUs WILL BE VESTED. IT SHOULD AUTHORISE THE HOLDING COMPANY TO TAKE ALL DECISIONS, INCLUDING SHARE SALE TO PRIVATE INVESTORS, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MANAGEMENT



should be taken on the merit of each case, irrespective of whether it is in a strategic or non-strategic area. Likewise, the mandatory closure of any loss-making enterprise should apply to all such entities without any distinction. National security concerns are always best addressed through strong, resilient and responsive regulatory and surveillance mechanisms.

Implementation is far more important than the policy. In this regard, the score of the Modi Government during the last seven years or so (it was pursued under a sophisticated nomenclature 'strategic divestment') has been disappointing. Except for two big ticket sales like the divestment of its 51.11 per cent shareholding in HPCL in 2017-18 and 52.63 per cent stake in the REC in 2018-19, there is nothing much to show. Even these sales can't be termed as privatisation as the buyers were ONGC and PFC respectively — both PSUs.

As per the original plan, 51.11 per cent shares of the Union Government in HPCL were to be sold to a private investor. But things did not pan out as planned and in January 2018, the Government had to ask ONGC to pick up the entire stake, as it desperately needed money to meet the fiscal deficit (FD) target. In the case of REC too, it asked the PFC to buy. During 2018-19, Air India was also put on the block but failed.

During 2019-20, besides restructuring that offer, the Government also took up sale of all of its shareholding in BPCL (53.29 per cent); CONCOR (30 per cent); SCI (63.75 per cent); NEEPCO (100 per cent) and THDC India Limited (75 per cent). Sans NEEPCO and THDC which were sold to NTPC — a CPSU in the power sector — others made no progress. During 2020-21, COVID-19 spoilt the party. For 2021-22, there is not much hope either. The target for proceeds for divestment speaks for itself. At ₹1,75,000 crore, this is substantially lower than the target for 2020-21 (₹2,10,000 crore). This is despite adding two Public Sector Banks (PSBs) and one general insurance company to the list of those (Air India, BPCL, SCI, CONCOR, LIC) already under the hammer. The mandarins in the Finance Ministry have sensed that some divestments may not go through, others would fetch lower valuation.

There are four major bottlenecks in the way like policy flip-flops (it stymied Air India's sale in 2018-19/2019-20); bureaucratic red tape (but for this, HPCL could have got a private suitor and BPCL's sale could have happened in 2019/20); trusting decisions on PSU Boards under a typical top-down approach; linking share sale to meeting the FD target. The last two reasons have the inevitable effect of delaying and reducing

realisation from every sale. The Budget offers nothing to address any of these bottlenecks. Under a business as usual approach, it will take several years, if not decades, for the sale process to get completed. The decision to set up an empowered group of secretaries to address the concerns of potential investors won't be of much help as even under this arrangement, bureaucrats will continue to rule the roost.

The Centre should de-bureaucratise the process of running PSUs. This should be done even before privatisation is taken up. The Government may set up a holding company — on the lines of a bank investment company recommended by an RBI committee under P Nayak — where all its shares in PSUs will be vested. It should authorise the holding company to take all decisions, including share sale to private investors, in consultation with the management. To be manned by eminent professionals drawn from respective fields, the company should be given full autonomy in its working.

This mechanism will also help in de-linking divestment from the Budget exercise and give much-needed flexibility to the holding company to decide the contours and timing of sale, taking into account the market conditions so as to maximise the proceeds from sales.

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

YOU SHAMELESSLY BETRAYED 40 LAKH BELEAGUERED UNEMPLOYED YOUTH OF TELANGANA WITH YOUR FAKE AND FABRICATED STATEMENT. —CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON DASOJU SRAVAN



1.32 LAKH JOBS WERE GIVEN IN GOVT SECTOR IN THE LAST SIX YEARS. CONGRESS COULD FILL JUST 10,000 POSTS IN TELANGANA FROM 2004-2014. —TRS LEADER KT RAMA RAO



# DEFYING LETHAL SHOOTINGS Myanmar protesters back on streets

AP ■ YANGON, MYANMAR

Police in Myanmar's biggest city fired tear gas and fired live rounds at defiant crowds who returned to the streets to protest last month's coup, despite reports that security forces had killed at least 18 people a day earlier.

The protesters in Yangon were chased as they tried to gather at their usual meeting spot at the Hledan Center intersection. Demonstrators scattered and sought in vain to rise the irritating gas from their eyes, but later regrouped. The coup reversed years of slow progress toward democracy in Myanmar after five decades of military rule. It came Feb. 1, the same day a newly elected Parliament was supposed to take office. Ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi's party would have led that government, but instead she was detained along with



In this image from video, anti-coup protesters run away from tear gas launched by security forces on Monday. AP

President Win Myint and other senior officials. The army has leveled several charges against Suu Kyi — an apparent effort by the military to provide a legal veneer for her detention and potentially to bar her from running

in the election the junta has promised to hold in one year. On Monday, Suu Kyi made a court appearance via video-conference and was charged with two more offenses, her lawyer Khin Maung Zaw told reporters.

# UN atomic watchdog: Deal with Iran key to full inspections

Berlin: A temporary agreement with Iran to allow United Nations inspectors continued access to the country's atomic facilities lays the groundwork for the return to full verification measures if and when Tehran allows it, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said Monday.

Iran began restricting international inspections last week, but under a last-minute deal worked out during a trip to Tehran by Rafael Grossi, the head of the Vienna-based UN atomic watchdog, some access was preserved.

Under the agreement, Iran will no longer share surveillance footage of its nuclear facilities with the IAEA, but has promised to preserve the tapes for three months. It will then hand them over to the IAEA if it is granted sanctions relief. Otherwise, Iran has vowed to erase the tapes, narrowing the window for diplomatic breakthrough. Inspections are a critical part of

the landmark 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

Since President Donald Trump pulled the US unilaterally out of the deal in 2018, Iran has been slowly increasing its violation of the pact by enriching more uranium than allowed, and to a greater purity than allowed, among other things.

