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BJP pits Suvendu against Didi

Bharati Ghosh, pacer Ashok Dinda in BJP list of 57 candidates



SAGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The high-profile Nandigram Assembly seat will see a titanic clash in the West Bengal polls with the BJP fielding Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's former close aide Suvendu Adhikari against her. The BJP on Saturday released the first list of its 57 candidates for the first two phases of Bengal Assembly elections starting from March 27.

The list released a day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Brigade rally in Kolkata carries the names of the party's star campaigner Suvendu Adhikari who will contest from the high-profile seat of Nandigram against



Mamata Banerjee.

The other two notable names on the list are former India pacer Ashok Dinda, who will contest from Moyna in East Midnapore, and former IPS officer Bharati Ghosh, who will take on another retired IPS officer Humayun Kabir from Debra Assembly seat in West Midnapore.

The saffron outfit announced candidates for all but three of the 60 seats which will go to polls in the first two of the eight-phase elections that will start from March 27 and end on April 27. One seat of Bagmundi in Purulia district has been left for alliance partner AJSU.

Adhikari who reached

Nandigram from Delhi — to a rousing welcome by party supporters shouting Jai Shri Ram slogans — hours before the list was published by the party top brass in the national Capital, attacked the Chief Minister for remembering Nandigram during the elections time only.

"She is a rank outsider here and I am the Bhumi Putra (son of the soil)... she remembers Nandigram that catapulted her to power in 2011 only when the polls are round the corner... the people of Nandigram have decided to teach her a lesson," said Adhikari, who has already vowed to defeat the Chief Minister by half-a-lakh votes.

Reacting to his statements, senior TMC leader Saugato Roy said, "The Trinamool does not want to talk about traitors who have stabbed in the back of Mamata Banerjee. The people will give him a befitting reply."

Adhikari, a former MP and State Minister left the TMC in December last year. He had been the Man Friday of the Bengal Chief Minister handling the party organisational affairs in about a dozen districts before he left the party.

Mamata had released the list of Trinamool Congress candidates on Friday. The TMC released the list for all the 291 seats and left three seats for alliance partner Gorkha Janmukti Morcha. The Left too had released its list of candidates for the first two phases on Friday.

Trivedi joins BJP; right man in right party now: Nadda



Former Union Minister Dinesh Trivedi joins BJP in the presence of the party president JP Nadda in New Delhi on Saturday

PTI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the West Bengal polls, former Railway Minister and Trinamool Congress Member of Parliament Dinesh Trivedi on Saturday joined the BJP.

BJP president JP Nadda welcomed him into the party's fold claiming that Trivedi crossed over not on account of "opportunism" but for the "ideological reasons".

The 70-year-old Trivedi maintained that he has switched sides to "serve the country better".

"This was the golden moment I had been waiting for," Trivedi said after joining the BJP at party headquarters here in the presence of Nadda and Union Minister Piyush Goyal.

Trivedi resigned his Rajya Sabha and Trinamool membership on February 12, saying he felt "suffocated" because of the violence in West Bengal and his inability to do anything about it. Alluding to 'parivar' in West Bengal, he said after joining the BJP he felt being with the "janta parivar".

Centre rushes Covid teams to Maha, Punjab

Return to Covid test, track, treat, Health Ministry tells States, UTs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has rushed high-level multi-disciplinary public health teams to Maharashtra and Punjab in view of the increase in the number of daily Covid-19 cases being reported by these States. It has also asked high-case load States and Union Territories like Maharashtra and Gujarat to continue with the strategy of "test, track and treat" that had yielded rich dividends at the height of the pandemic.

The States have been asked to collaborate with private hospitals to open up vaccination time-table for a minimum of 15 days and a maximum of 28 days at a time.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr Vinod Paul on Saturday interacted with health secretaries and MDs of Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Chandigarh, which have reported increased number of Covid cases in the last few days.



Elderly people wait to get vaccinated against Covid-19 at Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation hospital at Vashi, Navi Mumbai on Saturday

PTI

Mental health problems in 20% Covid survivors: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

One in every five Covid-19 survivors are showing symptoms including fatigue, cognitive problems and a range of psychiatric problems, a research review led by Oxford Brookes University has noted. It also painted a gloomy picture for the future, warning that more number of people will be affected by neuropsychiatric and cognitive complications.

The study has come close on the heels of similar observation from the World Health

Organization (WHO) officials who recently noted that the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has caused more "mass trauma" than World War II.

The observation hold importance in the context of India where more number of people with mental health disorder could pose further burden on the already patchy mental health care system. One in seven people or a total of 197.3 million people live with mental illness in India, according to the 2019 Global Burden of Disease Study.

Adopt world-class systems, PM exhorts defence forces

Modi addresses Combined Commanders' meet in Guj

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Urging the defence forces to keep pace with rapid advancements in war fighting capabilities all over world, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked them to "rid themselves of legacy systems and practices that have outlived their utility and relevance."

Making this observation while addressing the Combined Commanders' Conference in Kevadia, Gujarat, Modi also conveyed his appreciation for the "resolute dedication" shown by the armed forces over the past year in the context of the corona pandemic and the challenging situation on the northern border with China.

He stressed the importance of enhancing indigenisation in the national security system, not just in sourcing equipment and weapons but



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits an exhibition of innovations by our armed forces during Combined Commanders' Conference at Kevadia, in Narmada district

PTI

also in the doctrines, procedures and customs practised in the armed forces, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

Modi was briefed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) about the discussions during this year's conference, the statement said. He particularly appreciated the inclusion of Junior Commissioned Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers this year.

Incidentally, this was the first time that personnel below

officer rank were part of the high-level meeting held annually. The jawans shared their views on operational matters with the top military leadership besides the Prime Minister.

Emphasising the need for planning in both military and civilian parts of the National security architecture, Modi also called for a "holistic approach, focused on breaking down civil-military silos and on expediting the speed of decision making."

Remove Modi's photo from job certificates in poll-bound States: EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the run-up to Assembly elections in four States and a Union Territory, the Election Commission (EC) has asked the Centre to remove Prime Minister Narendra Modi's picture from coronavirus vaccination certificates being offered to beneficiaries in these States.

The EC directive came after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress registered a complaint saying that it violates the Model Code of Conduct.

In its letter to the Health Ministry, the EC referred to certain provisions of the Model Code related to the use of advertisement at the cost of the public exchequer. The direction to the Ministry does not mention Prime Minister Narendra Modi's name but says the Ministry has to follow the Model Code of Conduct in letter and spirit. The Government may have used filters to hide the PM's picture from the certificate, which could take some time for the Ministry to fully implement these directions on the certificates given to those who take the Covid-19 vaccine in poll-bound West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala and Puducherry.

150 Rohingyas detained in J&K for illegal stay

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In a major crackdown on illegal immigrants staying in Jammu & Kashmir more than 150 Rohingyas have been detained at a holding centre in Sub Jail Hiranagar at the end of the verification process of their travel documents.

According to official sources during the special drive conducted at the Maulana Azad stadium in Jammu on Saturday police authorities verified travel documents and collected biometrics of large numbers of illegal immigrants including Rohingyas from Myanmar.

During the verification process the stadium was kept out of bounds for local media persons and none were permitted to enter the premises.



Farmers during Kisan Ektta Morcha protest at KMP Expressway near Kundli in Haryana on Saturday

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The Haryana Police had made arrangements for traffic diversions and deployed adequate personnel.

The call for blocking the expressway was given by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of protesting farmer unions which is spearheading the agitation against the legislations.

Farmer block KMP to mark 100th protest day

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Farmers protesting the Centre's three farm laws on Saturday blocked the six-lane Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway at some places in Haryana to mark the completion of 100 days of their agitation at the Delhi borders.

The road blockade began at 11 am and continued till 4 pm. Farmers holding black flags and wearing black arm-bands and some women protesters with black "dupattas" shouted slogans against the BJP-led Government for not acceding to their demands.

Protesters in Sonapat and Jhajjar districts and some other places brought their tractor-trolleys and other vehicles and parked them in the middle of the KMP Expressway in some stretches.

CAPSULE

PAK PM IMRAN KHAN WINS TRUST VOTE

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday comfortably won a trust vote in the National Assembly amid Opposition boycott, bolstering his Government's position after an embarrassing defeat in this week's Senate elections.

NOTED KANNADA POET NSL BHATTA NO MORE

Bengaluru: Noted Kannada poet, critic and translator NS Lakshminarayana Bhatta died here early on Saturday. He was 84 and was suffering from age related ailments.

RAPE VICTIM SET ABLAZE DIES OF BURNS IN JAIPUR

Jaipur: A 30-year-old rape victim who was allegedly set on fire at her home in Rajasthan's Hanumangar succumbed to her burn injuries at Jaipur's SMS Hospital.

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HOME THEATRE

Big disappointment



COMING TO AMERICA 2
Amazon
*ing: Eddie Murphy, Arsenio Hall, Jermaine Fowler, Wesley Snipes, James Earl Jones
Rated: 3/10

It is not only strange but bizarre that a movie's sequel would be released 33 years after the prequel. However, what is even worse is that while *Coming to America* (the original) directed by John Landis and based on a story originally created by Eddie Murphy was a rom-com that managed to keep one engrossed in the film — at the end it was a love story, part two is anything but funny or even remotely romantic

in nature. Unless one considers a few scenes spent on two young people talking alone with one of them aspiring to open a salon of her own.
Here she befriends a prince no less and supposedly in love and her dream is to open a salon of her own!
One does manage to get over this rather strange dream but what one can't get over is the unfunny dialogues. Not only are the risqué, the hand gestures are even worse. And what the hell was Wesley Snipes thinking when he agreed to this boggles the mind. It does obviate his better work — *Blade* series comes to mind.
Directed by Craig Brewer and produced by Kevin Misher and

Eddie Murphy, this sequel may have started off on a good note but unfortunately all it manages to do in the 110 minutes is make you cringe.
Maybe Murphy thought that revisiting the original that had a cult following would be a great idea but all he manages to do is makes one wonder why he needed to do this in this horrible manner that take away from its prequel.
Coming To America, the must awaited film ends up disappointing and is a huge bore.
Watch only if you have nothing else to do and want to catch up on the stars of the original movie.

Riveting true story told well

MURDER AMONG THE MORMONS
Netflix
*ing: A true-Crime
Rated: 5/10

Of late Netflix has been releasing true-crime sagas. Take for example *The Night Stalker* or *The Cecil Hotel* that recently found their way on the OTT platform. However bizarre or strange such docu-movies may be, one can't shy away from the truth that they are absolutely riveting and unfold rather brilliantly. It could stem from the fact that if there is a murder and then another coupled with a Church in the middle of it all, facts and and how the investigation proceeds are bound to be filled with intrigue and throw up a few suspects.
Murder Among The Mormons relate to a true investigation into twin blasts that killed two people in Salt Lake City, Utah, US. These murders were unlike anything that came to light in the October of 1985. May be because it relates to religion, murder and deception — a lethal combination.



निविदा सूचना
प्रबन्ध निदेशक, गन्मन्विनि०, 74 / 1
राजपुर रोड, देहरादून की ओर से
ओहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा जिला पर्यटन विकास
कार्यालय रुद्रप्रयाग के पुनर्निर्माण,
कार्यालय उच्चैकरण एवं आन्तरिक
साज-सज्जा के कार्य हेतु जनपद
रुद्रप्रयाग के अन्तर्गत कार्य करने
हेतु अधिकृत भवन निर्माण कार्य में 'डी' एवं
उच्चतर श्रेणी में समस्त सरकारी एवं
अर्द्धसरकारी विभागों में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों /
फर्मों से मुहर बन्ध निविदायें दिनांक
23.03.2021 को अपराह्न 3.00 बजे तक
आमन्त्रित की जाती है जो उसी दिन
अपराह्न 3.30 बजे निविदा समिति द्वारा
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जायेगी। निविदा प्राप्त / खोले जाने की तिथि
में कतिपय कारणों से अवकाश घोषित होने
पर निविदा अगले कार्यदिवस में प्राप्त कर
खोली जायेगी। कार्य की धरोहर राशि रु०
20,000.00 एकरोडीआर० / सौ०डी०आर० के
रूप में महाप्रबन्धक (निर्माण) के पक्ष में बन्धक
होगी। निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य रु० 1000.00
+ (जी०एस०टी० अतिरिक्त), कार्य पूर्ण करने
की अवधि 2 माह तथा निविदा की वैधता
3 माह होगी। निविदा प्रपत्र निविदा खोले
जाने की तिथि से एक दिन पूर्व तक प्रत्येक
कार्य दिवस में कार्यालय से प्राप्त किये जा
सकते हैं। कार्य का विस्तृत विवरण, नियम व
शर्तें किसी भी कार्य दिवस में कार्यालय में
देखी जा सकती हैं।
प्रबन्ध महाप्रबन्धक (निर्माण)

How he not only managed to dupe the Church but his friends and wife without remorse or guilt for his own gain; a power hungry Mark Hofmann — regarded as one of the most accomplished forger in history. He is infamous for forging documents related to the history of the Latter Day Saint movement. What is more interesting to know is that one doesn't know how many of his forged yet authenticated documents are still in circulation.
Hofmann was given life sentence with no parole since it was found that he felt no guilt or remorse for what he had done. He is now in Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison, Colorado, US.
— Shalini Saxena

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Treat for all women

Venue: All MOD Outlets
When: March 8, 2021
Time: 1 pm onwards
Age is just a number! Well, the greater the number, the sweeter your treat at Mad Over Donuts. Mad Over Donuts has consistently managed to delight its customers with its new launches and festive offers. They are at it again and this time, the surprise is bigger and better!



Mad Over Donuts is celebrating women's day in order to thank the contribution of women to the society by running a "celebrate your age" campaign. Simply walk into any Mad Over Donuts store on Women's Day to get a treat of their fresh, handmade donuts and get a discount that is equal to your age. That's a sweet treat that's hard to beat, is it not?
Mark your calendar right away and set up a date with your girl gang. After a rollicking day out and about, end it on a delectable note with some of the scrumptious donuts offered by Mad Over Donuts.

Celebrate womanhood

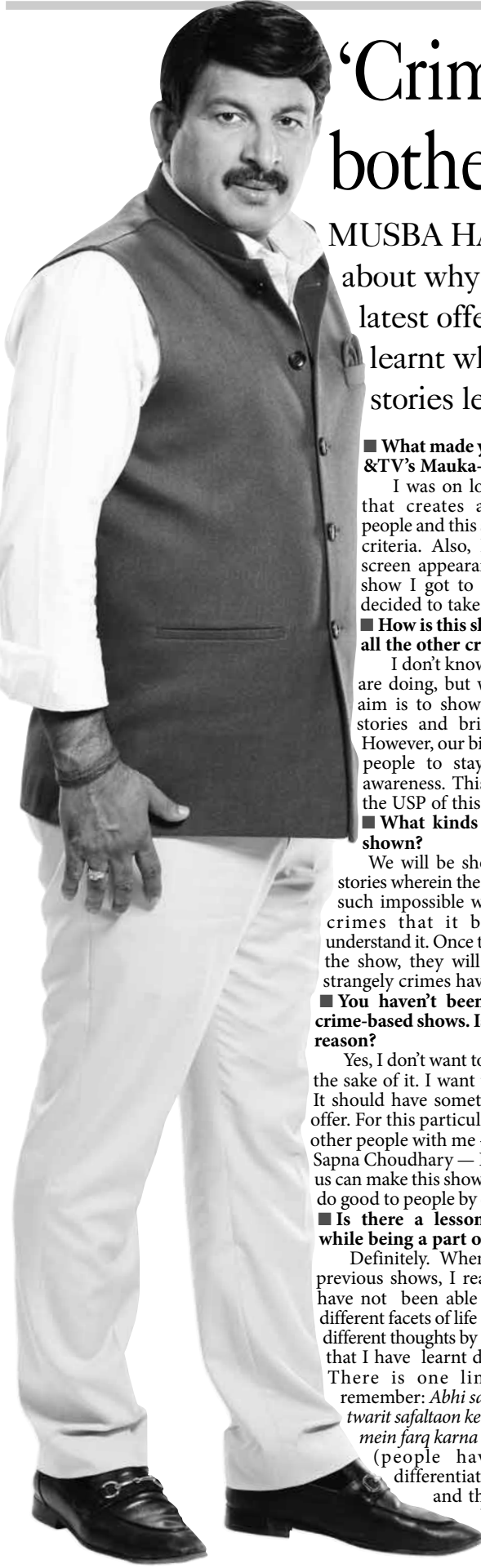
Venue: Horizon Plaza- Artisanal Market, Sec-43, Golf Course road, DLF Phase-5
When: March 7, 2021
Time: 3:30 PM-8:30 pm
This Women's Day, let's celebrate the #Womanhood by appreciating the efforts of our all inspiring women, who empower the Artisanal Market. Join us on Sunday browsing especially curated Artisanal products and produce by our Women Founders, Chefs, Bakers at one of its kind Artisanal Market, handpicked by PC.

Well! your weekend mornings just got healthy with a dose of refreshing handpicked homegrown products at Artisanal Market Handpicked by PC.
Shop and mingle with passionate home bakers, food curators and urban farmers who grow, produce and hand-craft breads, jams, honeys, turmeric, cakes and other eclectic cuisines from different parts of the world with natural ingredients and a whole lot of love.
Get a freshly brewed coffee

or a smoothie, select your fruits and veggies to cook your favorite dish. Stock up natural honey, masala and pickles from different regions of India. Bring your friends and family and to enjoy artisanals flavours.
Flower lovers take home some fresh flowers from our special lady "Phuloon Ki Rani" by Rani Chadha, the 80 year-old entrepreneur. Home chefs get ready to shop your favorite food stuff from our different stalls.
Look no forward, spend this weekend with your family and friends at Artisanal Market and make your day.



