

WORLD 7

EU THREATENS ASTRA WITH EXPORT BAN

MONEY 8

20 STATES COMPLETE EASE OF DOING BIZ REFORMS: GOVT

SPORT 10

SINDHU OUT OF ALL ENGLAND OPEN

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Adopt These Measures to Protect Elderly During Corona Strain



Do light exercise and yoga etc. at home



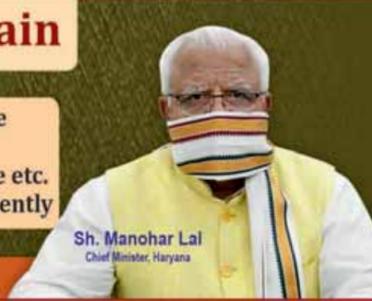
Take your prescribed medicines regularly



Ensure proper nutrition through fresh homemade food



Clean daily use items like spectacles/remote etc. with cleaner frequently



Sh. Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

Be Alert, Be Safe

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.prharyana.gov.in | @Cmohry @DiprHaryana

Fear sets in as corona surges on

41K infected in last 24 hours, 8 States major contributors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Coronavirus has infected a record 40,953 people in the last 24 hours, highest so far since November taking the total tally to 1,15,55,284 on Saturday. Eight States, including Maharashtra, are the major contributors in the total case-loads, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday.

Maharashtra, Kerala and Punjab cumulatively accounted for 76.22 per cent of India's total active caseload. The western States contributed to 62 per cent of such cases, while the southern and northern States accounted for 8.83 per cent and 5.36 per cent of active cases respectively.

The top five districts in Maharashtra recording the highest number of cases were Ernakulam (2,673), Pathanamthitta (2,482), Kannur (2,263), Palakkad



A health worker collects swab sample from a person for Covid-19 test, near Kashmir Gate in New Delhi on Saturday

Thane (16,735) and Nashik (11,867) while the top five districts in Kerala recording the highest number of cases were Ernakulam (2,673), Pathanamthitta (2,482), Kannur (2,263), Palakkad

Hoshiarpur (1,572). "A rising trajectory of daily new cases is visible in eight States. These are Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka and Haryana. Kerala is showing a consistently declining trend," the Ministry said in a statement.

The Health Ministry further said five States account for 81.38 per cent of the fresh deaths due to the virus. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties at 70, Punjab followed with 38 daily deaths and Kerala reported 17 deaths in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, in a major relief, fifteen States and UTs did not report any Covid-19 deaths in the last 24 hours.

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800 cases in Delhi; positivity rate breaches 1% mark again

New Delhi: Delhi reported over 800 Covid-19 cases for the first time this year on Saturday as the positivity rate breached the 1 per cent mark after over two months, while two more fatalities pushed the death toll to 10,955, as per data shared by the health department. The number of active cases rose to 3,409 from 3,165 a day ago, according to the latest health bulletin.

'Suspended cop asked to collect money from bars, restaurants...'

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a shocking development that further threatens the very stability of the Shiv Sena-led three party Government in Maharashtra, Mumbai's former Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh on Saturday alleged that State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh of the NCP had asked now arrested and suspended police officer Sachin Vaze last month to "collect" a staggering ₹100 crore per month from bars, restaurants and other sources.

Three days after he was shunted and posted in a relatively insignificant post as the Commandant General of Home Guards, Singh dropped a bombshell on the MVA Government, in the form of an eight-page sensational letter written to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, in which he laid bare "misdeeds and malpractices" indulged in by the State Home Minister.

In his swift retaliation, State Home Minister



Maharashtra HM Anil Deshmukh

Deshmukh — in a tweet put in the evening — debunked Singh's charge and said, "The former Commissioner of Police, Parambir Singh, has made false allegations in order to save himself as the involvement of Sachin Vaze in Mukesh Ambani & Mansukh Hiren's case is becoming clearer from the investigation carried out so far & threads are leading to Singh as well."

In his letter, Singh claimed that he had the briefing sessions with the CM, Dy CM, NCP president Sharad Pawar and other Ministers about the "several misdeeds and malpractices being indulged in by the Home Minister. I noticed that some Ministers were already aware of some aspects mentioned by me to them," he said.

The letter by Singh not only seeks to expose Deshmukh, but also threatens



Ex-Mumbai chief Param Bir Singh

to erode the credibility of the ruling MVA partner.

The Shiv Sena may insist on its alliance partner NCP to ask Deshmukh to resign as a "damage control" exercise.

Upping the ante, leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly and senior BJP leader demanded the State Home Minister's resignation over what he dubbed as "earth-shattering letter" written by Mumbai's former top cop.

"Under the circumstances, the State Home Minister should immediately tender his resignation. The Chief Minister should immediately seek his resignation. And there should be an impartial enquiry. This enquiry must be conducted by Central agencies. If this is not acceptable to them, then it should be a court-monitored probe," he said.

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Jabs to protect you from virus for 10 months: AIIMS head

Surge as people feel Covid over, not following norms: Guleria

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria on Saturday hoped that the vaccine would be able to give good protection from the infection for eight to ten months or be even more.

"The Covid-19 vaccine should be able to give good protection from the infection for eight to ten months and maybe, even more," Guleria said at an event organised by the IPS (Central) Association.

Over four crore people in the country have been vaccinated against the virus till now. The AIIMS head also said no major side-effect of the vaccine has been recorded.

He said the biggest reason for the surge in cases is that people feel the pandemic is over and they are not following Covid-appropriate behaviour.



A medic prepares to administer Covid-19 vaccine to a beneficiary, during the countrywide inoculation drive, in Hyderabad on Saturday

"There are multiple reasons for the surge, but the main reason is that there is a change in people's attitude and they feel the coronavirus is over. People should still restrict non-essential travel for some more time," he asserted.

NITI Aayog member (Health) VK Paul said the chain of transmission has to be stopped and for that vaccine is one tool but another is containment and surveillance strategy.

"Not following Covid-19 behaviour and laxity is a major reason for the surge," he said.

Responding to a question on vaccinating more people, Paul said the issue is vaccines are limited and that is why prioritisation has been done.

"If we had unlimited supply, we would open the vaccination for everyone. That is the reason, not everyone is getting vaccinated. Most countries in the world are not able to go beyond priority groups because of this reason," he said.

The NITI Aayog member also said the highest mortality was seen among people with co-morbidities and older age groups.

"These people must not delay taking the vaccine. So the message is that they need it more than others. That is the reason they have been prioritised for getting the Covid-19 vaccine," he said.

Talking about the effectiveness of the available Covid-19 vaccines, Covaxin and Covishield, Guleria said, "If we look at the two vaccines, they produce equal antibodies and are very robust. We should take the vaccine available to us because both are equally effective in terms of efficacy and long-term protection."

Restrictions in Nagpur

Nagpur: Restrictions imposed in Nagpur district will continue with some relaxations from March 22 to March 31 in view of rising coronavirus cases, Maharashtra Energy Minister Nitin Raut said on Saturday.

In Nagpur city, restaurants and eateries can operate till 7 pm while shops can remain open till 4 pm, said the Minister.

Lockdown in Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur today

Bhopal: A lockdown has been announced in Madhya Pradesh's capital Bhopal, Indore and Jabalpur. The three cities will remain shut from 10 pm on Saturday to 6 am on Monday, and their schools and colleges will remain closed till March 31, the State Government said on Friday.

Strategic ties with India a priority: US

US Def Secy, Rajnath review India-Pacific situations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the US on Saturday called for deepening defence and strategic ties with the US terming the partnership as a "stronghold" of a free and open India-Pacific region. This was in obvious reference to growing Chinese assertiveness in the region.

This takeaway came out after visiting US Defence Secretary Lloyd J Austin and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held wide-ranging dis-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and US Secretary of Defence Lloyd James Austin at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Saturday

cussion on bilateral defence relations and situation in the India-Pacific. They also reportedly reviewed the situation on the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh where stand-off was

still on at some flash points. After the talks, Lloyd said elevating the India-US defence partnership is a "priority" of the Biden administration, and that India is an increasingly impor-

tant partner amid rapidly shifting international dynamics and a "central pillar" in Washington's approach towards the region.

Describing the talks as "comprehensive and fruitful," Rajnath said the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation between Indian military and the US India-Pacific Command, Central Command and Africa Command. Moreover, both the countries are keen to work together to realise the full potential of the India-US global strategic partnership, he said.

Referring to India-US foundational agreements on defence cooperation, Rajnath said both sides discussed steps to be taken to realise the full potential of pacts such as LEMOA (Logistics Exchange

Memorandum of Agreement), COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) and BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement).

He also said the recent summit of leaders of India, the US, Japan and Australia under the Quad framework emphasised the resolve to maintain a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

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Discussed human rights of minorities, says Austin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said he had talked about human rights of minorities in India during his meeting with Cabinet Ministers here during his ongoing visit. It was important for partners to have "those kinds of discussions," he said.

In an interaction with media, "We have to remember that India is our partner, a partner whose partnership we value. And I think partners need to be able to have those kinds of discussions. And certainly, we feel comfortable doing that. And you can have those discussions in a very meaningful way and make progress," he added.

His response came in the backdrop of US Senator Robert Menendez, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee mentioning about "the deteriorating situation of democracy in India."

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CAPSULE

PM MODI WISHES IMRAN RECOVERY FROM COVID
New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday extended his best wishes to his Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan for a speedy recovery from Covid-19.

AADITYA THACKERAY TESTS COVID POSITIVE
Mumbai: Maharashtra Minister Aadiya Thackeray on Saturday said he has tested positive for coronavirus and urged people not to let their guard down.

MIZO CM WANTS ASYLUM FOR MYANMAR REFUGEES
Aizawl: Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga has called "not acceptable" the Centre's order to prevent illegal immigration from Myanmar and ensure speedy deportation of refugees, and urged PM Narendra Modi to provide them asylum on humanitarian grounds.

Dattatreya Hosabale next RSS general secretary

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Saturday elected Dattatreya Hosabale as the next sarkaryavah (general secretary). Hosabale replaces Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi, 73, who held the position since 2009 for the fourth time.

Hosabale, 65, was serving as the organisation's saha-sarkaryavah in the RSS.

The important decision for the change of guards was taken at RSS "Akhil Bharatiya Prathinidhi Sabha", the highest annual decision-making conclave of the Sangh, which was held near Bengaluru this year from March 19 to March 20.

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Opp parties in Parliament panel OK farm law

Essential Commodities Act is one of farm laws against which kisan protesting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties — Congress, TMC, AAP, DMK, SP, PMK and NC — have supported "the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020", one of the three farm laws against which farmers are protesting at Delhi borders for more than 100 days now.

A Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, comprising Farooq Abdullah, GS Basavaraj, Shafiqur Rahman Barq, Bhagwant Mann, Anbumani Ramadoss, Fauzia Khan, Shanta Chhetri and Ganesan Selvam, has asked the Government to implement in "letter and spirit" the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020.

The same leaders and their political parties have been demanding the repeal of all three farm laws enacted by the Centre recently and backing the farmers' protest against it. The report was tabled in Parliament on March 19, asking the Government to "implement the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 so the farmers and other stakeholders of the farming sector in this country receive the benefits intended under the said Act.



The panel said although the country has become surplus in most agri-commodities, farmers have been unable to get better prices due to lack of investment in cold storage, warehouses, processing and export as entrepreneurs get discouraged by the regulatory mechanisms in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

"This has resulted in farmers suffering huge losses when there are bumper harvests, especially of perishable commodities, much of which could have been reduced with adequate processing facilities," the panel said.