The violations have been intended to put pressure on the other signatories to the deal — Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China — to come up with ways to offset the economic devastation caused by American sanctions, but so far they have not been able to come up with a solution suitable to Iran.

US President Joe Biden has said he is ready to join talks with Iran and world powers to discuss a return to the deal. The new restrictions on inspections complicate matters, and, in effect, set the clock ticking on coming up with some sort of a resolution. AP

# France's Sarkozy convicted of corruption, sentenced to jail

AP ■ PARIS

Around French former President Nicolas Sarkozy guilty of corruption and influence peddling and sentenced him to one year in prison and a two-year suspended sentence.

The 66-year-old politician, who was president from 2007 to 2012, was convicted for having tried to illegally obtain information from a senior magistrate in 2014 about a legal action in which he was involved. The court said Sarkozy is entitled to request to be detained at home with an electronic bracelet.

This is the first time in France's modern history that a former president has been convicted of corruption.

Sarkozy's co-defendants — his lawyer and longtime friend Thierry Herzog, 65, and now-retired magistrate Gilbert Azibert, 70, were also found guilty and given the same sentence as the politician. AP



Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrives at the courtroom on Monday. AP

The court found that Sarkozy and his co-defendants sealed a "past of corruption," based on "consistent and serious evidence."

The court said the facts were "particularly serious" given that they were committed by a former president who used his status to help a magistrate who had served his personal interest. In addition, as a

lawyer by training, he was "perfectly informed" about committing an illegal action, the court said.

Sarkozy had firmly denied all the allegations against him during the 10-day trial that took place at the end of last year. The corruption trial focused on phone conversations that took place in February 2014.

# GLOBE TROTTER

PAK-IRAN-TURKEY FREIGHT TRAIN TO RESUME OPS

Islamabad: The Istanbul-Islamabad freight train is likely to resume operations this week after a gap of nine years, connecting three countries — Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, according to a media report.

RACE ON IN UK TO TRACK BRAZIL VARIANT CASES

London: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday said that a "massive effort" was underway to track the spread of a new Brazilian variant of Covid-19 detected in the country.

NEPAL PLANNING TO PURCHASE ZIM VACCINES

Kathmandu: Nepal is all set to start the second phase of Covid-19 vaccination drive from March 7, the Health Minister has said, as country is planning to purchase an additional 2 million doses of vaccine from India.

# Hungarian PM threatens to quit conservative political group

AP ■ BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

Hungary's right-wing Prime Minister has threatened to pull his party out of its group in the European Union's legislature as the conservative group edges closer to excluding its largest Hungarian delegation.

In a letter on Sunday to chairman of the European People's Party (EPP) group in the European Parliament

Manfred Weber, Prime Minister Viktor Orban condemned a group proposal agreed to on Friday that would allow for entire parties to be excluded from the electoral right EPP, rather than just individual MEPs as currently allowed.

Orban wrote that the proposed rules, which are expected to pass with a two-thirds vote at an EPP group meeting on Wednesday,

# Trump calls for Republican party unity; says Biden admin 'anti-jobs', 'anti-science'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In his first public speech since leaving office in January, former US President Donald Trump indicated he might launch a third presidential bid in 2024, calling for Republican party unity and slammed the Joe Biden administration, saying it was "anti-jobs" and "anti-science."

"We will take back the House. We will win the Senate and then a Republican president would triumph the White House. I wonder, who that will be," he said amidst cheers from his supporters at the annual session of the Conservative Political Action Committee in Orlando, Florida.

Though 74-year-old Trump multiple times in his

speech stopped short from announcing that he will run for president 2024, he gave enough indications that he is moving in that direction.

Trump indicates to run for 2024; says we've gone from 'America first' to 'America last' in 1 month

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In his first public speech since leaving office, former US President Donald Trump has called for Republican party unity while indicating that he might launch a third presidential bid in 2024 even as he slammed the Biden administration, claiming that the country has gone from "America first" to "America last" in just one month.

# Netanyahu claims Iran behind blast on Israeli-owned ship

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday accused Iran of attacking an Israeli-owned ship in the Gulf of Oman last week.

Netanyahu spoke to Israeli public broadcaster Kan and said that "it was indeed an act by Iran, that's clear."

# In 1st day on job, new WTO chief pushes for fisheries deal

AP ■ GENEVA

The new head of the World Trade Organization threw her support behind long-festering efforts among member countries to agree on fisheries subsidies that could reduce overfishing, calling it "one of a top priority as she took office on Monday."

Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a Nigerian economist and former government minister, donned a mask and doled out elbow bumps. Covid-19 obliged as she took up the job at WTO headquarters on the banks of Lake Geneva.

"I am coming into one of the most important institutions in the world and we have a lot of work to do," said Okonjo-Iweala, 66, who is both the first woman and the first African to hold the job. "I feel ready to go."

Negotiators have been tasked with striking an agreement that could help eliminate subsidies for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and prohibit some fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.

# SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one man namely **Mohd. Farid, S/o Mehboob, R/o Mohalla Khali, Ward No. 8, Kasba Kandhla, Distt. Shamli, U.P. Age: About 36 years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'5", Face: Oval, Build: Strong, Hair: Black, ID Mark: Mentally Weak, Wearing: Red colour sweater, dark brown colour pant and black colour slipper in his feet, has been missing since 14th March 2021 at 11:30 am, from the area of P.S. Mandir Marg, New Delhi. In this regards a case DO No. 24-A Dated 07/02/2021 has been registered at P.S. Mandir Marg, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing man but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this missing man please inform undersigned.**

Website: <http://ptcbl.in>  
E-mail id: [ctc@ptcbl.gov.in](mailto:ctc@ptcbl.gov.in)  
Ph. No. 011-24368633, 24368641  
Fax No. 011-24368639  
PS Mandir Marg, New Delhi  
DP/226/ND/2021 Ph. No. 011-23366730, 8750870522

