

OPINION 6
THE MISSING CULTURE
OF STRATEGIC THINKING**WORLD 8**
TRUMP'S CASH PLEA COULD
COMPLICATE GOP FUNDRAISING**SPORT 12**
AUS BEAT NZ
IN THIRD T20I

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY MARCH 4, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



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*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

Covaxin efficacy 81%: Biotech

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

Chairman and Managing Director Krishna Ella said.

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

In January, drug regulator DCGI had approved Oxford Covid-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country,

paving the way for a massive inoculation drive.

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

Bharat Biotech said the interim analysis of its vaccine included a preliminary review of the safety database, which showed that severe, serious, and medically attended adverse events occurred at low levels and were balanced between

vaccine and placebo groups, the company said.

The trial's conduct and monitoring are as per good clinical practice guidelines and have been outsourced to IQVIA, it added.

The company expects to share further details of the trial results as additional data becomes available, it noted.

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

Continued on Page 2

Eligible citizens can take Covid jabs 24X7, says Health Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The people of Delhi have once again voted in the name of work. Congratulations to all.

AAP wins 4 of 5 wards in Capital, Congress 1

BJP fails to retain seat

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

However, the AAP suffered a defeat in Chauhan Bangar ward, where Chaudhary Zubair Ahmad of the Congress defeated the party's candidate Mohammad Ishraq Khan by a whopping margin of 10,642 votes.

"The people of Delhi have once again voted in the name of work. Congratulations to all.



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

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

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said, "Today's result shows that the people of Delhi have immense faith in party and the Government led by Arvind Kejriwal. The BJP had termed these by-elections as 'semi-finals' to the 2022 MCD elections, the people have shown that the result of the 2022 elections will be a unanimous verdict in favour of the AAP."

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

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

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

AAP national spokesperson and MLA Raghuvar Chaudhary said, "The AAP wins semi-final decisively with roughly one year to go for MCD finals in 2022."

Continued on Page 2

SSB to raise 12 more battalions

New formations to fortify Sikkim tri-junction bordering Bhutan, Tibet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

The Centre has also sanctioned 548 posts to the force for deployment at four ICPs (inter-



grated check posts) along the Nepal frontier out of which two are already operational at Jogbani and Raxaul (in Bihar).

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

The tri-junction area is the plateau between India,

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

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

The additional manpower will also be deployed for upgrading the existing border posts at strategically important locations along the two front-

tiers besides bolstering the security at the eight ICPs.

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

Continued on Page 2

IT raids Kashyap, Taapsee's assets, questions 2 later

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

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

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

Kashyap and Taapsee were questioned by the IT department officials in Pune in connection with the searches conducted at various places. Official sources attributed searches to the available information that the IT depart-



ment had received that the movies made by the productions were showing disproportionately low income, in spite of the fact that their films were hits at the box-office.

The premises of Exceed Entertainment, which is being managed by actor Saif Ali Khan, were searched, while some executives of Kwan Talent Management that manages actor Deepika Padukone and other actors were questioned.

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



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

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

Known for his anti-establishment views, Kashyap has long been a critic of the Narendra Modi Government, while Taapsee has minced no words when it came to the criticism of the Centre on social media platforms. Both of them have supported the formers' agitation which has been going on the outskirts of the national Capital since November 26.

Continued on Page 2

Karnataka Min quits Cabinet on charges of sexual harassment

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi on Wednesday resigned from the State Cabinet, following allegations of sexual harassment against him.

His resignation came after protests and criticism by Opposition parties and several sections of society, causing a huge embarrassment to the Government and the ruling BJP.

In his resignation letter to Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa just ahead of the cabinet meeting this afternoon, Jarkiholi claimed he was innocent. "The allegations against me are far from the truth. It has to be investigated at the earliest."

Continued on Page 2

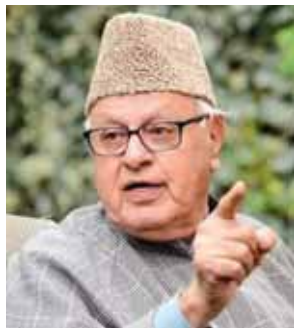
Dissent from Govt decision can't be termed seditious, rules SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that expression of a view which is dissent from a decision taken by the Central Government itself cannot be said to be seditious, the Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a PIL seeking action against National Conference president Farooq Abdullah over his comments on abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution.

A Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hemant Gupta rejected the plea and also imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on the petitioners for making such claims and directed them to deposit the amount with the Supreme Court Advocates Welfare Fund within four weeks.

"The expression of a view which is dissent from a decision taken by the Central



Government itself cannot be said to be seditious. There is nothing in the statement which we find so offensive as to give a cause of action for a court to initiate proceedings.

"Not only that, the petitioners have nothing to do with the subject matter and this is clearly a case of publicity interest litigation for the petitioners only to get their names in press. We must discourage



such endeavours," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a plea which referred to his statement on restoring Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir, and contended it clearly amounts to a seditious act and therefore he is liable to be punished under section 124-A of the IPC.

The petition filed by Rajat Sharma and Dr Neh Srivastava,

PIL seeking action against Farooq for criticism of Art 370 abrogation rejected

both belonging to an organisation Vishwa Guru India Vision of Sardar Patel, alleged that the former Chief Minister is trying to "hand over" Kashmir to China and thus, he should be prosecuted for sedition.

"Mr Farooq Abdullah has committed an offence punishable under section 124-A of Indian Penal Code. As he has made the live statement that for restoring Article 370 he would take help of China which clearly amounts to seditious act and therefore he is liable to be punished under section 124-A of the IPC," the plea said.

The petitioners also referred to a statement made by BJP spokesperson

Sambit Patra to claim that Abdullah is misleading the people of Jammu & Kashmir to join China for the restoration of Article 370.

Will stay away from politics: Sasikala's dramatic pledge

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Weeks ahead of Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections, VK Sasikala, expelled AIADMK leader and close aide of late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, on Wednesday announced she "will stay away from politics," but would pray for the "golden rule" of the late party supremo.

In an announcement that came as a bolt out of the blue, she urged "true supporters of Amma" to work like siblings and ensure Jayalalithaa's "golden rule continues."

"I will stay away from politics and keep praying my sister Puratchi Thalaivi (Jayalalithaa), whom I consider as God, and the Lord Almighty for the establishment of the golden rule of Amma," she said in a statement.



She appealed to Jayalalithaa's "true supporters" to work unitedly in the April 6 elections and prevent "common enemy", DMK, identified as "evil force" by the late CM, from coming to power.

After being released from a Bengaluru prison following completion of a four-year term in an assets case, Sasikala had

last month announced her intention to engage in active politics.

Her subsequent political moves, including the stand of the AMMK floated by her nephew TTV Dhinakaran, in the polls was keenly awaited by observers and political parties alike in the State in the context of the crucial elections.

‘India-US ties greatest testament to Gandhi-King legacy’

Washington: The current strong ties between India and the United States is the greatest testament to the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr, Consul General

of India in Chicago Amit Kumar has said.

Kumar said this at the first Gandhi King Legacy Roundtable Summit organized by the US Congressional Multi

Advisory Task Force of Congressman Danny K Davis in cooperation with Metropolitan Asian Family Services on February 26.

"The greatest testament to

the Gandhi-King legacy is the current ties between India, the world's largest democracy and the US, the oldest democracy," Kumar said, addressing the summit in Chicago last week,

according to a media release issued on Tuesday.

He said the supply of Indian-made coronavirus vaccines to several countries recently is "another glowing

example of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's global leadership".

"Martin Luther King Jr. Was a disciple of Gandhi. A lot of Gandhi's teachings was put

into practice by Martin Luther king Jr. So it is important that our elected leaders and community leaders adapt and enrich the same partnership between African

and Indian communities in Chicago and beyond," said Congressman Danny K Davis in his presidential address.

PTI

5 Naxalites held with arms in Jharkhand

Chatra: The police on Tuesday arrested five Naxalites of two outfits from Chatra district of Jharkhand and seized arms and ammunition from them, an officer said.