Also, it noted that even the High Powered Committee for Transformation of Indian Agriculture had suggested that there was a need to create an environment based on ease of

doing business and for removing the fear of frequent statutory controls under the Essential Commodities Act in order to boost immediate investment in agriculture sector, increase competition and enhance farmers' income.

"The Committee hope(s) and expect(s) that the recently enacted 'Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020', which was aimed at addressing the issue, will become a catalyst for unlocking vast untapped resources in the agriculture sector by creating an environment for enhanced investments in agriculture sector, fair and productive competition in agricultural marketing and increase farmers' income," the report added.

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Doorstep ration scheme to drop Mukhya Mantri name: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government's doorstep ration delivery scheme will be implemented in the national Capital without any name and a fresh proposal will be sent to the Centre for its approval, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Saturday.

The announcement came a day after Centre red-flagged "Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna", saying subsidised foodgrains under the "National Food Security Act" cannot be used for State specific scheme.

Kejriwal said, "We will accept all conditions of the Centre but will not allow any obstruction of the scheme."

Detailed report on P3

HOMETHEATRE

Dark and thrilling



THE WILD GOOSE LAKE & Prive HD
***ing: Hu Ge, Kwai Lun-Mei, Wan Qian, Liao Fan, Yicong Zhang, Dao Qi, Huang Jue, Tang Wei, Chloe Maayan, Yongzhong Chen**
Rated: 6/10

slowly enough to not let you off the hook.

Add to this the almost muted character of an unapologetic matter of fact prostitute Liu Aiai who grabs the scene from the time she asks for a light from the youth under a leaky sky in the middle of the night, to the last scene which scripts the suspense and revelation to the last seconds, there is something really dramatic about this understated thriller from the celebrated director Diao Yinan.

Aiai is crucial to the film though she does well to keep the theatrics away from her story and role in the film as does Zhou Zenong around whose predicament the film beautifully revolves.

All in all a differently enabled film if you are not into a ferocious pace circuit.

Could have been scarier

THE WIFE
Zee 5
***ing: Gurmeet Choudhary, Sayani Datta**
Rated: 5/10

This movie should not be confused with the 2017 film directed by Björn L Runge where a wife questions her life choices as she travels to Stockholm to see her husband receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

This one, written and directed by Sarmad Khan, set in a metro, talks about how a witch changes the life of a young boy forever and takes him on a path from where there is no coming back. This is not a spoiler alert. As the opening credits rolls, one knows how this one is going to end. The tag: The Wife: Till Death Do Us Part is a dead give away.

There are a few let downs here. The pace and how the story is told and unfolds is rather slow. This takes away the scare element. The acting is stilted as well taking away from the jump moments.

Gurmeet Choudhary is not new to this genre; he has done *Khamoshiyan* (2015). His expressions and disinterest in what is happening in his house is rather strange given that he is aware of the reason of the spookiness in his house.

Still this makes for an interesting watch. It is rare for Bollywood to make films that will spook you with things that go bump but *The Wife* does manage to give a few fright moments. But given what the story is here, the scare quotient could have been a notch more to give one the heebie-jeebies.

— Shalini Saksena



Holds attention from the start

THE FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER
Disney+Hotstar
***ing: Sebastian Stan, Anthony Mackie, Wyatt Russell, Erin Kellyman, Danny Ramirez**
Rated: 6.5/10

Here is some great news for the Marvel Cinematic Universe fans. The Disney+, last week dropped the first episode based on the Marvel Comics characters Falcon and Winter Soldier. The OTT platform will release one episode each week for the next six weeks. And this is the only downer here. The wait for what is to come next is going to leave the fans on the edge. More so, given where episode one left off. A spoiler alert: Another Captain America?

However, fans can take heart from how the mini-series starts — the Falcon jumping from an aircraft on a rescue mission. And what a rescue it is. The stunts are amazing; his flying even more awesome that gives you a bird's eye view of the ground below. Mid-air rescue is definitely something that will have viewers talk about — until the next episode.

Unfortunately, the Winter Soldier here doesn't have much to do except give a glimpse of his back story and the demons that drive him. Still it is good to see the Marvel characters come to life given how *Avengers: Endgame* ended — on a sad note.

The Falcon and The Winter Soldier is bound to keep the fans interested, at least till *Black Widow* or *Spider-Man: No Way Home* release.

— Shalini Saksena

Plan Your Day

For the love of rolls

Venue: Near HBR Chowk, Ulahawas, Sec- 62, Gurugram
When: Till March 31, 2021
Time: 11:30 am to 11 pm

If you're someone who can eat rolls, day in and day out, then call us your BFFs, 'cause we come bearing the bestest (trust us) news you have heard today!

Rollery is out with their Buy One Get One offer meaning that you can gobble up two of their spicy and creamy rolls at the price of one. And to make you drool even more, we would like to mention their specials that include Butter Chicken rolls, Pahadi Mutton rolls, Bengali egg Kathi rolls, Arabian falafel rolls, tower of turkey roll, and the list is endless.

You can get your hands on any of their two yummilicious rolls at the price of one. So, don't wait anymore and call these sweet guys up and get rollin'!



Fridays and Sundays with Lakshay Verma

Venue: OTB Courtyard , B-49, the Corus, Rajiv Chowk, Connaught Place, New Delhi
When: Every Friday & Sunday
Time: 12 noon to 12 am

Out of the Box sticks right with its name with every new outlet they open. The latest one being OTB Courtyard in CP is the talk of the town. The overall vibes and the food just make everything better. Plus, to give you a good time on weekends, they're calling in the super talented Lakshya Verma who has hot numbers like *Tu Hi Hai*, *Middle Class* and the remake of *Moh Moh Ke Dhaage* under his belt. He'll be performing live every Friday and Sunday night to give you a good time.

Soundscapes with Swaraag

Venue: Online,
<https://www.facebook.com/HCLConcerts/>
When: March 26, 2021
Time: 7 pm

A virtual concert featuring music that will transcend across the boundaries of Indian Folk, Sufi Fusion and Western music. Swaraag is an Indo-Western Fusion band from Rajasthan, India. The band's title Swaraag indicates an individual's state that is in union with music. They have been recognised for their mesmerizing performances featuring folk fusions of Rajasthani and Bollywood songs and have quickly become a household name.



TELLY TALE

RAINA RECALLS THE WIN
 The upcoming episode of *Indian Pro Music League* is surely going to be nothing short of a delight for the viewers as the ambassador of UP



Dabbangs, Suresh Raina will be seen sharing the stage with Bollywood actor Parineeti Chopra. While the show was filled with power-packed performances from the captains and team members of Punjab Lions and UP Dabbangs, the highlight of the evening was the celebration of Team India winning the Cricket World Cup 2011, 10 years ago. While paying a tribute to this glorious moment and to the Indian Cricket Team, Suresh Raina couldn't help but go down the memory lane reminiscing the biggest moment when he felt even more proud to be an Indian!

Recalling the memory, Suresh said: "A win in a team sport is not just of an individual but of an entire team which comprises coaches, team members and every single person who is connected with the team. I still remember the moment when we were in our last over and everyone was praying with their heart and soul that we win this match. As soon as that happened, it was the most surreal experience for us as the entire stadium was singing *Vande Mataram* with their mobile flashlights swaying in the air. That is the moment all of us had a feeling that we had truly made our country proud."

Coming together to depict their spirit of patriotism, the singers and captains of both the teams came on the stage to sing to the tunes of *Vande Mataram* as they collectively paid a tribute to the Indian team and the country respectively. Even superstar Parineeti Chopra couldn't stop herself from taking Suresh Raina's autograph on a bat post the performance. What is sure to excite viewers in the upcoming episode will be Parineeti and Suresh presenting a cricket and badminton fusion of sorts where Parineeti will be seen marking shots with her badminton racket while Suresh brings his classic cricketer style on the floor.

JUHI'S EMOTIONAL CONNECT
 Zee TV's *Hamariwali Good News*

is a primetime drama that presents a heart-warming and unique role reversal between a daughter-in-law - Navya (Srishti Jain) and her mother-in-law — Renuka Tiwari (Juhi Parmar) to give their family the much-awaited 'Good News'. Over the last couple of weeks, we've seen a lot of drama take place at the Tiwari household. In fact, the show took a three-month leap recently and left everyone astonished after Renuka and Mukund (Shakti Anand) returned to find out that their son, Raghav (Aditya) and daughter-in-law, Navya are heading for a divorce. Renuka was in quite a fix. She not only had to restore the Tiwari sadan to its glory as well as save Raghav-Navya's relationship, but also get ready to deliver a baby.

Playing a seven-month pregnant woman with a huge baby bump is a task, but also immersing yourself in such dramatic sequences makes it even more difficult. But Juhi Parmar has been acing it! In fact, the pregnancy track has even made the actress reminisce about her real-life pregnancy. As Juhi Parmar mentions, "I have played a pregnant woman in an earlier show as well, however, during that period of time, it was different. I hadn't experienced pregnancy in real life, so I



didn't know how you feel when you're a mother. But this time around, I have been a mother, so I know how you feel when you're pregnant and it did make me nostalgic. When you have been through the journey, how I have now, it becomes more natural to enact scenes and pick up the body language as I know what it is like to be pregnant. The post leap track has really made me nostalgic, especially with all the beautiful memories of my pregnancy coming back to me."

She further added: "Personally, motherhood is my best experience till date. As an actor, when I am enacting sequences where I am pregnant, it becomes much easier to relate to the scenes as the emotions come naturally. While the sequences might be similar to other tracks I shoot, being a mother, the pregnancy scenes bring a little

more attachment and emotional connection to the whole track and I am enjoying shooting as always."

In the meantime, with Aditya and Navya heading for divorce, will Renuka be able to save their marriage? Will she be able to resurrect the Tiwari Sadan again? And what would happen to Mukund and Renuka's relationship, will it be affected, or would they be together?

MEET THE RIG'S CAST

Amazon Prime Video has unveiled casting on the highly-anticipated UK Amazon Original series *The Rig*, a six-part epic thriller produced by Wild Mercury Productions (part of Banijay UK), created by David Macpherson and directed by John Strickland (Line of Duty, Bodyguard). The series is set to film exclusively in Scotland later this month on an oil rig and at FirstStage Studios in Edinburgh.

Iain Glen (*Game of Thrones*, Mrs Wilson) plays Magnus MacMillan, Offshore Installation Manager of the rig and leader of the crew, Emily Hampshire (*Schitt's Creek*) plays Rose Mason the scientist and oil company rep, a fresh face on-board the rig. Martin Compston (*Line of Duty*, Traces) plays Communications Officer Fulmer Hamilton. Rochenda Sandall (*Criminal: UK*, *Small Axe*) plays Medic Cat Braithwaite. Owen Teale (*Game of Thrones*, *A Discovery of Witches*) is Head Driller Lars Hutton. Richard Pepple (*Bridgerton*, *Cobra*) is crew boss Grant Dunlin and Mark Bonnar (*Guilt*, *Quiz*) is Deck Foreman Alwyn Evans.

Calvin Demba (*Life*, *Last Christmas*) plays Drill Hand Baz Roberts, Emun Elliott (*Guilt*) is rig mechanic Leck Longman. Abraham Popoola (*Cruella*) is rig crane driver Easter Ayodeji, Stuart McQuarrie (*Des*) is Head Chef Colin Murchison and Molly Vevers (*The Spanish Princess*) plays roustabout Heather Shaw.