‘Crime stories don’t bother but astonish me’
MUSBA HASHMI speaks with MANOJ TIWARI about why he chose to come on board &TV’s latest offering Mauka-E-Vardaat, a lesson that he learnt while hosting these shows and how such stories leave him astonished



■ **What made you come on board &TV’s Mauka-E-Vardaat?**
I was on look out for a show that creates awareness among people and this show fits best in the criteria. Also, I was missing my screen appearances and with this show I got to do both. Hence, I decided to take it up.
■ **How is this show different from all the other crime-based shows?**
I don't know what other shows are doing, but with this show our aim is to show the audience real stories and bring out the truth. However, our bigger aim is to teach people to stay alert and create awareness. This is what I think is the USP of this show.
■ **What kinds of stories will be shown?**

We will be showcasing shocking stories wherein the culprit has taken to such impossible ways of committing crimes that it becomes hard to understand it. Once the audience will see the show, they will get to know how strangely crimes have been committed.
■ **You haven't been a part of many crime-based shows. Is there a particular reason?**
Yes, I don't want to take up a show for the sake of it. I want to resonate with it. It should have something interesting to offer. For this particular show, I have two other people with me — Ravi Kishan and Sapna Choudhary — I believe all three of us can make this show a huge success and do good to people by creating awareness.
■ **Is there a lesson that you learnt while being a part of such shows?**
Definitely. When I was doing my previous shows, I realised that I would have not been able to understand the different facets of life and gather so many different thoughts by reading a 100 books that I have learnt during these shows. There is one line that I always remember: *Abhi samaaj mein log apni twarit safaltaon ke liye vyakti aur vastu mein farq karna bhulte jaa rahe hain* (people have forgotten to differentiate between people and things for their own benefits). This holds true and I hope people start

One such story left me shocked. It is about a group which would take fingerprints of dead bodies at the crematorium and used them for getting fake IDs. When they were caught committing a crime, it was revealed that the identities they were using were of people who died years ago

realising what is more important and learn to differentiate between good and bad.
■ **Did getting to know so many crimes so closely bother you in any way?**
We are narrating the stories that have already happened with the aim of informing people about ways to safeguard themselves and their families. I don't get bothered by it. But yes, I do get astonished with such stories.
■ **What makes crime-based shows so popular?**
People love to see a story that can shock them up. This is not imaginary, hence the interest level goes even up. The interest factor also depends on how a show has been shot and who is narrating these stories. If the person telling these stories holds a value in the minds of the people, the audience automatically wants to see more such stories.
■ **Was there a case that left you shattered?**
There is one such story that left me shocked. It is about a group which would take fingerprints of dead bodies at the crematorium and used them for getting fake IDs. When they were caught committing a crime, it was revealed that the identities they were using were of people who died years ago I told my team that it is important to put across such stories. The team too agreed and told me it has to be done in a way where people take lessons from it and stay alert. This story will be shown in *Mauka-E-Vardaat*.

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As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	M/s Nagpal Traders/ Sarita Nagpal/ Ranbir Nagpal/ Ankur Nagpal/ 010251000788	Roof Right Of Building No 5-1048, Located At Plot No 5/706, Janpath Market Complex, Village Gorakhpur Malla, Pargana Bhabarchai Khata, Tehsil Haldwani, Dist Nainital / March 03, 2021	August 17, 2019 Rs. 1,59,54,755/-	Haldwani

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : March 06, 2021 Place: Haldwani

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

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U'khand Assembly Budget Session adjourned sine die

Budget of ₹ 57,400.32 crore, nine Bills passed by the House

PNS ■ BHARADISAIN

The Budget Session of Uttarakhand Assembly was adjourned sine die by the Speaker Prem Chand Agarwal on Saturday. In the major business of the day, the House passed the Budget of ₹ 57,400.32 crore for the year 2021-22 by voice vote. Earlier in the day, the Congress members staged a Dharna at the entrance of Vidhan Sabha in protest against alleged irregularities and delay in construction works in the Haridwar Kumbh Mela. As soon as the proceedings of the House started, the Congress members demanded work adjournment motion under rule 310 on corruption.

The senior Congress leader and Chakrata MLA, Pritam Singh said that the discussion should be held on corruption in land acquisition and disbursement of compensation in NH-74 and the recent order of Uttarakhand High Court for Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry on allegation of corruption on Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat. The parliamentary affairs minister Madan Kaushik objected to the demand and said that since these issues are subjudice they



50 out of 186 starred questions answered during 6-day Session

PNS ■ BHARADISAIN

The six-day Budget Session of Uttarakhand Assembly functioned for a total of 31 hours and 29 minutes. Giving details of the Session, the Speaker Prem Chand Agarwal said that 630 questions were

received by the Assembly for the Session. He said that out of 186 starred questions, 50 were answered while 85 out of 352 unstarred questions were answered.

He further informed that a total of 32 petitions were accepted during the session.

Agarwal said that 25 notices out of 28 received under rule 300 were forwarded. A total of nine Bills were tabled and passed by the house during the Session. The Speaker said that for the first time the proceedings of the house were telecast live on DIPP Facebook page.

cannot be discussed in the house. The speaker also denied permission to discuss the issue. Raising the issue of alleged corruption in Haridwar Kumbh, the leader of opposition Indira

Hridayesh demanded that discussion on it should be held under rule 310. The Manglaur MLA Qazi Nizamuddin raised the issue of 108 ambulances under rule 58 on the day. He

said that the fleet of the 108 emergency service ambulances is in bad shape. In his response Kaushik said that the State Government has recently added 140 new ambulances in

CAG finds irregularities in Tanakpur-Jauljibi Road

Report tabled in assembly also raps PWD, UPCL, mining &, stamps & registration departments

PNS ■ BHARADISAIN

The Tanakpur-Jauljibi Road which comes under Indo-Nepal border road project has attracted indictment by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

In its report for the year 2020 tabled in the Uttarakhand Assembly on Saturday, the CAG has pointed out several irregularities in the project.

It is pertinent to mention here that Lohaghat MLA Puran Singh Fartiyal had raised the issue of irregularities in the important road on several occasions. He had even caused embarrassment to his own Government by rais-

ing the issue in the Assembly.

In the report, the CAG mentions that the 173 kilometre Tanakpur-Jauljibi Road had been proposed but the detailed survey found that the actual length of the proposed road was only 135.47 kilometres. It further mentions, "The Public Works Department did not comply with the extant rules and failed to provide a clear site to the first contractor which resulted in delay of more than four years in completion of stretch 0-12-km besides an extra burden of ₹1.92 crore on the state government. Further, the work on the 12-55 km stretch was either delayed or was held up due to termination of the contract and the matter going to the court," the report reads.

The CAG mentions faulty Detailed Project Report (DPR) and adoption of improper tendering process in the project. The report says that a stretch of the road was

constructed in contravention of provisions of Indian Road Congress Codes resulting in inferior quality of road which was of strategic importance.

The CAG also found diversions of funds worth ₹9.21 crore in the project.

The report also indicted the mining department for non levy of penalty of ₹ 277.10 crore and non realisation of five times royalty from the contractors in the absence of Form MM-11. It also mentions that the stamp and registration department suffered loss of revenue of ₹22.90 lakh due to inadmissible exemption of 50 per cent allowed by the department on stamp duty.

The report states that the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) did not ensure replacement of burnt and defective meters within prescribed time resulting in penalty of ₹6.89 crore while delay in testing of meters attracted a penalty of ₹66.34 lakh.

the fleet of 108 emergency service.

The Jageshwar MLA, Govind Singh Kunjwal raised the issue of guest teachers under rule 58. He said that

these teachers are working for a meagre salary of ₹15,000 per month and their salary should be increased to ₹50,000 per month. In his reply the education minister Arvind Pandey

said that the guest teachers were deployed on vacant posts on purely temporary basis. He said that it is not possible to increase the stipend of these teachers.

CAG report puts question mark on health services

PNS ■ BHARADISAIN

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India in its report on district hospitals has found many irregularities in the health service of Uttarakhand and said that there is scope for vast improvement in the service.

It says, "An increase or decrease in out-patient load was not matched by proportional increase or decrease in the strength of doctors resulting in much higher OPD cases per doctor, in some hospitals as compared to others. Due to non availability of doctors, many OPD services like ENT, eye etc were not available for a substantial period during 2014-19. The prescribed medicines were not made fully available to 59 per cent of the OPD patients."

The audit report also pointed out a shortage of doctors, nurses and para-medical staff in the in-patient services. For infection control, the CAG states that cleaning and laundry services, despite outsourcing, were not of a satisfactory level in most of the hospitals.

Similarly, biomedical waste management system was inadequate as per the CAG report.

CM will complete his full term in office, says Bhagat

Core group meeting of BJP triggers speculations on political change

PNS ■ DEHRADUN / BHARADISAIN

The adjournment of the Budget Session of Uttarakhand Assembly, the decision of the BJP to hold a meeting of its core group in Dehradun on Saturday coupled with the arrival of the BJP national vice president Raman Singh as an observer for the meeting and rush of several leaders including the MLAs from Bharadisa in to Dehradun by helicopter fuelled speculation on a political turmoil in the State.

However, the BJP State president Banshidhar Bhagat put the speculations to rest stressing that the chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat will complete his full term in office. He averred that the core group had met to discuss the programme to be held across the state on March 18 to mark four years of the state government in office. Dispelling all doubts, the CM himself said later that everything is okay.

The Budget Session of Uttarakhand Assembly was scheduled to function till Sunday but the House was adjourned by Speaker on



Saturday afternoon after passage of the budget. Immediately after the adjournment, CM Rawat and several of his Cabinet colleagues left the summer capital by helicopter for Dehradun to attend the core group meeting. Several MLAs also used choppers to fly to Dehradun to attend the meeting. The meeting of the core group was deferred twice to ensure the presence of more leaders. A senior leader of the party told The Pioneer that the leadership issue was discussed in the meeting but added that there is no threat to the position of the CM.

In Dehradun, Raman

Singh, BJP State in-charge Dushyant Kumar Gautam, CM Rawat, Bhagat, MPs and other members of the core group met in the Bijapur safe house.

Talking to media persons after the meeting, the BJP state president said that the programme to be held in all assembly constituencies on March 18 to mark four years of the state government in office was discussed in the meeting.

He said that there was no uncertainty regarding the CM, adding that Rawat will complete his full term in office. Responding to media queries, cabinet minister

Several MLAs used choppers to fly to Dehradun to attend the meeting

Madan Kaushik said that there was nothing unusual in the core group meeting, adding that it is held periodically and attended by some senior party leader. Kaushik further said that the budget session had been adjourned on time after functioning as decided by the business advisory committee.

He also reiterated that the programme to be held on March 18 was the main point of discussion in the core group meeting. After the core group meeting, the senior party leaders and MLAs went to the CM residence where Rawat introduced various MLAs to Raman Singh.

CM discusses March 18 programme with MLAs



Union minister Nitin Gadkari also to attend event

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat held a meeting with the MLAs at his residence here on Saturday evening. The CM and MLAs discussed the 'Batein Kam, Kaam Zyada' programme to be held on March 18 to mark the completion of four years by the State Government in office under Rawat as the CM.

Union minister Nitin Gadkari will also be attending the main programme to be held at Lacchiwala in the CM's Doiwala constituency. Rawat said that on the occasion the public will be informed about the development works executed by the Government during its four years in office. In addition to the main programme, similar programmes will be held simultaneously in all the assembly constituencies in the state.

The CM said that committees headed by the MLAs have been formed to ensure successful conduct of the events at the Vidhan Sabha constituency level

The CM said that committees headed by the MLAs have been formed to ensure successful conduct of the events at the Vidhan Sabha constituency level.

The MLAs will preside over the events in the constituencies. In addition to works done by the State Government, the MLAs will also inform the public about the works done in their respective constituencies, added Rawat.

Police nab Bangladeshi from Kaliyar area



PNS ■ HARIDWAR

Amidst heightened security and checks in view of the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, the police and the local intelligence unit succeeded in apprehending a foreign national on Saturday. According to official sources, while conducting a checking drive in the Kaliyar area, the police arrested a Bangladeshi national. The man was booked under the Passport Act and presented in the court from where he was being sent to jail.

Official sources stated that a checking campaign has been undertaken in the Kaliyar Dargah area in view of the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar. The police team apprehended a person on suspicion and questioned him in the police station. During questioning, the man identified himself as 60 year old Sarvar Hussain from Bagerhat district of Bangladesh.

In India, he used to live in Kolkata in West Bengal and some years ago had gone to Ajmer

According to officials, the man said during questioning that he had crossed the border without a passport to arrive in India about 30 years ago.

In India, he used to live in Kolkata in West Bengal and some years ago had gone to Ajmer. From Ajmer he came to Haridwar district about two years ago and had been working in a guest house in Kaliyar area.

The police station in-charge Jagmohan Ramola informed that the Bangladeshi national had been booked under the relevant act and present in the court.

Ex-CM pulls auto rickshaw, carries cylinder to protest against price rise

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Congress national general secretary and ex-Chief Minister Harish Rawat symbolically pulled an auto rickshaw to protest against the rising cost of petrol, diesel and price rise here on Saturday. Staging this protest demonstration from the Congress Bhawan to the nearby Gandhi Park, Rawat then addressed a gathering while holding a cooking gas cylinder on his shoulder. He said that while the cost of a gas cylinder had risen by about ₹250 in the past three months, there has been an unprecedented rise in the price of petrol and diesel even as the price of food items has also increased. He said, "In the past six years, the Central Government has earned ₹21,00,000 crore from petroleum products alone and nobody knows where this money has gone." Rawat exhorted the party members to not rest until the prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas are decreased. Congress workers should move from village to village raising public awareness about the



burden of price rise being put on them. He also accused the

central government of framing its policies to favour some cap-

italists. Targeting the state government, he alleged that the

problems of the people are being ignored.

Congress protest on price rise a drama: Bhagat

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party state president Banshidhar Bhagat said that the demonstration by Congress leader and ex-CM Harish Rawat on the issue of price rise was nothing more than a drama. Bhagat said that the prices of petrol and diesel have risen but the level of price rise is still quite far from the level it was at during the tenure of the Congress. Food items and daily use commodities are easily affordable for the common people, said Bhagat.

He further said that the Indian economy is progressing as revealed by study conducted by international organisations. Stating that the nation was progressing considerably under the leadership of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, the BJP State president further said that in addition to economic reforms like demonetisation and GST, the reliability of the Government has strengthened in the economic sphere during the Covid-19 pandemic as seen by the trust placed in the government's policies by the companies, share market and general public. "Under the leadership

of PM Modi, the nation is progressing consistently. The nation's economy has improved despite the Covid pandemic and other difficulties due to the policies of the Modi Government.

The State is also progressing due to the far-sighted policies of the centre. The people are now bored of the Congress' propaganda," said Bhagat.

**गढ़वाल मण्डल विकास निगम लि०**
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम)
पंजीकृत कार्यालय 74/1 राजपुर रोड, देहरादून। CIN U31101UR1976SGC 004259
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पत्रांक : 689 / ईओअनु(सी) निविदा ई-निविदा सूचना दिनांक : 06.03.2020

प्रबन्ध निदेशक, गढ़वाल मण्डल विकास निगम लि०, 74/1 राजपुर रोड, देहरादून की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा ई-निविदा के माध्यम से 1) "गुच्छुपानी पर्यटक स्थल को पर्यटक सुविधाओं के रूप में विकसित किये जाने के कार्य" एवं 2) "गौरीकुण्ड जनपद रुद्रप्रयाग के अवशेष विकास कार्य" हेतु दिनांक 03.04.2021 को अपरॉहन 1500 बजे तक सम्बन्धित कार्य में दक्ष एवं अनुभवी फर्मों से ई-निविदा आमन्त्रित की जाती है, जो उसी दिन अपरॉहन 1530 बजे खोली जायेगी। निविदा प्रपत्र, नियम, शर्त आदि की जानकारी उत्तराखण्ड राज्य की अधिकृत वेबसाईट www.uktenders.gov.in पर दिनांक 10 मार्च 2021 को अपरॉहन 1700 बजे से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। महाप्रबन्धक (निर्माण)

Youths trained to become self-reliant

PNS ■ ROORKEE

Students who had undergone training under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihood Mission were presented certificates at a function held in the municipal corporation of Roorkee on Saturday. The Roorkee mayor Gaurav Goel, municipal commissioner Nupur Verma, councillors and other officials were present on the occasion. Goel said that the

aim of the training was to connect the youths with self employment and make them self-reliant to achieve the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The municipal commissioner said that the students had been provided free training under the scheme. Those who had passed the exam after training were presented certificates. It is now upto the trained youths if they opt for employment or self employment.

Women's bike rally to be held on March 14

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Trikon Society will organise the second edition of the Uttarakhand women's bike rally on March 14. The bike rally will start from the chief minister's residence and cover a distance of about 32 kilometres to conclude at Doon Heritage School. This event is an initiative to celebrate women's essence and to break stereotypes by involving as many women as possible.

PVM inaugurates various CSR works



PNS ■ PANTNAGAR

Perfetti Van Melle dedicated two rooms of Anganwadi centre, kitchen, store and furniture in Dimri block as part of its corporate social responsibility activity. The PVM legal director Atul Sood inaugurated the facilities, stating that the company will continue to do such works for the betterment of children.