They used to extort contractors and businessmen, Sub-Divisional Police Officer of Chatra Avinash Kumar said.

Of the arrested five, three are members of the Tritiya Sammelan Prastuti Committee

(TSPC) while the two others belong to the People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI).

Two American made pistols, a .303 rifle looted from the police, three other pistols and 32 cartridges were seized from their possession, Kumar said.

The police also confiscated six mobile phones, 16 SIM cards, three motorbikes and other articles from them. *PTI*

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

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

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

"The ferry service that we are planning is designated to be on three or four identified routes whether from South of Goa to Dona Paula and onwards, South of Goa to Captain of Ports jetty at Panaji and onwards to Old Goa or from South of Goa to any of the beach destinations like Candolim, Calangute, Baga and so on," Kumar said.

"With a dedicated colour-coded ferry service, we are also

contemplating to receive passengers on the other side with hop-on-hop-off buses, with the same colour codes with refreshments served en route, multilingual audio commentary," he also said.

The top official also said that the Port Trust was also in the process of setting a commercial hub spread over 4,000 sq mt area near the port terminal itself for visiting cruise-ship holidayers.

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

IAN S

2 kids dead after stepfather throws them into UP canal

Four arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A stepfather, reportedly facing severe financial problems and a domestic dispute, threw his children and wife into a canal in Uttar Pradesh (UP) on February 27 resulting in the deaths of two children while his wife was saved by passersby, the police said on Wednesday.

According to the police, the

bodies of two children, 6-year-old Tohida Khatoon and 1-year-old Ankur were recovered from a Merut Canal in UP after two days search operation on Wednesday.

The woman Saira alias Rajni stated in her police complaint that she had married Sonu, who is a resident of Bhangrola village in Gurugram and somewhere in UP they threw her along with her children into a canal and fled. But she was saved by a passerby

complaint that her husband Sonu, his brother Pradeep, Sachin and mother-in-law Ravita used to beat and taunt her due to her children.

"Late night of February 27 her husband and family members had trashed the woman and held hostage in a car and travel towards UP via Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway and somewhere in UP they threw her along with her children into a canal and fled. But she was saved by a passerby

after her screaming while her children drown into the canal," the woman told the police.

Thereafter, somehow the woman managed to reach in Gurugram on Tuesday and reported the matter to the police.

The man sed to work as a delivery boy and was also facing some financial problems. The accused and his family dislike her kids, the woman told the police said.

Following a woman's

complaint we had registered a case of kidnapping but later a police team reached in Uttar Pradesh and after two days search we managed to recover the children body into canal and we added the section of murder in the FIR. We have arrested all the culprits they will be produced before a local court on Thursday," Krishan Kant, station house officer (SHO) of Kheri Daula police station in Gurugram told The Pioneer.

MP lawyer in jail over ‘indecent’ birthday message to woman judge

Indore: A Madhya Pradesh lawyer is in jail for the last three weeks after he was arrested by the police in Ratlam district for allegedly sending an "indecent" message to a woman judge on her birthday, officials said on Tuesday.

After failing to get bail from a lower court, the advocate has filed an application before the Madhya Pradesh High Courts Indore bench seeking relief, they said.

He was booked under IPC sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forging documents) and others besides relevant sections of the I-T Act on a complaint lodged by a district court official at the Station Road police station in Ratlam city, the officials said.

It was alleged in the complaint that the lawyer had sent an indecent birthday wish to the woman judge on January 28 on her official email address.

The lawyer allegedly downloaded the display picture of the judge from her Facebook account and used it for fraudulently" making a greeting card, the officials said, citing the complaint.

He was arrested on February 9 and an additional sessions judge rejected his bail plea on February 13, they said.

The prosecution had strongly objected to the lawyers bail plea in the sessions court, arguing that his alleged actions amounted to sexual harassment and "outraging the modesty" of a woman. *PTI*

IAN S

DUTA flays College of Art merger with Ambedkar varsity

New Delhi: The Delhi Government has decided to bring the College of Art of Delhi University under Ambedkar University. The Delhi Government's cabinet has approved the merger. But the Delhi University teachers are strongly objecting to the Delhi Government's move.

The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) has condemned the decision while cautioning the government.

"This is another example of the Delhi government's violation of statutory provisions of the University of Delhi," DUTA president Rajab Ray said. "It reveals the attitude of the Delhi government in tackling governance issues in funded colleges under the University of Delhi," he added.

According to Duta, teachers, staff and students of 12 colleges of Delhi University, fully

funded by the Delhi government, are already suffering a lot due to the delay of grant by the Delhi government, which is affecting their financial, educational and administrative functioning. The employees of these colleges have not been paid salaries and pensions for several months.

Ray further said that DUTA strongly condemns the Delhi government's stand and warns against harassment of these institutions and employees.

It may be recalled that this is not the first time that an institute of Delhi University has been linked with any other university other than DU.

In the year 2009, the Delhi College of Engineering was similarly shifted from DU to another university. It is called the Delhi Technological University.

IAN S

8-yr-old Dalit girl raped by elderly man in UP village

Banda: An elderly man has been arrested for allegedly raping an eight-year-old Dalit girl in a village here, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in the Baberu area in Banda district in Uttar Pradesh around 6 pm on Tuesday when the girl was playing near her house.

The accused, identified as Jagdish Pal, 70, was arrested later, Circle Officer Siyaram said, adding the girl has been sent for medical examination.

According to the police, the girl has a vision problem and cannot see clearly. In a separate incident in the Bisanda area in the district, a 14-year-old boy was sodomised by a teenager on Tuesday. The accused boy has been held. *PTI*

ECI organises briefing meeting for poll observers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The meeting was a virtual cum physical gathering which saw the participation of more than 1650 General, Police and Expenditure Observers joining

virtually from 120 locations across the country. Officers from IAS, IPS, IRS and other Central Services have been included to be deployed as General, Police and Expenditure Observers.

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

Commission's commitment to the principle of inclusive elections.

Taking note of the exemplary work accomplished by the Chief Electoral Officers and Deputy Electoral Officers of Bihar despite widespread Covid concerns, Arora said Bihar Assembly elections have literally become a turning point in the history of Indian elections. Even the participation of voters was better than the previous Assembly and Parliamentary elections in Bihar.

IT raids Kashyap, Taapsee’s assets, questions 2 later

From Page 1

Kashyap had also raised his voice against the Citizenship Act. Last year, Kashyap extended his support to actress Rhea Chakraborty in the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case.

So much so that Taapsee had hit out at the Government for the manner in which it was running down international pop star Rihanna's tweet drawing attention to the farmers' agitation. Taking to twitter, the actress had said: "If one tweet rattles your unity, one joke rattles your faith or one

show rattles your religious belief then it's you who has to work on strengthening your value system not become 'propaganda teacher' for others".

The IT raids on the premises of Kashyap and Taapsee evoked instant protests across the country. Condemning the raids, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav tweeted: "They (the Modi Government) first employed IT, CBI, ED to conduct raids on vocal and upright political rivals for their character assassination. Now Nazi Govt is chasing social activists,

journalists & artists to threaten them against calling spade a spade".

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Minister Nawab Malik slammed the Modi Government saying the way in which raids were conducted in the homes and offices of Anurag Kashyap and Taapsee Pannu was definitely misuse of its agencies against those who take a stand against the Government or its policies.

"Anurag Kashyap and Taapsee Pannu have raised their voice against the Modi Government's

policies. This action is an attempt to suppress their voices," Malik said.

Senior Congress leader and Cabinet Minister Ashok Chavan dubbed the income tax raids against Anurag Kashyap and Taapsee Pannu as an act of retaliation against the critics of the Modi Government.

Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Yashomati Chandrakant Thakur said those who speak in their (the Government's) favour were "good" and the ones who spoke against were "traitors".

SSB to raise...