Magnus and his crew aboard the Kinloch Bravo oil rig are stationed off the Scottish coast in the dangerous waters of the North Sea. When they are due to be collected and return to the mainland a mysterious and all-enveloping fog rolls through. The rig is hit by massive tremors, and they find themselves cut off from all communication with the shore and the outside world. As the crew endeavour to discover what's driving this unknown force, a major accident forces them to ask questions about who they can really trust. Bonds are broken, allegiances formed and generational fault lines exposed. The crew of the Bravo will be driven to the limits of both their loyalties and their endurance, into a confrontation with forces beyond their imagination.

'Tough to juggle SIT and Pratigya 2'

POOJA GOR, who plays Pratigya Krishna Singh in Star Bharat's *Mann Kee Awaaz Pratigya 2*, tells MUSBA HASHMI about her excitement about this season and how the prequel had taken a toll on her eating habits

■ **How does it feel to be back on TV with Mann Kee Awaaz Pratigya 2 after about six years?**

It feels great. I am a workaholic and shooting every day is something I love. Not that, I wasn't shooting for the last six years. I was, but it was more relaxed. I used to shoot for 20 days with a few holidays, I loved that, but I laid back. And as soon as I started shooting for *Pratigya 2*, I realised how much I love being grinded up. I am excited for the Season 2 of the show that has made me what I am.

■ **Do you have more pressure for this season or are you relatively relaxed since the character is already well-established?**

No, there is no pressure. In fact, as you mentioned, I feel comfortable and relaxed because the character is already established. It is a character that I don't have to create. As an actor, when you start a new show you have to sit and spend time with the character in order to get into its skin. I didn't have to do this. When I gave my first shot, the character was inside me. It didn't feel I was doing it nine years later.

■ **Some memories that you can share from the sets of Pratigya 1?**

There are tons of them. In fact, every single day, not just me and but the whole cast and crew of the show gets reminded of something from the previous season. It is a great nostalgic feeling to look back and make more today. I can't choose one memory because it will be unfair since we have spent three and a half years with the show.

■ **A lesson that you took back home from the sets.**

When I started the show, 12 years back and till it ended, our shooting schedule was erratic. We were shooting day in and out till the last episode got over. It was aired on October 27, 2012 at 10:30 pm and we packed up for that episode at 7:30 am on the same day. And because of which my sleep had gone for a toss and I could do very little about it since it was the demand of the show. Even my eating habits were horrible. I would eat a lot of junk or eat at wrong times or don't eat at all. I was about 18 back then, I

No, there is no pressure for Season 2. In fact, I feel comfortable and relaxed because the character is already established. It is a character that I don't have to create. When I gave my first shot, the character was inside me. It didn't feel I was doing it nine years later

will spare me for SIT too because it is also extremely close to my heart. It is a different world and I enjoy it equally. I look forward to being on the sets of SIT. The good thing is both the production houses have been kind enough to help me manage it all.

■ **How did Kedarnath happen?**

It was simply through auditions. I received a call from Mukesh Chhabra Casting Company about a film that they

were casting for. At that time, I didn't know what that movie was. They gave me a scene and I tested for it. Later on, I was called again for another test and then I was told that it was for an integral part of a big movie. It was not before my third test that I was told it was for *Kedarnath*. I was given insights into the script tested with Sara Ali Khan for a scene. A few days later, I got a call from the team that I have been finalised. That was it.

■ **From Kitani Mohabbat Hai to now Pratigya 2, how would you describe your journey?**

The journey has been colourful and enriching. I can say that I am a much more refined actor now — rich in knowledge of the technicalities of how to stand on your mark or how to look into the camera. I have done a lot of varied roles. I have been choosy in terms of the kind of work I take up because I want to do new things every time. I don't want to get typecast, which did happen after I did *Pratigya* and *Savdhaan India*. I was offered the roles of a strong woman, which is fine, but I was looking for something that I haven't done. Thankfully, that happened with *Roshni*. It is definitely challenging to have patience and wait for the right project. But, utilised that time in learning new things. I call it 'I was updating my software'.

■ **In between all this, did you have any regrets?**

Not at all. The reason is before making any decision, I sit and think about all the pros and cons of it. And if I will have even the slightest of doubt about that decision, I will not go ahead with that. I never take or won't be able to take up a project because I have to. I should feel happy going to the sets.



AFTER CENTRE OPPOSES RATION SCHEME

Doorstep delivery won't have name: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government's doorstep ration delivery scheme will be implemented in the national Capital without any name and a fresh proposal will be sent to the Centre for its approval, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Saturday.

The announcement came a day after Centre red-flagged "Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna", saying that subsidised foodgrains under the 'National Food Security Act' cannot be used for State specific scheme.

The Central Government has objection to the word 'Chief Minister'. So we have decided to provide door to door ration without any name of the scheme," he said, adding that there will be a Cabinet meeting



on Monday and its proposal will be sent to the Centre.

Kejriwal said "We will accept all conditions of the Centre but will not allow any obstruction in the implementation of the scheme. We were a little disheartened with the Central Government's objection, but we have understood their issue with it; we just want the people to benefit and the

ration mafia to be defeated." "We dreamed of this scheme for 20-22 years and I was personally preparing for it for the last 2-3 years, our battle of 22 years will be won with the implementation of this scheme.

Kejriwal said, "On 25th March 2021 the Delhi Government was supposed to begin the revolutionary flagship project — the Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana. Every State Government provides ration to its poor. People get ration from ration shops and face various difficulties. In many cases, the ration dealers also charge extra money from the poor, which is why citizens face a lot of difficulties in getting ration."

Taking cognisance of this situation, the Delhi Government came up with the

idea of home delivery of ration, he said, adding that under this scheme, the Government decided to prepare a pack comprising atta, rice and other ingredients, which the Government would then deliver to individuals.

"We realised this can reduce the issues citizens face in getting their monthly ration. This is why the Delhi Government came up with Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana. We were all set to launch this scheme on 25th March but yesterday afternoon we received a letter from the Central Government, whereby the Central Government directed us not to implement the scheme," he said.

The Chief Minister said, "It was a bit surprising because just five days before the launch of the scheme we received such a

direction from the Centre. We were trying to understand the reason behind such a direction. The Central Government has written that we cannot keep the name Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana. It looks like they have some issues in the use of the word Mukhya Mantri."

"This scheme is not to publicise our name. We are not coming up with this scheme to publicise our name. The Centre has written that the name of the scheme will make it look like a State Government scheme. I want to make it very clear that we did not plan this scheme to get any credit. I am very hopeful that after this decision, the Central Government will not have any more problems with this scheme and they will allow us to implement this decision," he said.

Mentoring of Classes IX-XII girls in City Govt-run schools

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government launched the "Education Mentoring Programme" through its "Youth for Education" initiative, which focuses on mentoring of girls studying in grades IX to XII in Delhi Government Schools. Under the programme, students will be mentored by B.Tech, M.Tech, PhD and MBA students of Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University of Women.

On the involvement of women and girls in the field of innovation, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said, "Our world is becoming a knowledge economy with dedicated research and innovation quickly becoming the key to progress. Although our nation is seeing some major innovations in every field of work, these innovations are mostly led by men. The participation of women is abysmal when it comes to innovation, especially in the field of STEM. According to a study I recently came across, women form only 33 per cent of the total workforce in research and innovation in STEM in South Asia."

Sisodia said, "With the Education Mentoring Programme, Delhi Government wants to empower students of Delhi in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. We want our students, especially our girls, to



receive the right guidance, which will help them build sustainable innovations. It is our vision that our girls equally dominate the STEM sector."

Addressing the mentors, he said, "If I have to speak about the enrolment rate of pre-primary and primary schools, approximately 21 lakh children are enrolled every year. However, only 10,000 girls take up STEM studies in higher education. Our students and teachers are continuously endeavouring to work hard in this field but we need to fill in this gap. Therefore, your participation and mentoring will play a crucial role."

"Our Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wants to bring in a revolution in education. When I used to visit government schools earlier, I was always astonished to see how dilapidated the buildings were, how unsanitary the classes were. We laid the foundation of basic education to help our students take pride in

attending government schools. We built the professional capacity of our teachers and sent them all over the world - Harvard, Cambridge, Singapore and Finland for training. Delhi Government school children attained a 98 per cent pass percentage in CBSE board exams. Our students are going to IITs without any coaching," he said.

Appreciating the efforts of mentors in guiding students, he said, "Many students, especially male students are going to IITs without any guidance. They receive guidance from their teachers or fathers and brothers. I am aware that a lot of students are confused about their long-term goals and they require the right information at the right time because making such decisions can be challenging. The best kind of guidance a student can receive is from his/her senior and I am happy that you will play a key role in guiding our students," he said.

Inter-State exam paper leak gang busted, police uniforms seized

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the arrest of four people, the Delhi Police on Saturday busted an inter-State paper leak gang operating in Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Police said that they have also recovered two police uniforms from the possession of the accused.

The accused have been identified as Rohit (23), Love Kumar (26), Himanshu (23) and Vaishali (26), all residents of Haryana.

According to Urvija Goel, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), West district, police received specific inputs that some illegal practice was going on at Om and Chandar Examinations Centre in Naraina Industrial Area during the examination for the post of forest guard.

"On February 4, police conducted a raid at the centre and nabbed Rohit who was using a mobile phone for solving his online paper. Thereafter, a case was registered at Naraina police station," said the DCP.



"During investigation, WhatsApp data of the seized mobile phone was retrieved and analysed, following which three more people were arrested from Delhi and Haryana," said the DCP.

"During interrogation, it was revealed that Vaishali is the kingpin of the gang. She, along with her boyfriend Anil Sharma, brother Love and other associates, used to run a racket related to online examinations for various Government jobs," said the DCP.

"The gang operated in various States, including Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar

Pradesh and Delhi, particularly in rural areas. Two uniforms of Delhi Police were also recovered from them. Vaishali used to pose as an IPS officer and two of her associates used to pose as sub-inspector and head constable of the Delhi Police to impress people, the DCP said.

"The accused used to charge around ₹10 to 25 lakh, depending upon the nature of the job, from candidates in order to pass the examination. Usually an employee of private examination centre helped to provide a mobile phone to their candidate," said the DCP.

"The dummy candidate used to send a picture of the paper to the kingpin. Then "solvers" solved the paper within a few minutes and circulated the answer-key to their examination centres in different states," said the DCP.

"The bank statement of accused persons revealed heavy cash transactions in 2021. Efforts are being made to nab their associates. Links of candidates who have cleared the examination by unfair means with the help of the gang are being investigated," said the DCP.

Lucknow-bound Shatabdi Express catches fire at Gzb, parcel bogey gutted



Workers douse the fire which broke out in the generator car of the New Delhi-Lucknow Shatabdi Express train at Ghaziabad railway station on Saturday

STAFF REPORTER ■ GHAZIABAD

The Lucknow-bound Shatabdi Express caught fire when it reached Ghaziabad junction early on Saturday. The officials said no one was injured in the incident and the fire was in parcel bogey in which all the articles kept were completely burnt.

However, the train moved toward its destination after the bogey was separated from the train.

According to Sunil Kumar Singh, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), the fire department received information from railway at around 7:00 am about the incident following which five fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

"The fire was in the parcel bogey of the train and it took half an hour to douse the flames. The train was departed for its destination after cleansing and detaching the parcel bogey," said the CFO.

The General Manager Northern Railway Ashutosh Gangal, who was present at the site said an enquiry has been initiated and officials have been asked to submit its report within a short period of time.

"The enquiry committee will consist the forensic scientist's team to determine the electric and other banned items," said the official.

The Shatabdi Express had left New Delhi railway station at around 6:38 am and reached Ghaziabad junction at 6:41 am where smoke coming out of parcel van was noticed.

"The railway officers, initially, tried to control the fire through its workforce but they were not able to control it following which fire control department was informed. To pave the way to other inbound trains the Shatabdi was diverted to other platform from platform number 2," said the official.