कार्यालय नगर निगम देहरादून

पत्रांक 324 / नचिणो / 2021 शुद्धि पत्र दिनांक: 06.03.2021

विधानसभा क्षेत्र धर्मपुर के अंतर्गत देहराखास वार्ड नंबर 72 में काली मंदिर चौक से थाना कोतवाली तक सड़क के दोनों ओर जल निकासी हेतु नाली निर्माण की ई-निविदा जो दिनांक 12.03.2021 को आमंत्रित थी को अपरिहार्य कारणों से निरस्त किया जाता है

नगर आयुक्त

नगर निगम देहरादून

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

The Divisional Railway Manager (Medical) Northern Railway, Moradabad for & behalf of President of India, invites open E-Tender for the under noted work.

N.I.T. No. No.: 98-Med/K.M./2021/HW/Manpo Dated 06.03.2021

Name of work: Provide Nursing Superintendent's, Pharmacist's, Health Attendant's & Housekeeping Assistant's for one 10 Bedded Hospital and 07 First Aid Post for 21 days to work in three shift at Haridwar, Rishikesh, Motichur, Jwalapur, Laksar during Kumbh Mela, 2021.

Approximate Cost Rs. 13,31,430.03 Ps (Including GST)

Earnest Money 0.00

Period of work 21 days

Date & Time of opening of Tender E-Tender shall be opened on Dt. 27.03.2021 at 15.00 hrs. If date of opening happens to be a holiday the tender shall be opened on the same time on next working day.

Indian Railway Website Additional relevant information may be checked on the Website www.iimps.gov.in

Cost of E-Tender Document Rs. 2,000/- online Payment mode www.iimps.gov.in.

Note: Payment of Tender document cost deposit (TDC) in respect of E-Tendering shall be accepted IREPS Portal through net banking Debit and credit card only.

L.No. 98-Med/K.M./2021/HW/Manpo Dated 06.03.2020

516/2021

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कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियंता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, देहरादून

पत्रांक: 735/निविदा/37 दिनांक: 05.03.2021

निविदा सूचना

प्रबंध निदेशक, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, देहरादून की ओर से अधिशासी अभियंता, निर्माण शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, देहरादून द्वारा विमानपुरा मोहर बन्द गव्यार निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है। जो कि उसी दिन 3:30 बजे उपस्थित निविदादालाओं/प्रतिनिधि के सम्म अघोहस्ताक्षरी अथवा नामित प्रतिनिधि द्वारा खोली जायेगी। निविदा, दिनांक 19.03.2021 तक किसी भी कार्य दिवस एवं कार्यालय समय में कार्यालय से क्रेय की जा सकती है। केवल कार्यों के समुच्च अंकित श्रेणी अथवा उच्चतर श्रेणी के ठेकेदारों को ही निविदा विक्रय की जायेगी।

क्र० सं०	कार्यों का नाम, संबंधित विकास क्षेत्र के नाम सहित	घरोहर कर (रु० में)	कार्य पूरा करने की अवधि	ठेकेदार की श्रेणी	निविदा प्रारंभ का मूल्य (रु० में)
01.	मसन्दावाला पेयजल के अन्तर्गत वितरण प्रणाली एवं तत्संबंधी कार्य। (जल जीवन मिशन कार्यक्रम, वि०सी०-सहस्रपुर)	38,000.00	06 माह	डी०	1500.00+ जी०एस०टी०
02.	मसन्दावाला पेयजल के अन्तर्गत उच्च जलाशय एवं तत्संबंधी कार्य। (जल जीवन मिशन कार्यक्रम, वि०सी०-सहस्रपुर)	38,000.00	09 माह	डी०	1500.00+ जी०एस०टी०
03.	सोझा पेयजल के अन्तर्गत श्रोत, सफाई मैन एवं तत्संबंधी कार्य। (जल जीवन मिशन कार्यक्रम, वि०सी०-सहस्रपुर)	50,000.00	12 माह	डी०	2000.00+ जी०एस०टी०
04.	सोझा पेयजल के अन्तर्गत जलाशय, वितरण प्रणाली एवं तत्संबंधी कार्य। (जल जीवन मिशन कार्यक्रम, वि०सी०-सहस्रपुर)	14,000.00	06 माह	डी०	1000.00+ जी०एस०टी०

नियम एवं शर्तें शाखा कार्यालय में किसी भी कार्यालय दिवस एवं समय में अवलोकित की जा सकती है।

अधिशासी अभियंता

"जल संवर्धन-जीवन संवर्धन" "कृपाया जल छोटी को प्रदूषित होने से बचाईये"

पंचायतिका प्रशासकी-जल छोटी को प्रदूषित करना गंभीर अपराध है।

No new taxes in Himachal Budget presented by CM Jai Ram Thakur

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday presented his fourth budget for 2021-22, proposing no new tax which pegged total expenditure at `50,192 crore for 2021-22 against `49,131 crore in the last fiscal despite the Covid-19 crisis.

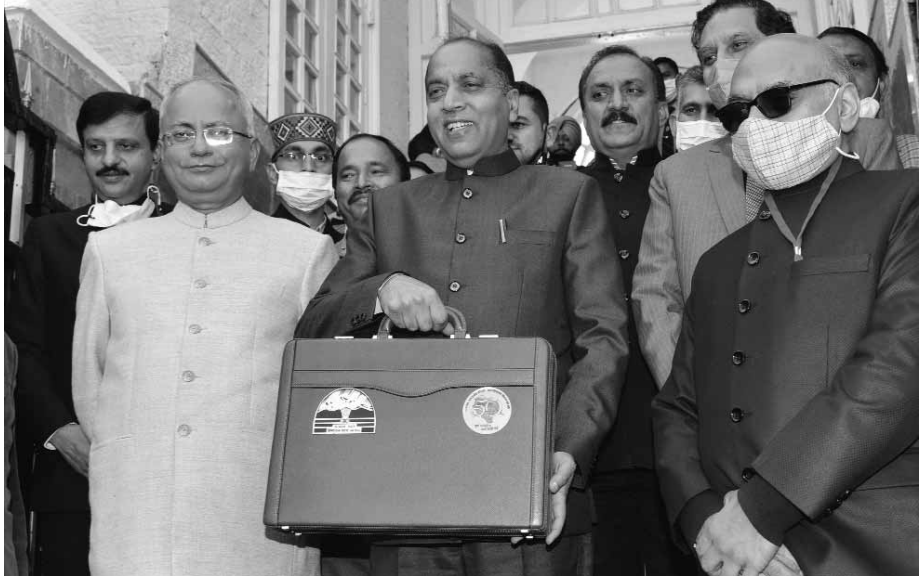
The Chief Minister announced a budgetary allocation of `8,024 crore for education and `3,016 crore for health services during 2021-22. After presenting the Budget for three hours in the House, Thakur said the State has a debt burden of `60,500 crore. The debt burden has increased by `4,763 crore from `55,737 crore in the last financial year.

Earlier Thakur announced in the assembly that MLAs will get their full salary from April 1. Thakur, who also holds the finance portfolio, said the MLA local area development (MLAL-AD) fund will not only be restored, but it will be hiked by `5 lakh — from `1.75 crore to `1.80 crore. The State Government had last year decided to cut 30 per cent salary of MLAs and suspend the MLAL-AD fund for two years to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

While presenting the budget, the Chief Minister said total revenue receipts are estimated at `37,028 crore during 2021-22, whereas total revenue expenditure is estimated to be `38,491 crore, leading to a revenue deficit of `1,463 crore. Fiscal deficit is estimated at `7,789 crore which is 4.52 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product, he added.

"I believe that necessary resources will be mobilised through effective tax administration, funding from international funding agencies, continued support from the Government of India and prudence in fiscal management," Thakur said. Out of every hundred rupees to be spent by the Government in 2021-22, `25.31 will be spent on salaries, `14.11 on pension, `10 on interest payment, `6.64 on loan repayment and `43.94 will be spent on development works and other activities, he added.

Covid-19 has impacted revenue receipts adversely during 2020-21, he said adding that its impact on the state's own revenue cannot be ruled out during 2021-22.



Jayanti Nari Sambal Yojana" besides other existing pension schemes for the woman, Thakur said that that additional amount of `55 crore would be spent for that. Further declaring the new scheme "Shagun", Thakur said that a grant of `31,000 would be given to the daughters of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes from BPL families at the time of marriage. Besides, two girls of BPL families will now be given Post-Birth grants of `21,000 as fixed deposit, he added. Thakur further stated that 40,000 new beneficiaries would be brought under Social Security Pension Schemes.

Announcing about expanding health facilities, the chief minister said PET scan in IGM, CT scan and MRI machines in RPMC Tanda and CT scan machines in medical colleges in Hamirpur and Nahan would be installed at a cost of `70 crore.

Besides, a super speciality hospital in Chamyana, New OPD Block and Trauma Centre in IGM will be dedicated to the people, he added. All persons above the age of 70 years and orphans living in Bal Ashrams will be covered free of cost under HIMCARE, he added.

The Chief Minister said that Mission "Drishti" would be started for free eye check up and providing of free spectacles to the students of class 6 to 10 in

Government schools. An amount of `250 crore will be spent for providing health related services under Ayushman Bharat, HIMCARE, Mukhya Mantri Chikitsa Sahayta Kosh, free medicines, Sahara, Sammaan, he added.

For making available the high density fruit plants at reasonable prices, the "Swaran Jayanti Smridh Bagwan Yojana" will be started, he added. An expert group will be set up to restructure various schemes and enhance income of the farmers, he added. Under "Swaran Jayanti Ashraya Yojana", 12,000 beneficiaries will be provided with houses equipped with all basic facilities, he said.

E M P L O Y M E N T

Punjab Police busts inter-state sex racket in Ludhiana, 14 held

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/LUDHIANA

In an early morning operation, Punjab Police on Saturday busted an inter-state sex racket active in Ludhiana with arrest of 14 persons, including 10 girls alongwith the lady kingpin already on bail in similar case who used to target needy girls out of jobs due to Covid lockdowns from city and outside forcing them into prostitution.

Antecedents of girls found involved in the flesh trade have been traced back to as far as Nepal, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh & Amritsar and further investigations are on to unearth the complete area of their operations, said ADCP-4 Ludhiana Rupinder Kaur Sran who led the operation. We have also recovered restricted drugs Etizolam and Escitalopram Oxalate tablets which are only allowed on prescription and the accused are being interrogated to ascertain the source of their supply, the ADCP added.

Initial investigations have also revealed the names of similar operatives in other cities with whom the main accused and her girls were in touch to widen their net, Sran said adding all these angles were being probed and more arrests were likely.

Commissioner of Police Ludhiana Rakesh Agrawal had constituted a special team under ADCP Ludhiana IV Rupinder Kaur Sran,

with SHO Mohammad Jamil its member. An FIR has been registered in this case.


Giving details about the raid, the ADCP said that a tip-off was received about flesh trade activity being run by the accused and her movements were kept under watch. The main accused has been identified as Manjit Kaur alias Pammi aunty resident of street number 10 New Subhash Nagar and was also arrested in a similar case lodged at Police Station Jodhewal in 2018. Three men were also arrested from the house during the raid who had come there as customers.

She was on bail now and was running the illegal activity from her house only by luring young needy girls into prostitution. Modus operandi was to engage girls once into her net to target more needy girls out of work due to Covid lockdown and force them into prostitution.

Of those arrested, one girl from Delhi was lured into the trade because she could not repay the loan she had taken from a relative to make ends meet during Covid, while another girl was picked up by the main accused from a city Gurdwara she was visiting at the pretext of a job offer. These girls back home used to tell their family members that they were working in a factory or performing in marriage parties, Sran added.

Punjab Chief Secy reviews preparedness for 2nd wave of pandemic

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH



PUBLIC NOTICE

I No 2489667N, Rank-Hav. Karan Lal, Unit-29, Punjab C/o 56 APO declare that in my army records my Wife names and DOB are wrongly written as Neelam Kumari & DOB 15.8.1987 instead of Neelam Devi & DOB 15.07.1984.

In my relation certificate, my name has been accidentally recorded as Devendar Rana. While my correct name is Devendra Rana. Both these names are of the same person. This relation certificate has been created by my brother Hari Bahadur Rana. Devendra Rana son Sher Bahadur Rana resident Nayali, Kerad, Tuni

LOST & FOUND

An earlier sale deed of my consent whose book No-1 Cover 1337 Page 164 AD F.A. Book No. 1 Cover 1368 Page 759/770 Registered in No 1876 on Date 16.03.2004 which was executed by Rajendra S/o Jagram Singh in the midst of Mukhtaram Vikas Gursing (Seller) which is lost some where. Its use will be illegal by any other person.

Advocate Vijay Chandna
Near Sahid Smarak, Court Compound,
Dehradun Ph: 8630055903

PUBLIC NOTICE

I hereby informed the general public that **Shashi Prasad Dangwal S/o Sitaram Dangwal** is absolute owner of Property i.e. Property situated at **Khasra no. 248 Mouja Chak Gujraara Karanpur, Tehsil Vikasnagar Dist Dehradun**, measuring **2835 Sq. ft or 263.47 Sq mtr** purchased from Ram Prasad Naudiyal S/o Late Shaligram, R/o 73/2 Vijay Colony Hathibarkala Dehradun registered in Sub Registrar Vikasnagar Dehradun vide Register No 01, Zild 2 Page 354 ADF Book No-01 Zild 352 Page 349/360 Document No-3245 Dated 16.06.2005. Original Sale deed of the said property has been actually lost anywhere and not found yet. A Police report has also been got registered in this respect in Garhi Cantt Police. If anybody found the said lost documents then may contact to undersigned and anybody having claim or claiming any prior rights or interest in the manner in this property or has raised loan by depositing the aforesaid documents to any person/ bank/ corporation/ financial institution may approach the undersigned and may submit objections within 7 days from the date of this public notice. After the expiry of the period of this notice, no claim shall be entertained and such claim shall be deemed to be false, fake, frivolous, fraudulent and baseless claim and shall have no value in the eyes of law.

Vijay Chandna (Advocate)
Block No 11, Chamber No 1,
Civil Court Compound, Dehradun
Ph: 9412052425

To effectively manage the second wave of Covid-19 in Punjab and to break the chain of transmission, a high level meeting was chaired by Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan, where-in the Deputy Commissioners, Police Chiefs and key officers of other stakeholder departments like health and medical education were present.

Mahajan reviewed the preparedness for the second wave of pandemic with each district along with their status of the vaccination.

She said the second wave of the disease has already started and all DCs and Police Chiefs must ensure that large gatherings like marriages, religious events and social functions should be restricted as per the guidelines of the Government and COVID monitors should be deputed at marriage palaces and other places of gatherings.

She further directed the Deputy Commissioners and Police Chiefs to ensure strict enforcement of Covid-19 regulations at all places in their respective jurisdiction and people be educated for Covid appropriate behaviours.

The chief secretary also emphasized upon the detailed assessment of Health Care Facilities to effectively combat

the second wave. She asked the officers to quickly undertake an analysis of the positivity rate in towns, where elections were held recently, to assess the impact of crowding at these places. She said that as the overall positivity rate in schools is low, hence there is no need to close the schools. She however added that the school teachers should be encouraged to get tested and eligible teachers must be vaccinated as front line workers on priority. She expressed concern that the number of cases and positivity rate has increased in the last two weeks in the State and 9 districts of Punjab have shown a higher number of cases in the last two weeks with markedly increased case positivity rate. She exhorted that a major thrust needs to be given

on awareness regarding COVID Appropriate Behaviors among the community.

Hussan Lal, Principal Secretary Health presented the current status of COVID-19 trends. He shared the data about some super spreader events like marriages, social gatherings and offices resulting in greater exposure and increased positivity.

He informed that 238,367 persons have already been given the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine with no major adverse events following immunization.

He also appraised the Chief Secretary regarding a model which predicts a huge surge in the number of cases starting mid March to 3,000 cases per day by end of March.

2 more Covid-19 deaths, 1,179 new cases in Punjab

Chandigarh: Punjab on Saturday reported 1179 new Covid-19 cases, pushing the tally to 1,87,348. A total of 12 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 5910 in the State, according to a medical bulletin. Punjab has been witnessing a surge in the number of fresh Covid-19 cases for

nearly four weeks.

The number of active cases in the State is 7164 on Saturday. Ludhiana reported a maximum of 164 cases, Jalandhar 154, Patiala 109, among the new cases that surfaced in the State.

A total of 644 patients were discharged after recov-

CREATION

Regarding employment creation, Thakur said that an amount of `100 crore will be spent on expansion of the scope of "Mukhya Mantri Swavlamban Yojana."

The Chief Minister said that 7,000 unemployed youth will be provided employment in the private sector through Rozgar Melas and campus interviews. Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board will extend increased assistance to more workers, he said adding that the Government has kept a target of filling up 30,000 functional posts in 2021-22: 4,000 posts in different categories in Health Department, 4,000 posts of different category teachers in Education Department; 8,000 posts of Multi task Part Time Workers in Education Department; 5,000 posts of Multi Task Part Time Workers in PWD and 4,000 posts of Para Fitter and Pump Operator & Multi Task Part Time Workers in Jal Shakti Department. Himachali Handicraft and traditional products sale centres will be developed near Atal Tunnel (on both sides) for convenience of the tourists, he added. Budget of `1,016 crore has been earmarked for construction of Mandi Airport and expansion of Shimla, Kullu and Dharamshala Airports, he added. The Planning Department of the state would be renamed as Niti Vibhag, the Chief Minister said.



port for OLS survey but the report was still awaited.

He said five heliports were also being constructed under UDAN-2 in the State which include heliports at Kangnidhar in Mandi district, at Sanjauli and Rampur in Shimla district, at Baddi in Solan district and at SASE (Manali) in Kullu district. He said that all these heliports would give a big boost to tourism development by providing better air connectivity to the high end tourists. He said that Shimla heliport was nearing completion and trial landing had also been carried out by the GAD helicopter on 3rd January this year.