From Page 1

Following this, the SSB came up with a proposal suggesting requirement of 12 new battalions, a frontier headquarter and at least 3 sector headquarters that would be used to enhance logistical and administrative support to its border units as also for deployments for internal security roles in the hinterland.

The Ministry, however, approved creation of only one

sector headquarters and 12 battalions in phases, they said, adding the new sector formation will be created in the National Capital Region (NCR). A battalion comprises over 1,000 personnel.

A sector formation of a paramilitary is responsible for the operation of about 5-6 battalions and is headed by a deputy inspector general (DIG) rank officer. A frontier on the other hand comprises about two to four sectors and is headed by an Inspector General rank officer.

MLA from Kalkaji Atishi.

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar said the Congress put up an impressive show in the by-elections. "The party candidate Zubair Ahamad won from the Chauhan Banger ward in Seelampur and the party's overall vote share rose from six per cent in the last Assembly elections to 22 per cent now. While the BJP suffered a 10 per cent reduction in its vote percentage while the AAP's votes share reduced by 5.50 per cent," he said.

"We have the trust of the people and confidence and the results show that the Congress will win the MCD elections due next year in 2022," he added.

The AAP polled the high-est 46.10 per cent votes in the bypolls, followed by 27.29 per cent by the BJP and 21.84 per cent by the Congress, according to the State Election Commission.

AAP wins...

From Page 1

"It is time for Delhiites to put an end to the 15-year corruption-plagued rule of the BJP. Rajya mein bhi Kejriwal, MCD mein bhi Kejriwal, Phir chalegi double engine ki Kejriwal sarkar" he said.

"The four party councilors who won the elections today will work towards making their respective wards as 'Model Wards'. The work of Kejriwal such as zero-water bill, zero-electricity bill and free travel for women on the bus among other things are highly appreciated. The dream of making Delhi a world-class city is now the dream of the people and the people will vote unanimously for the AAP and bring the Kejriwal Government to all three municipal bodies," said AAP

Covaxin...

From Page 1

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

Bharat Biotech said more than 40 countries globally have expressed their interest in Covaxin. Covaxin and Covishield, both vaccines were cleared by the DCGI in early January, at a time when late-stage trial data for Covaxin was

not available; it was cleared on the basis of Phase 1 and 2 data that confirmed its "safety and immunogenicity".

Covaxin was given "restricted use in emergency situation in public interest", meaning all those who were administered the drug as part of the vaccination drive were enrolled as part of the study.

Covaxin has been developed in collaboration with the ICMR on the WHO prequalified vero cell platform which is globally recognised with a well-established track record of safe-

ty. "The development and deployment of Covaxin ensures that India has a powerful weapon in its arsenal in a continually evolving pandemic situation and will go a long way in helping us win the war against Covid-19.

"The need of the hour is to ensure that people in India continue to receive the vaccine and break the chain of virus transmission," said Dr Samiran Panda, Head, Epidemiology and Communicable Disease, ICMR and Director, National AIDS Research Institute.

BSES

BSES Yamuna Power Limited

BSES Yamuna Power Limited, New Delhi

... A joint venture with Govt. of NCT of Delhi

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Date: 04.03.2021

Sealed tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) is invited for following jobs:

NIT No.	Brief Work Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BY/20-21/ RB/SV/44	DESIGN, SUPPLY, ERECTION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING INCLUDING WARRANTY, COMPREHENSIVE OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF SPV PLANT OF GRID INTERACTIVE ROOFTOP SOLAR OF VARIOUS CAPACITIES IN THE STATE OF DELHI IN OPEN CATEGORY FOR 2 MW AGGREGATE CAPACITY	-	-	25.03.2021 15:00 Hrs	26.03.2021 15:30 Hrs
CMC/BY/20-21/ RB/SV/46	RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY & SUPERVISION OF 11KV INDOOR & OUTDOOR RING MAIN UNITS	₹ 11.50 Crore	₹ 11.50 Lakh	25.03.2021 15:00 Hrs	26.03.2021 16:00 Hrs
CMC/BY/20-21/ RB/SV/47	RATE CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF AIR CIRCUIT BREAKER 400, 1250 AND 2000A WITH ENCLOUSER	₹ 4.10 Crore	₹ 8.20 Lakh	25.03.2021 15:00 Hrs	26.03.2021 16:30 Hrs

Cost of each Tender Documents: ₹1,180/-
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submitment of tender documents, corrigendum etc. please visit our website www.bseshdelhi.com -->Tenders --> BSES YAMUNA POWER LTD --> Open Tenders.

Head (Contracts & Materials)

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TEL: 011-41247777 | Fax-011-4124 7787 | Website: www.bseshdelhi.com

People rejected BJP for corruption in MCDs: Kejriwal

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

Addressing party workers at AAP headquarters on Wednesday after his party won four of the five civic wards in February 28 municipal bypolls, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal congratulated the AAP volunteers and the newly-elected councillors.

"The people of Delhi once again voted in the name of work. Congratulations to all. The public has been perturbed by the 15-year BJP's misrule in the MCD. People are now desperate to form the Aam Aadmi Party



Government in the MCD as well," he tweeted.

Kejriwal said the people of Delhi have rejected and defeated the BJP due to its incompetence in the corporations in the

last 15 years. "The people of Delhi are very happy with the work done by AAP in the last six years, that is AAP managed to win four seats. The AAP Government has improved schools, hospitals, electricity, water, and roads," he added.

"The people of Delhi want to change the functioning of the municipal corporations. In the 2015 elections, we got 67 out of 70 seats and 62 out of 70 seats in 2020. After six years, the people of Delhi have again shown their faith in us and given their approval of the good work done by us. This shows that the people of Delhi are very happy with

the work done by AAP," he added.

On the other hand, people are extremely disappointed with the ruling BJP in corporations, the Chief Minister said, adding that the people want the MCD to function as effectively as the Delhi Government.

"If someone asks the people of the country about the achievements of AAP, people from States such as Punjab, Goa, Delhi, UP, and many other States will tell you about improvements in education, health, power, water and infrastructure sector," he said. But if you will ask anyone about what

the BJP has done in the MCD in the last 15 years, they cannot count even a single task fulfilled," he added.

"The results are an indication of what kind of outcome is expected next year in the civic body polls. We are waiting for it and will make the city neat and clean," Kejriwal said.

The AAP convener also took a dig at the BJP for failing to secure any seat in the bypolls. "The zero obtained by the BJP showed people rejected corruption and theft at the MCDs ruled by it and the politics of violence they practised by vandalism at Deputy Chief Minister Manish

Sisodia's residence and the Delhi Jal Board office," he said.

Of the five civic wards where bypolls were held on February 28, the party won four and the Congress one. The

AAP polled the highest 46.10 per cent votes in the bypolls, followed by 27.29 per cent by the BJP and 21.84 per cent by the Congress, according to the State Election Commission.

Cong wins Banger, regains vote share: Anil Kumar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar said the party has shown an impressive performance by winning Chauhan Banger ward in Seelampur and regaining its vote share.

Asserting that the people of Delhi want to see the Congress in MCDs, he said that the overall vote share of the party also increased from 6 per cent in the last Assembly elections to 22 per cent now.

While the BJP suffered a 10 per cent reduction in its vote percentage while AAP's votes share reduced by 5.50 per cent

Kumar said that Delhiites were now looking towards the Congress to give the knockout punch in the MCD general elections in 2022.

"Delhiites not only want Congress back in power but

also want to teach the BJP a lesson for their 15 years misrule. The Congress workers successfully exposed issues like cleanliness, price raise, including oil price hike, corruption, ration, pension, unemployment, dirty drinking water etc during the campaigning," he said.

The Congress president further said that despite the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) misused official machinery and money power, Congress workers spared no effort to make personal contact with the people and expose the BJP and AAP.

He said the real battle will be fought in the MCD general elections next year when the BJP will be wiped out from the Corporations for its corruption and non-performance.

BJP should resign after bypoll rout, says AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak on Wednesday said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) should resign from Municipal Corporations on the basis of its miserable defeat in the by-election.