Fire breaks out at Singhu protest site, farmer hurt, says Kisan Morcha

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Saturday said a fire broke out in a tent at Delhi's Singhu border where farmers have been protesting the Centre's three agri laws. However, there was no official word about the incident from the police or the fire department.

According to SKM, the incident took place around 10 am near an under-construction flyover where the tent was put up and the tent was completely burnt.

"A man was also injured while trying to extinguish the blaze. The tent was burnt after a cylinder caught fire. There were around 10 to 12 people inside the tent when the blaze broke out. Five mobile phones, twenty mattresses, 20 chairs and dry ration were destroyed. A fire tender from Sonapat's Kundli

area doused the fire," said the SKM.

Hundreds of farmers are camping at Delhi's borders points at Ghazipur, Singhu and Tikri since November demanding that the Centre repeal the three contentious farm laws and make a new one that would ensure legal guarantee on the MSP.

Enacted in September, the three farm laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

The protesting farmers, on the other hand, have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and do away with the "mandi" (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

Three held for molesting girl, looting truck driver

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested three men for allegedly molesting a 25-year-old woman and robbing a truck driver in South Delhi.

The accused have been identified as Yogesh (26), Naveen Lohmod (25) and Baljeet (30), all residents of Aya Nagar.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, information was received that the caller was molested by three to four men in their car who had also tried to rape her and torn her clothes.

"Police reached at the spot and met the victim where she said that three persons were in a car quarreled with her brother. When she came to save him, they sexual assault her. Thereafter, a case under relevant sections has been registered at Fatehpur Beri police station," said the DCP.

Steps taken for women safety: Rly

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Railways in order to prevent the incidents of crime against women in trains and its premises have taken several steps in recent years as part of a focused effort to collectively strive for safety of women passengers and to mitigate atrocities against women in railways.

Various guidelines or action plans issued by Indian Railways to all zonal railways and production units to prevent incidents of crime against women. As estimated twenty

three (23) million passengers travel through the Indian Railways everyday out of which 20 per cent i.e. about 4.6 million are women.

"The action plan should be classified in short term and long term plan. Short term plans should be implemented immediately from the existing resources on priority without any delay. It may include keeping watch on suspects, regular visit to vulnerable spots by duty officers and staff during their rounds. However, long term plan include improvement of basic infrastructure, CCTV, light masts, etc," the

ministry said in a statement. Among the preventive measures that need to be adopted including proper lighting arrangements should be ensured covering all vulnerable places identified in railway stations, circulating area, parking, approach roads, ends of platforms, yards and washing lines, etc, it said.

It has been noticed that generally cases of eve teasing, if remain unattended, lead to increase in incidents of molestation or assault on women. As a measure to prevent such crimes, GRP/RPF officials shall promptly take

necessary action on receiving complaints regarding any type of 'Crime against women'.

The Ministry further said that CCTV surveillance systems should be used effectively. "Time to time audit of the cameras installed and the area covered by them should be done. It should be ensured that all the persons visiting the Railway Platform/ Passenger area are caught on the cameras," it said.

The vulnerable places identified for such crime should mandatorily be covered under the CCTV surveillance, it added.

Mulaqat inside jail allowed twice a month with Covid protocols

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Prisons Department on Saturday resumed the process of internal mulaqat of inmates inside the jail premises.

According to a senior prison official, on Saturday, the physical mulaqat of female inmates of jail no 6 Tihar and Jail no 16 Mandoli was facilitated with

their male relatives who are incarcerated in other jails of Delhi.

"In today's mulaqat, 128 male inmates met their relative female inmates of jail no 6. Similarly, 42 male inmates had mulaqat in jail no 16, Mandoli. These male inmates were brought to the female jails and allowed to meet face to face in

an open space for half an hour," he said.

Earlier during the pre-Covid time, this mulaqat was done every Saturday, except second Saturday. Now, it will be allowed twice a month, the first and third Saturday, he said, adding that proper Covid protocols, including masks and social distancing, were ensured for all concerned.

"Our Government has been steadfast in its efforts towards empowerment of our tribal communities and preservation of their traditions. We are working tirelessly to transform the tribal-rural economic system."

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

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RISE IN COVID-19 CASES

Schools in TN to be shut from tomorrow

Chennai: With Tamil Nadu witnessing a sudden surge in coronavirus cases over the last few days, the State Government on Saturday ordered closure of schools for classes 9, 10 and 11 from March 22 until further orders.

However, they would continue to function for the 12th standard students for they have to take the board examination.

Notifying the closure, the government said the director of public health and preventive medicine has recommended that it would not be advisable to

continue classes for 9, 10 and 11 from the health point of view as there has been a rise in COVID-19 cases.

With regard to 12th standard, the director said the students may be permitted to attend school as their numbers would be lesser and they have to sit for the board examination with strictly adherence to preventive measures such as wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing.

"The government of Tamil Nadu hereby order that schools shall be closed for classes 9th,

10th and 11th with effect from March 22 until further orders," state Chief Secretary Rajeev Ranjan said in the order.

However, online/digital mode of education shall continue for classes 9, 10 and 11, he said.

Further, hostels too would be closed. Announcing relaxations in lockdown rules, the government had permitted the re-opening of schools for 10 and 12 classes from January 19 this year and for 9 and 11 from February 8 after a year, permitting also the re-opening of hostels for those students. **PTI**

Modi, Didi trade 'Tolabaj' jibe

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KHARAGPUR/KOLAGHAT

Mamata Banerjee was running a Pathshala of Nirmamata (school of cruelty), Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said launching a frontal attack on the Bengal Chief Minister.

Addressing a huge election rally at Kharagpur the Prime Minister said the Chief Minister "Pathshala of Nirmamata ran on a syllabus of cut money, syndicate and tolabaj (extortion)

Calling for "Ashol Poriborton" (real change) the Prime Minister said the term, "Ashol Poriborton does not only stand for a political change but it also means transforming Bengal into a Sonar Bangla (golden Bengal) ... this time round Bengal has decided to bring about the Ashol Poriborton."

He said Kharagpur represents mini-India. "It represents India's diversity as people from different languages live here... you have the longest railway station as well as the first IIT of the country... (With all these assets already in store) I assure you of 'ashol poriborton' (real change)."

Attacking the Chief Minister for failing to develop Bengal in the past one decade he asked "how many industries have come up in Bengal in the past 10 years ... today Bengal lags behind many states ... as the Government here excels in Tolabaj (extortion), cut money, syndicate raj ... in Bengal the whole system has been criminalised, the administration has been politicized and corruption has been institutionalized."

Promising to return to the

State what it has lost in the past seven decades of Congress, Left and Trinamool Governments he said "you have seen the Congress, communists and the Trinamool ... now you give a chance to the BJP and witness the development taking place in five years. If they took you back in the past 70 years we will take you ahead in five years time."

Attacking the Chief Minister for unleashing a dynastic politics he said in a clear reference to Banerjee's nephew and Diamond Harbour MP Abhishek Banerjee "when the entire country is getting accustomed to single window system here the Government is pursuing Bhaipo (nephew) window ... that implies everything has to be channelized through the Bhaipo (nephew)."

Attacking the Chief Minister for raising Khela Hobey (a game is in the offing) slogan --- that many critics call a psychological ploy to terrorise the voters --- the Prime Minister said "they talk of khela hobey and I too know that khela hobey because they are expert players having large scale involvement in corruption, loot of public money and the central grants for various schemes including Amphan relief fund ... but I want to assure you that TMC's khela khatam, vikas shuru (TMC's game is over, and development has begun)... please vote for the BJP fearlessly because Ebar bhoi noy... joy hobe (this time there will be no fear but victory)."

Refuting Banerjee's "outsider" slogan raised against the national BJP leaders who have been coming to Bengal for campaigning, Modi said that

"BJP is not the party of outsiders ... rather it is the only party of Bengal as the father of Jan Sangh Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was from this State."

Attacking the Bengal Government for blocking the implementation of national education policy in Bengal he said "enough is enough we will not allow you to play with the future and shatter the dreams of the youth of Bengal" as after BJP comes to power there will be a huge change in all the fields. "We will bring industry, introduce agricultural reforms ... and compensate for the lapses of the previous Governments in the past 70 years."

Banerjee who was addressing a rally barely 60 km away at Haldia however hit back in equal measure wondering why her Government should only be called a government of corrupt and extortionists when the one sitting in the Centre is selling out all the national assets created painstakingly over the years.

"They call us tolabaj and corrupt but what about the PM Cares fund ... where has the money deposited in it gone... BJP is the biggest tolabaaz in India," Banerjee said.

"Those who steal Rs 500 are called thieves but what about those who sell out the entire basket of national assets, they are selling out Rail, Sail, BSNL, Coal India, Air India ... and tomorrow they will sell out the entire country," the Chief Minister said adding "it is a necessity that the BJP is defeated in Bengal so that from this State the Biday Ghanta (swan song) can be sung for them ... after Bengal they will be defeated in Delhi."

Nomination papers of 2 BJP candidates rejected in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

In a setback to the BJP, the returning officers rejected the nomination papers submitted by the party candidates at Thalasseri and Guruvayur while the papers of its ally, the AIADMK, was rejected by the returning officer of Devikulam in the high ranges.

The nomination paper submitted by N Haridas, the Kannur district BJP president, as a party nominee from Thalasseri was rejected because the papers did not have the signature of the national president of the party. But sources in the district collectorate said that Haridas had submitted the copies of documents along with the affidavit instead of the original.

"My nomination has been rejected on technical grounds. This is against the spirit of democracy. We will move court regarding this incident," said Haridas. Thalasseri was all spruced up to welcome union home minister Amit Shah who was scheduled to address an election rally for the BJP candidate.

The returning officer of Guruvayur constituency rejected the nomination submitted by Nivedita Subramanian, president, Kerala Mahila Morcha, on the ground that the Form B did not have the signature of the party's state president. She blamed the returning officer for refusing to accept her nomination and said she would go to the court challenging the RO's

decision. "How do you expect me to check whether all the papers are ion order. It has to be done by the persons entrusted with the responsibility," Subramanian told The Pioneer.

This was the second time Subramanian was fielded by the BJP from Guruvayur. Sources in BJP expressed shock over the callous manner in which the nomination paper was submitted by an experienced candidate, who herself is a lawyer by profession.

Interestingly, the BJP had not fielded any dummy candidates at Thalasseri and Guruvayur which means that the constituencies will see direct engagement with the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-led UDF.

Nomination papers of R Dhanalakshmi, the AIADMK candidate at Devikulam in Idukki district too was rejected by the returning officer as the former had not filled the Form 26 in full.

By evening it was announced by the NDA's Idukki district council that an independent candidate Ganeshan joined the AIADMK, saving the alliance from a major embarrassment. Ganeshan would be the NDA candidate at Devikulam.

By evening the political landscape of Kerala was agog with allegations and counter allegations by the CPI(M) and the Congress accusing each other for making secret deals with the BJP.

Maha records 27,126 infections, 92 deaths

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

There was palpable shock and anxiety in the health circles of Maharashtra on Saturday, as the daily infections shot up to a highest ever tally of 27,126, surpassing 25,000-plus daily cases recorded in the state for the two consecutive days.

After the state recorded 25,883 and 25,681 fresh infections on Thursday and Friday respectively --- more than the previous single-day peak of 24,886 registered on September 11 last year, Maharashtra recorded 27,126 fresh cases, while 92 more people succumbed to the pandemic in various parts of the state. With fresh cases reported on Saturday, the total infections in the state climbed from 24,22,021 to 2,44,147. Similarly,

with 92 new deaths the Covid-19 toll in the state went up from 53,208 to 53,300.