The Chief Minister requested the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation to expedite the construction on all these heliports so that they could be completed within stipulated time period. He also felt the need for night parking of helicopters of an additional FATO for at least mi-172 type helicopter at Shimla heliport anticipating rush of

flight at this heliport. He also requested the Ministry to complete Mandi heliport within next three months.

Secretary, Union Ministry of Civil Aviation Pradeep Singh Kharola assured the Chief Minister that the Ministry would ensure time bound completion of all these projects besides providing all possible help for construction of heliports. Director Tourism and Civil Aviation Yunus made a presentation on development of heliports under RCS UDAN-2.

Chief Secretary Anil Khachi, Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Civil Aviation Usha, Additional Chief Secretary Finance Prabodh Saxena, Additional Chief Secretary, PWD J.C. Sharma, Member, Planning, Airport Authority of India Anil Kumar Pathak, CMD Pawan Hans Limited Sanjeev Rajdan, Secretary Tourism Dvesh Kumar, Deputy Director, DGCA Satya Prakash Rai and other officers were present on the occasion.

323 new Covid-19 cases in Haryana

Chandigarh: Haryana recorded 323 fresh coronavirus cases on Saturday, taking the tally in the State to 2,72,215, a health department bulletin said.

11,236 health workers inoculated in the State, taking total number of vaccinated people to 3, 64, 996. With three fatalities including one each from Faridabad, Hisar, Karnal districts, the total number of deaths due to Covid-19 in the State rose to 3,056, it said.

The fresh cases were reported from districts, including Karnal, Gurugram, with 58 and 48 infections, respectively.

The total number of active cases in the State was 1898. The recovery rate was 98.18 per cent, as per the bulletin. **PNS**

Lookout notice against TMC leader’s brother

CATTLESMUGGLINGCASE



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has issued a lookout notice against Bijay Mishra, brother of Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Binay Mishra who is a close confidant of party MP Abhishek Banerjee, in a cattle-smuggling case.

The agency is mulling over approaching Interpol to get a Red Corner Notice (RCN) issued against Binay Mishra, who has not joined the probe till now, officials said.

“A lookout notice has been issued against Bijay Mishra, the brother of TMC leader Binay Mishra,” the official said, without divulging any other details.

The agency has also summoned two senior officers of the West Bengal police -- an Inspector General and a Superintendent of Police -- on Monday for questioning in connection with the case, they said.

The agency had named Binay Mishra as a co-accused in its supplementary

chargesheet filed in the cattle-smuggling case last month.

Binay Mishra is suspected to be close to West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee’s nephew Abhishek Banerjee, they further said.

In its chargesheet filed before a designated CBI court in Asansol (West Bengal), the agency has already mentioned Binay Mishra as absconding.

The CBI had filed a chargesheet on February 18 in the case against Border Security Force (BSF) Commandant Satish Kumar and six others for their alleged involvement in a cattle-smuggling racket operating at the India-Bangladesh border.

Recently, the CBI had also questioned Abhishek Banerjee’s wife Rujira and sister-in-law Menaka Gambhir in a separate case pertaining to illegal coal mining and pilferage from the mines of the Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL).

ED arrests 2 directors of TN-based firm over ₹325 cr laundering

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has arrested two directors of a Tamil Nadu-based firm in a money laundering case worth ₹325 crore, linked to a bank fraud case.

Hittesh Patel and Suresh N Patel, directors of Shinago Plantations Pvt Ltd, were sent to 10 days’ ED custody by a special court on Saturday after they were placed under arrest under sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the agency said in a statement.

The two allegedly laundered funds to the tune of ₹325 crore by using a network of nearly 20 group entities located across Tamil Nadu.

The PMLA investigation revealed that “the accused in collusion with the valuers



availed loans from erstwhile Corporation Bank (now Union Bank of India) on the basis of inflated value of the properties offered as collateral and indulged in wilful diversion of funds through various group accounts.”

It said investigation further revealed that “the funds so availed by various individuals/group concerns in the form of Letter of Credit (LC) and Cash Credit (CC) limits/Agriculture term loans, were transferred within the group entities through circular rotation of money to avail more funds from the Bank without any actual business.”

Donations for Ram Mandir cross more than ₹2,500 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Donations for the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya are estimated to have crossed ₹2,500 crore and construction is likely to be completed in three years.

Addressing the media, Ramjanmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust chairman Champat Rai on Saturday said that the construction will commence from April and as per banks’ estimations till February 4, the donations have crossed ₹2,500 crore and house-to-house visits for donations have been stopped.

Now only online donations will be received, Rai said adding that 10 crore households in 4 lakh villages had been approached by 9 lakh volunteers in the past 45 days during the fund collection drive.

“Four lakh cubic stones will be used to complete construction within 3 years. While construction has not



begun, the improvement of land for the foundation will start in April.

Around ₹2,500 cr have been received till 4th of March, but can’t confirm the figures. We have reached 10 crore households with 9 lakh workers. The campaign is over doesn’t mean that dedication towards God is over. Visit our website which has all the details of bank accounts and one can contribute accordingly.”

He also said that a lot of

responses were received from North East States and Southern States.

To a query, Rai said that donations from Rajasthan are expected to be bigger than Uttar Pradesh.

From Arunachal Pradesh donations are estimated to have crossed ₹4.5 crore, followed by ₹2 crore from Manipur. As per the press release issued by VHP, Rs.85 crore has been received from Tamil Nadu and ₹13 crore from Kerala.

Hybrid physical hearings in SC from March 15

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, which is hearing cases through video-conferencing since March last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will commence hybrid physical hearings from March 15.

The apex court has issued the standard operating procedure (SOP) for the hybrid physical hearings.

The top court has been hearing cases through video-conferencing since March last year due to the pandemic and several bar bodies and lawyers have been demanding that physical hearings should resume immediately.

“On an experimental basis, and as a pilot scheme, the final hearings/regular matters listed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays may be heard in the hybrid mode, as may be



decided by the bench, considering the number of parties in a matter as well as the limited capacity of the courtrooms; all other matters, including those listed on Mondays and Fridays, shall continue to be heard through video/tele-conferencing mode,” said the SOP issued by the apex court.

“The hybrid physical

hearings are to commence with effect from March 15, 2021,” it added.

It said unless otherwise directed by a bench, the final hearings or regular matters where the number of lawyers for the parties is higher than the average working capacity of the courtrooms according to COVID-19 norms, that is

20 per courtroom at any given time, shall invariably be listed for hearing through the video or tele-conferencing mode.

“...However, in case the bench directs hearing of such matters to be held through the hybrid mode, the appearance of the parties, whether by physical presence or through video/tele-conferencing, will be facilitated as per the directions of the bench,” the SOP said.

It said if the number of parties is higher than the specified number in a matter listed for hybrid hearing, then one advocate-on-record (AOR) and one arguing counsel per party would be allowed entry.

It said one registered clerk per party, as may be chosen by the AOR, shall be allowed entry to carry paper-books or journals of lawyers up to the courtrooms.

Cong: Kisan stir period black chapter in India’s democracy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the farmers’ protest against the Centre’s new farm laws completed 100 days, the Congress on Saturday said the period was a “black chapter” in India’s democracy for the treatment meted out to the protesters and also marked 100 days of the ruling BJP’s “arrogance”.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi hit out at the Centre over the farmers’ protest and said nails were laid at Delhi’s borders for those, whose sons risk their lives at the country’s borders.

His attack came after the farmers’ agitation completed 100 days with the protesting union leaders asserting that



their movement is far from over and they are “going strong”. “Whose sons risk their lives at the country’s borders, for them nails have been laid at the borders of Delhi. ‘Annadaatas’ demand their rights, government commits atrocities,”

Rahul said in his tweet, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also hit out at the Centre saying, “100 days of farmers’ struggle, of fight for rights, of respect for ‘annadaatas’, of the path shown by Gandhiji, Sardar

(Vallabhbhai) Patel, Nehruji, (Lal Bahadur) Shastriji, Shaheed Bhagat Singh.” With the hashtag ‘100DaysOFBJParrogance’, she said, “100 days of BJP Government’s arrogance, of assault on farmers, of lies and scorn for farmers.”

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said the protesting farmers have been braving all odds — of nature and the might of the State — for the last 100 days.

“Each one of us, whichever category we may belong to, have our own struggles and that is the awareness on which the Government depends,” Khera said.

There is one section of the society that has found time to come out and protest — farmers — against these “black laws” and they are “our voice”, he added.

The Congress demands that the three new farm laws should immediately be repealed, Khera said.

Kerala gold smuggling case

CPM accuses Centre of misusing Central agencies against CM, Mins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOCHI

The CPI(M) Polit Bureau on Saturday accused the BJP-led Government at the Centre of playing dirty tricks by misusing Central agencies like Customs Department to target Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Ministers during the poll season with tutored affidavits of accused persons in the gold smuggling case.

For his part, Vijayan said: “After declaration of Assembly polls, central investigation agencies’ attacks have intensified. The Customs Commissioner, who isn’t party to gold smuggling case, included portions of confidential statement by accused (Swapna Suresh) in his statement in High Court. He has also leveled allegations against Kerala Speaker and Ministers to defame the LDF government.”

The Customs Department in Kochi earlier alleged that a political party was trying to intimidate the investigation agency but made it clear that it will not work. “A political party trying intimidation, will not work,” Customs (Preventive) Commissioner Sumit Kumar wrote on his Facebook page.

“She has stated with clarity about smuggling of foreign currency at the instance of the



Hon’ble chief minister and the Hon’ble Speaker with the help of the Consulate,” the Customs has said in a statement filed in the Kerala high court.

The CPI (M) Polit Bureau alleged that the tutored statements of the jailed accused was recorded months ago and leaked to malign the party during the election time.

“The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the Customs Authority’s attempt to falsely implicate Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, three other ministers and the Speaker of the Assembly of Kerala in an alleged dollar smuggling case. The customs have cited an affidavit by one of the accused, who is in judicial custody in the gold smuggling case, for this purpose. The fact that this tutored statement was recorded some months ago and pre-

sented after the elections were announced shows the political game behind this move.

“The BJP Central government is systematically misusing the Central agencies for maligning the Chief Minister and the LDF government. The people of Kerala will see through this political chicanery and give a fitting rebuff to the dirty tactics adopted by the BJP and the UDF,” said CPI(M).

In Kerala, the CPI(M) has staged protest marches at Customs offices. Recently, the Customs Department has filed an affidavit before the Court stating that the main accused Swapna Suresh has given statement before the investigators on the knowledge of the Chief Minister and three Ministers and Speaker of the Kerala Assembly about the illegal dollar trade and gold smuggling involving UAE consulate.

Frontier Gandhi’s autobiography released in English

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

First published in Pashto in 1983, the autobiography of freedom fighter Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, fondly known as Bacha Khan or Badshah Khan, is now out in English, announced publishing house Roli Books.

The book, titled “The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle”, is translated by former Pakistani civil servant and author Imitiaz Ahmad Sahibzada. This is the “first time” that Khan’s autobiography is available in English. An earlier account of his life, published in English in 1969, and with the same title, was based on the interviews conducted with him and was not “his written autobiography”.

“... Bacha Khan felt that the 1969 account of his life and struggle was not complete and began to write his own autobiography thereafter, with the help of numerous associates. Bacha Khan’s autobiography was thus first published in Pukhto in 1983, in Kabul.. This book is a translation of Bacha Khan’s only written, Pukhto autobiography,” writes Sahibzada in the book.

Khan (1890–1988), popularly called the ‘Frontier Gandhi’, was born in Uthmanzai in the North-West Frontier Province of British India. His life was dedicated to

the social reform of the Pukhtuns and he continues to be revered across the world by them. In India, he is known for his close association with Mahatma Gandhi and his leadership of the Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God) movement from 1930 – 47 – one of the most successful and sustained Gandhian non-violent campaigns anywhere in the world.

The book, whose foreword is written by historian and Mahatma Gandhi’s grandson Rajmohan Gandhi, brings to life events and personalities of the independence movement as Khan records the untiring energy and sacrifices that went into winning freedom.

“If our world wants to picture non-violent defiance, or inter-faith partnership, .. Or a commitment to the rights of the vulnerable, it cannot do much better than study these two men together: Ghaffar Khan and, older by 21 years, Mohandas Gandhi, brothers in spirit, each armed with the swords of conscience and courage,” writes Rajmohan, who is also the author of Khan’s biography, “Ghaffar Khan: Nonviolent Badshah of the Pakhtuns”.

“The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle”, priced at ₹695, is available for sale in offline and online stores.

Scientists develop platform to detect effect of alcohol exposure on red blood cells

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Scientists have developed a platform to detect the effect of prolonged exposure to alcohol on red blood cells (RBC) through high-resolution measurements of their size, according to a statement on Saturday.

The high-resolution platform that shows the reduction in size of RBCs due to alcohol exposure can be tuned for a point-of-care screening of multiple conditions that alter the size and count of red cells in blood.

Although it is known that alcohol affects RBCs, the exact physiological changes are very subtle and difficult to measure.

In order to overcome this challenge, scientists led by Professor Gautam Soni from Raman Research Institute (RRI), an institution funded by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), have developed a custom-made electro-fluidic platform that can detect the change by measuring the cell size in enhanced resolution.

The device made in RRI relies on the resistive pulse sensing principle.

The team first developed techniques for making tiny micron (1/1000th of a millimetre) sized holes or micro-pores at the tip of a glass capillary with careful fabrication, flame polishing, and image verification.

Pon Radhakrishnan BJP candidate for bypoll to Kanyakumari LS seat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday nominated senior party leader and former Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan as its candidate for the April 6 bypoll to the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha constituency in Tamil Nadu.

As the campaign for the Assembly polls heats up, union Home Minister and former BJP president Amit Shah will be on a one-day visit to Tamil Nadu and Kerala on Sunday to attend various important programmes.

According to a party statement here, Shah will first visit Suchindram Temple in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, and offer prayers. He will then launch “Vetri Kodi Eandhi” (Vijay Sankalp Mahasamprk Abhiyaan - a door to door campaign) in Suchindram Town, Kanyakumari.

The BJP said Shah will hold a massive roadshow “Vetri Kodi Eandhi” from Hindu college to Veppamoodu Kamaraj statue in Kanyakumari. After the roadshow, the Union Home Minister will address a Karyakarta Sabha of the party at Uduppi Hotel in Kanyakumari .

Shah will then proceed to Kerala where he will visit Shri Belur Math at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala and offer prayers. After that, he will address the Valedictory function of BJP’s Kerala Vijay Yatra at Shanghumukham in Thiruvananthapuram.

parliamentary and inducted in then Modi-led NDA dispensation as Minister of State.

He lost the subsequent 2019 Lok Sabha elections to Kumar from the same constituency. He was then MoS Finance and Shipping.

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Medha Patkar defamation: Delhi court asks HC clerk to bring original case file

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Court has ordered to summon the court clerk of the record room of Delhi High Court to bring original case file of the petition filed by Medha Patkar for quashing of the defamation case filed by VK Saxena, presently the chairman of Khadi and Village Industries Commission. The original case file will help settle the dispute about the existence of the so called “defamatory” press

release issued by Patkar, something she has persistently denied in the court.

Saxena has filed two defamation cases against Patkar which are pending in the court of Metropolitan Magistrate, Saket, New Delhi. The one defamation case was related to a press note issued by Patkar on 24.11.2000, in which she claimed that Saxena visited Malegaon, praised Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), and donated a cheque of ₹40,000 to

Lok Samiti, a support group of NBA. The news was published by a news portal rediff.com.

Saxena denied that he ever visited Malegaon or made any such donation to the NBA and said that the press note was full of false allegations and was defamatory. He subsequently issued a legal notice to Patkar. After receiving no response from the NBA leader, Saxena filed a defamation case in January 2001.

During the last 20 years on

various occasions, Patkar denied that she ever issued any such press note and even claimed that it was fabricated by Saxena himself.

Interestingly, Patkar filed a criminal miscellaneous application No 6026 on 26.11.2018, U/S 482 of CrPC in the High Court of Delhi for quashing the proceedings in another defamation case filed by Saxena against her. An advance copy of the petition was also sent to Saxena by her advocate. In the said

criminal petition, Patkar in the list of “dates and events”, mentioned that on 24.11.2000, a press note was released by her which was subsequently published in the news portal rediff.com.

Incidentally, this was precisely the case made out by Saxena. Patkar later withdrew the petition.

Saxena on February 17, 2020 filed an application in the MM Court along with certified copies of the criminal miscel-

laneous application no. 6026 of 2018 filed by Patkar in the Delhi High Court with the request for calling upon additional witness in the case, i.e. the concerned court clerk of the Delhi High Court with original case file of the above case where she has admitted to have issued the press note in question. Counsel for Saxena pleaded that judicial admission cannot be withdrawn.

Metropolitan Magistrate Animesh Kumar after hearing

both the sides said, “it is a case of the complainant (VK Saxena) that on 26.11.2018, accused (Medha Patkar) filed a petition bearing number CrI MC 6026 of 2018 before the Hon’ble Delhi High Court U/S 482 CrPC for quashing the proceedings of CC No. 2866/1/03 pending before this court. Ld Counsel for the complainant submits that the accused has made certain judicial admissions under oath in the said petition filed before the DHC

where she has categorically admitted that she made averments against the complainant.”

The Magistrate further said that relevant record related to CrI MC No. 6026 of 2018 titled “Medha Patkar Vs State of Delhi & Others” should be summoned in the present case.

“Hence, let summon be issued to the concerned clerk of the record room of Hon’ble Delhi High Court to bring the original case file on 19.03.2021,” he ordered.