# Democratic voting Bill would make biggest changes in decades

Washington: As Congress begins debate this week on sweeping voting and ethics legislation, Democrats and Republicans can agree on one thing: If signed into law, it would usher in the biggest overhaul of US elections law in at least a generation. House

Resolution 1, Democrats' 791-page bill, would touch virtually every aspect of the electoral process — striking down hurdles to voting erected in the name of election security, curbing partisan gerrymandering and curtailing the influence of big money. AP

**"KAVYAM"-AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT**

Advertisement is invited to inform general public at large regarding cancellation of units of already allotted customers through the list of flats dated 24.02.2021 and 2nd draw of flats dated 01.03.2021 due to non-payment despite several reminders, in the residential Apartments in the Affordable Group Housing Project Kavyam is being developed by Agratis Realty Ltd Sector-108, Gurgaon, Haryana, as per terms and conditions of the policy prescribed by the Town & Country Planning Department, Government of Haryana vide notification No PF-2748921 dated 19.08.2013 & amendments thereof (details available at the Department website, i.e. [www.tchparyana.gov.in](http://www.tchparyana.gov.in)).

S. No.	Allotted Unit No	Application No.	Name	Co-App.
1	2530	TAS-1003	Mr. Satya Prakash	MS. BABLI KUMARI
2	2653	TAS-1201	Mr. Abhishek Chhajuram Agarwal	N/A
3	2793	TA3-801	Mr. Adarsh Kumar	N/A
4	3407	TD-1106	Mr. Rakesh Yadav	N/A
5	3409	TD-1706	Ms. Riti Yadav	N/A
6	3639	TA3-1101	Mr. Veenet Verma	N/A
7	3688	TB-204	Mr. Nitin	N/A
8	3690	TAS-202	Mr. Sombir	N/A

It is to inform to all above allottees that it is last & final opportunity to restore the cancellation after making the all dues till date within seven working days, otherwise it shall be considered as cancelled and the same shall be allotted to the aspiring applicants under the applicable provisions of policy prescribed by the Town & Country Planning Department, Government of Haryana vide notification No PF-2748921 dated 19.08.2013 & amendments thereof.

Regd. Office: Agratis Realty Ltd 704 7<sup>th</sup> Floor DLF Tower-8, Jassola, New Delhi, CIN:10701012019PLC248731

Contact at - website: [www.kavyamhomes.com](http://www.kavyamhomes.com); 011-41924100-199, 8800499674

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, Plot No. 23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110055

**PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET**

Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of movable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price/ Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Ravinder Singh Bedi (Borrower), Mrs. Anu Sharma (Co-Borrower) [BDO/1002422645]	5th Floor Tower-D, Chandra Park, Sector-109, Flat No-D-504, Gurgaon, Haryana, 122005 Area 2630 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 29,95,211/- (as on February 19, 2021)	Rs. 13,00,000/-	April 5, 2021 From 12:00 Noon To 01:00 Noon	April 16, 2021 From 12:00 Noon Onwards

The online auction will be conducted on website [www.icicibank.com](http://www.icicibank.com) or our auction agency M/s NexGen Solutions Private Limited. The Mortgagee's notices are given at last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till April 15, 2021 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110055, and there after they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before April 15, 2021 before 05:00 PM along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi-110055 on or before April 15, 2021 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Delhi. For any further clarification regarding to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Bank Limited on 8657476284 or M/s NexGen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/9810029926/01244233933

Please note that Marketing agencies have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property. The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit [www.icicibank.com/mp4s](http://www.icicibank.com/mp4s)

Date: March 02, 2021 Place: Delhi/NCR

Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

# PUBLIC NOTICE

It is known to the general public that my clients, the Hon.ble. Kumar Sangeet S/o Late Sh. N. S. Prakash Singh aged about 45 years and my wife Late Smt. Nisha Singh W/o Late Sh. N. S. Prakash Singh, both deceased, have been missing since 14th March 2021 at 11:30 am, from the area of P.S. Mandir Marg, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing man but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this missing man please inform undersigned.

Website: <http://ptcbl.in>  
E-mail id: [ctc@ptcbl.gov.in](mailto:ctc@ptcbl.gov.in)  
Ph. No. 011-24368633, 24368641  
Fax No. 011-24368639  
PS Mandir Marg, New Delhi  
DP/226/ND/2021 Ph. No. 011-23366730, 8750870522

# PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that 1. Mrs. Namita Priya Agarwal and 2. Mr. Piyus Gaurishankar Agarwal are the owners of flat No. 3 (Three), on Third Floor (SUI-I Second Floor), addressing 147/50 Sq. Mts of Builtup area in the building known as Space Twelve Apartment constructed on Plot No. 206/A out of S. No. 728/10/13B in 25A/37 Jangpura and being at Nishkith in the limits of Nishkith Municipal Corporation, Noida.

Notice is hereby given that the original Deed of Apartment and registration certificate thereof registered at S. No. 6159/2008 on 04.10.2008 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar of Noida, Noida executed by Space Developers Corporation in favour of 1. Mrs. Namita Priya Agarwal and 2. Mr. Piyus Gaurishankar Agarwal is lost and unavailable with the owners and the owner state that the same is not deposited with any bank or lender as security or otherwise or no charge is created on the property.

It is stated by all persons that if any one finds original Deed of Apartment and registration receipt or has the original document with him is hereby requested submit the same to the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. Dated this 02<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2021

Advocate Ramesh Kumar D/11732613  
L-54/1924, First Floor, Farid Road, Mohan Garden Extension, Badli, Sector 14, New Delhi - 110044

# NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

By, CSE/TW, DIVISIONAL Railway Manager OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, ROOM NO. 203, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055 for & on behalf of President of India invites online OPEN E- tender in single packet system from the experienced & established contractors having sufficient experience in similar work and satisfying minimum eligibility criteria as prescribed in the tender notice work.