"Today, the AAP has got a stunning victory in the Delhi MCD by-election while the BJP could not even win a single seat," he added. The citizens of Delhi do not want the BJP any more, they want AAP in the MCD too," he said.

"I would like to first extend my gratitude to every AAP worker who worked day and night by visiting door to door for campaigning for the party. I want to thank and congratulate all organization members, district heads, Lok Sabha in-charge and frontal workers of the party for this splendid victory," he added.

Pathak further added, "The people of Delhi had given the BJP massive support for the last 15 years. In these 15 years however, the BJP has destroyed Delhi and the Municipal Corporation. Even as the funds of the Corporation deteriorated, the income of BJP councillors and the party increased."

"For the last nine months, MCD employees have been protesting. The Delhi Police under BJP has lathi-charged them. Whenever we have questioned the BJP ruled MCD over non-payment of salaries they say that they do not have money. Yet, they have the money to put up hoardings all over the Delhi," he said.

₹1 cr contributed for Ram Temple, says MP Lekhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Nidhi Smarpan Samman Samaroh on Wednesday organised at the office of Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's) Member of Parliament (MP) Meenakshi Lekhi's located at 14, Mahadev Road, New Delhi

Today a total of Rs1 crore has been contributed to facilitate the construction of Shri Ram Temple, she said. The collection details with its respective receipts or coupon numbers are also being also updated in a mobile application especially designed for the purpose.

Lekhi said Bhagwan Shri Ram is within all of us. It is an emotional moment for me and construction of grand Temple of Lord Ram has illuminated everyone's heart in the entire country. Shri Ram's temple will become the modern symbol of our culture, eternal faith and national spirit.

She added there is no aspect of life where our Lord Ram does not inspire us. There is no such feeling of India in which Lord Ram is not seen. Ram is in the faith of India; Ram is in the ideals of India. Ram is in the divinity and philosophy of India.

Lekhi also said Shri Ram Mandir Nidhi Samarpan Abhiyan began on January 15 on the pious day of Makar Samkranti. Many of BJP workers are working round the clock all over the country to collect voluntary contribution which is being deposited in the accounts of Shri Ram Janambhomi Teerth Kshetra Trust , which is facilitating the construction of Shree Ram Temple.

Govt joins Atmanirbhar Bharat, orders 45K masks from KVIC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government joined the Atmanirbhar Bharat (self reliant India) bandwagon ordering 45,000 Khadi face masks to Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for its transport department. While the first consignment of 30,000 masks has been delivered and remaining 15,000 masks will be supplied within a week, Delhi government will become second state in India after Arunachal Pradesh promoting Make in India.

The masks have been purchased for the staff of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) of Delhi Government. These face masks have been made using a combination of blue colored fabric with DTC logo placed on the masks.

KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said the bulk purchase of Khadi face masks by Delhi Government manifests Khadi's growing popularity and also the acceptance of Khadi in various government departments. "Such big orders create additional job for Khadi artisans which has helped them overcome financial distress during the Covid-19 pandemic. We will be supplying the masks at the earliest," Saxena said.

It is worth mentioning that KVIC has sold more than 25 lakh face masks in just over 8 months since its launch in April last year. Owing to the comfort and high quality of these face masks, KVIC has received several

bulk orders including 12.30 lakh masks from the Indian Red Cross Society.

KVIC received the purchase order for 45,000 Khadi face masks from the Transport Department of Delhi Government out of which the first consignment of 30,000 masks has been delivered and remaining 15,000 masks will be supplied within this week. The masks have been purchased for the staff of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) of Delhi Government.

KVIC has supplied double-layered Cotton face masks that are breathable, skin-friendly and suitable for long-duration use. KVIC has specifically used Double Twisted Khadi fabric for manufacturing of these masks as it helps retain 70 per cent of the moisture content inside, while providing an easy passage for the air to pass through. These masks are washable and reusable.

Recently, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh had purchased 1.60 lakh Khadi cotton face masks for its students, becoming the first North Eastern state to go for the bulk purchase of Khadi masks.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir had purchased 7.50 lakh Khadi face masks.

KVIC has also received repeat orders from Rashtrapati Bhavan, Prime Minister's Office and various Central government ministries and PSUs apart from the general public.

2 burglars held while attending nature's call

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two burglars, who had escaped after allegedly committing a burglary in south Delhi. Alert police personnel nabbed the duo after they stopped to attend the nature's call. The incident took place early Tuesday morning.

The accused have been identified as Deepak and Ravikan, who have multiple involvements in the cases of theft and burglary registered in the National Capital. Police said that Deepak has been found involved in 10 cases of theft while Ravikan has four previous involvements of theft.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, after committing a burglary in Karawal Nagar, Deepak and Ravikan were returning to their hideout with gold and silver jewellery.

"The two men stopped for urinating at the BRT road where they were caught by the police team. Recently, a police team was formed and deployed at the BRT road to curb incidents of crime in the area, especially in the morning hours," said the DCP.

"The accused, who were in a Hyundai Santro, were spotted by the picket staff when they were urinating in public. Police have also recovered two country-made pistols, laptops, LCD television and some gold and silver ornaments were recovered from their possession during checking," said the DCP.

G'gram: DTCP seals illegal commercial establishments

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The department of town and country planning (DTCP) has begun massive drive against the commercial establishments that were operating in the residential buildings illegally in Gurugram.

On Tuesday, the DTCP has sealed over 150 commercial establishments and demolish two illegal under-construction building at U1 lane in DLF Phase-3 in Gurugram.

People were running saloons, property dealer shops, restaurants, medical shops and grocery shops in the area.

The massive sealing and demolition drive was resisted by locals approximately 500 persons were gathered on the spot. District Town Planner (DTP) RS Batth led the drive, Assistant Town Planner (ATP) Ashish Sharma and JEs along with 100 police personnel were present in the drive.

Batth said that under The Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas

Act, 1975 notices had been served to the owners of these units but there was no action taken by the owners.

"We have already served warnings that in the coming days there will be more sealing campaign will take place. As per the rules, commercial activities are not allowed in residential areas, be it licensed colonies that come under DTCP or plots in sectors falling under Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSPV)," Batth said.

The DTCP had received complaint that there are over 150 houses that are allowing commercial activities to take place in their premises.

According to officials DLF Phase-3 which has a large number of PG houses and guesthouses owing to its proximity to various commercial areas like Cyber City and Golf Course road. Most of these PG's are not licensed.

Most of the PG's in an area of 150 to 200 square yards built floors that are more than five storeys.

Covid recovered people show faster antibody response to Covishield

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Those who have recovered from Covid-19 respond faster to the Covishield vaccine and reach high antibody levels, says a study, leading to hopes that they may not need a second dose and therefore help widen India's corona immunisation cover.

The study on the immune response to Covishield was carried out by researchers from New Delhi's CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), Max Super Speciality Hospital and Institute of Endocrinology.

Diabetes and Metabolism as well as the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR) in Ghaziabad.

"Covishield is inducing a robust immune response. Those who are seropositive at baseline respond faster and reach higher antibody levels..." CSIR-IGIB Director Anurag Agrawal, one of the authors of the study, told PTI.

Seropositivity is an indicator of the presence of the virus in the serum, or evidence of previous exposure to it. The Oxford-AstraZeneca's COVID 19 vaccine, or ChAdOx, is an

important part of the global vaccine roll-out. Covishield, a locally manufactured version by Pune's Serum Institute of India, is one of the two vaccines along with the indigenous Covaxin, from the Hyderabad-based company Bharat Biotech, approved for use in the country.

The study, covering 135 healthcare workers, was Covishield specific. In the vaccine, scientists have engineered a version of adenoviruses that infect chimpanzees to carry the gene responsible for the spike protein of the novel coronavirus, which it uses to enter the human cells. The adenoviruses are common viruses that cause a wide range of illnesses and symptoms such as colds, sore throat, bronchitis, pneumonia, diarrhoea.