As 13,588 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up to 22,03,553. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from 90.42 per cent to 89.07 per cent.

With seven fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai rose from 11,569 to 11,576 cases, while the infected cases went up by 2982 to trigger a jump in the infections from 3,55,914 to 3,58,896. Meanwhile, the number of "active cases" total cases in the state went up from 1,77,560 to 1,91,006. The fatality rate in the state dropped

from 2.22 per cent to 2.18 per cent. There are a maximum of 38,803 "active" cases in Pune, followed by Nagpur (28,423), Mumbai (20,019), Thane (18,088), Nashik (13,223), Aurangabad (13,007), Jalgaon (5,079), Amaravati (3,530) and Akola (4,585).

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 460,114 to 3,65,705, while the total number of deaths in Pune stood static from 8167 to 8170.

Thane district remained in the third spot --after Pune and Mumbai -- after the total number of infections rose from 301,386 to 3,03,465 while the total deaths climbed from 5890 to 5891.

EXPLOSIVE LADEN SUV RECOVERY & BUSINESSMAN MURDER CASE

NIA recreates crime scene near Antilia with Vaze

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) sleuths, accompanied by arrested police officer Sachin Vaze, sought to re-create the crime scene involving the planting of a SUV with 20 gelatin sticks and a threat note near Industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence "Antilia" in the small hours of Saturday.

The NIA sleuths took Vaze, who is under their custody till March 25, to the spot where the gelatin sticks laden Scorpio had been recovered on February 25, and tried to re-create the crime scene, which is in the vicinity of Industrialist Mukesh Ambani's skyscraper mansion "Antilia" on Carmichael Road in south Mumbai.

Having cordoned off the otherwise busy road, the NIA asked Vaze 'walk down the road' near Antilia from the spot where the SUV was recovered, in its effort to

check his gait and timings and sought to compare with the findings investigations conducted and evidence collected so far in the case. Earlier, the NIA had taken to various other locations in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane, where now under arrest Vaze lives, to re-create the entire set of circumstances culminating in the SUV imbroglio on Feb. 25.

On its part, the NIA so far seized five high-end cars --a Scorpio, Innova, Prado and two Mercedes. The investigators suspect that four seized vehicles had been used to carry out reconnaissance of the site near Ambani's residence where a Scorpio laden with 20 gelatin sticks was recovered on February 25. They also suspect that a few of them were used by Thane businessman Mansukh Hiran, whose body was recovered from the marshy Reti-Bunder creek in Mumbai in the neighbouring Thane district on March 5.

Bhupesh Baghel to disburse fourth installment of Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana

Raipur: In the virtual presence of Lok Sabha MP Rahul Gandhi, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will transfer one thousand 104 crore 27 lakh rupees in the accounts of 18 lakh 43 thousand farmers of the State, as the fourth installment of Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana and a total of Rs. 7 crore 55 lakhs as the 15th and 16th installments of the Godhan Nyay Yojana, in the accounts of cattle rearers, on March 21. All the members of the cabinet will be present in this program scheduled to be held in the Chief Minister's residence office at 11 am.

Under the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana, farmers have been paid 4500 crore rupees in three installments. Similarly, 23 crore 62 lakh rupees have been paid in three installments to 4777 farmers of certified seed producers and Rs 74 crore 24 lakh have been paid to sugarcane grower 34 thousand 292 farmers as additional incentives and inputs. So far, Rs 4597 crore 86 lakh has been paid to the farmers under the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana. Chief Minister Mr. Baghel will transfer Rs. 3 crore 75 lakh as the 15th installment of the Godhan Nyay Yojana and Rs. 3 crore 80 lakh as the 16th installment in the accounts of the cattle rearers, in this program to be held on March 21.

Thakur warns Kerala Govt for trying to derail ED probe

KOCHI: The Pinarayi Vijayan-led Kerala Government is on the run from the hands of law, according to Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of State for Finance and Corporate affairs. He said the Kerala Government's action of filing a criminal case against the officials of the Enforcement Directorate for allegedly threatening and recording a false statement of Swapna Suresh, the gold smuggling accused, is a hitherto unheard charge from a State Government against the Central Government's agency.

The Crime Branch of the Kerala Government had filed a FIR against the ED officials probing the gold smuggling case that the latter forced and coerced Swapna Suresh that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was involved in the crime. The FIR was based on a statement by women police cops who were guarding Swapna while she was custody of the ED in the latter's office at Kochi.

But the FIR is silent about the ED officials who were involved in the case.

"This kind of allegation is unheard of in the history of India. The FIR against the ED is that they forced to extract a confession from the accused and make her name Pinarayi Vijayan as an accomplice in the case," Thakur told The Pioneer in the sidelines of an electio campaign in Perumbavoor on Saturday. **PNS**

Strategic ties with India...

From Page 1

Underlining the growing ties, Rajnath said, "India is committed to further consolidate our robust defence partnership with the US. I look forward to working with you closely to make the India-US relationship one of the defining partnerships of 21st century."

In his media statement Austin, who arrived here on a three-day visit on Friday, said India is an increasingly important partner amid rapidly shifting international dynamics and Washington was committed to a "forward-looking" defence partnership with New Delhi as a central pillar of its approach to the region.

"As the world faces a global pandemic and growing challenges to an open and stable international system, the US-India relationship is a stronghold of a free and open Indo-Pacific region," he said.

The US Defence Secretary said as the Indo-Pacific region faces challenges to a free and open regional order, cooperation among like-minded countries is imperative to securing the shared vision for the future.

He said the two Ministers discussed opportunities to elevate the US-India defence partnership through regional security cooperation, military-to-military interactions and defence trade. In addition, the two sides are continuing to advance new areas of collaboration, including information-sharing, logistics cooperation, artificial intelligence, and cooperation in new domains such as space cyber, the visiting Minister said.

Describing his talks with Rajnath were "productive", he said a number of security issues which are important to the two countries were discussed.

Discussed human rights...

From Page 1

Austin said President Joe Biden has said human rights and rule of law are important to the US.

Ahead of his visit, Austin was asked to raise concerns about democracy in the country with Indian officials by the chief of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The visiting dignitary also said he did not discuss with India possible US sanctions over India's acquisition of S-400 missile system from Russia. Austin said India has not acquired the missile system so far, so the issue of sanctions was not discussed.

Opp parties in Parliament panel OK farm law

From Page 1

Further, the panel asked the Government to keep a close watch on prices of essential commodities and take remedial steps because commodities such as potato, onions and pulses are part of a common man's daily diet and that lakhs of people who do not get the benefits of Public Distribution System (PDS) and may suffer adversely in the aftermath of the implementation of the new Act.

Besides, the committee also asked the Government to consider the inclusion of more consumables in the list of essential commodities, particularly those which directly affect the health of all consumers and are use-

ful for village and town dwellers, and subsidise these products.

Thousands of farmers, especially from Punjab, Haryana and parts of Uttar Pradesh, are camping at Delhi borders seeking repeal of the three farm laws for last 114 days.

So far, 11 rounds of talks between the Government and protesting farm unions have failed to yield any result although the Government has offered to suspend implementation of these laws for 18 months.

Meanwhile, a Supreme Court-appointed panel is examining the matter and expected to submit a report in this regard anytime soon.

Fear sets in as...

From Page 1

These were Assam, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Sikkim, Ladakh, Manipur, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Arunachal Pradesh.

The Ministry further said India has scaled a significant peak in its battle against Covid-19 pandemic with the total vaccination coverage surpassing four crore.

"About 4,20,63,392 vaccine doses have been administered through 6,86,469 sessions, as per the provisional report till 7 am today. These include 77,06,839 healthcare workers (HCWs) (first dose), 48,04,285 HCWs (second dose), 79,57,606 frontline workers (FLWs) (first dose) and 24,17,077 FLWs (second dose), 32,23,612 beneficiaries aged more than 45 years with specific co-morbidities (first dose) and 1,59,53,973 beneficiaries aged more than 60 years," it said.

Maha HM...

From Page 1

In the operative part of the letter, Singh wrote, "... Sachin Vaze who was heading the Crime Intelligence Unit of the Crime Branch of the Mumbai Police was called by Anil Deshmukh to his official residence Dyaneshwar several times in last few months and repeatedly instructed to assist in collection of funds for the Home Minister," Singh wrote in his letter.

"In and around mid-February and thereafter, the Home Minister had called Vaze to his official residence. At that time, one or two staff members of the Home Minister including his Personal Secretary, Palande, were also present," Singh stated.

"The Home Minister expressed to Vaze that he had a target to accumulate Rs 100 crore a month. For achieving the aforesaid target, the Home Minister told Vaze that there are about 1,750 bars, restaurants and other establishments in Mumbai and if a sum of Rs 2-3 lakhs each was collected from each of three them, a monthly collection of Rs 40-50 crore was achievable. The Home Minister said the rest of the collection could be made from other sources," the former CP wrote.

"Vaze came to my office the same day and informed me of the above. I was shocked with the above discussion and was mulling over how to deal with the situation," Singh said.

In his letter, Mumbai's former CP goes onto allege that Deshmukh's personal secretary Palande informed Assistant Commissioner of Police Sanjay Patil, ACP, Social Service Branch - who had been called to the Home Minister's residence a few days later - that Deshmukh "was targeting a collection of Rs. 40-50 crore which was possible through an approximate 1,750 bars, restaurants and establishments operat-

ing in Mumbai".

"The aforesaid meeting at the official residence of the Home Minister with Patil and Bhujbal occurred on March 4, 2021 as informed to me by Patil. In order to remind myself about the exact conversation that I had with ACP Patil, I messaged ACP Patil on March 16, 2021," Singh wrote, as he went on to quote the WhatsApp exchanges between him and ACP Patil.

Singh said both Vaze and Patil had approached after the instructions from the Home Minister and told him "about their predicaments".

In the incriminating letter, Mumbai's former CP also accused the State Home Minister of interfering in the official duties of police officers.

"The Home Minister has as a regular practice been repeatedly calling my officers and giving them instructions in respect of the course to be followed by them in performance of their official duties. The Home Minister has been calling my officers at his official residence bypassing me and other superior officers of the police department to whom those respective police officers report to."

"The Home Minister has been instructing them to carry out official assignments and collection schemes including financial transactions as per his instructions based on his expectations and targets to collect money. These corrupt malpractices have been brought to my notice by my officers," the former CP alleged.

Referring to instances of interference indulged in by the Home Minister in the functioning of the Mumbai police force, Singh wrote, "These acts of political of interference are illegal & unconstitutional and courts in our country including the Supreme Court of India have in the past come down heavily on such acts of interference in police investigations. In the event of my expressing reservations against the interference from

the Home Minister and resistance from me in that regard, the Home Minister has found my reservations and resistance undesirable."

Alluding to the suicide by seven-time Dadra Nagar Haveli MP Mohan S Delkar in a hotel along Marine Drive on February 22, the former CP said, "My professional view after seeking appropriate legal advice was that while the suicide had occurred in Mumbai, all the alleged acts of abetment had taken place in Dadra & Nagar Haveli. Thus, the abetment of suicide, if any, was required to be investigated by the police at Dadra & Nagar Haveli who would have jurisdiction in that regard."

Singh said while he held to his professional view as advised by legal experts, the Home Minister "kept insisting otherwise despite having been informed by me about the opinion of legal experts on this issue."

Singh said, "Despite being fully aware of the opinion of the legal experts, the general opinion and the reasons behind it", the State Home Minister announced the setting up of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) and registration of an FIR into the alleged case of abetment of suicide by Delkar, on the floor of the Maharashtra Assembly on March 9.