1 Name of work Provision of OGC & associated equipments in Atankh-Arman-Dera Baba Nanak & Balala-Qadian Sections of FZR Division.

2 Approximate cost of the work Rs. 3,73,29,333.80 (Three Crore Seventy Three Lakh and Twenty Nine Thousand Three Hundred Thirty Three and paise Eighty only)

3 Cost of tender form Nil

4 Address from where tender document can be downloaded Indian Railways website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in) from 02.03.2021 from 11:30 hrs.

5 Earnest money Nil

6 Completion period 09 (Nine) months

7 Date and time of submission of tender and opening of tender 02/03/2021 at 11:30 hrs

8 Detailed Tender Notice Available at Indian Railways website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in)

No. 172-SGP/TW/NR/04 Dated: 01.03.2021 458/21

# SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Lado, DO Ram Kishanwar, R/o H. No. 24001, Gali No. 19, Shadipur, Village Patel Nagar, New Delhi, has been missing since 15-01-2021 from the Jurisdiction of P.S. Ranjeet Nagar, New Delhi, Age: 16 years, Height: 4'2", Complexion : Fair, Face: Round, Built: Strong, Wearing: Blue Colour Sult & Black Colour Trouser and Black Shoes in her feet.

In this regard a FIR No. 18/21 dated 16.01.2021, U/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Ranjeet Nagar, New Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this girl but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: [ctc@ptcbl.gov.in](mailto:ctc@ptcbl.gov.in)  
Website: <http://ptcbl.in>  
Ph. No. 011-24368639, 24368641  
PS. Ranjeet Nagar, New Delhi  
Ph. 011-25740407, 8750870436  
DP/672/CD/2021

# NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

By, CSE/TW, DIVISIONAL Railway Manager OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, ROOM NO. 203, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055 for & on behalf of President of India invites online OPEN E- tender in single packet system from the experienced & established contractors having sufficient experience in similar work and satisfying minimum eligibility criteria as prescribed in the tender notice work.

1 Name of work Provision of OGC & associated equipments in Atankh-Arman-Dera Baba Nanak & Balala-Qadian Sections of FZR Division.

2 Approximate cost of the work Rs. 4,47,66,231.17 (Four Crore Forty Seven Lakh Six Thousand Two Hundred Thirty One and paise Seventy only)

3 Cost of tender form Nil

4 Address from where tender document can be downloaded Indian Railways website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in) from 02.03.2021 from 11:30 hrs.

5 Earnest money Nil

6 Completion period 11 (Eleven) months

7 Date and time of submission of tender and opening of tender 02/03/2021 at 11:30 hrs

8 Detailed Tender Notice Available at Indian Railways website [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in)

No. 172-SGP/TW/NR/04 Dated: 01.03.2021 459/21

# APPEAL FOR CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

General public is hereby informed that one female fetus was found dead at BG-7, Kothi No. 134, White House, Paschim Vihar, Delhi on 16.02.2021, at 08.40 am. In this regard a FIR/DO No. 52/21 u/s 315 IPC, Dated 16.02.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, DO: Unknown, R/O: Unknown, Age: about 4-5 months fetus, Complexion: Fair, Height: 9" inch. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead female fetus but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead female fetus please inform the undersigned.

S.H.O  
P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi  
Ph. 011-25263471, 25267286

# SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Lado, DO Ram Kishanwar, R/o H. No. 24001, Gali No. 19, Shadipur, Village Patel Nagar, New Delhi, has been missing since 15-01-2021 from the Jurisdiction of P.S. Ranjeet Nagar, New Delhi, Age: 16 years, Height: 4'2", Complexion : Fair, Face: Round, Built: Strong, Wearing: Blue Colour Sult & Black Colour Trouser and Black Shoes in her feet.

In this regard a FIR No. 18/21 dated 16.01.2021, U/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Ranjeet Nagar, New Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this girl but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: [ctc@ptcbl.gov.in](mailto:ctc@ptcbl.gov.in)  
Website: <http://ptcbl.in>  
Ph. No. 011-24368639, 24368641  
PS. Ranjeet Nagar, New Delhi  
Ph. 011-25740407, 8750870436  
DP/672/CD/2021





## SleepOnIt

A disorder called obstructive sleep apnea that occurs when breathing is repeatedly interrupted during sleep is common in people with thinking and memory problems, says a new study. The risk of cognitive impairment increases as people age. The study involved 67 people with an average age of 73 who had cognitive impairment



## DOCYARD

DR COL VIJAY DUTTA

Senior Consultant  
- Internal Medicine

INDIAN SPINAL INJURIES  
CENTRE



## Take care of your throat



Dysphagia, a medical condition that makes swallowing of food or fluid difficult, is one of the lesser-known side effects of COVID-19 infection. The condition has so far been observed as a fallout of viral and bacterial infections, pharyngeal and esophageal obstructions or other palate problems and neurological diseases. Dysphagia was witnessed in maximum cases of severe cases of COVID-19, especially those who developed acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) and were ventilated.

**Most of the COVID-19 patients also experienced a change in their voice, ranging from a rough one to a deeper-pitched one or a mere whisper. The inflammation of vocal cords is exacerbated by long periods of coughing**

There are a few ways to feel better even if one has this condition:

- Think of baby food and bring your food to that consistency. Include a lot of fluid such as juices to the diet. As you get comfortable, slowly shift to a normal diet. Chew the food completely before swallowing
- Sit upright when you eat or drink. Start with liquids using straw. Do not lay down or bend while eating or drinking. Stand or walk for a minimum of 30 minutes after meals
- Small portion sizes help to ease the discomfort of dysphagia. Clear your mouth completely before taking the next bite

Most of the COVID-19 patients also experienced a change in their voice, ranging from a rough one to a deeper-pitched one or a mere whisper. The inflammation of vocal cords is exacerbated by long periods of coughing. Such an effort makes the vocal folds put extra effort to clear any mucus from lungs and throat, in the process making them swollen and inflamed.