Using two doses of ChAdOx, administered four weeks apart, human cells train the immune system to recognise and retain memory of the virus spike protein to neutralise it and prevent infection when the actual coronavirus infects people.

The new study, posted online on preprint repository medRxiv and not peer-reviewed, estimated the effec-



tiveness of the first dose of Covishield in generating antibody response.

Researchers measured antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 directed against the spike protein in the 135 healthcare workers administered Covishield.

"Antibody levels were quantitatively measured at 0, 7, 14, 28 days after the first dose of the vaccine," said Agrawal. The team found differences in the levels of antibodies among immunised individuals who were already seropositive, compared to those who were not.

In 44 people who had already developed antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 at day 0 (before immunization), the antibody response was significantly

higher, with the maximum increase seen between days 0 and 7, the researchers said.

In contrast, the seronegative group of 91 people started developing antibody response only after 14 days or later. Three seronegative individuals did not develop any antibody response even on day 28 of vaccination, the researchers said. The average antibody response at 28 days in seronegative subjects was similar to that of seropositive subjects at baseline (day 0), and was on a rising trajectory, they said.

"Our data suggest that ChAdOx1 is highly immunogenic, particularly so where previous SARS CoV2 antibody-response is established,"

the authors of the study noted.

"Given the high background seropositivity in India, this may be useful in determining the optimal timing of the second dose during mass immunization within the constraints of vaccine supply and administration," they said.

Reacting to the findings, immunologist Vineeta Bal, who was not involved in the research, said the study sample size is small. Though a single dose of Covishield is not enough to trigger adequate immune response in everyone, making a booster dose necessary, it is enough in individuals already exposed to SARS-CoV2, she noted.

"They may not need the second dose and hence those doses can be spared to increase coverage," explained the scientist from Pune's Indian Institute of Science Education and Research.

This number, the immunologist said, could be as high as 30 per cent of all the population based on the results of sporadic serosurveys available in the public domain from India.

"Thus there is some logic in doing spot-check for pre-existing antibody before vacci-

nation," she added.

Agrawal said the study supports the effectiveness of India's vaccination programme and helps in determining the timing of the second dose. "By 28 days, there was a good immune response in almost all of our participants. This needs to be confirmed further and may lengthen our window for the second dose, especially in communities with high seropositivity rates," he explained.

A caveat in the data, Bal noted, is that whether pre-immune individuals were asymptomatic RT-PCR positives, or suffered from the disease, is not mentioned. "A wide range of antibody titres is seen and making some correlation between the severity of disease and immune response would have been nice, even if it was only a weak association because of limited numbers," she added. The antibody titer is a test that detects the presence as well as quantitatively measures the antibodies within a person's blood.

On Monday, India opened up its vaccination programme to all those above 60 and people from 45-59 who suffer from specified co-morbidities.

No of 'severe' pollution days in Delhi-NCR lower this winter

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The number of days with severe and very poor levels of PM 2.5 concentration have been comparatively lower this winter but the number of days with concentration level in the poor category have registered an increase.

According to the latest Center for Science and Environment (CSE) report on Delhi- NCR winter pollution, the overall city-wide average for the season has been comparatively higher this year. However, citywide average pollution for the winters was seven percent higher than the seasonal average of 2019-20 winters. Except Wazirpur and Sahibabad, all the locations on Delhi-NCR pollution hotspots list saw a spike in the seasonal PM2.5 level compared to last winter.

Jahangirpuri with a seasonal average of 256 µg/m3 was the dirtiest among the recognized hotspots. Bahadurgarh that recorded almost 50 per cent jump in PM2.5 level was cleaner than other hotspots.

As per the report, except Wazirpur and Sahibabad, all the locations on Delhi-NCR pollution hotspot list saw spike in the seasonal PM2.5 level compared to last winter.

Jahangirpuri with a seasonal average of 256 µg/m3 was the dirtiest among the recognized hotspots. Bahadurgarh that recorded almost 50 per cent jump in PM2.5 level was cleaner than other hotspots.

"There is always a special interest in understanding winter pollution trends -- given the extraordinary situation due to the pandemic this year, as well as the fact that winter remains

the most difficult season in this region due to atmospheric conditions of inversion, calm wind, and cold weather," says Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director-research and advocacy, CSE, and the head of its sustainable urbanisation, air pollution and mobility programmes.

"The trapped winter air traps local and regional pollution in turn, and gives rise to the deadly winter smog that we, the residents of Delhi-NCR, are so familiar with," she added.

CSE in its report, further said number of days with severe concentration of PM2.5 declined and smog episodes were of shorter duration. "This winter 23 days had citywide average of PM2.5 concentration in 'severe' or worse AQI category, this is down from 25 such days in previous winter and 33

days in 2018-19 winters," the report said.

Illustrating the pollution patterns, the CSE report high-

lighted that there was a decline in number of severe and worse air days. "Technically, a smog episode is defined for the pur-



pose of implementing emergency action under the Graded Response Action Plan when the levels of PM2.5 remain in

"severe" category for three consecutive days. From this perspective, this winter there were two continuous smog episodes. The first episode was of longer duration as it started on 3rd Nov and lasted 7 days. The second started on 22nd December and lasted for 3 days. Thus the continuous smog episodes are fewer and shorter compared to previous winters. 2019-20 winter had three smog episodes of 8 days, 6 days and 5 days durations. 2018-19 winter had four smog episodes of 10 days, couple of 6 days and a 3 days durations."

However, during the winter months, at least 14 more locations registered higher seasonal average than the mean of recognized hotspots, i.e. 197 µg/m3. These were Alipur, DTU, ITO, Nehru Nagar, Patparganj, Sonia Vihar

and Vivek Vihar in Delhi, Sector 1 and 116 in Noida, Loni, Sanjay Vihar and Indirapuram in Ghaziabad, Knowledge Park V in Greater Noida and Bulandshahr. This again points towards impact of local pollution.

Eight towns show improvement in seasonal average from last year with Bhiwani and Palwal in Haryana showing the most improvement (exceeding 60 per cent). But Sonapat (69 per cent) and Bahadurgarh (49 per cent) lead the pack of towns with maximum deterioration in seasonal average. It is noteworthy that Hapur and Bulandshahr are neighbours but Hapur saw 24 per cent improvement while Bulandshahr deteriorated by 32 per cent. In fact, the seasonal average of Bulandshahr is three times that of Hapur.

MILITARY COMMANDERS' MEET

In a first, jawans to share views with PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



Academy(IMA), Dehradun.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All private hospitals can give Covid shots with riders: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Congress leaders target UP Govt over law and order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

BJP VICTORY IN GUJ LOCAL POLLS

Voters' confidence rising each year: Javadekar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the municipalities, the BJP won



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

CBI arrests J&K Govt official in bribe case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

SC to hear anticipatory bail plea of Amazon Prime Video's India head today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

PM only.