Contesting the claim by the Minister that he had been transferred because of serious lapses in the investigations into the recovery of explosive laden SUV near Mukesh Ambani's residence on February 25, the former CP wrote, "In these circumstances, the assertions of the Home Minister to the effect that my transfer is not for administrative or routine reasons, I have conducted serious lapses and the serious lapses in the investigation committed by me are unpardonable are all statements contrary to the record and seem to be for extraneous and vindictive reasons."

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Civil Maintenance Division BHEP Civil Chanderkote
 Email- xendambhep@gmail.com

E- NIT No: 04 of 2020-21 Date: 18-03-2021

1. For and on behalf of the Managing Director JKPCDC; e-tenders from registered PWD/PCD/CPWD/MES contractors are invited for below mentioned works:
SNo.1. , Name of the Work :- Repair works at stage I, BHEP Chanderkote, Estimated Cost (In Lakhs) :- 498.00, Cost of Tender Document (in Lakhs) (Non-Refundable) :- 0.05, Bid Security/EMD (In Lakhs) (Refundable) :- Nil, Time Allowed for Completion :- 130 days, Class of Contractor :- A & Above

2. Scope of the work/mentioned above is defined in the Tender Document/ BoQ of the work. Further, minimum requisite eligibility and the terms & conditions applicable for each work are also laid down in the Tender Document.

3. The Tender Document for the works mentioned above can be downloaded from e-tendering portal of J&K Government www.jktenders.gov.in and the official website of JKPCDC www.jkpcdc.nic.in.

4. The quantities in the BOQ are tentative and actual quantities shall be firm up during approval of drawings by JKPCDC and same shall be used for regulation.

5. The tendering process shall proceed as per the following Schedule of Events:
SNo.1, Event :- Tender publish date on www.jktenders.gov.in and www.jkpcdc.nic.in., Date & Time :- 19-03-2021 at 10:00 Hrs
SNo.2, Event :- Bid document download start date, Date & Time :- 19-03-2021 at 10:00 Hrs
SNo.3, Event :- Last date of receipt of queries through e-mail only, Date & Time :- 05-04-2021 upto 16:00 Hrs
SNo.4, Event :- Replies to Bidders Queries through return e-mail only, Date & Time :- 15-04-2021 upto 17:00 Hrs
SNo.5, Event :- Bid uploading start date, Date & Time :- 19-03-2021 at 10:00 Hrs
SNo.6, Event :- Bid uploading end date, Date & Time :- 20-04-2021 upto 16:00 Hrs
SNo.7, Event :- Opening of the Technical Bids, Date & Time :- 22-04-2021 at 15:00 Hrs
SNo.8, Event :- Opening of the Financial Bids, Date & Time :- After the evaluation of technical bids
 6. Any corrigendum/modification to Tender Document shall be available on JKPCDC official website www.jkpcdc.nic.in. The Applicants are advised to visit these sites before deadline for submission of bids.
 7. Price bids/ Financial Bids of only technically qualified bidders shall be opened.
 8. JKPCDC reserves the right to reject all or any of the e-NIT or any subsequent bids without assigning any reason thereof and shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other Bid or to give any reason for such decision.
 No. DIP/J-5064-P/20 Dated :- 20-03-2021 **Sdl- ExecutiveEngineer**

Dattatreya...

From Page 1

"Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha of RSS elected Shri Dattatreya Hosabale as its 'Sarkaryavah'. He was Sah Sarkaryavah of RSS since 2009", according to the RSS.

Hosabale will be taking charge ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections and RSS centenary celebrations in 2025- both being major milestones for the BJP and the RSS.

Hosabale studied English literature at a university in Bengaluru. He enjoyed proximity with almost all writers and journalists of Karnataka, notable among them being YN Krishnamurthy and Gopal Krishna Adiga. He played an active role in setting up the Youth Development Centre in Guwahati, Assam and the World Organization of Student and Youth.

He was the founding editor of Aseema, a Kannada monthly. He became Sah-Baudhik Pramukh (second in command of the intellectual wing of RSS) in 2004. He is multi-lingual and fluent in Kannada, Hindi, English, Tamil and Sanskrit.

activists. He joined the RSS in 1968 and then the student organisation ABVP in 1972. He became a full-time worker of the ABVP in 1978. He was the general secretary of ABVP for 15 years with his headquarters being Mumbai.

The new RSS General Secretary comes from Sorab in the Shimoga district of Karnataka. A staunch supporter of the government's key policies like NRC and NEP, he is also vocal about his view on conversions to other religions.

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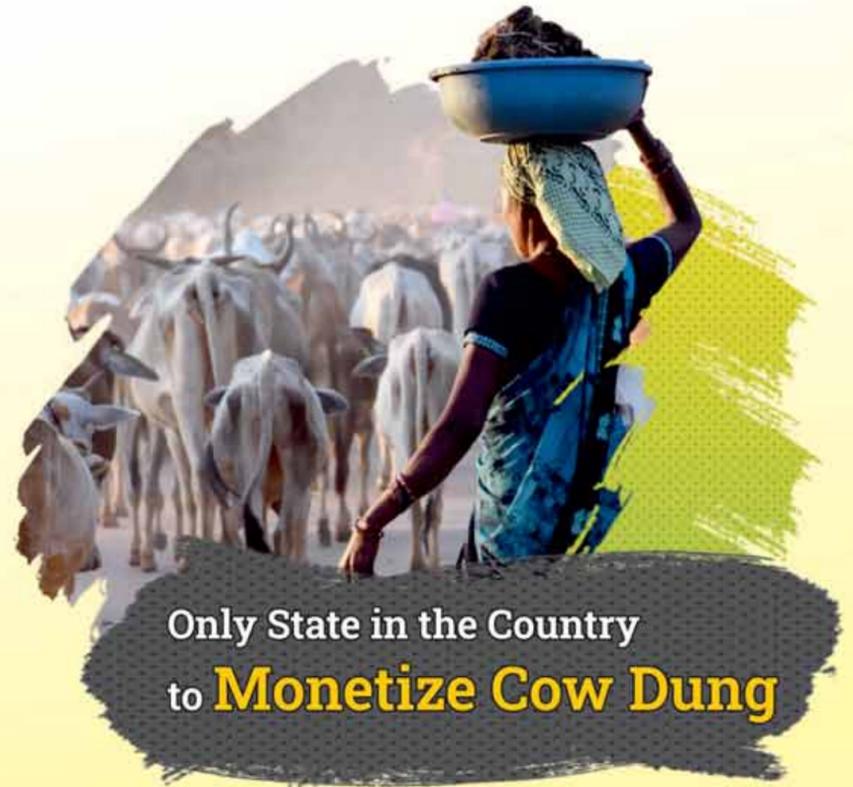
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(Hon'ble Member of Parliament)

Shri Bhupesh Baghel
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh

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Antilia bomb scare NIA to probe Hiran death

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has handed over the probe into the death of Thane-based businessman Mansukh Hiran to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Hiran's body was found in a creek days after a vehicle laden with explosives was parked near the Mumbai residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani.

The NIA is already probing the case related to the recovery of a Mahindra Scorpio SUV (sports utility vehicle), parked near Ambani's residence 'Antilia', with gelatin sticks and has arrested an Assistant Police Inspector, Sachin Waze.

The SUV was in possession of Hiran before his death. The Union Home Ministry has handed over the probe into the Mansukh Hiran case to the NIA, an official said.

Earlier, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) was probing the case related to the death of Hiran.

Hiran was found dead in Thane, a creek near Mumbai, on March 5. His wife has accused Waze of involvement in her husband's suspicious death. On March 8, the Union Home Ministry had entrusted the investigation of case FIR No. 35/2020 registered at Police Station Gamdevi, Mumbai on



February 25. This case relates to recovery of explosives from a Mahindra Scorpio parked at Carmichael Road, Mumbai. Subsequently, the NIA had re-registered the case.

Around midnight on March 13, the NIA had arrested Mumbai police API Sachin Waze in the case relating to recovery of explosives laden SUV near Ambani's residence in Mumbai.

Waze has been booked under Indian Penal Code

Sections relating to negligent conduct relating to explosives, punishment for forgery, making or possessing counterfeit seal, criminal intimidation and criminal conspiracy besides Explosive Substances Act 1908. "Sachin Waze, API Mumbai Police Crime Branch, was arrested for his role and involvement in placing explosive-laden vehicle near Carmichael Road on 25th February 2021," the NIA had said.

Covid-hit pregnant women need spl care: Journal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Doctors managing Covid-19 afflicted pregnant women should be more careful and adopt effective strategies to prevent or reduce risks to patients and fetuses, researchers have cautioned stating that such pregnancy is associated with adverse outcomes like preeclampsia, stillbirth, preterm birth and others.

"Our findings suggest that pregnant people with Covid-19 have an increased risk of high blood pressure, stillbirth and preterm birth. Their newborns are more likely to need intensive care. Pregnant people with severe COVID-19 symptoms have a particularly high risk of these complications," said Dr. Nathalie Auger, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, School of Public Health, University of Montreal, Montréal, Quebec, with coauthors.

Their study "The impact of Covid-19 on pregnancy outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis" is published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal).

The researchers reached this conclusion after reviewing 42 studies involving 438 548 pregnant women from around the world to determine the association between SARS-



CoV-2 infection and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

They found double the risk of preterm birth and a 50 per cent increased risk of cesarean delivery in pregnant women with symptomatic Covid-19 than in those with asymptomatic patients. Those with severe virus had a 4-fold higher risk of high blood pressure and preterm birth.

The reason for the increased risk of adverse outcomes is unclear, but could be

because SARS-CoV-2 may lead to vasoconstriction and stimulate an inflammatory response affecting blood vessels.

The findings of this systematic review differ from prior findings from case reports and case series. "Our meta-analysis of recent good-quality cohort studies with comparative data does not align with these previous reviews, and provides clear evidence that symptomatic or

severe Covid-19 is associated with a considerable risk of preeclampsia, preterm birth and low birth weight," wrote the authors.

This is for the first time that the researchers have reached this conclusion. Prior to this study, though there were apprehensive that patients who may get infected with symptoms like high fever may increase the risk of birth defects, there was no evidence.

SC OK's disbursal of ₹50,000 to widow of man who died due to negligence of AAI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has given its nod for disbursal of ₹50,000 deposited in its "suits fund" by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to the widow of a man who had died of cardiac arrest owing to negligence in shifting him to the nearest hospital in Kolkata in 2012.

The AAI, under provisions of the Consumer Protection Act has deposited ₹50,000 with the top court while filing an appeal against the October 7, 2015 order of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) which had held its negligence or deficiency in shifting the patient to the nearby hospital and directed payment of ₹10 lakh as compensation to the widow.

Under the Consumer Protection Act, if an appeal is preferred against an order of the NCDRC by a person who is required to pay any compensation, it would be entertained by the top court only if that person has deposited fifty per cent of that amount or Rs 50,000, whichever is less.

The amount is deposited in the "suits fund" of the top court and under the Supreme Court Rules, 2013, if the appeal is allowed by the court, then the amount deposited by the appellant would be refunded without interest but if it is dismissed, the amount will be allowed to be withdrawn by the other party or disbursed according to the directions of the court.

A bench of Justice Ajay Rastogi on Friday allowed disbursal of ₹50,000 to the widow after she moved an application on the ground that the appeal filed by the AAI had been dismissed by the court on November 29, 2019.

Advocate Dushyant Parashar, appearing for the widow, contended that since the top court had upheld the order of the NCDRC that the AAI was negligent in shifting the man who had suffered cardiac arrest to the nearest hospital in Kolkata and dismissed the appeal, the amount deposited in suits fund shall be disbursed to her.