Easing the sore throat and post-COVID voice problem can be done by following these steps:

- Keep yourself well hydrated with warm fluids. Drink about two liters of fluid (plain water and fresh juices) daily. Avoid caffeine or alcohol as they can aggravate the condition
- Warm saline gargles and steam inhalation for at least 15 minutes
- Try to rest your voice as much as possible.

If you are in hospital then you must keep a few things in mind that comprises immediately informing the concerned Doctor or paramedical staff immediately if you are feeling more short of breath during or after the meals. If you are recovering at home, then you must be careful about a few things and directly inform your General Physician if you are facing problems while eating or drinking something and coughing or choking while having your food. Such patients should avoid shouting, smoking or chewing tobacco and going in dusty areas. Medicated lozenges can also be used.

## SUMMERCoolERS

**PAPAYA:** Papayas are rich in Vitamin C, fibre and antioxidants which prevent cholesterol build up in your arteries and boosts immunity, apart from the several other health benefits.

It also helps in weight loss because the fibre content in papaya leaves you feeling full and clears your bowel movement.

It is also a rich source of phytonutrients and flavonoids that prevent your cells from undergoing free radical damage. Some studies have also linked the consumption of papaya to reduced risk of colon and prostate cancer.

The presence of various vitamins and nutrients also help in preventing the skin from free radical damage thereby keeping all the signs of ageing at bay.

Several studies have shown that eating papayas also help in maintaining and improving heart health.



## Get ready for COVID jab

DR KANCHAN SANYAL lists the precautions one should take and things to keep in mind before going for the vaccine

With India beginning the COVID-19 vaccination phase 2 from March 1 administering vaccines to those above the age of 60 and people with other medical diseases, it won't be too long when people above 50 and less will also be able to receive the jab.

Despite the fact that the virus is a new and a highly transmissible one, the medical fraternity has learnt immensely from it in the last year. It has managed to fight the disease, analyse and lay down protocols for the treatments, and above all, have worked from all parts of the world together as one to produce reliable and safe vaccines in record time.

Therefore, as your much awaited turn rolls in, here are some precautions you should remember to adhere to before you go to the health facility for your inoculation. Some of these precautions apply to any vaccine you may have taken before this.

- Take normal diet the evening before the vaccine.
- Avoid alcohol before the injection (and for a few days after). This helps in reducing any mild side effects you may have.
- Clarify with your physician about your underlying illnesses and medical history (the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, Govt. of India has issued clear guidelines and your physician will be aware of this).

**Do not worry about side effects. Any vaccine can have side effects but they are minuscule compared to the good they do to the individual and to the society**

India has issued clear guidelines and your physician will be aware of this). The COVID-19 vaccine: The three basics of COVID-19 preventive measures will have to be followed (i.e. wearing a mask, hand hygiene and social distancing) at the vaccination site and in public places.

## How to get your dose

India has embarked on the third and the largest phase of vaccination drive against Covid-19 which will reach out to around 27 crore of population aged above 60 or above 45 with co-morbid conditions.

However, registration is required to receive the vaccine doses. The Government has provided three modes for the registration of eligible beneficiaries — online, on-site and facilitated cohort registration.

The first is advance self-registration under which the beneficiaries will be able to self-register in advance by downloading the CO-WIN 2.0 portal and through other IT applications such as Arogya Setu etc.

Eligible people can register themselves on the platform from Monday, March 1, 9 am onwards. The platform can be accessed via web or through a mobile application.

Eligible beneficiaries can register at the CO-WIN 2.0 portal through their mobile number following a step by step process. After registration, the application will show the government and private hospitals serving as Covid Vaccination Centres (CVC) with the date and time of the available schedules. The beneficiary would be able to choose the CVC of his/her choice and book an appointment for vaccination.

IANS

decide for yourself but remember that we already have a vast experience in vaccines, tried and tested in many diseases to make the world a healthy place for ourselves and our children.

With the COVID-19 vaccines, we have learnt to deal with this disease scientifically, clearly and with optimism.

The writer is Advisor, Wellness and Wellbeing, Columbia Pacific Communities

## DadiKa Kehna

*Toothaches are common, especially if one prefers to eat a lot of sweets.*

**ROSHANI DEVI** shares easy home remedies that can help ease the pain without much hassle



Where all might have had a toothache at least once in a while. While as painful it is, it is also extremely annoying.

Here are a few remedies that can help relieve the pain.

Rinse with salt water. Salt water is a natural disinfectant. One can rinse their mouth with it to relieve the pain and inflammation caused by bacteria.

Use garlic. Garlic can help in killing the harmful bacteria that causes dental plaque and can also help in relieving toothache. Crush a clove of garlic and



apply it to the affected area and let it sit for five minutes. Alternatively, you can also chew a clove of garlic. Cloves can help. Cloves are known to relieve toothache and reduce inflammation for many years. Dab a small amount of clove oil onto a cotton ball and apply it to the affected area. You may want to dilute the clove oil with a few drops of a carrier oil, like olive oil, or water. Do this a few times per day.

## 'Regular exercise is key'

Experts talk us through the thyroid disorders, reasons and how one can keep them at bay

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), one of the apex trade associations of the country successfully organised its annual edition of the webinar series on 'Illness to Wellness' campaign, themed around "Thyroid & Related Disorders - Impact on Health". ASSOCHAM organised this webinar with an objective to cascade mass awareness and disseminate knowledge & wisdom for prevention and treatment of thyroid.

The virtual event was graced by a team of eminent Gastroenterologists, hepatologists who shared their valuable inputs on causes, trends and recent advancements in the treatment of thyroid.

The ASSOCHAM's campaign running under a CSR initiative supported by SAVLON, aims at promoting healthy living with a keen focus on wellness and preventive health through healthy

habits, diet, exercise, and holistic health.