SHARE OF TAX DEVOLUTION TO STATES

15th Fin Comm opted for continuity: Singh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The 15th Finance Commission opted for continuity and predictability and hence retained the share of tax devolution to States at 41 per cent of the total pool, its chairman NK Singh said on Saturday.

Speaking at a webinar organised by the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Singh said each Finance Commission in the past has somewhat increased the total amount of devolution to states, but the 15th Finance Commission weighed all the options considering that the fiscal space of both states and the Centre has shrunk on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rajya Sabha member Sushil Kumar Modi highlighted that the share of divisible pool is slowly shrinking as the "cess and surcharge" component in Gross Tax revenue is

increasing.

The 15th Finance Commission has recommended that states be given 41 per cent of the divisible tax pool of the Centre during the period 2021-22 to 2025-26, which is at the same level as was recommended by the 14th Finance Commission.

Finance Commission is a constitutional body that gives suggestions on Centre-state financial relations.

As per the Commission, the gross tax revenue (GTR) for the 5-year period is expected to be Rs 135.2 lakh crore. Out of that, divisible pool (after deducting cesses and surcharges and cost of collection) is estimated to be Rs 103 lakh crore. States' share at 41 per cent of divisible pool comes to Rs 42.2 lakh crore for 2021-26 period.

The report of the 15th Finance Commission was tabled in Parliament on

February 2.

Singh said each Finance Commission has somewhat increased the total amount of devolution as percentage of divisible pool.

"We had an option of continuing this trajectory, we had an option of enhancing this devolution to somewhat higher figure. We had the option of somewhat recalibrating downwards looking at the constraints on the fiscal space of the Central Government. Finance Commission is not an encounter with shock and awe, Finance Commission has a legacy which believes in stability, continuity and predictability. We opted for continuity and predictability," he said.

Modi, in his speech, said cess and surcharge which was 10.4 per cent of GTR in 2011-12, has increased to 20.2 per cent. Even after deducting GST compensation cess, it is 15 per cent.

Govt open to evaluate, explore cryptocurrencies, says Thakur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday said the government is open to evaluate and explore new technologies, including cryptocurrencies, for improving governance.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself is a strong advocate of embracing technology in various aspects of governance, the Minister of State for Finance said while addressing an event organised by Entrepreneurs' Organisation - EO Punjab.

"Let me say that we welcome innovation and new technology...Blockchain is a new emerging technology. Cryptocurrency is a form of virtual currency. I firmly believe that we must always evaluate, explore and encourage new ideas with an open mind," he said.

A High-Level Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) was constituted under the Chairmanship of Economic Affairs Secretary on digital currencies and it has submitted its report.

The government would



The Govt would take a decision on the recommendations of the IMC and the legislative proposal, if any, would be introduced in Parliament following the due process

take a decision on the recommendations of the IMC and the legislative proposal, if any, would be introduced in Parliament following the due process, he said while inviting suggestions and views on this issue.

Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of their units and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the government is still formulating its opinion on cryptocurrencies and will take a calibrated position.

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das had last week said the apex bank has certain "major concerns"

over the impact cryptocurrencies may have on the financial stability in the economy and has conveyed the same to the government.

The RBI had virtually banned cryptocurrency trading in 2018

and had directed all entities regulated by the central bank to cease dealing in virtual currencies. The Supreme Court had also asked the Centre in 2019 to frame policies for crypto, and in 2020, struck down the curbs imposed by the RBI.

The Reserve Bank had through various public notices on December 24, 2013, February 1, 2017 and December 5, 2017, cautioned users, holders and traders of virtual currencies, including bitcoins, regarding various risks associated in dealing with such virtual currencies.

Goyal stresses on manufacturing high quality containers in India

New Delhi: Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday emphasised on the manufacturing of the indigenous high quality containers in India saying that India has excellent steel making capabilities.

Addressing a webinar here at the Container Corporation of India Ltd (CONCOR) on 'Indigenous Manufacturing of Containers', Goyal said, "We should be aspiring for a much bigger play in container manufacturing. We have absolutely excellent steel making capabilities, we have an MSME sector with good skills and the frame making capabilities are also good."

The minister stressed that India's exports are going to increase significantly, as against the imports. "Government has made a conscious decision to support our shipping sector so more and more of the Indian companies start owning Indian flag vessels," he said.

Goyal said, there is a lot of buzz and excitement in our manufacturing sector, to meet domestic and international requirements. "We are part of the resilient global supply

chain, which are looking at alternate supplies," he said.

"If India starts manufacturing at scale, we will become cost-competitive to sell to all parts of the world. Scale presents huge cost-benefit opportunities," he said. Goyal emphasised that if you produce a high-quality product, our neighbours will never be able to match it. And that can be sold in Europe and US.

"If India manufacturers a million containers in a year, we will become cost-competitive," he said. Goyal said container manufacturing business needed a LIFT, which CONCOR has been able to provide. Elaborating the meaning of LIFT, he said L - efficient logistics, I - depending on indigenous sources, F - futuristic and T - becoming a trendsetter. "We should all collectively take a concrete decision to buy only Indian and support Indian industry, to meet not only India's needs but the world's needs. Container shortage and imported container should be dumped into the flames of history," the minister said.

Tech bids open for Mum-Ahm Bullet train bridge project

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) on Saturday said that it has opened two technical bids for construction or building of bridges for the 508 km Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) corridor in the state of Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli in which nine companies have participated.

NHSRCL spokesperson Sushma Gaur said that the technical bids for contract packages of P-1(B) and P-1(C) for construction or building of

bridges for the MAHSR corridor in the state of Gujarat as well union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

She said that of now, 5 bidders for P-1 (C) whereas four bidders for P-1 (B) have submitted their bids for the package. She said that the P-1 (C) package includes construction of bridges for double line High Speed railway for four PSC Bridges and seven steel truss bridges between Zaroli Village at Maharashtra - Gujarat Border and Vadodara, in Gujarat and the union territory of Dadar and Nagar Haveli for the project.

Tesla, Ford only carmakers not gone bankrupt: Elon Musk

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

As several carmakers bleed in the US and beyond, Tesla is profitable and according to Elon Musk, his electric car company and Ford are the only two carmakers in the US which have not gone bankrupt.

Tesla reported another profitable quarter as revenue hit \$10.74 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020. In last year, Tesla achieved free cash flow of nearly \$2.8 billion after spending more than \$3 billion on building new factories and other expenditures.

US automaker Ford last month announced to more than double its investment in electric and autonomous vehicles to \$29 billion. The

automaker had previously committed to spend \$11.5 billion on electrifying its vehicle lineup through 2022.

"Tesla & Ford are the only American carmakers not to have gone bankrupt out of 1000's of car startups. Prototypes are easy, production is hard & being cash flow positive is excruciating," Musk said in a tweet on Friday.

Ford CEO Jim Farley responded to his tweet, saying: "Respect".

In 2020, Tesla produced and delivered half a million vehicles. In addition, Model Y production in Shanghai has begun.

Tesla this year also registered its Indian subsidiary with the Registrar of Companies

(RoC) in Bengaluru, on January 8.

"2020 was a defining year for us on many levels. Despite a challenging environment, we've reached an important milestone of producing and delivering 0.5 million cars," Musk had said.

On the other hand, Ford's increased investment is aimed at catching up with the EV market leader Tesla and keep pace with other automakers like GM and Volkswagen.

"We are accelerating our plans right now, breaking constraints, increasing battery capacity, improving our costs and getting more battery electrics into our cycle plan," Ford CEO Farley said last month.

'Privatisation will lead to increase in service charges'

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

All India Nationalised Banks Officers Federation (AIN-BOF) has opposed privatisation of public sector banks as it will lead to increase in service charges and will take banking beyond the reach of common man.

In a statement, the AIN-BOF said privatisation will primarily impact the general public only as the social objectives will be lost in the name of profitability.

"Service Charges will be increased and customers who are able to bear those charges only will be serviced. This will take banking beyond the reach of the common man which was the primary objective of

nationalization," it said.

It said though the Government's agenda of privatization started way back in 1991 immediately after the liberalization the trade unions were successful in thwarting the ill-conceived moves of the successive governments over the past three decades and maintaining the public sector status.

"Of the many private sector banks that came into existence, today only a handful which were promoted by the financial houses like ICICI, UTI, IDBI, HDFC are surviving and many of the private sector entities that commenced their banking operations after 1990 were either closed or merged", it added.

Petrol, diesel prices steady even as crude boils

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies have spared consumers of yet another petrol and diesel price hike even though the global oil market is on the boil with crude reaching within touching distance of year-high level of \$70 a barrel.

Petrol continues to be priced at ₹91.17 a litre and diesel ₹81.47 a litre in the capital on Saturday. Across the country too, the petrol and diesel price remained unchanged.

This is seventh consecutive day when pump prices of auto fuels have remained unchanged.

After a spike in global oil prices seen over last two weeks with crude price jumping close to \$67 a barrel, prices had fallen to around \$63 a barrel but it rose again to cross \$69 a barrel mark now after the OPEC+ decision to continue with crude production cut in April.

Petrol and diesel prices have been rising continuously since February 9.

Public Notice

This is to inform general public that Mrs. Sunita Gujral is the owner of Entire First Floor, Entire Second Floor, Entire Third Floor, with roof rights 'said floors', built on Property bearing No. J-13/63, in Plot No. 63, area measuring 200 sq. yds., in Block J-13, Situated at Rajouri Garden, New Delhi vide Sale Deed dated 11.12.2020 and the same was duly registered with the Sub-Registrar-IIB Delhi, as Document No. 19218, Book No. I, Volume No. 5819, Page No. 110-128, on 17.12.2020. Now, Mrs. Sunita Gujral is mortgaging the above property with Shri Ram Housing Finance Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 15 days of this publication to Mr. Munesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Ventures, Unit no 405, 4th Floor, GD-ITL North Tower, (A-09), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/ 9818228636 (M).

LOST AND FOUND

ORIGINAL SALE DEED OF RESIDENTIAL PLOT NO. G-37, GREEN PARK, NEW DELHI VIDE REGISTRATION NO. 8970 AND 8971, EXECUTED ON 20.11.1992 ARE MISSING IF ANY PERSON, BANK, FINANCIAL INSTITUTION HAVING ANY CLAIM, RIGHT, TITLE OR INTEREST OF ANY NATURE WHATSOEVER IN OR UPON THE ABOVE PROPERTY, IS HEREBY CALLED UPON TO MAKE THE SAME KNOWN, IN WRITING WITH DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BY REGISTERED AD POST TO THE UNDERSIGNED AT THE ADDRESS MENTIONED HEREIN BELOW WITHIN 7 (SEVEN) DAYS OF PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE TO THE UNDERSIGNED ON TELEPHONE NO.-8860074071 ADDRESS: PNB HOUSING FINANCE LTD., 5-8 GREEN PARK EXTENSION, NEW DELHI - 110016

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE FOR ENGINEERING WORK

Srl. No. (1) E-Tender No. DRM-ENGG-BSP-T-176-20-21, Date: 03.03.2021.

Work : Renewal of existing Channel Sleepers with H-Beam Sleepers under the jurisdiction of DEN/ Central-II/ BSP.

Tender Value : ₹ 2,88,36,781.56/-.

Completion Period : 09 Months.

Start Date of Submission of Tender: From 11:00 hrs. on 11.03.2021. Last Date of Submission of Tender : Upto 11:00 hrs. on 25.03.2021.

The Complete information of above e-Tender Notices is available over website <https://www.irops.gov.in>. Bids other than e-bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders.

Divl. Railway Manager (Engg.) CPR/10/468 S.E.C. Railway, Bilsapur.

South East Central Railway @secrail

Covestro pulls through fiscal 2020

Mumbai: Covestro saw a strong end to an exceptional year in 2020 and benefited, especially in the second half, from its consistent crisis prevention measures and a recovery in demand.

However, despite the very successful fourth quarter, the group could not fully compensate the massive, pandemic-related cut-backs that arose in the first six months.

"We were able to successfully navigate through this highly exceptional year and maintained our ability to act at all times," said CEO Markus Steilemann.

Base effect subdues pharma market's growth in Feb

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

High base effect along with volume decline subdued the growth of India's pharmaceuticals market, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said.

Accordingly, the volume declined in the anti-infective and respiratory products was pronounced during the month.

"Ind-Ra expects a growth improvement over the coming months as the vaccination drive gains momentum and a lower base leads to better growth momentum."

"However, IPM grew 1.1 per cent YoY during February 2021, due to a 5.8 per cent volume decline, price growth of 4.8 per cent and products launches at 2.1 per cent."

According to Ind-Ra, acute therapies such as gastro and vitamins witnessed sales growth of 9.9 per cent YoY and 8.6 per cent YoY, respectively, while anti-infectives declined 11.3 per cent YoY during February 2021.

"A growth outperformance was observed in chronic therapies during the month, with cardiac and anti-diabetic growing 7.3 per cent YoY and 4.3 per cent YoY, respectively."

NMDC leaves iron ore rates unchanged

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Country's largest iron ore miner NMDC has left the price of lump ore unchanged at ₹5,100 per tonne and ₹4,210 per tonne for fines in its latest price revision announced on Saturday.

Iron ore is the key raw material used in steel making. Any change in its prices has a direct impact on the rates of steel. In a filing to the BSE, NMDC said it fixed the price of lump ore or high-grade iron ore at ₹5,100 per tonne, and that of iron ore fines or inferior grade ore at ₹4,210 a tonne.

The revised prices are effective from March 6, 2021 and exclude royalty, District Mineral Fund (DMF), National Mineral Exploration Trust

(DMET), cess, forest permit fee, and other taxes, the company said.

Last month, NMDC reduced the price of lumps to ₹5,100 per tonne from ₹5,700 per tonne fixed on January 6, 2021, while the rate of fines was also revised downwards to ₹4,210 a tonne from ₹4,810 per tonne.

NMDC, under the Ministry of Steel, is the country's largest iron ore miner.

The company, which has been in the business of mining iron ore for over six decades, produces about 35 MT iron ore from its three iron ore complexes in the country — one in Donimalai in Karnataka and two in the Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh.

AXIS BANK

SME Centre, Delhi: 4th Floor, Ashoka Estate, 24 Barakhamba Road New Delhi-110001, **Also at** III Floor, Red Fort Capital Parswanath Tower, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, Near Gole Market, New Delhi-110001

Also at: Axis Bank Ltd., Axis House, Tower T-2, 2nd Floor, I-14, Sector-128, Noida Expressway, Jaypee Greens Wishtown, Noida (U.P.)-201301, **Corporate Office:** 'Axis House', Block-B, Bombay Dyeing Mills Compound, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400025

Registered Office: 'Trishul', 3rd floor, opposite Samartheswar Temple, Law garden, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-380006

POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notice upon the Borrower(s) Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower(s) Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.

The Borrower(s) Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Axis Bank Ltd.

The Borrower(s) Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower / Co-Borrower	Description of Property	1. Date of Demand Notice 2. Date of Possession 3. Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)
1. MNG International , Registered Office At 185-186 , 2nd Floor, D-14, Sector 7 Rohini, Delhi - 110085	1. Equitable Mortgage over ground floor of freehold residential property bearing No. 128, in PKT 14, Sector 24, Rohini, Delhi - 110042, situated in the layout plan Rohini, Residential Scheme, Rohini, Delhi, admeasuring 68sq. mtrs., along with the proportionate free hold rights of the and under the said property owned by Mr. Anshuman Mohanty & Mrs. Pranti Mohanty built on a phot admeasuring 60 sqm.	1. 26-11-2020 2. 04-03-2021 3. Rs. 1,00,04,592/- (Rupees One Crore Four Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Two Only)
2. Mr. Anshuman Mohanty , Proprietor of M/S MNG International 185-186 , 2nd Floor, D-14, Sector 7 , Rohini, Delhi - 110085	2. Equitable Mortgage charge over freehold residential Property situated at House No. 63, Second Floor, with Roof Rights Pocket 21 , Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110085	1. 26-11-2020 2. 04-03-2021 3. Rs. 1,00,04,592/- (Rupees One Crore Four Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Two Only)
Also At - : Property No. 128 in Pkt-14, Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110042		
3. Mrs. Pranti Mohanty 185-186, 2nd Floor, D-14, Sector 7, Rohini, Delhi-110085		
Also At - Ms. Pranti Mohanty House No. 63 , Second Floor Pocket 21 , Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110085		
Also At - Ms. Pranti Mohanty Property No -128, In Pkt-14, Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110042		

The above-mentioned Borrower(s) Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) are hereby given a 30 days' Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Sd/-
Authorized Officer,
Axis Bank Ltd.,

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Re-Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement System)

1 Name of work with its location	Strengthening of rail and cross girder, providing screen over web of cross girder on Br. No.-176A UP DLI-UMB section under AXEN/Br/SP/TKJ.
2 Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 26,14,403.75
3 Completion period of Work	(02) Two Months
4 Date & time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 14.00 hrs. on 30.03.2021 Opening of tender after 14.00 hrs. on same day
5 Website particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.irops.gov.in

Tender Notice No. 32-W-BR-176A-DLI-2021 Date: 06.03.2021 517/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SOUTHERN STAR CO-OPERATIVE (URBAN) THRIFT & CREDIT SOCIETY LTD.

Corp. Off.: E-283, DDA Market, MOR Land, New Rajendra Nagar, New Delhi-60

Phone : 011-28741801-02, 28741821-22, E-mail : ssstarsociety@yahoo.com, website : southernstar.org

NOTICE

Notice is being published for general information of the members of the **SOUTHERN STAR CO-OP. (U) THRIFT & CREDIT SOCIETY LTD.** (hereafter referred to as the Society') that the 31st Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) of the Society will be held on **Friday, 19th March, 2021 at 02.00 P.M. at the MCD Community Center, New Rajendra Nagar, New Delhi-60**, to consider the Agenda already circulated and also available at the website of the Society.