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

कानपुर विद्युत आपूर्ति कम्पनी लिमिटेड 14/71, सिविल लाइन्स 'केसा हाउस' कानपुर, ई-निविदा सूचना अघोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा ई-निविदा पृथक-पृथक दो भागों में निम्न साम. गिराये हेतु केस्को ई-निविदा वेबसाइट www.kesco.co.in/https://etender.up.nic.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। ई-निविदाएं प्रपत्र पूर्ण कर निविदादाताओं द्वारा वेबसाइट पर खुलने की तिथि के अपराह्न 12:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती हैं। उक्त ई-निविदा उसी दिन 15:00 बजे से 17:00 बजे तक वेबसाइट पर सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। उक्त तिथि को अवकाश घोषित होने पर निविदायें अगले कार्यदिवस में नियत समय पर खोली जायेगी। ई-निविदा धनराशि का भुगतान ऑन लाईन एन0ई0एफ0टी0/आर0टी0जी0एस0 (खाता सं0 628805018266 आई0एफ0एस0ी0 - कोड0 ICIC0006288) के माध्यम से किया जायेगा। ई-निविदा प्रपत्र निविदा खुलने की तिथि पर दिये गये समय से दो घण्टे पूर्व तक वेबसाइट से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रपत्रों के साथ यू0टी0आर0 की स्कैण्ड प्रति अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरोहर धनराशि का भुगतान ऑन लाईन एन0ई0एफ0टी0/आर0टी0जी0एस0/बी0जी0 (खाता सं0 628805018266 आई0एफ0एस0ी0 कोड0 - ICIC0006288) के द्वारा स्वीकार किया जायेगा एवं निविदा प्रपत्र के प्रथम भाग में निर्धारित पी0क्यू0आर0 एवं तकनीकी अभिलेख होंगे तथा निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में दरें एवं व्यवसायिक शर्तें होंगी, बिना धरोहर धनराशि के तथा सशर्त निविदायें खोली/स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी। निविदा सं0 16/20-21 पात्र फर्म मूल निर्माता/अधिकृत विक्रेता/अनुमयी ठेकेदार विवरण विभिन्न प्रकार के डी0पी0सी0 कॉपर एवं एल्युमिनियम वायर की आपूर्ति हेतु। धरोहर धनराशि (रु0) 70000/- निविदा धनराशि रु0 में (जी0एस0टी0 के साथ) 3540/- ई-निविदा अपलोड करने एवं खोलने की तिथि 24.03.2021 उपरोक्त ई-निविदा की पूर्ण प्रक्रिया केस्को की ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाइट www.kesco.co.in/https://etender.up.nic.in के माध्यम से की जायेगी। तकनीकी योग्यता पूरा न करने वाले निविदादाता के निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। सामग्री क्रय की मात्रा घट बढ़ सकती है। अघोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के पास बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी एक अथवा समस्त निविदाओं को स्वीकृत/अस्वीकृत करने का पूर्ण अधिकार सुरक्षित होगा। (ललित कृष्ण) अधिशासी अभियन्ता (मण्डार क्रय) पत्रांक- 804 दिनांक 3.3.2021 राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचायें

DMK-Cong ties on verge of collapse

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

Meanwhile sources close to chief minister Edappadi Palaniswamy told

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

those found guilty would not be spared.

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

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

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

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

Didi may file nomination from Nandigram on Mar 11

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

The TMC sources said the Chief Minister would file her

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TMC wants PM posters removed

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

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

Seeking the intervention of the ECI so that the posters and

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



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

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

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

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

SSP Muniraj ji reached the spot and all the five teams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

disposal of grievances of women.

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

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

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

Final year MBBS student dies of Covid in Bihar, many docs infected

Patna: A final year student of Nalanda Medical College and Hospital (NMCH) in Patna died due to Covid 19, an official said.

Subhendu Shekher,23, as a native of Dahia village in Begusarai district and was pursuing MBBS course from NMCH.

He had complained of cough and cold on February 24 and underwent a RTPCR test on the same day and was found Corona positive. The next day, he went to his native village in Begusarai and underwent home isolation before dying on March 1.

Shockingly, the deceased had taken the first jab of vaccination in the first week of February.

Dr Heera Lal Mahto, the principal of NMCH confirmed the incident. “We have directed other doctors to undergo home isolation. All doctors who are in contact with Subhendu, underwent Covid 19 test and 9 of them are tested Corona positive.”

“We have initiated sanitisation in old and new hospitals in NMCH. At present, examination is underway in the college. We have allowed doctors if they want to leave the examination,” Mahto said.

“The death of a doctor is saddening. Some more doctors have tested positive after his death but the government is making all efforts to ensure their safety,” said Mangal Pandey, health minister of Bihar. **ANS**

J&K clocks 104 fresh Covid cases; no death

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

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

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

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

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

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ HATHRAS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gaurav wanted to marry younger daughter forcibly.

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

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

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FIRST COLUMN

THE CROWN PRINCE OF AMATEURS



GWYNNE DYER

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



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

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

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

India badly needs a uniform law on bail

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

Therefore, a solution lies in

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT


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



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

A move towards self-reliance in the education system

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



SUDHIR HINDWAN

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

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

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

system to ensure that only talent gets selected.

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

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

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



international, inter-dependence and global change.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trump’s cash plea could complicate GOP fundraising

AP ■ ORLANDO

Trump needs you,” one fundraising email implored.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kuwait swears in new Govt amid mounting crises

AP ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

The infighting has diminished public confidence, caused instability and hastened the country’s worst debt crisis since the 1990 Iraqi invasion. As Kuwait’s general reserve fund runs out of cash, lawmakers skeptical of deep-rooted corruption have prevented the government from borrowing as other Gulf states have done in response to the coronavirus pandemic and low crude prices.

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

Biden health pick taking heat for support of abortion rights

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

US forces: Rockets hit airbase in Iraq hosting US troops

AP ■ BAGHDAD

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

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

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

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

Myanmar security forces kill at least 6 protesters



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

Myanmar authorities charge Associated Press journalist

AP ■ YANGON

Authorities in Myanmar have charged Associated Press journalist Thein Zaw and five other members of the media with violating a public order law that could see them imprisoned for up to three years, a lawyer said Tuesday.

The six were arrested while covering protests against the February 1 military coup in Myanmar that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The group includes journalists for Myanmar Now, Myanmar Photo Agency, 7Day News, Zee Kwet online news and a freelancer.

Lawyer Tin Zar Oo, who represents Thein Zaw, said the six have been charged under a law that punishes anyone who causes fear among the public, knowingly spreads false news, or agitates directly or indirectly for a criminal offense against a government employee.

The law was amended by the junta last month to broaden its scope and increase the maximum prison term from two years. AP’s Thein Zaw, 32, was taken into custody on Saturday morning in Yangon, the country’s largest city. He is reported to be held in Insein Prison in northern Yangon, notorious for housing political prisoners under previous military regimes.

According to the lawyer, Thein Zaw was remanded into

custody by a court and can be held until March 12 without another hearing or further action.The AP has called for his immediate release.

“Independent journalists must be allowed to freely and safely report the news without fear of retribution,” Ian Phillips, AP vice president for international news, said after the arrest. “AP decries in the strongest terms the arbitrary detention of Thein Zaw.”

The Committee to Protect Journalists joined that call.

“Myanmar authorities must release all journalists being held behind bars and stop threatening and harassing reporters for merely doing their jobs of covering anti-coup street protests,” said Shawn Crispin, CPJ’s senior Southeast Asia representative. “Myanmar must not return to the past dark ages where military rulers jailed journalists to stifle and censor news reporting.”

Thein Zaw was arrested as police charged toward protesters gathered at an intersection in Yangon that has become a meeting point for demonstrators.

Authorities escalated their crackdown on the protesters this past weekend, carrying out mass arrests and using lethal force. The UN Human Rights offices said it believes at least 18 people were shot dead Sunday in several cities when security forces opened fire on demonstrating crowds.

AP ■ YANGON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Japan weighing extension of coronavirus emergency in Tokyo

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said

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

concerns that infections have not slowed enough and are continuing to strain medical systems in the region.

Suga declared a month-long state of emergency on January 7 for Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama and Chiba, and then extended it through March 7.

An emergency issued for up to 10 other urban prefectures later in January was lifted last week, underscoring the government’s eagerness to allow businesses to return to normal as soon as possible.

“Our anti-infection measures are in a very important phase,” Suga told reporters Wednesday.