Sharing his perspective, Dr Joshi said: "Thyroid disorder occurs when thyroid gland does not work properly either permanently or temporarily. However, the disease is treatable and one needs to consult endocrinologists once in three months and in some cases only once in a year".

Dr Joshi also emphasised on following healthy lifestyle, balanced diet and follow regular exercise regime.

Addressing the ASSOCHAM webinar, Dr Tripathi talked about the various thyroid disorders in detail. He said, the commonest thyroid disorder is Hypothyroidism, which can affect the entire life span of a human from congenital hypothyroidism at birth, to juvenile hypothyroidism, adult onset hypothyroidism and even in the elderly age group. The

treatment of hypothyroidism is generally lifelong, but it is easy to begin and continue and is without side effects.

Dr Kapoor, in his address also explained thyroid is a butterfly shaped gland in the neck which weighs about 18 grams it is not a disease. The under functioning glands leads to hypothyroidism and the over functioning glands lead to hyperthyroidism.

On behalf of the chamber, Rajput said that following a regular exercise regime, maintaining healthy weight together with low fat, low sugar, low rice and high fibre diet can go a long way for everyone to keep such ailments at bay.

He added: "In India over 42 million people suffer from thyroid ailments and 1 in 10 adults suffer from hypothyroidism, a condition in which the thyroid gland doesn't produce the required hormones to meet the needs of the body. It can also cause serious complications during pregnancy."

## INBRIEF

A Central Fabrication Unit for prosthetics and orthotics is being developed at Narayan Seva Sansthan with support from Rotary Foundation. The unit will provide artificial limbs and equipment to better NSS's global campaign for empowering the differently-abled. The cutting-edge technology installed at the unit will ensure quality and affordable prosthetics and will help to bring down the cost of the procedures.

During the programme Rotary governor of the District 6900, Rajesh Agrawal said: "To give a fresh start to the differently-abled, NSS is serving needy individuals by offering services such as free food, operative surgery, limbs, education, and skills. With setting up for artificial limb manufacturing, which will bring us additional accomplishment to change the lives of differently-abled people."

In a two-phase project, Global Grant by Rotary Foundation, Rotary Club Emory-Druid Hills (USA District-6900), Rotary Club Udaipur Mewar budget is USD 182995 passed in the first phase.

Speaking on occasion Prashant Agarwal, President, Narayan Seva Sansthan said: "Due to the Rotary Foundation, our various efforts to establish this unit have now been successful. NSS hopes that the installation of the central manufacturing unit will meet the demands and release of the patient load to achieve stability in the quality of equipment manufactured in a short period of time."

## BEAUTY LIES WITHIN

For a flawless skin, lustrous hair and a slim figure, good health must be on top of the list, says

SHAHNAZ HUSSAIN



Good health and beauty are two sides of the same coin. For a flawless skin, lustrous hair and a slim figure, good health must be on top of the list. A healthy woman is also better equipped to deal with the stresses of daily life. A body that is healthy is imperative for preserving beauty and building up immunity.

The right diet is absolutely essential to good looks. A diet for beauty should be high in vitamin-rich foods and low in carbohydrates and sugar. The answer is to choose from a variety of foods, to ensure a balanced diet. Fresh fruits, raw salads, sprouted grains and yogurt should be included in the daily diet. Have whole grain cereals. Reduce tea and coffee and have freshly extracted fruit and vegetable juices, lassi and clear soups. Avoid fried snacks, rich gravies and desserts, and confectionary items. Add the juice of a lemon to a glass of water and have it first thing in the morning. Drinking adequate water helps to eliminate toxins and wastes from the system.

Exercise, together with a balanced diet, can work wonders. Not only does it build up stamina and strength, but improves blood circulation to the skin and scalp. Every tissue of the body needs oxygen, so begin your exercises by doing deep breathing in front of an open window. Check with your doctor before beginning regular exercise. Walking is good physical activity, as it exercises all the muscle groups. The ancient Indian doctrine of Yoga has attained universal popularity today. In fact, it has become very relevant to modern lifestyle, bringing about harmony of body and mind.

Pay attention to cleansing and daily hygiene. Improper daily hygiene can undermine the health in a number of ways. The skin is influenced by many external factors, like dirt, chemical pollutants, bacteria and virus. By daily washing, bathing and cleaning, we can remove impurities and keep ourselves free from infections. A daily bath, or shower, is a must, especially on returning home. During the ancient times, infusions of herbs were used to wash the body. Neem leaves in hot water and let it stand overnight. Use the water to bathe the next morning.

Adequate sleep is also essential for fitness. Sleep is a way of restoring energy to the body and is nature's best cure. It is a beauty treatment in itself.

A positive mental attitude is also important, because mind and body are closely related. All of us encounter a certain amount of stress and anxiety in our daily life. It is a matter of learning how to cope with it. We have to train our minds towards positive thinking and relaxation. Regular patterns of rest and exercise, along with hobbies and interests certainly help. Some people are so aware of the world around them. They are always keen to learn new things. Hobbies, interests and new activities can actually be very relaxing to the mind. They also give another dimension to the personality.

Indeed, the finest foundation for beauty consists of some common factors, which we often overlook.

The writer is founder of The Shahnaz Hussain Group





## TRENDBLAZER

### KANGANA REMINISCES ABOUT CHILDHOOD



Bollywood actor **KANGANA RANAUT** has reminisced about her childhood as it is her birthday month.

Kangana shared a childhood picture on Instagram. In the image, a young Kangana is seen dressed in salwar kameez.

Alongside the image, she wrote: "My birthday month, growing up grannies told stories that after a sister another girl child birth disappointed everyone..."

### fairtalk

ADAH SHARMA



"I've always felt more comfortable around animals than humans. I'm the most uncomfortable in social places like parties with people I don't know. But put me in a forest with animals and I feel at home. Animals are uncomplicated, easy to interact with. They live in the moment. I recently rescued an injured bird while shooting and named it Twitter."