S/d

NEW DELHI -60
Date : **01.03.2021**

(VENKIDESWARAN POTTY P.N.)
HONY. SECRETARY

PUBLIC NOTICE

ICICI Bank

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohitak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Kanchan Kumari, Raghunath Sharma, 276, Sector B2 Pocket C, Narela, Delhi A/c No:- LBDEL00002866980	LIG Flat No-276, Third Floor Block-B2 Pocket-C, Narela, Delhi	03-Feb-2021, Rs. 12,93,262/-	17-02-2020
2.	Pankaj Bakshi, Meena Bakshi, 641 New Ashiana Apartment Plot No-10, Sec 6, Dwarka South West Delhi, Delhi A/c No:- LBDEL00002967064	Flat No-641 4th Floor, Plot No 10, Block Ph-1, New Ashiana CGHS Ltd Cat-B, Sector-6, Delhi	03-Feb-2021, Rs. 24,47,256/-	29-02-2020
3.	Sanjeeta Thakur, Sanjeev Kumar Thakur, Flat No.990 Jay Ambey Apartment, New LIG Dda Flats, Kondli Gharoli, Mayur Vihar-3, Delhi A/c No:-LBGHZ00004865169	DDA LIG Flat No-137F, 2nd Floor Pocket-A-2, Kondli Gharoli, Mayur Vihar, Phase 3, Delhi	03-Feb-2021, Rs. 37,60,624/-	29-02-2020
4.	Rana Singh, Aarti Bhagwan Singh Thakur, 402 AI Ikrema Building, Near Grand Cafe, Al Jurf Ajman, UAE A/c No:-LBNOD00002008679	Flat No-g-3/19, Diamond-4, 19th Floor, Ganga Apartment, Sidhharth Vihar, Sector-7, ghaziabad,	03-Feb-2021, Rs. 1,04,25,664/-	31-05-2018
5.	Anil Singh, Sudha Anil Singh, Flat No. 1003, Al Smallo BLDG., Jamal Ab, Sharjah, UAE A/c No:-LBDEL00001462326	Apartment No.ICD011, First Floor, Along With Parking Spaces PBD 103 And PBD 104, Revenue Estate, Wazirabad, Gurgaon	03-Feb-2021, Rs. 46,05,237/-	30-11-2018
6.	Baljeet Garg, Mamta Garg, H No-73, Ft, Sec-12A Dwarka, Delhi A/c No:-LBDEL00001866197	Plot No-73, first Floor Sector-12 A, Dwarka Delhi	03-Feb-2021, Rs. 20,23,764/-	31-07-2018
7.	Utkarsh Jhingran, Niti Jhingran, Block 24 Unit Number 02-13 Simet Street Melville Park, Singapore, Singapore A/c No:-LBDEL00001879850	Flat No- Ptt- 09-0001, Palm Terraces, Sector- 66, Gurgaon, Haryana, Gurgaon	03-Feb-2021, Rs. 2,47,782/-	31/08/2018
8.	Sukhvinder Singh, Gurpreet Singh Arora, A- 4/24, Paschim Vihar, Delhi A/c No:-LBDEL00001977268	Unit No 0047, Ground Floor, Block E, Anthea Floors, Wild Flower Country, Gurgaon	03-Feb-2021, Rs. 38,13,100/-	30/11/2018

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : **March 06, 2021**
Place: **Delhi/NCR**

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Pakistan PM Imran wins trust vote



Supporters of the ruling Pakistan Tehree-e-Insaf political party gather near the National Assembly to celebrate Prime Minister Imran Khan winning a vote of confidence in Islamabad, Pakistan on Saturday

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday comfortably won a trust vote in the National Assembly amid opposition boycott, bolstering his Government's position after an embarrassing defeat in this week's hotly-contested Senate elections.

Prime Minister Khan secured 178 votes in the 342-member lower house of Parliament during a special session convened on the directives of President Arif Alvi. He required 172 votes for a simple majority. The floor test took place without the Opposition as the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) — an

alliance of 11 parties — boycotted the voting, making it easier for Khan to secure the required numbers.

Khan decided to take a vote of confidence in the National Assembly after his finance minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh was defeated in the Senate election by former prime minister Yusuf Raza

Gilani on Wednesday. The Opposition demanded the Prime Minister's resignation after the debacle.

Addressing the House after securing the trust vote, the 68-year-old cricketer-turned politician thanked all lawmakers from his party and allies for supporting him in Parliament.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi earlier tabled a single-point resolution in the House.

"That this House reposes confidence in the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr Imran Khan, as required under clause (7) of Article 91 of the Constitution Islamic Republic of Pakistan," the resolution said. Speaker Asad Qaiser announced the result, saying Prime Minister Khan had been elected to the post with 176 votes following the 2018 general elections. "Today, he has secured 178 votes," he said.

The ruling coalition had 181 members but after the resignation of one of its lawmakers, Faisal Vowda, its strength was reduced to 180. The Opposition coalition has 160 members in the House. One seat was vacant. According to the breakdown, 155 PTI lawmakers out of 156 voted in favour of the prime minister, Dawn newspaper reported.

Seven lawmakers from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), five each from the Pakistan Muslim League-Q and the Balochistan Awami

Party, three from the Grand Democratic Alliance, and one each from the Awami Muslim League and the Jamhoori Watan Party voted in favour of the resolution. Independent candidate Aslam Bhotani also voted in favour of Khan.

Earlier, unruly scenes were witnessed outside Parliament building when supporters of the ruling alliance tried to dis-

rupt a press conference of Opposition leaders belonging to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

PML-N leaders alleged that they had been manhandled by the ruling party members who were holding up banners and chanting slogans in favour of Khan. Security forces managed to separate the political workers of the two sides.

Pakistan Opp slams PM, terms vote of confidence 'meaningless'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's leading Opposition leaders on Saturday demanded Prime Minister Imran Khan's resignation and fresh elections, soon after he won a vote of confidence in the National Assembly.

Khan secured 178 votes in the 342-member lower house of Parliament during a special session convened on the directives of President Arif Alvi.

The floor test took place without the Opposition as the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) — an alliance of 11 parties — boycotted the voting.

The first to respond was chief of the PDM Maulana

Fazlur Rehman, who told the media in Sukkur, Sindh that the vote of confidence has no meaning.

"This was not a confidence vote. We know which agencies watched the members of the assembly the entire night. [We know] who knocked on the doors of each member to ensure they were present," he said.

His reference was towards reports stating that the government kept its members inside lodges in Islamabad under strict watch so that all of them are present in Parliament during the floor test.

Rehman alleged that the lawmakers were forced to vote for Prime Minister Khan.

Imran bats for electoral reforms for fair elections, to introduce EVMs

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Saturday that his government will introduce electoral reforms and electronic voting machines to ensure fair and transparent elections in the country.

Delivering a speech after winning a trust vote in the National Assembly, the cricketer-turned-politician said his government plans to introduce electronic voting, enabling millions of Pakistanis abroad to vote in elections.

"We are bringing modern technology in elections for a transparent election process. We have decided to use Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) in the future. It is important to use them to counter the voter fraud claims made by the candidates who lose the polls. We are also working on putting up a system

so that the overseas Pakistanis can cast their votes," Khan said.

"Just like in the US where former president Donald Trump's repeated allegations of electoral malpractice were debunked by a transparent system, Pakistan will also put in place the same system to ensure fair and transparent elections in the country.

"As captain in Cricket, I brought the concept of neutral umpiring, similarly my government will set in motion a fair electoral system," he said.

Khan's remarks came after Pakistan's election commission on Friday expressed shock and disappointment over the prime minister's allegations against it, asserting that the Senate elections were held as per the Constitution and it has "never come under any sort of pressure and God willing, will not in future as well."

Protests, tear gas in Myanmar after UN envoy urges action

AP ■ YANGON

Security forces in Myanmar again used force Saturday to disperse anti-coup protesters, a day after a UN special envoy urged the Security Council to take action to quell junta violence that this past week left more than 50 peaceful demonstrators dead and scores injured.

Protests were reported Saturday morning in the country's biggest city, Yangon, where stun grenades and tear gas were used against demonstrators. On Wednesday, 18 people were reported killed there.

Protests also took place in several other cities, including Mandalay, the second-biggest city, Myitkyina, the capital of the northern state of Kachin, Myeik in the far south, where police fired tear gas at students, and Dawei in the southeast, where tear gas was also used. Officials are believed to



Anti-coup protesters prepare water and wet cloths to help extinguish tear gas canisters during a demonstration in Yangon, Myanmar on Saturday

have exhumed the body of a young woman who was killed during Wednesday's suppression of protests in Mandalay. The woman, Kyal Sin, had been photographed taking part in the protests before her death, and images of her on the front lines have made her a high-pro-

file martyr.

Security forces on Friday night sealed off the cemetery where she was buried, and when residents visited in the morning, her grave was freshly plastered over and shovels and other evidence of digging were found at the site.

Pope to visit Iraq church damaged by ISIS terrorists

Baghdad: The scenes are seared in the memory of the Rev. Ammar Altony Yako: A church that for decades has been the pride of the town of Qaraqosh, a center for Christian life in Iraq, stood badly scarred.

Yako saw it in 2016 when Qaraqosh was liberated from more than two years of Islamic State group rule. Scrawled on a wall was the proclamation, the "Islamic State will remain." Strewn amid the rubble in a courtyard were bullet-riddled mannequins and other telltale signs of a militants' makeshift firing range for target practice.

On Sunday, a new scene will play out for the world to watch at the Church of the Immaculate Conception and new memories will be created. Where the extremists once damaged, Pope Francis will now pray.

"I never could have imagined that his holiness, the pope, would visit this church, not even in my dreams," said Yako, who has been



Pope Francis stands with religious leaders during an interreligious meeting near the archaeological area of the Sumerian city-state of Ur, 20 kilometers south-west of Nasiriyah, Iraq on Saturday

Pope Francis, Iraq's top Shia cleric hold historic meeting

AP ■ PLAINS OF UR (IRAQ)

Pope Francis and Iraq's top Shia cleric delivered a powerful message of peaceful coexistence on Saturday, urging Muslims in the war-weary Arab nation to embrace Iraq's long-beleaguered Christian minority during an historic meeting in the holy city of Najaf.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani said religious authorities have a role in protecting Iraq's Christians, and that they should live in peace and enjoy the same rights as other Iraqis.

The Vatican said Francis thanked al-Sistani for having "raised his voice in defense of the weakest and most persecuted" during some of the most violent times in Iraq's recent history.

Al-Sistani, 90, is one of the most senior clerics in Shiite Islam and his rare but powerful political interventions have helped shape present-day Iraq. He is a deeply revered figure in Shia-majority Iraq and his opinions on religious and other matters are sought by Shiites worldwide.

The historic meeting in al-Sistani's humble home was months in the making, with every detail painstakingly discussed and negotiated between the ayatollah's office and the Vatican. Early Saturday, the 84-year-old pontiff's convoy, led by a bullet-proof Mercedes-Benz, pulled up along Najaf's narrow and column-lined Rasool Street, which culminates at the golden-domed Imam Ali Shrine, one of the most revered sites in Shiite Islam. He then walked the few meters (yards) to al-Sistani's modest home, which the cleric has rented for decades.

A group of Iraqis wearing traditional clothes welcomed him outside. As a masked Francis entered the doorway, a few white doves were released in a sign of peace.

He emerged just under an hour later, still limping from an apparent flare-up of sciatica nerve pain that makes walking difficult. The "very positive" meeting lasted a total of 40 minutes, said a religious official in Najaf, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to brief media.

Senate works through night, virus aid on path to passage

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Beary-eyed lawmakers worked through a mountain of amendments Saturday as the Senate plodded toward passage of a \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 relief bill that President Joe Biden and Democrats say is crucial for hoisting the country out of the pandemic.

The Senate commenced a dreaded "vote-a-thon" — a continuous series of votes on amendments — shortly before midnight Friday, and by midmorn-

ing Saturday had dispensed with over two dozen.

Democrats were hoping for final passage by around midday so the Senate could send the modestly revamped bill back to the House, and then to Biden this coming week for his signature.

The Senate had been in session since 9 a.m. EST Friday. Its work on the bill was proving to be a test of both lawmakers' physical stamina and Democrats' ability to pass legislation backed by every senator in the party.

The chamber is divided 50-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris' tiebreaking vote their only edge, and Republicans are arrayed against the legislation. Overnight, the Senate was like an experiment in the best techniques for staying awake. Several lawmakers appeared to rest their eyes or doze at their desks, often burying their faces in their hands. At one point, Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, at 48 one of the younger senators, trotted into the chamber and did a prolonged stretch.

Biden White House: message discipline, no news conference

Washington: No news conference. No Oval Office address. No primetime speech to a joint session of Congress.

President Joe Biden is the first executive in four decades to reach this point in his term without holding a formal question and answer session.

It reflects a White House media strategy meant both to reserve major media set-pieces for the celebration of a legislative victory and to limit unforced errors from a historically gaffe-prone politician. Biden has opted to take questions about as often

as most of his recent predecessors, but he tends to field just one or two informal inquiries at a time, usually in a hurried setting at the end of an event.

In a sharp contrast with the previous administration, the White House is exerting extreme message discipline, empowering staff to speak but doing so with caution.

Recalling both Biden's largely leak-free campaign and the buttoned-up Obama administration, the new White House team has carefully managed the president's appear-

ances, trying to lower the temperature from Donald Trump's Washington and to save a media moment to mark what could soon be a signature accomplishment: passage of the Covid-19 bill.

The message control may serve the president's purposes but it denies the media opportunities to directly press Biden on major policy issues and to engage in the kind of back-and-forth that can draw out information and thoughts that go beyond the administration's curated talking points. **AP**

NASA's Perseverance rover performs first test drive on Mars

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

NASA's latest Mars rover, Perseverance, performed its first test drive on the Red Planet, covering a distance of about 6.5 metres across the Martian landscape, a "major milestone" before it begins its science operations.

The drive lasted about 33 minutes, propelling the rover forward by four metres, where it then turned to the left by 150 degrees and backed up 2.5 metres into its new temporary parking space, the American space agency noted in a statement.

According to NASA, the drive served as a mobility test to check out and calibrate every system, subsystem, and instrument on the Perseverance rover, which it said is a major milestone before the science operations get underway.



This photo made available by NASA was taken during the first drive of the Perseverance rover on Mars. Perseverance landed on February 18, 2021

ROVING ON RED PLANET

- The drive lasted about 33 minutes, propelling the rover forward by four metres, where it then turned to the left by 150 degrees and backed up 2.5 metres into its new temporary parking space
- The drive served as a mobility test to check out and calibrate every system, subsystem, and instrument on the Perseverance rover
- All the while, the space agency said the rover continues to send down images from Mars using the most advanced suite of cameras ever to travel to the Red Planet

fident our drive system is good to go, capable of taking us wherever the science leads us over the next two years," Zarifian said.

Regular commutes of over 200 metres are expected once the rover begins pursuing its science goals, including the search for signs of ancient microbial life, NASA said.

As part of its mission, the rover would characterise the Red Planet's geology and past climate, and pave the way for human exploration of Mars.

It is also expected to be the first to collect and cache Martian rock and soil.

Since its landing on Mars on February 18, the rover has undergone several routine checks, including a a software update, replacing the computer program that helped land Perseverance with one NASA will rely on to analyse the

planet.

On March 2, NASA said its engineers unstowed the rover's 2-metre-long robotic arm for the first time, flexing each of its five joints over the course of two hours.

All the while, the space agency said the rover continues to send down images from Mars using the most advanced suite of cameras ever to travel to the Red Planet.

"Every picture from Perseverance is relayed by either the European Space Agency's Trace Gas Orbiter, or NASA's MAVEN, Mars Odyssey, or Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. They are important partners in our explorations and our discoveries," said Justin Maki, chief engineer for imaging and the imaging scientist for the Mars 2020 Perseverance rover mission at JPL.