AP ■ KABUL

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

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

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

Afghan officials said police arrested the alleged killer of the

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

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

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

Kenya receives 1 million vaccines from COVAX

AP ■ NAIROBI

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

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

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

SEARCH FOR MISSING



NITIN RANA @ SANJU

Fair, Face: Round, Built: Strong, Identification: Four fingers of the left leg are amputated. Wearing: Red & white colour jersey & blue colour payjama and shoes in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing person, may inform SHO, Samaipur Badli, Delhi at E-mail Id – cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Phone: SHO 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi
Fax No. 011-24368639 Outer North Distt., Delhi
DP/805/ON/2021 Ph. No. 011-21710052, 7065036326

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, TRANSMISSION LINE MAINTENANCE DIVISION-VIII, AMBEDHKAR CHOWK, JAMMU

Email: xentlcd01@gmail.com, Fax No: 0191-2451732

(NOTICE INVITING TENDER)

e-NIT No: TLMD-VIII/J/31 of 2020-21DATED: 25/02/2021 Executive Engineer TLMD-VIII, JKPTCL, Jammu, for and on behalf of Managing Director of JKPTCL, Jammu, wishes to receive online fresh e-bids for “Stringing of second circuit of 132KV barn-jourian transmission line on already existing double circuit towers of 132 KV S/C Barn-Jourian transmission line along with construction of 132 KV Line bay at 132/33 KV Grid Station Jourian” inall respects as specified in technical specification. Submission of e-bid against this standard Bidding Document (SBD) shall be deemed to have been done after careful study and examination of the procedure, terms and conditions of the standard bidding document with full understanding of its implications. The tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>

Interested bidders may view/download the e-bid document, submit their e-bid online upto date and time mentioned in the table below:

Scope Of The Work :- Stringing of second circuit of 132KV barn-jourian transmission line on already existing double circuit towers of 132 KV S/C Barn-Jourian transmission line along with construction of 132 KV Line bay at 132/33 KV Grid Station Jourian

Estimated Cost :- Rs. 560.00 Lacs (Rupees Five hundred Sixty lacs only), Earnest Money :- Rs. 11.20 Lacs (Rupees Eleven lacs Twenty thousand only) Pledged to Executive Engineer TLMD-VIII, JKPTCL, Jammu. Cost Of Tender Documents :- Rs. 10000 (Rupees Ten Thousand only) Demand Draft in favour of Executive Engineer TLMD-VIII, JKPTCL, Jammu., Last Date of e- bids submission online :- Upto 18/03/2020 4:00 PM, Class of Contractor :- 'A' Class

Other Details:

1. Date & Time of downloading of Standard Bidding Document :- The Standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over <http://jktenders.gov.in> from date 26-02-2021 (1600 Hrs onwards)

2. Pre-bid meeting :- Shall be conducted on 05-03-2021 at 1200Hrs in the Office of the Executive Engineer TLMD-VIII, Jammu J&K.

3. e-Bid submission (starts) date & time (submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format and hard copy) :- 26-02-2021 from 1600Hrs

4. e-Bid and hard copy submission (end) date & time :- 19-03-2021 up to 1600Hrs

No.: DIP/J-4578-P/20 Sd/- Executive Engineer
Dated :- 02.03.2021 Trans. Line Maintenance Division-VIII, JKPTCL, Jammu

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

Sd/- P. Sharma (Advocate)
Seat No.28, Hall No.2, Dwarika Court Complex, Sec.-10, New Delhi-110075

WESTERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

Tender Notice Nos.: BCT/20-21/365 & BCT/20-21/366, dt. 01.03.2021 DOP 06.04.2021 Existing as (Date of Opening) for both tenders: 06.04.2021 To be read as (Date of Opening) for both tenders: 26.03.2021. All other terms & conditions remain the same. 0704

Like us on: [Facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly)

Public Notice: Loss of ID card:

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID Card of Mr.RAVI PANKAJ do hereby serve notice to the public at large that my client above said is the sole and exclusive owner of properties i.e. 1) LIG FLAT NO.576, FIRST FLOOR, PCKET 13, DWARKA, NEW DELHI 2) PLOT NO.136, K-1, VILLAGE HASTAL 80 SOYDS MOHAN GARDEN, NEW DELHI 3) LOCKER NO.321, STATE BANK OF INDIA, RAJOURI GARDEN, NEW DELHI. And have lost/misplaced the original Letter of Administration P.C. No.21/11 dated 05-02-2013 issued by the court of Sh. Alok Aggarwal, ADJ, Dwarka, New Delhi. Anybody dealing with the property(ies) or the said document without my client shall do so at his/her risk and responsibility and shall also be liable for civil and criminal action.

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

Anjum Kumar (Advocate)
Ch.No.X-9, Civil Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that I, Suraj Sharma is purchasing the House No. A-267, MIG Flat on Ground Floor at Distt. Vihar Sector-8, THA, Tehsil & Distt., Ghaziabad, (U.P) from Rohit Bandhu, Akshay Bandhu, Kamna Vedh Arya and Kamlesh legal heirs of Late Prakash, Mr. Prakash was the absolute owner of the same vide Transfer Deed dated 03.05.2002 (Doc. 2649)

All person/s having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage(equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Shop No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, 9810063351

Govt. of Bihar

Department of Science and Technology
Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul

Beena Road, Ward No.-24, Supaul-852131

Website:- www.scesupaul.org and E-mail:- supaulcollege@gmail.com

Corrigendum

With reference to the notice no. SCE/E-TEN/01/2020-21 and PR. No. 013216 (SCI.&TECH) 2020-21 inviting e-tender, published in the different newspapers on 23.02.2021, the following amendments are being hereby notified therein:

- The date and time of Opening of Technical Bids should be read as 12.03.2021 at 10.30 AM.
- The e-procurement website address should be read as <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in> and the concerned eProc 2.0 Help Desk address/contact details can be accessed from the “Contact Us” section of the eproc2 website.

All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

Principal

PR. No. 013799 (Sci. & Tech.) 2020-21 Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul

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India's services sector expands at fastest rate

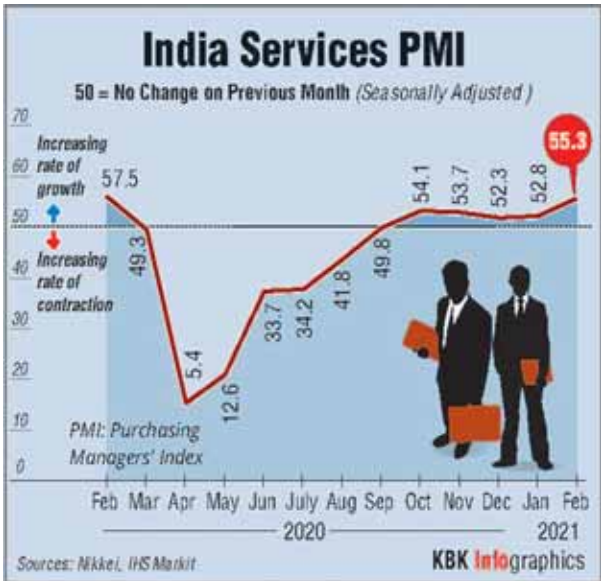
Employment falls further, says survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index rose from 52.8 in January to 55.3 in February, pointing to the sharpest rate of expansion in output in a year amid improved demand and more favourable market conditions. The index was above the critical 50 mark that separates growth from contraction for the fifth month in a row during February as the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines led to an improvement in business confidence towards growth prospects.

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



tions curbed international demand for their services.

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

Meanwhile, Indian private

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

PTI

with confidence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INBRIEF

GHAZIABAD TO FLOAT BONDS WORTH ₹150 CRORE

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



GOYAL FLAGS OFF SIDDHABALI JAN SHATABDI TRAIN

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

CLW PRODUCES 40 PLUS LOCOMOTIVES PER MONTH

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

AYURVEDA BEAUTY PRODUCTS LAUNCHED

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

JIO, FIREWORK TEAM UP TO OFFER VIDEO STORIES

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

ZIPAWORLD FORAYS INTO OCEAN FREIGHT

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

budget estimate can be met,” ICICI Securities said in a note.

It expressed optimism for an excise duty cut given demand recovery, impending privatisation and inflation concerns but expected it to be more modest than ₹8.5 a litre.