### dailytalk

VINAY PATHAK



"I remember our screening at the Berlinale where baring me, Udit and her parents, the rest of the audience in the screening theatre, which was a full house, was an entirely international audience. The way the audience reacted to the story after the screening was overwhelming. *Dust* is an Indian film with a global appeal and that is why we touched the right chords."

### HOW ELLIE KEPT HER PREGNANCY PRIVATE

Singer **ELLIE GOULDING** reveals she used her husband **Casper Jopling's** coat to hide her pregnancy for the first six months.



Chatting on a show, Ellie was asked how her pregnancy is going and how she hid it. "It's different. I stole my husband's coat for about six months," she revealed.



## Nano influencers are proving to be the next big leap for social media. By TEAM VIVA

As the world experiences the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an upsurge in people turning active on social media. This phase has unlocked the creative minds and pushed people to explore relatively fresh opportunities. Aradhana Srivastava, Public Relations Expert from Savin Communication says, "Social Platforms have hidden potential, if cultivated fairly can yield exceptional output both in matter of content and volume."

Social Media has always been a highly interactive platform catering to users of a young generation, giving rise to a new community called "Influencers." These social media connoisseurs have turned into a driving force for the national economy in the most surprising way. They are the first preference of any brand because of their better reach among millions of Instagram users and creators.

Welcome the nano influencers

The latest community of influencers added to the Instagram family is popularly called "Nano Influencers." These are the social media warriors with the power to influence a small group of 1000-5000 people and have the ability to nurture communities with specific interests and influence.

Partnering with nano-influencers is fast becoming a major strategy point for



brands with budgetary constraints due to the pandemic. A report by Marketing Week projected that 52 per cent of brands are planning to collaborate with more nano-influencers in the forthcoming months and 44 per cent of brands who are already collaborating, plan to continue their association with

these new-age agents of social media growth. Engaging with such influencers is not only cost-effective but also helpful in reaching highly engaged audiences.

New-age celebs

Remember the ice bucket challenge? Those were the days when film

celebrities used to set trends that went viral but the situation has flipped now. Nowadays, it is the Nano influencers who are driving public opinion in a micro-manner than global celebrities. No wonder that this community has become the new-age celebs and has even motivated various brands to collaborate.

Taking over competition

Nano-influencers may take over from the micro-influencers as key brand partners in the coming years. Micro-influencers who have followers between 5k to 100k have been the premiere preference for any brand campaigns for the past couple of years but it is being observed that nano influencers have established a closer relationship with their audience and are considered a more reliable option to take the brand forward.

The need of the hour

Since there are thousands of nano influencers creating content for Instagram, brands look for a platform through which they can directly pick the right influencer for their needs. One such forthcoming platform is 'We the Influencers.' It is an online community of talented and enthusiastic influencers from all across the country. This platform will cater to a common room for both the brand and the influencer, allowing them to communicate and create fruitful collaborations.

A helpful companion

Marketing specialists are searching for creators with an individual approach and who enjoy the trust of their followers. Since the nano influencers tick both the boxes, they've become the ideal companion for brands looking for new ways to spread their message. What makes this association better is the fact that these young guns are also highly dedicated to their work and are open to learning new things.

## TREND TOOL

# Decoding fusion

Design your spaces by combining elegance with durability

Do you often find yourself juggling to achieve a fine balance between the lifespan and design of our interiors? Trust us, it's not a herculean task. Undoubtedly, home decor must be planned very thoughtfully whether you are re-purposing the space or thinking of some minor tweaks. There are various elements and aspects to keep in mind, such as the climate in your city and the design aesthetics. Today, the evolving technology and innovations have ensured the integration of all these elements under one roof. Parul Mittal, Director, Greenlam Industries Ltd shares a few simple decor themes that offer you the best of both worlds - durability and design.

A SOOTHING FACELIFT

The entry of your house is usually through the living room which sets the tone for the entire home and leaves the first impression. Therefore, a minimal and clean look is needed for such spaces. Calming shades give your mind, body and soul a certain level of relaxation. Throw muted shades of yellow and grey to your cushions placed on a sofa set in muted blue. These colours will instantly infuse a comforting vibe around your space. The best way to distinguish your colour scheme is by keeping your walls, door and floor crisp white.

While visual impact of doors must not be compromised as they are some of the most visible design elements in the house, its resistance and lifespan should top your checklist.

WONDERS OF NATURAL WOOD

The majestic grandeur and simplicity of a natural element like wood is just limitless. Wood holds the power to make an unmatched statement and looks absolutely charming when used for home interiors. If you have cream or off-white interiors, opting for a darker shade of



wooden doors to complement the entire ambience. Keep your area spick and span by placing minimal kitchen essentials out in the open. Make it look more modern by showcasing your silver crockery and glassware in open cabinets.

OPTIMISTICALLY YOURS

We all have stepped into a new year with positivity and hopefulness. How about we paint this outlook all over the house to ensure every touch point encourages you? Spill the pantone colour 'Ultimate Gray' on your walls to add an instant warmth and comfort. Since, we are talking about all

the earthy tones, we suggest going for a crisp yet classic white shade for doors. It will not only exude sheer panache but also a strong sense of calmness. Make your space functional and minimal; this can be done by placing a statement sofa and a mini-breakfast table in opposite directions.

Every element of your house speaks to you and brings along a purpose to fulfill. The three distinct decor looks are an inspiration for designing a space that brings elan as well as ensures durability. So, think no further and get on with curating your own dream-like haven.