Rajasthan Skill & Livelihoods Development Corporation EMI Campus, J.S.A., Jhalana Institutional Area, Jaipur-302004 (Rajasthan) Ph: +91-0141-2705917, 9103246, Fax: +91-0141-5103246, www.rajasthanlivelihoods.org F () No: RSLDC/SDT/2021-22/50976 Dated: 05-03-2021		
Office Order		
Subject: - Extension of Bid submission last date and opening date for procurement of Services for providing Self-Defence Training to girls/women through training partner for RSLDC.		
Reference: - RFP No. RSLDC/SDT/20/30473 dated 3rd Feb, 2021		
Due to some unavoidable circumstances the last date and Bid opening date of above referred Bid is hereby extended as per the following –		
Activity	Old Date & Time	New Date & Time
Last Date/Time for Submitting / uploading of offer/Bid	8th March, 2021 up to 3:00 PM	18th March, 2021 up to 03:00 PM
Last Date / time for submitting original hard copy of Bid Security Demand Draft	8th March, 2021 up to 3:00 PM	18th March, 2021 up to 03:00 PM
Date & Time for opening of Technical Bid	8th March, 2021 up to 05:00 PM	18th March, 2021 at 05:00 PM
The interested bidders may submit the proposal as per the above amendments and all other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.		
UBN No. SLD2021RFP0003		Managing Director, RSLDC
Raj.Sanwad/C/20/10627		

AXIS BANK SME Centre, Delhi: 4th Floor, Ashoka Estate, 24 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001. Also at III Floor, Red Fort Capital Park/Sarnath Tower, Shaheed Vihar, Meerut, Near Gole Market, New Delhi-110001 Also at: Axis Bank Ltd., Axis House, Tower T-2, 2nd Floor, I-14, Sector-128, Noida Expressway, Jaypee Greens Wishtown, Noida (U.P.)-201301. Corporate Office: Axis House, Block-B, Bombay Dyeing Mills Compound, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400025 Registered Office: "Trishul", 3rd floor, opposite Samartheswar Temple, Law garden, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-380006			
POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002			
Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notice upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgage(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgage(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgage(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgage(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Axis Bank Ltd. The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgage(s) attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.			
Name of Borrower / Co-borrower	Description of Property	1. Date of Demand Notice	2. Date of Possession
1. M/S Lakhmi Chand Om Prakash (Through Its Proprietor) Mr.Ashish Gupta Registered Office At: 2745/9, Sushila Mohan Marg, Naya Bazar, Delhi-110006 Also At: - 3963/108, 1st Floor Naya Bazar, Delhi-110006	Equitable Mortgage on Property No.-5, In Block C – 5 Out of Khassana No.- 262/258/217/4/3 with all roof/terrace rights, Built on land area measuring 105.5 Sq. yards, Situated in the area of village Dharoli, colony known as Adarsh Nagaar, on Cottage Road Cottage Road Delhi – 110033	2. 04-03-2021	2. 04-03-2021
2. Mr. Ashish Gupta At: 2745/9, Sushila Mohan Marg Naya Bazar, Delhi-110006 Also At: - 3863/108, 1st Floor Naya Bazar, Delhi-110006		3. Rs. 3,16,89,855/- (Rupees Three Crore Sixteen lakh ninety nine thousand Eight hundred and fifty five only)	
Also At: - : R/O C-5, Cottage Road, Near Azadpur Sabzi Mandi, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi-110033.			
3. Mrs. Shahsi Gupta, R/O C-5, Cottage Road, Near Azadpur Sabzi Mandi, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi-110033.			
4. Mr.Om Prakash Gupta, R/O C-5, Cottage Road, Near Azadpur Sabzi Mandi, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi-110033.			
The above-mentioned Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgage(s) are hereby given a 30 days' Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days' from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.			
Date: 07-03-2021 Place: Delhi		Sd/-, Authorized Officer, Axis Bank Ltd.,	

INDIA FIX LORD'S DATE

Virat & Co will face Black Caps in WTC final after Axar, Ashwin take five each to thrash England by innings & 25 runs to seal series

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin once again made a mockery of Kane Williamson's New Zealand but Axar (24-6-48-5), in company of Ashwin (22.5-4-47-5), literally blew England away in a session and half for a paltry 135 in 54.5 overs to complete a 3-1 rout, ensuring that the Anthony De Mello Trophy will stay at the Cricket Centre in Mumbai.

All India needed was a draw to book a Lord's date in June with Kane Williamson's New Zealand but Axar (24-6-48-5), in company of Ashwin (22.5-4-47-5), literally blew England away in a session and half for a paltry 135 in 54.5 overs to complete a 3-1 rout, ensuring that the Anthony De Mello Trophy will stay at the Cricket Centre in Mumbai.

It was another two and half days finish but even the most partisan England experts like their former skipper Michael Vaughan have admitted that the 22-yard strip had almost nothing to do with their side's abject surrender.

A case in point could be India's first innings score of 365 and a lead of 160 on the same track where England could cumulatively manage only 340 runs across two innings.

This was one Test match where Indians, even before a ball being bowled, created an illusion of a turning track. It was a play of playing with the minds of a team that was already in a negative zone.

There wasn't much turn but enough to ensure that the visitors wilted under pressure as Patel's series tally stood at high-est for a newcomer (27) while man of the series Ashwin was peerless as ever with 32 scalps in his kitty.

A lot of credit for this vic-



India captain Virat Kohli along with teammates Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Mohammed Siraj and Rishabh Pant pose with winners trophy

PTI

tory should go to the indomitable Rishabh Pant, who played the enforcer on the second day with a magnificent hundred, and Washington Sundar, who notched up a chiselled 96.

These two knocks literally made it impossible for England to make a comeback as a total of 365 seemed like 650.

The coming of age of Pant as a real replacement for the iconic Mahendra Singh Dhoni and emergence of Washington as a potent batting all-rounder only augurs well for the team.

So formidable is India's bench strength right now that Hanuma Vihari, who saved an epic Test in Sydney only a couple of months back, may not get

to play a Test in near future.

World's best wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha will also find it difficult to add to his 38 Tests unless the Roorkee Rockstar gets injured.

Patel, in his debut Test series, was a powerhouse performer but he also knows that once Ravindra Jadeja is fit and available, he will have to wait for his next Test.

The story of the third day was similar to the one that has played out for most of the series.

With shoulders already drooping after the humiliation inflicted by Pant and Washington, England's openers Zak Crawley (5, 16 balls), Dom Sibley (3, 21 balls) and Jonny

“Every team in International cricket is a quality side and we need to work hard to beat them, even at home. Keeping that intensity going is most important and is the hallmark of our team.”

—VIRAT KOHLI

“We haven't matched India in the last three, and we need to keep learning and keep getting better for this experience and this series, and we need to keep evolving and move forward.”

—JOE ROOT

Bairstow (0, 1 ball) seemed like “walking wickets” at the start of the post-lunch session.

One had expected two of England's best players in Joe Root (30) and Ben Stokes (2 off 9 balls) to put up a fight but the all-rounder failed to gauge the extra bounce as he went for a sweep shot off Patel.

Kohli accepted the dolly at leg slip as England's resistance was blown away at 30 for 4.

Ollie Pope (15) hit Ashwin for a six, which was more desperation than finesse, and it was only a matter of time before he yoked himself as Pant fumbled while gathering but managed to effect a stumping to make it 65 for 5.

The England skipper could

India top WTC table

Dubai: India on Saturday finished on top of the league phase of the ICC World Test Championship standings after crushing England by an innings and 25 runs in the fourth Test.

“That victory against England means India finish the league phase of the inaugural ICC World Test Championship with a fine view from the top of the table,” the ICC tweeted.

India finished the league phase with 520 points, which includes 12 wins, four losses and one draw.

New Zealand finished in the second spot with 420 points, including seven wins and four losses.

Australia finished third with 332 points ahead of England and Pakistan.

only helplessly look how his colleagues made a mess of Test match batting and Ashwin finally had his number trapping him leg before on the back-foot with another straight ball.

The remaining wickets in the post tea session were a mere formality which the spinners completed in due course of time.

The morning session belonged to Washington, whose 96 off 174 balls was as important as Pant's second day hundred in the final context of the match.

Washington and Axar Patel (43 off 97 balls) added an invaluable 106 runs for the eighth wicket, which ended even a miniscule chance for England to stage a recovery.



Our bench strength is extremely strong: Kohli

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India's supremely talented bench strength has made skipper Virat Kohli quite confident that the team will have a relatively smooth ride when the transition period dawns upon it in the next few years.

With the rise of several young players like Washington Sundar, Mohammed Siraj and the maverick Rishabh Pant, India have been on a roll both at home and abroad.

“Our bench strength is extremely strong and that's a good sign for Indian cricket. When the transition happens, the standards won't fall and Rishabh and Washy's partnership showed exactly that in a crucial juncture of the match,” Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

After notching up victories in the second and third Tests respectively, India won the fourth match inside three days.

“We had to pick up our body language after the first game in Chennai. Every team in International cricket is a quality side and we need to work hard to beat them, even at home. Keeping that intensity going is most important and is the hallmark of our team,” Kohli said.

Star opener Rohit Sharma scored 161 in the first innings of the second Test and the skipper feels the knock changed the complexion of the series alongside seasoned spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's performance of 32 wickets.

“Rohit's knock was the defining moment in Chennai, and Ashwin has been our most bankable player over the years so they have been our best players this series.”

“Now we can accept that the World Test Championship final, which was a distraction in New Zealand in 2020, but now it's a reality,” Kohli said.

Ashwin, who ended the series with 32 wickets and a century, was named *Man of the series* and the spinner was delighted to qualify for the WTC final, adding that the win was a collective effort.

“The fact that we qualified for the WTC final is very important. The intensity was low after Chennai, despite the high in Australia. Every time there was a challenging time in the series, someone put their hand up, so this series win was right up there,” Ashwin said. England skipper Joe Root conceded that his team was outplayed by the hosts in the series.

“The first game was a positive. We haven't matched India in the last three, and we need to keep learning and keep getting better for this experience and this series,” Root said.

Ashwin wants to leave his own legacy

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

To become the best version of himself while learning something new everyday is Ravichandran Ashwin's endeavour as he aims to leave his lasting legacy in the pantheon of Indian cricket greats.

Ashwin has now won eight Man-of-the-Series awards in his 10-year career and is only eight wickets short of equalling Harbhajan Singh's 417 Test wickets.

It could well happen in England this summer but he doesn't want to entertain any such thoughts.

“Honestly, that's not even crossed my mind and if you want me to put my thoughts on it. He is a fantastic bowler. There's a lot that I have learnt from him. I wasn't even an off-spinner when Bhajju paa started playing for the Indian team,” Ashwin's respect for another practitioner of the same craft was there for all to see.

“He (Harbhajan) was also an inspi-



ration because of the 2001 famous series (32 wickets in 3 Tests). I never imagined in 2001 that I will be an off-spinner, and I mean who would have imagined those things.

“I was fortunate to play alongside Bhajju paa when I came into the team and also play under Anil bhai but I would now like to leave my own legacy,” Ashwin said.

Being a student of the game Ashwin wants to evolve as a cricketer and a person everyday.

“My growth as a cricketer is a direct synonym to the person I am. I want to keep evolving, keep learning and that's my second nature, directly proportional to the kind of cricketer I am and whatever I do, the best that I can be.”

Ashwin's apathy for all those pitch critics is well documented and he would love to see how the global media reacts when a green top is given to India when they go for a game outside the sub-continent.

“The series win is a testament to the

fact that this is a really good Indian cricket team. That's all I would like to say. Other day, I was listening to what Sunny bhai (Sunil Gavaskar) was saying, makes sense,” Ashwin said referring to Gavaskar's statement about not giving too much credence to the British pundits, whose favourite day job had been criticising the Indian tracks.

“Only because we are giving attention to people who are making a mockery of it, we are encouraging them to do it non-stop,” he said.

He then sarcastically said that he would keenly watch how foreign media cover the criticism from Indian commentators about the pitches provided when India is on tour abroad.

“I would like to a pitch covered with grass somewhere else in the world and some of our Indian commentators, taking picture and putting an Instagram post and I will like to see how the global media takes notice and then we will know who's at faulty end.”

‘Motera track produced fantastic entertainment’



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

There is no reason to cry over the nature of the Motera track. India head coach Ravi Shastri asserted on Saturday, saying the curator prepared pitches that produced “fantastic entertainment” in the last two matches here.

The pitch for the third Test came in for sharp criticism from a few former England players after the visitors were bowled out for 112 and 81 in the Day/Night match.

“Why should I hold back? I attribute it to the groundsman,” Shastri said after India dismissed England for 135 to register an innings and 25 run win.

“Who will complain against a track like this? It is fantastic entertainment, for both teams and the game and the result 3-1 doesn't really suggest how close the series was.”

Shastri lauded the team for making it to the WTC final despite the ICC changing the qualification criteria last year.

“For us to be on the top of the table in World Test championship is two-and-a-half years of work and for those years to be successful, it's been six years prior to that,” he said.

“The boys took one series at a time, they were not really bothered about the World Test Championship because the goal post gets shifted every time.

“We were heading the table and some rule change came of percentage system when we were not even playing but never mind all that, we have got 520 points, we deserve to be on top of the table and playing that final.”

The 58-year-old said it is very satisfying to see the youngsters perform.

“... When you see youngsters coming through the ranks and performing in such situation which are really tough. Not one individual calling the shots. We've given opportunities for youngsters and they have grabbed those and delivered,” he said.

“They have been in a corner

but they have fought from there. This side refuses to give up. We were irrepressible in Australia and we are the same here too.”

“What Pant and Sundar pulled off yesterday was unreal because the pressure was on us and we were trailing by 50 and from there to get 360 was an outstanding achievement.”

Pant's 101 best counter-attacking knock on Indian soil: Shastri

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India coach Ravi Shastri on Saturday said Rishabh Pant's game-changing hundred against England in the fourth Test here was the best counter-attacking knock that he has seen by a number six Indian batsman on home soil.

Pant, in an innings that was just the right mix of caution and aggression, notched up 101 off just 118 balls, playing a crucial role in India winning the match by an innings and 25 runs.

Speaking highly of Pant, Shastri said the stumper's hard work is now showing results.

“He has worked like hell in the last three or four months and the results are showing. Yesterday's innings is the best counter attacking innings, I have seen in India

by an Indian, especially at number six when the ball was turning,” Shastri said after India's emphatic win in the fourth Test.

“We were hard on him. Nothing comes easy and he was told in no uncertain terms that he has got to respect the game a little more. He has got to lose some weight and work hard on his keeping.”

“We know the talent he has. He is a genuine match winner and he has responded.”

Pant's potential was never in doubt but he struggled to do justice to his talent, often inviting criticism for his shoddy work behind the wickets and average batting show.

However, Australia tour changed everything for him as he played match-winning knocks in India's historic victory. Since then he has only grown in confidence.

We failed to grab opportunities: Root

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

England captain Joe Root on Saturday mourned the opportunities his team squandered in the lost fourth Test, saying they let slip the advantageous position from where they could have been on top of the game.

India at one stage were 121 for five but ended up taking a 160-run lead in the first innings which proved to be match-winning.

Rishabh Pant, Washington Sundar and Axar Patel took the game away from England with their fearless approach.

“There have been times we had a chance to wrestle the game in our favour, to get on top, just didn't manage to do it,” Root said at the post-match conference.

“India played those important, key moments better than us in these last three games and credit for being able to do that better than we do.

“So, it has been disappointing, it has been frustrating to finish the series on a note that we have but we are going to keep looking forward as a team,” said Root.

The England skipper acknowledged Indian batsman Rishabh Pant's remarkable ability to take the attack by the scruff of its neck. “The way he bats, he



England players react during Day 2 of fourth Test against India

AP

makes it difficult for bowlers to build pressure on him. Sometimes he pulls a reverse sweep to a guy, who has 600 Test wickets.

“So it is quite a skill and a brave move to do and it came off for him and got themselves (India) to a very good position on that wicket,” said Root, referring to the reverse sweep which Pant played off James Anderson.

For India, Ravichandran Ashwin grabbed 32 wickets in the series, while Axar snared 27 wickets to leave England floored. Root lavished praise on the

Gujarat left-arm spinner saying he was relentless in his lengths.


“In this series, Axar in particular, has been very accurate and has asked very good questions. He has been relentless with his length and some balls have skidded, some have spun quite big and we are going to just find a way to manage it well.”

But not all was doom and gloom for Root, who found solace in the fact that his wicket-keeper Ben Foakes and left-arm spinner Jack Leach performed their roles to the best of their abilities.



Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar was on Saturday felicitated by the BCCI on the 50th anniversary of his Test debut. The 71-year-old former skipper received a commemorative Test cap from BCCI Secretary Jay Shah during the lunch break on Day three of the fourth and final Test between India and England at the Narendra Modi Stadium here in Ahmedabad


PTI



the pioneer

agenda

I think that an actor is more likely to be forgiven in the public's eye than an actress
— Mila Kunis

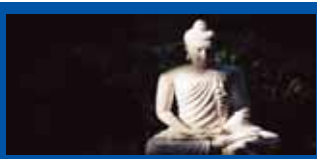


FROM THE INSIDE

The power of attention

The connection to God is not hard to make. It is just a matter of making the choice that this is what we want to do

2



4

Calm mind for *dhyana*

Train your mind to remain disengaged as a silent witness. Only when you pay attention, you get affected

MAPPING THE SACRED DWELLINGS OF SHAKTI

Renowned writer and historian DR ALKA PANDE narrates that while the Shakti Peethas represent a single philosophical fold, they are a testament to the diverse legends of Shakti. An edited excerpt:

Originating from Sanskrit, the word ‘Peetha’ means ‘seat, altar, shrine or dwelling’. In the case of the Shakti Peethas, it is very specific. It is the sacred space where the Supreme Goddess rakes a strong, well-founded sear on Earth. Each of the Peethas have been turned into shrines for the Goddess by the very people who believe in the absolute power of the feminine. Each site where the 51 body parts of Sati fell, came to be known as a Shakti Peetha.

A teertha is a crossing. As with most Sanskrit words, there are multiple meanings of this too. Teertha is also the passing of the *atman* to the *parmatman* the crossing from the physical world to the metaphysical world. These 51 sacred sites are also linked by theologists and scholars to the 51 alphabets of the Sanskrit language. In each of the Peethas also resides *Kaalbhairava*, which is another name of Shiva. Most of the Shakti Peetha shrines contain a naturally appearing stone which becomes the object of worship around which the temple shrine is built.

Vindhyavasini is an additional Shakti Peetha, which I have deliberately not included in the 51 Peethas. While a powerful dwelling of Shakti, Vindhyavasini is not the abode of Shakti as Sati’s body parts. It is, however, the preferred choice and home of Yogamaya, the sister of Krishna, who escaped from Kamsa’s prison at Mathura.