Rly mulls severe penalty for smoking in trains, arrest if it leads to fire incident

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The railways is set to get cracking against those found smoking in trains and is mulling severe penalties, even arrest, for damaging public property after an initial probe in the recent fire in a coach of the Shatabdi Express, a senior official said on Saturday.

Officials in the know said that the initial report has found that cigarette or bidi butts were thrown into the dustbin of one of the toilets which were filled with soiled tissue paper. This led to a fire in the S5 coach of the New Delhi-Dehradun Shatabdi Special. The incident happened on March 13 near Raiwala in Uttarakhand.

Section 167 of the Railway Act specifies that anyone found smoking in a compartment despite prohibition or objection from a co-passenger is liable for a fine of up to Rs 100.

Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal in a meeting with Railway Board members and general managers of zones asked them to take proactive steps towards sensitising passengers against smoking in trains and also urged that erring passengers need to be deterred from causing risks to others by smoking in trains.

"The railways will crack-down on smoking in trains. The fire most likely started in one of the toilets and initial investigations revealed that the fire was in all probability caused by simmering cigarettes/ beedi thrown in the dustbin. The continuous air flow in a fast moving train would have fanned it. "We are contemplating severe penalties. In some cases, even arrests can be made for causing damage to public railway property and risking the lives of others to deter irresponsible and errant persons," a senior officer said.

The official refused to come on record as the investigation into the incident is still underway.

Restrain political picks in municipalities from work, EC orders Bengal CS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking note of political appointments in municipal bodies, the Election Commission has asked the West Bengal Chief Secretary to temporarily restrain such political appointees, who are holding the office of Administrators/ Head of Board of Administrators in the Municipal Corporations and appoint Government officials to discharge the functions during the period of model code of conduct (MCC).

In its order on Saturday, the EC said that a committee headed by Chief Secretary, and Principal Secretary Urban Development, and Principal Secretary Personnel as members shall appoint the government officials, keeping in

view ECI's instructions to discharge the functions of the Administrators/ Head of Board of Administrator, as the case may be, during the period of MCC.

The BJP has urged the EC to remove 'political appointees' from various boards of administrators in civic bodies appointed by the West Bengal Government, saying it appointed the same representatives who had completed their term of five years in blatant violation of constitutional and legal provisions. "Since the tenure of former elected representatives has expired, they cannot be conferred powers to manage affairs of the municipality under any pretense, the BJP delegation told the EC and cited a Supreme Court ruling to back its demand.

NRIs may vote online from 2024 LS poll

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) has expressed hope the concept of remote voting will see "the light of day" by the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and said that a pilot project could begin in the next two-three months. According to the EC, after the Assembly polls in five States, the Election Commission will hold consultations with all stakeholders to allow non-resident Indians (NRIs) to vote remotely through electronically-transmitted postal ballot system (ETPBS) from their country of residence.

Addressing at the Sansad Ratna awards function on Saturday, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said the EC had early this year started a research project for enabling remote voting, in consultation with IIT Madras and eminent technologists from IITs and other leading institutions. He also expressed hope



the concept of remote voting will see "the light of day" by the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and said that a pilot project could begin in the next two-three months. Over the last few months, a dedicated team has been working hard for giving shape to this project, he said, adding the concept would hopefully "see the light of day" by 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The first pilot project could be rolled out in the next "two to

three months", the CEC said.

It needs to be underscored that the project is neither aimed at internet-based voting nor does it imply voting from home, he observed. For the Commission, transparency and confidentiality of voting has always been a guiding consideration in ensuring free, fair and credible elections, he said, adding the Commission will soon be giving shape to the final model of such voting, after

due deliberation on various options. This will entail some process changes as well, he said, adding there will be wider consultations with political parties and other stakeholders.

Explaining the "blockchain" technology involved in the project, former Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Sandeep Saxena had earlier said the concept is a "two-way electronic voting system in a controlled environment on white-listed IP devices on dedicated Internet lines enabled with biometric devices and a web camera".

Saxena, however, had made it clear that voters will have to reach a designated venue during a pre-decided period of time to be able to use this facility. It does not mean voting from home, Saxena had said.

On the issue of the Commission's proposal to allow eligible overseas Indian voters use one-way electronically transferred postal ballots to cast vote, Arora said after the elec-

tions to five assemblies are over, the poll panel would hold a seminar with all stakeholders as suggested by the government. He expressed hope that the concept would materialise in the next six months or a year. At present, non-resident Indians can vote in the constituency in which their place of residence, as mentioned in the passport, is located. Some time ago, the Commission began to look for options to enable NRIs to vote from overseas after it received several requests for expanding their voting options.

At the event, Bhartruhari Mahtab (BJD), Supriya Sule (NCP) and Shrirang Appa Barne (Shiv Sena) were given the 'Sansad Maha Ratna Award' for their sustained qualitative overall performance in the 16th Lok Sabha. Twelve Parliamentarians including the Chairman of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture were given the Sansad Ratna Awards.

Mujib Jackets all set to catch eyeballs during Modi's visit to Bangladesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Khadi's "Mujib Jackets", is all set to catch eyeballs during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh on March 26th and 27th as the garment will be the key attire of dignitaries. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) have supplied 100 such custom-designed 'Mujib jackets' to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

"As Bangladesh celebrates 'Mujib Borsho', the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Cultural Centre of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, had placed an order for 100 Mujib Jackets, ahead of the Prime Minister's visit," KVIC Chairman, Vinai Kumar Saxena said.

The "Mujib jacket" is an immensely popular outfit in Bangladesh. For the older generation, it is symbolic of the ideology of their great leader, while it has increasingly become a fashion statement for the youth of Bangladesh. Modi has always been particular about Khadi and its heritage and cultural value to strengthen diplomatic ties with foreign countries.

In 2016, the BRICS leaders, which also includes Modi, had attended the summit in Khadi jackets in Goa. The Prime Minister always accorded top priority to Khadi during his diplomatic visits. This is to carry forward the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi who always carried Khadi products specially a Khadi handkerchief with him

and presented it to dignitaries during his foreign visits," Saxena said.

The specially designed "Mujeb Jackets" have been made of high-quality hand-crafted Khadi fabric. The black Mujeb Jackets have been designed with six buttons, two pockets on the lower half and a front pocket on the left, as worn by Rahman.

In keeping with the eco-friendly nature of the fabric, the zip-covers for these jackets too have been made of black cotton fabric with "Khadi India" logo embroidered over it. These jackets will be carried in specially designed white coloured waste plastic-mixed carry bags made at KVIC's Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute (KNHPI) in Jaipur.

"Mujeb Jacket" is historically significant in Bangladesh and it is a matter of great pride that these jackets made of Khadi fabric be adorned during the Bangladesh visit of Prime Minister Modi who is the biggest brand ambassador of Khadi, Saxena said.

"Mujeb jackets made of Khadi will add significantly to the historical and cultural values of the celebrations," he said, adding, this will also promote Khadi on the global and diplomatic platform in a big way.

Since the jackets were meant for diplomatic purposes, KVIC accorded top priority to it and delivered the consignment before time. Earlier KVIC sent its high-quality cotton and silk masks to various countries.

Sensor developed for identification of new cancer therapeutic drugs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers from inStem, Bangalore in collaboration with Curie Institute, Orsay, France, have developed the first tubulin nanobody - or sensor to study the dynamics of microtubule modifications in living cells and use this for identification of new cancer therapeutic drugs.

Microtubules are part of the cytoskeleton, a structural network within the cell's cytoplasm, and they alter in response to several chemicals. This work published recently in the Journal of Cell Biology has been funded by Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research (IFCPAR/CEFIPRA), a bilateral organization supported by Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Government of France

Understanding tubulin modifications has remained a challenge till date because of unavailability of tools that can mark them in living cells.

The researchers from Bangalore and Orsay devised a method to design synthetic proteins, known as nanobodies, which can bind specifically to modified microtubules.

These nanobodies are similar to antibodies made in our body as a defense mechanism against pathogens. However, unlike antibodies, the nanobodies are smaller in size and easily amenable for protein engineering, said Minhaj Sirajuddin (inStem) Bangalore, India

The nanobody was then coupled with a fluorescent molecule to serve as a detection tool, called sensor. They developed and validated a live cell sensor against a unique

microtubule modification called tyrosinated form of microtubules that is already known to be important for cell division and intracellular organization, added researcher Carsten Janke (Institut Curie) Orsay, France

The tyrosination sensor is the first tubulin nanobody - or sensor - that can be used to study the dynamics of microtubule modifications in living cells. CEFIPRA researchers have shown the application of this sensor in studying the effect of small-molecule compounds that target microtubules.

These chemicals are frequently used as anti-cancer drugs. Thus, the tyrosination sensor will facilitate studying microtubule functions for many researchers and will aid identifying new drugs of therapeutic value, as per the study.

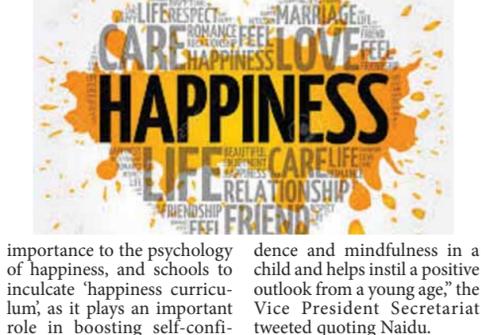
Policymakers should accord importance to psychology of happiness: Naidu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On International Day of Happiness, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday asked people to shun negative emotions and said policymakers should accord importance to the psychology of happiness.

March 20 is celebrated as International Day of Happiness. It is a UN designated day dedicated to the importance of happiness in people's life.

"On this day, I call upon the policymakers to accord



importance to the psychology of happiness, and schools to inculcate 'happiness curriculum', as it plays an important role in boosting self-confidence and mindfulness in a child and helps instil a positive outlook from a young age," the Vice President Secretariat tweeted quoting Naidu.

Nucleic Acid Amplification Test lab inaugurated

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan on Saturday inaugurated a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAT) lab at the headquarters of Indian Red Cross Society here.

The lab has been set up by the Thalassemia Patients Advocacy Group (TPAG), the patient wing of Thalassemics India as part of their Safe Blood Campaign to prevent transmission of infectious diseases such as hepatitis B, C or HIV through blood transfusions.

The event also involved the launch of Thalassemics India three blood collection vehicles - 2 vans funded by DXC and 1 tempo travelers funded by LIC. This was Thalassemics' India's contribution for voluntary blood donation.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that while, the government is taking relevant steps towards prevention and better management of Thalassemia in the country, these steps to initiate blood collection vans and advanced blood-screening technology are just in the right direction to support safe-blood availability for the patients.

He also appealed for blood donation to save lives of patients during any medical emergencies or chronic health conditions like Thalassemia and Blood Cancer.

Anubha Taneja Mukherjee, Member Secretary, Thalassemia Patients Advocacy Group, said, NAT is a world class blood screening methodology believed to be extremely effective in screening transfusion transmitted infections (TTIs) due to its reduced window period. "The technology is even more relevant for patients



The event also involved the launch of Thalassemics India three blood collection vehicles - 2 vans funded by DXC and 1 tempo travelers funded by LIC

of thalassemia, who depend on frequent transfusion and are more susceptible to infections as compared to others."

Later Mukherjee shared that they have been stressing on inclusion of patients in policy making as decision makers may not be experts in every subject or issue. "It would therefore be pertinent to include a patient representative who understands the trials and tribulations involving the relevant condition. For instance, the decision makers could invite thalassemia patients to be a part of the policy making while devising a new policy on thalassemia as patients are the ones who undergo the hardship of a particular disease."