## USP



**State Bank of India Chandigarh Circle - Sports Fest 2021**  
Chandigarh: State Bank of India, Chandigarh Circle Sports Fest 2021 concluded yesterday which was held for two days starting from 27.02.2021. During the SBI Chandigarh Circle sports fest lot of games were held including Cricket, Table Tennis, Badminton, Carrom and Chess in which huge participation was seen by the staff members of SBI who participated in this SBI Sports Fest with full zeal and zest. Earlier, on 27.02.2021 group matches were played, and the finals were played on 28.02.2021 for different sporting event including Cricket, Table Tennis, Badminton, Carrom and Chess. The prize distribution ceremony was held at Sector 82, Mohali Sports Ground in which Sh. Anukul Bhattacharya, Chief General Manager, SBI Chandigarh Circle gave away the winner's trophy and other prizes to the winners. During SBI Chandigarh Circle Sports fest 2021, General Managers, DGM & CDO along with other senior functionaries were also present during the prize distribution ceremony.

**B.K.M. College of Education recognized as Authorized Training Centre of NI-MSME, Govt. of India**

Ni-MSME, an Organization of the Ministry of MSME, Government of India recognized B.K.M. College of Education, Balachaur as its Authorized Training Centre (ATC) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship programs. These programs by Govt. of India aim to enhance the professional skills of youth and cope up with the issue of unemployment unskilled youth in India. As an ATC the college will train the students in ten skill-based courses: Diploma in Nursery teacher's training (2 years), Nursery Teacher's training (1 year), Diploma in Fire & Safety Management (Duration 1 year), Advance Diploma in Fire & Safety Management (6 Months), Certificate in Fireman (6 Months), Diploma in Digital Marketing & E-Commerce (6 Months), Certificate in Digital Marketing (3 Months), Early Childhood Care & Education (1 year), Certificate in Nanny (6 months) and Yoga Teacher's Training (1 year). The students who have completed 10th or 10+2 are eligible to get enrollment in most of these courses. These courses have wide array of scope both in India and abroad. Students can also secure Government jobs after completing these courses. It is worth mentioning here that the authorities of Ni-MSME, NCFSE Group of Institutions (National Training Partner) and State Training Associate Anand Group of Colleges Amritsar will guide and monitor the ATCs for smooth conduct of these courses. The College Management shall grant special fee concession to the selected First Ten Candidates seeking admission in the college.

Principal Dr. Balbir Singh Janwal remarked that it is a matter of honour for the college to be recognized as the first ATC in S.B.S. Nagar (Navanshahr) District by Govt. of India. These recognized courses which the college would offer are professional and job oriented. After passing these courses even a 10th pass could get high salary employment in India and abroad. The aspirants can get further information regarding these courses from the College website [www.bkmcollge.edu.in](http://www.bkmcollge.edu.in) or contact personally in college office for admission.

# REMEMBERING HIS CANVAS

Artist **SAYED HAIDER RAZA**, who would have turned 100 this year, lives through his works even today. By **UMA NAIK**

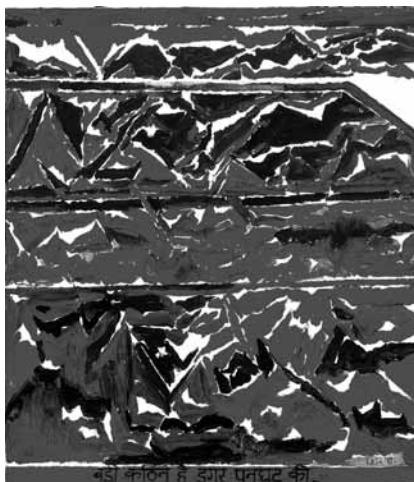
At the art gallery, Akar Prakar, there are canvases created by Sayed Haider Raza in his last few years. They are a testimony to his love for painting and clearly prove that he was a pilgrim of deeper intensities in geometry and symbolism.

Amongst all the works in this seminal show, it is *Shantibindu* that strikes a deep chord in this critic. In a conversation to me in 2004 on the eve of his 85th birthday, he said, "My *bindu* is primarily a philosophical expression, an act of faith in the infinite, an affirmation of spirituality. When I sit down in front of one of my paintings to contemplate, I suddenly feel a great expansion of the spirit, I feel like a man liberated from the wants of material desires, a man who belongs to the vastness of the present and past."

*Shantibindu* tryst

Raza Sahib's tryst with the *Shantibindu* began in the 1990s. The black orb that went beyond the black sun into infinite realms and references gave way to a set of concentric geometric circles that formed a suffused ethereal *Bindu*, which looked like a symphony of peace created for a vision of harmonies. For Raza, the recurring *Bindu* became a new corollary on canvas with infinite variations.

The *Shantibindu* for Raza was an exemplification of *Purusha Prakriti* principles. These principles dwell on the infinite, on dualities and deeper philosophies of the inner spirit and outer realities of nature's relativity. Born of a meditative mooring, his *bindu* was the device of a spiritual firmament. The

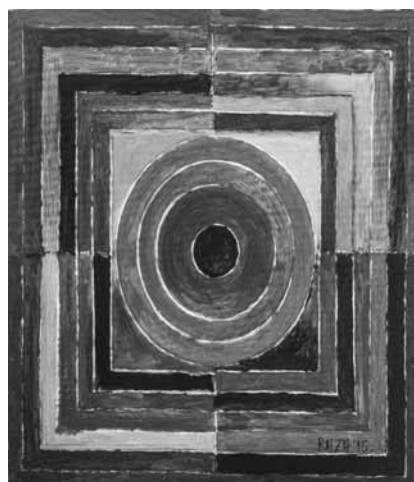


softly nuanced pastel toned circles resonate with a harmony emanating from the epicentre. Their terracotta and soft tinted colour tones form an elegant exemplar. The *Shantibindu* became an iconic nucleus in which the central core

was an energy that created a ritual.

Nostalgia and memory

Looking at this show highlights the power and prowess of his paintings that come rushing into human mem-



ory. His early landscapes of European cities, churches, glowing ember like canvases that spoke of his passion for nocturnes, his midnight moorings of works like *Tapovan*, *La Terre*, *Saurashtra*, *Rajasthan* and his

*Shantibindu* series, all become a part of his pilgrimage of painting. India's avant grade artist who combined expressionist brushwork with the symbolism of geometry woven into personal memory lives through his works.