Kalika Purana indicates that there are four Adi Shakti Peethas, which is further affirmed in the commentary and text of *Brihat Samhita*. It lists the names of the location at various places in India such as Vimla temple, Odisha, where her feet fell, Tara Tarini temple in Behrampur, Odisha, where her breasts fell, Kamakhya temple in Guwahati, Assam, where her *yoni* or vagina fell and lastly, the Kalighat temple in West Bengal, where her right toe fell.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE DEVI

Since antiquity, Goddess worship has been part of the Indic tradition of India. In fact, the Goddess is even more popular than Shiva and Vishnu. All the manifestations, avatars or appearances of the many forms of Devi belong to the pantheon of the Shakti cult. The Supreme Goddess can be a gentle life-giver as in the case of Lakshmi, Saraswati or Parvati, or as the mistress of death in the form of Durga, Kali and Chamunda. She is a fascinating juxtaposition, both life-perpetuating and potentially destructive. In her life-giving form, Shakti can be represented as beautiful, benevolent, maternal, knowledgeable, compassionate and even desirable to the best. She invigorates, cheers and brightens the entire universe. She is represented and described as an idealized woman who is imbued with beauty, virtue and righteousness, and adorned with jewels. In fact, her iconography is drawn from the pre-modern depictions of the *salabanjikas*, *apsaras* and *surasundaris*. In this form, Shakti embraces and enlivens all aspects of reality. As the goddess of destruction and disease, she takes on rather unattractive and repulsive forms. As Sitala Devi Manasa, or Kali, the Devi is shown as haggard, ugly, unkempt and emaciated. However, whatever the form, it is always powerful.

I have dipped into both Puranic and Shakta texts to read the many interpretations and mythologies associated with the iconography, rituals of worship, devotion and representation of the Shakti Peetha as sites of immense power and energy. Each devotee enters the site of the Peetha through their own path of worship, through their respective understanding of the Great Goddess. The *wama panthis* or Shakt worshippers, for whom Shakti/Devi is supreme, enter through the tantric path, which is a sectarian movement.

The 51 Peethas have their own singular iconography and their own specific modes of rituals, worship and even prasada, with some standard common offerings like flowers, sweets and vermilion.

RITUALS OF PRAYER AND DARSHAN

While the Shakti Peethas were specific to the body parts of Sati, the rituals of adoration, prayer and worship differed from region to



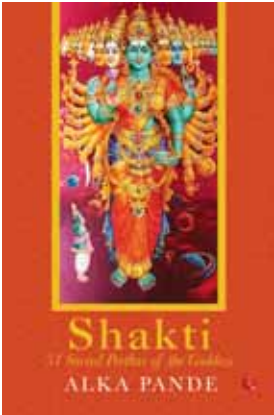
Kottari Devi (Hinglaj Mata) Temple, Pakistan

region, given the culture and history of the place. Over time, the Peethas became linked to their respective regions. The local people took ownership of them and started claiming rights over the teerthas and sites. Naturally, the local food and religious and cultural traditions started getting preference over the stated Puranic or standard Sanatan *dharmashastras*.

In the temples, the daily rituals of worship were similar to the presiding deity, who was normally male, i.e. Vishnu or Shiva, and the feminine was worshipped in the form of their consorts. However, in the Shakti Peethas, the presiding deity was a body part, which while having its own specific service or prayer, was enfolded in the larger narrative of the worship of Shakti in the form of Devi.

The purpose of puja (prayer) is to appease, soothe and mollify the powerful Goddess and embrace the divine energy expressed as life force. The life force itself has many variations, from auspiciousness, health, desire for children, wealth and success, gaining power over intellectual and artistic skill, even victory over enemies. The ritual of puja is heavily invested in darshan. While doing puja, the concept of making eye contact with the deity is the key. Darshan is a two-way concept where the devotee sees the divinity and in turn, the divinity sees the devotee. The concept of darshan crosses all spaces, from intimate puja corners at home in domestic spaces to large public temples including the 51 Shakti Peethas.

The very act of darshan/view is the crucial key that creates the iconic moment where the devotee and the divine are in complete sync. This is the reason why ‘Shakt’ worshippers make long and arduous journeys to the Shakti



SINCE ANTIQUITY, GODDESS WORSHIP HAS BEEN PART OF THE INDIC TRADITION OF INDIA. IN FACT, THE GODDESS IS EVEN MORE POPULAR THAN SHIVA AND VISHNU. ALL THE MANIFESTATIONS, AVATARS OR APPEARANCES OF THE MANY FORMS OF DEVI BELONG TO THE PANTHEON OF THE SHAKTI CULT



Peethas. The idea is to take the energy of the Supreme Goddess while receiving her blessings. The religious rites have three distinct classifications: *Nitya*, which is daily, normally done at home; *Naimittika*, which are important days of the deity, and particular festivals (some special to the *ishta deva* at home or to the presiding deity of the temple); and finally *Kamyas*, which are optional, but a highly desired teertha being one of them.

The ritual of prayer to Shakti is also vested in the *panchbhootas*, where the five *gnanaindriyas*, or senses, are included in the aspect of puja:

Panchbhoota	Jnanindriya	Sense	Puja
Akash	Space	Ear	Hear
Vayu	Air	Skin	Touch
Agni	Fire	Eye	Vision
Jal	Water	Tongue	Taste
Bhoomi	Earth	Nose	Smell

PRASADA

Prasada is both an offering and a blessing. It is offered by the devotee when he/she begins the ritual of puja. In domestic spaces, the devotee performs the puja at an individual, intimate level, often making prasada or an offering of fruits, and a rice and milk pudding with saffron strands and sprinkled with mewa/ nuts, particularly almonds and raisins. What I have observed in the offerings by the devotees, is that for Shakti, it is a bali, or animal sacrifice, normally a lamb and sometimes even a buffalo. The very basic prasada for Shakti is meat, alcohol for Bhairava, and a sweet, normally a rice pudding. Since the Shakti Peethas have been appropriated

by the devotees of the region, naturally the prasada of the Peetha also acquires a local flavour. In Eastern India, it is primarily kichdi and kheer with poori and potato curry; in South India, it is a variation of the local rice, i.e. pulihora; in Andhra Pradesh, a jaggery laddoo; and in Western India, at the Amba temple in Banaskantha, a delicious sweet made of chickpea flour, the mohanthal, is offered along with sindoor, and makhana, or dried lotus seeds. In this way, almost every region brings in its regional flavour and speciality as part of the prasada offered at the Shakti Peethas.

Meat as prasada is served in the temple community kitchens only on special occasions when specific sacrifices are conducted. Holding water in the palm of their hands, or *achaman*, the devotee asks for forgiveness and blessings before beginning their prayer. In the large public temples, it is the priest who becomes the conduit of devotion and reverence. He is the intermediary who while performing the ritual acts, offers food and flowers to the presiding deity of the temple. Worship in a temple begins by circumambulating the temple and the *garbhagriha* where the deity lives.

The myth of Sati and the 51 Peethas is an important myth in the worship of the Supreme Goddess. It lays down the template for all those who believe in the Absolute Power of the Mother Goddess, crossing borders from Tantra to Mantra, from *Devi Bhagwat Purana* to *Yogini Hridaya Tantra*, right down to the popular Grama Devi in a village to the Kula Devi of a Rajput clan.

Over a period of many decades, I have realised that this vacuum can only be filled by God. Only He, the omnipotent, can help in certain circumstances; only He, the omniscient, can guide me in the most difficult situations; only He, the omnipresent, can be available to me at all times; and only He, the Master of the universe, can provide fifteen minutes daily prior to going to sleep thanking the Lord for various things. The underlying emotion is: God, we have you. Without your presence I or anyone cannot gain peace, bliss or sense of security. Thank God that you are very much with us.

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Syrian quagmire: How long and for what?

The Syrian Civil War started as a non-violent uprising in the middle of March 2011. Today it is a full-fledged war which involves several nations and world's prominent jihadi outfits such as Islamic State (ISIS), al-Qaeda and splinter groups of these two mainstream groups. However, the Baathist Syrian Arab Republic headed by President Bashar al-Assad has survived a decade in power despite military challenges from all corners of the country.

Estimates emerging from various human rights agencies and independent media reports say that by end of December last year, the death toll in the war was between 3,87,000 and 5,93,000. The UN reports that more than 5.6 million have already fled the country and over 6 million have been internally displaced so far.

Although many complex events pushed the Syrians into this war, one that stands out is the historic Arab Spring, started in the early months of 2011. This 21st century movement mainly inspired by digital platforms across North Africa through the West Asia finally triggered the uprising in Syria. But then quickly, the Arab Spring had turned into mass gathering in the form of non-violent protests against the authoritarian and family-ruled regimes in all these countries.

In Syria, in the month of March, 15 schoolchildren were arrested and tortured for writing graffiti which was rightly inspired by the Arab Spring. One of the boys was killed as well. The arrest of these schoolchildren sparked outrage across Syria. Soon after, people came out on the road and demanded the release of all the children and raised slogans for basic freedoms for all in the country. The Assad regime responded by killing many protesters and this led to the demand for his resignation by the demonstrators. Subsequently, the clashes broke out between the masses and the supporters of the Government. This gradually spiralled into the full-blown war, what the whole world is witnessing today, involving terror groups of various nations of the world. But at its heart, the conflict highlights the tragic Shia-Sunni divide among the Muslims in the entire region.

The failure of the UN-led efforts to bring the warring parties to the negotiation table last month in Geneva has once



again brought war clouds over this West Asian nation. The United Nations should take the lead and restart the Geneva process. So far, the UN strategies have broadly failed for Syria. If it moves in the same direction, can it be so that the organisation is complicit in the crimes committed by the Assad regime?

Now, what America is doing to bring peace to Syria is that it is back again. The latest American strike in Syria has signalled President Joe Biden's new war game in West Asia.

The so-called messenger of peace and reunion of America badly divided by former President Donald Trump, Biden is now targeting Iran-backed militias in Syria. His administration is justifying the attack as the missile sallies are directed towards rebels that are propping up the Assad regime. The US Air Forces dropped 500-hundred-pound joint direct attack munitions at a crossing used by Iranian backed groups reportedly

killing 17. The particular groups hit by the limited US strike are Kataib Hezbollah and Kataib Syiaid al-Shuhada. Meanwhile, Dennis Ross, a former Senior US official and West Asian expert, says the attack was designed to show that there would be a military response if US forces were targeted, or the militias continued to strike. The Assad administration was quick to remind Biden that the American attacks were a cowardly act and urged Biden not to follow the law of the jungle.

The country's Foreign Ministry condemned the attack on areas in Deir al-Zor, near the Syrian-Iraqi border. The statement released by the Ministry highlighted that Biden Administration is supposed to stick to international legitimacy, not to the law of the jungle as did by the previous administration.

It's really ironic that Biden and Harris, the duo is repeating what once Trump simply did. When Trump ordered a

strike on Iran in 2019, Biden sharply reacted and tried to offer a sermon to him: "Trump's erratic, impulsive actions are the last things we need as Commander-in-Chief. No President should order a military strike without fully understanding the consequences. We do not need another war in the Middle East, but Trump's actions toward Iran only make that likely."

And what Biden is doing now? He knows very well how an American President responds to the crisis zones in the "Middle East". Precisely, nothing has changed in Washington, except the man giving orders. What Obama did, Trump followed and now Biden is taking it forward. America clearly has no strategy for the West Asia and North African (WANA) region. Its policy towards the region is outdated and dangerous. It's meddling carelessly with Iraq, Iran and Syria. Washington has no coherent policy to deal

with Tehran, Damascus and Baghdad. So obviously, finding out a solution for the Syrian war demands a new approach with a purely humanitarian concern.

Only with the collective efforts of the US, Russia, Iran and Turkey, peace can be brought to war-torn Syria. Biden's engagement with Putin, Erdogan, Rouhani and Kadhim (Iraq) would matter the most in bringing a permanent solution to the chaos in Syria. That is why the stability in West Asia demands more than a deal with Iran from Washington. The experts and policy practitioners opine that regional issues in this part of Asia could no way be comprehensively addressed.

They all agree that Iran would no way concede its sustained support for regional proxies and halt its ballistic missile programme in the near future. It is widely felt that isolating Iran was purely counterproductive. So to address, Tehran's troublesome behav-

iour in the region, it is better to handle each regional conflict through separate and parallel platforms at the same time.

Why is Moscow equally concerned about the chaos in Syria? It is not only to save the embattled Assad regime, an old ally of Russia, but also to stave off the growth of the Islamic terror in Russia. Hence, the Syrian conflict is not just a far-away battle for Putin regime. The life-time monarch is longing for stability at any cost. He knows fully well that the jihadists may get enough ground for their subversive models in his vast country. Of course, this might alter Putin's long-term strategies to keep the opposition and western pressure at bay. His regime is not best equipped to counter the ISIS, the way it is raging its ugly head in the WANA region. Russia's relationship with Syria dates back to 1950s and the Cold War. In those days, the USSR used to train the top brass of the Syrian military. What lies ahead in Syria?

By 2020, the Syrian civilians faced another year confronting life-threatening challenges. It is all about their survival as all of them are fighting for basic amenities such as food and medicines.

However, the last year saw the discernible decrease in violent conflicts across the country. But this does not mean that warring groups are retreating. No single rebel group is considering withdrawing from the war zones. The reason behind is that all these groups are backed by strong allies and they want to pursue the war till the fall of the Assad Government.

The Human Rights Watch notes, "With the unprecedented depreciation of national currency, the imposition of further international sanctions and crises in neighboring countries, the Syrian economy went into freefall for much of 2020. For ordinary Syrians, this translated into an inability to procure food, essential drugs, and other basic necessities. As a result, more than 9.3 million Syrians have become food insecure and over 80 per cent of Syrians live below the poverty line."

This correctly reflects the situation on the ground and insurmountable challenges faced by the millions who are caught between warring zones.

Only way to solve the imbroglio in Syria is to establish a UN-backed transitional regime and pressurise Assad to step down. A presidential election is meant to be taking place in Syria this summer. It would be a total disregard to millions of those who are suffering and a sham on global governance platforms such as the UN. The world body is not talking anything about this. And it is abandoning the Geneva peace process.

In fact, the Syria Constitutional Committee that demands a political process would be useless if the UN does not stop the upcoming presidential poll for Assad. This election would offer full immunity and legitimacy to the torturous and autocratic regime in Damascus. It's time to act. Ensure that no more civilians die. There is no need to secure peace when hardly anyone will be there to share the joy of the same. Washington should not employ the old tactics to handle the dictators in WANA.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

India's collective responsibility to eradicate TB

While the prioritisation of TB at the national level has been commendable, States must sustain this momentum by effectively implementing the policies and ensuring optimum fund allocation and utilisation. It is only with the collective approach we will be able to rid the country of this deadly disease



DIGAMBAR BEHERA

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of awareness on infectious diseases. Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that needs our attention as much as the SARS-CoV2 because it affects over 26.4 lakh Indians each year. An estimated 4.45 lakh Indians lose the battle to this ancient disease that is both preventable and curable.

It has therefore been extremely encouraging to see the heightened commitment towards TB elimination from the highest levels of Government leadership. Since the announcement by the Prime Minister to eliminate TB by 2025, five years ahead of the UN Sustainable Development Goal target, at the End TB Summit in New Delhi in 2018, comprehensive plans have been developed to achieve this goal.

The launch of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB Elimination introduced pivotal interventions, including a four-fold increase in funding, launch of private sector engagement to improve access to care as well as initiation of social support schemes to support patients in completing their treatment. However, there is still more to be done.

While the prioritisation of TB at the national level has been commendable, States must sustain this momentum by effectively implementing



the policies and NSP interventions and ensuring optimum fund allocation and utilisation.

The funding of the NTEP is divided on a 60:40 ratio, where 60 per cent of the total funding is provided by the Central Government, and State Governments are expected to fund the remaining 40 per

cent. However, in addition to fund allocation, fund utilisation and efficient implementation of the programme at the State level remains a challenge.

The Central TB Division has developed a State TB Index that highlights the performance of States based on targets achieved, funds utilised, among others towards achieving the

goal of TB elimination. While some States have made significant progress towards these goals, with Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala (among the large States) performing well on all indicators, including fund utilisation, many large States such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal still reflect poor fund

utilisation and thus have challenges in the implementation of the programme. Another critical challenge at the State level remains the paucity of human resources — with vacancies in critical positions required to be filled.

The other challenge that the programme faces is the lack of awareness about the disease

that negatively impacts health seeking behaviour. In the past year, the pandemic has brought about a positive change in people and their appetite for information on health, thereby giving us an opportunity on this positive behaviour to generate awareness about TB.

The launch of the TB Harega Desh Jeetega campaign in 2014, with the country's biggest movie star Amitabh Bachchan as the face of the campaign, was a game changer at the national level. However, there is a need to amplify the campaign at all levels, including States, districts, blocks and villages, to improve access to information and generate the demand for TB care.

Along with improving communications for awareness generation, it is also critical for the programme to directly engage with the community at all levels. Not only do community champions aid in generating awareness to destigmatise the disease, but their voices also serve as an important feedback mechanism for the programme.

Under the NSP, the National TB Elimination Programme established TB forums at the State and district levels to bring to the fore community voices, patient perspectives and understand ground-level challenges faced by patients in accessing care.

Continued and effective functioning of these forums will provide the programme with independent monitors who can help in highlighting localised gaps that need to be addressed. At the district levels, elected representatives can also serve as independent monitors of the programme providing oversight and aid in addressing localised challenges to ensure effective implementation.

The call for a Jan Andolan by Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan is timely and aims to engage 1.3 billion people of this country to take ownership of the programme and ensure we achieve the target of a TB free India. It is crucial for the programme to take cue from this call to action and reflect the targets and initiatives through direct and relatable messaging which will generate awareness among the people on where to seek treatments, what incentives they are entitled to, and thereby improve health seeking behaviours. It is only with the collective approach we will be able to rid the country of this deadly disease.

(The author is chairman, National Taskforce, National TB Elimination Programme, and Professor and former HoD, Department of Pulmonary Medicine, PGIMER, Chandigarh)