Crude oil futures decline on low demand

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

PTI

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Jaikaran, S/o Rama Shankar Parsad, R/o Samalka Farm House Ramchandra Hajari, Near Narayan Ashram, NH-8, New Delhi, Age: 15 years, Height: 5', Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Build: Medium, wearing School Uniform, Sky Blue colour Dharidar Shirt, Blue Pant and Black Shoes** in feet, has been missing from his house since 05.08.2019 at 11:00 AM. In this regard a **FIR No. 345/19, dated 06.08.2019 has been registered at P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website : http://cbi.nic.in
E-mail : cbc@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/316/SW/2020 Ph. No.: 011-25066105, 25063758

NORTHERN RAILWAY (Construction Organization) TENDER NOTICE	
The Deputy Chief Engineer /Const./ Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under One-Packet system for the following work:	
1. Name of work and location	"Design and drawing of test piles, foundation (open/piles), substructure & super structure (PSC/Steel) in connection with construction of 07 nos. Road over Bridges on Jind-Panipat, Jind-Sonepat, Rohtak-Panipat and Delhi-Ambala section of Northern Railway".
2. Completion period of the work	12 (Twelve) Months
3. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 33.21 Lakhs
4. Earnest Money to be deposited	NIL (However Bid Security Declaration is Mandatory as per Annexure-T)
5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on 26.03.2021 on IREPS web site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in . The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs on 26.03.2021
6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	Tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in from 04.03.2021 to 26.03.2021. Above tenders document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 12.03.2021 to 26.03.2021 All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office
No 484-Acs-Design& Drawing-ROBs/RUBs-CSB Dated : 03.03.2021. 476/21	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



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

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

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

DP/72/RLY/2021

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Mohan Parmar S/o Sultan Singh Parmar R/o C-79, Bhagat Singh Colony, Balabgarh, Haryana** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 84/15 U/S 408 IPC, P.S. Naraina, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Mohan Parmar** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Mohan Parmar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

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

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

CELEBRATE LADAKH

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

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

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

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



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

The deputy secretary of Ladakh's Department of Culture,

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

He shared that the preference was given to rural artisans and craftsmen. All the proceeds will go directly to the artisans. At the inaugural event, Gyalson said that this is the sec-

ond edition. "We didn't record good sales in the first edition of the festival. We wanted to make sure that the artisans from Ladakh gets sufficient exposure on a national level," said he.

IN BRIEF

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



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

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



Maharashtra Governor felicitates LIC

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

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



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

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

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

Delhi Govt GST revenue for Feb is 1,982 crore

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

HUDCO organises DoPT training

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

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



the Government of India is leveraging its resources to generate more funds from other sources, including private investment in projects. Addressing the participants,

Kamran Rizvi, Additional Secretary, MoHUA & CMD, HUDCO, highlighted the Government of India initiatives to tackle challenges in urban infrastructure financing.

Tata Power-DDL organises power theft awareness session

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

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



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

The consumers who attended the session were also informed

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



Empowering tribals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PFC extends financial support

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

The building block com-

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

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

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

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

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

VIT-AP signs MoU



Expert, Blockchain App Developer, Financial Analyst, Data Scientist, Finance, Business Analyst, Process Analyst, Compliance Manager, Product Manager and Business Development Manager. The areas where FinTech qualification is in

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

Dr S Jeyavelu, Dean, VIT-AP

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

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

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

Match of high-stakes

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

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kohli, despite two fifties, hasn't

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

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

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

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

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

expected to be back in action.

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

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

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

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

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

Virat bats for rotation policy

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

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

“The kind of systems you have

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

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

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

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

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

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

SINGLES

SANIA-ANDREJA ENTER QATAR SEMIS

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

MEDVEDEV, ZVEREV EXIT IN 1ST ROUND

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

MARY ASSURES MEDAL IN SPANISH TOURNEY

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

SHARATH OFF TO A FLYING START

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

STEYN APOLOGISES FOR IPL REMARK

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

SONAM PULLS OUT OF ROME EVENT

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

INDIA PLAY 1-1 DRAW AGAINST GERMANY

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



Ashton Agar celebrates with Matthew Wade after he takes wicket

@ICC/Twitter

Agar's 6/30 keeps Oz alive

AFP ■ WELLINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Srikanth, Satwik-Ashwini start Swiss Open with win

PTI ■ BASEL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Man City equal unbeaten record

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

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

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

The champions-elect were made to sweat after Conor Coady cancelled out an early own goal



from Leander Dendoncker but two late goals from Gabriel Jesus and a Riyad Mahrez strike sealed the three points.

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

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

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

Juve stay in title race

AFP ■ TURIN

Juventus gave their hopes of a 10th straight Serie A title a timely boost as they beat struggling Spezia 3-0 on Tuesday to move within seven points of league leaders Inter Milan.

Andrea Pirlo's side were frustrated for long periods, but second-half goals from Alvaro Morata, Federico Chiesa and Cristiano Ronaldo clinched an important win.

Juve sit three points behind second-placed AC Milan, who

host Udinese on Wednesday, with Inter Milan four points further clear ahead of their match at Parma on Thursday.

The Turin giants have won the last nine Italian league titles, but have it all to do to deny either of the two Milan clubs from ending that remarkable run.

“We are working to win, if we don't win this season, then we'll congratulate the champions, but as long as there's a mathematical chance, we'll give our all on the pitch,” Morata said.

They are in the best position right now to take them out and we are going to try but they are the champions.

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

Too much noise about spin-friendly tracks: Kohli

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

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

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

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

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

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

zealand.

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

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

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

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

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

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

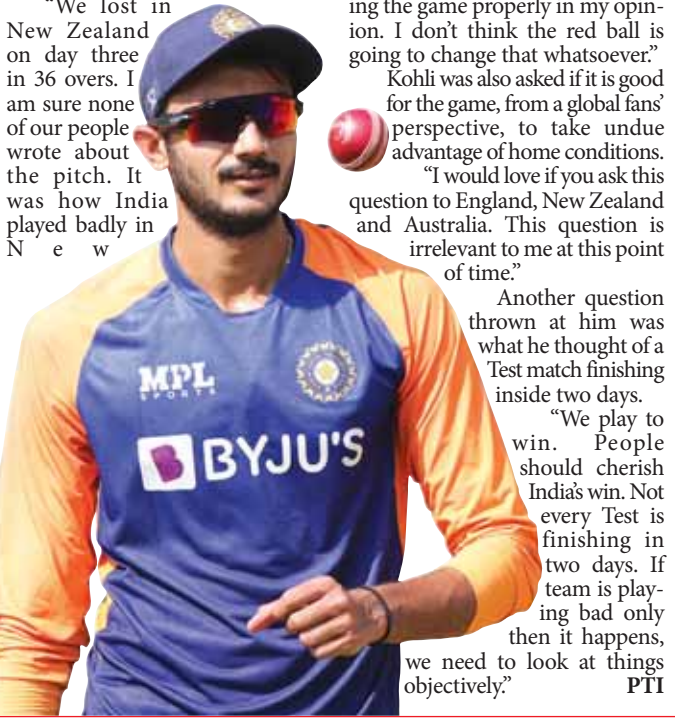
Kohli was also asked if it is good for the game, from a global fans' perspective, to take undue advantage of home conditions.

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

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

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

PTI



Pitch looks very similar to last Test: Root

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

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

Root said the English batsmen will look to build partnerships.

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



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

PTI

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

'EVERYONE TRAINED'

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

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

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

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

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

Zim beat Afghans by 10 wickets

AFP ■ ABU DHABI

A century from skipper Sean Williams coupled with destructive pace bowling from Blessing Muzarabani and Victor Nyauchi led Zimbabwe to a rapid 10-wicket win over Afghanistan in the first Test in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday.

Williams hit 105 to guide Zimbabwe to 250 all out before Afghanistan — trailing by 119 — were bowled out for 135 in their second innings.

That left Zimbabwe to score 17 runs which they got without any loss to end the match inside two days.

Afghanistan were bowled out for 131 in their first innings.

Lanky pacer Muzarabani finished with 2-14 — six wickets in the match — while his new ball partner Nyauchi took 3-30, also getting six in the match.

This becomes Afghanistan's third defeat in five Tests since gaining status to play the five-day format in 2017.