Striking Myanmar rail workers move out

Internet access severely restricted, pvt newspapers barred from publishing

AP ■ MAMDALAY (MYANMAR)

Residents of Myanmar's second-biggest city helped striking railway workers move out of their state-supplied housing on Saturday after the authorities said they would have to leave if they kept supporting the protest movement against last month's military coup.

Mandalay residents carried the workers' furniture and other household items to trucks, van and pickup trucks. The state railway workers last month went on strike as key and early supporters of the civil disobedience movement against the Feb. 1 coup that toppled the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

The military regime has sought to force them back to work through intimidation, which included a nighttime, gun-firing patrol last month through their housing area in Mandalay and a raid in the railway workers' housing area in Yangon.

Protests against the coup continued Saturday in cities and towns across the country, including in Mandalay and Yangon.

The coup reversed years of slow progress toward democracy in Myanmar after five decades of military rule. In the



State railway employee load belongings after being evicted from their homes on Saturday in Mandalay, Myanmar AP

face of persistent strikes and protests against the takeover, the junta has responded with an increasingly violent crackdown and efforts to severely limit the information reaching the outside world.

Internet access has been severely restricted, private newspapers have been barred from publishing, and protesters, journalists and politicians have been arrested in large numbers.

The independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners has verified 235 deaths and has said the actual total — including ones where verification has been difficult — is likely much higher. It said it has confirmed that 2,330 people have been arrested or charged since the coup, with 1,980 still detained or remaining charged.

In addition to using lethal force to try to break up demon-

strations, the security forces have been carrying out a campaign of harassment, stealing from homes they raid, said the group, which also charged that security forces have used people they arrested as human shields as they sought to break up demonstrations.

Numerous reports on social media, including videos, have shown security forces vandalizing cars parked on the street.

United Nations official: Myanmar people want UN sanctions, peacekeepers

United Nations: The people of Myanmar have huge expectations from the United Nations and the international community following the February 1 coup, with many calling for sanctions and some urging the UN to send peacekeepers to stop the killings of peaceful protesters seeking a return to democracy, the top UN official in the country said Friday.

Acting resident and humanitarian coordinator Andrew Kirkwood said in a video briefing to UN reporters from Myanmar's largest city Yangon that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and other UN officials have been very consistent about what's really needed: "collective member state actions in the Security Council."

Guterres echoed that message again on Friday, saying "a firm, unified international response is urgently needed" to stop the violence by security forces and return Myanmar to the path of democracy, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

"Many people will have seen people carrying placards saying, 'how many more bodies?'" Kirkwood said. "People are really looking for concerted international action in terms of sanctions. Frankly, some people here want to see peacekeepers."

"There's a huge expectation on the United Nations, with the entire international community," he said. "We are doing everything we can in the current situation, and there is still frustration among the people that the international community hasn't done more to date."

The coup reversed years of slow progress toward democracy in Myanmar, which for five decades had languished under strict military rule that led to international isolation and sanctions. As the generals loosened their grip, culminating in Aung San Suu Kyi's rise to power after 2015 elections, the international community responded by lifting most sanctions and pouring investment into the country. AP

EU threatens AstraZeneca with export ban

AP ■ BERLIN

The European Union's executive arm is increasing its pressure on pharmaceutical companies to speed up their vaccine delivery to the continent as virus numbers are rising again in many member countries. The European Commission said Saturday that AstraZeneca in particular could face export bans to countries outside the EU if it didn't quickly deliver the promised amount of vaccines to the 27-nation bloc.

"We have the possibility to ban planned exports," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Saturday.

"This is a message to AstraZeneca: You fulfill your part of the deal toward Europe before you start to deliver to other countries," von der Leyen said in an interview with German media group Funke.

Von der Leyen said the contract between the EU and AstraZeneca clearly regulates how much vaccines the EU gets from AstraZeneca's plants inside the EU and in Britain. However, von der Leyen



added, "we didn't get anything from the Brits while we are delivering vaccines to them."

She said the commission had sent a "formal reminder" to AstraZeneca regarding this issue. AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine is one of three vaccines that's approved in the EU.

However, its usage has been overshadowed by several problems, including a slow start, recurring delivery problems and a temporary ban for several days earlier this week in many of the bloc's member countries after reports of blood clots in some recipients of the vaccine.

Most countries in the EU resumed giving shots of AstraZeneca again Friday as infection numbers were spiking again across the continent and AstraZeneca's vaccine, too, is seen as critical to ending the coronavirus pandemic.

Joe Biden is on his heels amid migrant surge at Mexico border

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Somehow, they didn't see it coming. Within weeks of Inauguration Day on January 20, the Biden administration had reversed many of the most maligned Trump-era immigration policies, including deporting children seeking asylum who arrived alone at the US-Mexico border and forcing migrants to wait in Mexico as they made their case to stay in the US.

While the administration was working on immigration legislation to address long-term problems, it didn't have an on-the-ground plan to manage a surge of migrants. Career immigration officials had warned there could be a surge after the presidential election and the news that the Trump policies, widely viewed as cruel, were being reversed.

Now officials are scrambling to build up capacity to care for some 14,000 migrants now in federal custody — and more likely on the way — and the administration finds itself on its heels in the face of criticism that it should have been better prepared to deal with a predictable predicament.



Migrants are seen in custody at a US Customs and Border Protection processing area under the Anzalduas International Bridge in Mission, Texas AP

casted for space (for young migrants more quickly," said Ronald Vitiello, a former acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and chief of Border Patrol who has served in Republican and Democratic administrations.

"And I think in hindsight, maybe they should have waited until they had additional shelter space before they changed the policies." The situation at the southern border is complex.

February — an increase of 168% and 63%, respectively, from the month before, according to the Pew Research Centre.

That creates an enormous logistical challenge because children, in particular, require higher standards of care and coordination across agencies. Still, the encounters of both unaccompanied minors and families are lower than they were at various points during the Trump administration, including in spring 2019. That May, authorities encountered more than 55,000 migrant children, including 11,500 unaccompanied minors, and about 84,500 migrants traveling in family units.

Pakistan PM Imran, First Lady Bushra Bibi test Covid positive

Islamabad: Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were tested positive on Saturday for the Covid-19, his top aides announced, two days after the Pakistani premier got the first shot of a vaccine. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr Faisal Sultan took to Twitter to confirm that Khan, 68, has contracted the coronavirus on a day when the country registered the

highest number of Covid-19 cases since July last year.

Later, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis, Syed Zulfi Bukhari in a tweet confirmed that the First Lady was also corona positive. "Wishing our First Lady & PM @ImranKhanPTI a speedy recovery," he tweeted.

Senator Faisal Javed, who is considered very close to Khan, also expressed similar sentiments in a tweet. "First Lady Bushra Bibi

has also been tested positive for Covid-19. Lots of prayers for all who have been tested positive including PM Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi!" he said.

Khan was vaccinated on Thursday as part of the nationwide anti-coronavirus vaccination campaign which is underway in its first phase.

Khan is reported to have received the first shot of the Chinese-produced Sinopharm vaccine, the only anti-Covid pill available in Pakistan. PTI

Hindu scribe killed in Pak's Sindh province

Karachi: A 31-year-old Hindu journalist in Pakistan has been shot dead by some unidentified assailants while getting a haircut at a barber shop in the country's Sindh province, the police said on Saturday.

Ajay Lalvani, a reporter with a private Royal News TV channel and an Urdu language newspaper *Daily Puchano*, died on Thursday after he sustained bullet injuries in stomach, arm and knee. He was sitting in the barber shop in Sukkur city when assailants on two bikes and a car drove by and opened fire.

Lalvani was rushed to a nearby hospital where he died. His father Dileep Kumar said that the family did not have any enmity, dismissing the police's claim of the murder being the result of a personal enmity, according to *The News International*. Condemning the killing, Hindu member of Pakistan's National Assembly (MNA) Lal Chand Malhi said that it is a "matter of great concern."

"Strongly condemn D killing of yet another journalist Ajay Kumar at Saleh Pat, Sindh. It is a matter of great concern that media persons are increasingly feeling unsafe in Sindh," he said on Twitter.

GLOBE TROTTING

5 WHITE HOUSE STAFFERS LOSE JOBS OVER DRUGS
Washington: Five White House staffers have been fired because of their past use of drugs, including marijuana, press secretary Jen Psaki said on Friday. Marijuana has become a delicate issue for President Joe Biden's administration because 15 states and Washington DC allow for recreational usage despite a federal prohibition.

STRONG QUAKE SHAKES JAPAN; MINOR INJURIES
Tokyo: An earthquake struck off northern Japan, shaking buildings even in Tokyo and triggering a tsunami advisory for a part of the northern coast. No major damage was reported, but several people had minor injuries.

UN: 8 KIDS DIED, 33 HURT THIS MONTH IN YEMEN
Cairo: A surge of fighting in war-torn Yemen has been particularly brutal for children this month, with at least eight killed and 33 wounded, the UN Children's agency said on Saturday. Philippe Duamelle, UNICEF's representative to Yemen, said the casualties happened in several areas including the provinces of Taiz and Hodeida, where fighting between forces of the recognised Government and Houthi rebels has intensified.

Biden, Harris travel to Atlanta to comfort Asian Americans

AP ■ ATLANTA

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris offered solace to Asian Americans and denounced the scourge of racism at times hidden "in plain sight" as they visited Atlanta, just days after a white gunman killed eight people, most of them Asian American women.

Addressing the nation after a roughly 80-minute meeting with Asian American state legislators and other leaders Friday, Biden said it was "heart-wrenching" to listen to their stories of the fear among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders amid what he called a "skyrocketing spike" of harassment and violence against them.

Turkey withdraws from European treaty protecting women

AP ■ ISTANBUL

Turkey withdrew early Saturday from a landmark European treaty protecting women from violence that it was the first country to sign 10 years ago and that bears the name of its largest city.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's overnight decree annulling Turkey's ratification of the Istanbul Convention is a blow to women's rights advocates, who say the agreement is crucial to combating domestic violence. Hundreds of women gathered in Istanbul to protests against the move on Saturday.

The Council of Europe's Secretary General, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, called the decision "devastating."

"This move is a huge setback to these efforts and all the more deplorable because it compromises the protection of women in Turkey, across

Europe and beyond," she said. The Istanbul Convention states that men and women have equal rights and obliges state authorities to take steps to prevent gender-based violence against women, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators.

Some officials from Erdogan's Islam-oriented party had advocated for a review of the agreement, arguing it is inconsistent with Turkey's conservative values by encouraging divorce

and undermining the traditional family unit. Critics also claim the treaty promotes homosexuality through the use of categories like gender, sexual orientation and gender identity.

They see that as a threat to Turkish families. Hate speech has been on the rise in Turkey, including the interior minister who described LGBT people as "perverts" in a tweet. Erdogan has rejected their existence altogether.

As vaccinations lag, Italy's elderly again pay a price

Bergamo (Italy): One year ago, Bergamo's state-of-the-art Pope John XXIII Hospital verged on collapse as doctors struggled to treat 600 patients, with 100 of them in intensive care. The picture is much improved now: The hospital is treating fewer than 200 virus patients, just one quarter of whom require intensive care. But still unchanged as Italy's death rate pushes upward once again is that the victims remain predominantly elderly, with inoculation drives stumbling in the country and elsewhere in Europe.

Eruption of Iceland volcano easing, not affecting flights

AP ■ REYKJAVIK (ICELAND)

The eruption of a long-dormant volcano that sent streams of lava flowing across a small valley in southwestern Iceland is easing and shouldn't interfere with air travel, the Icelandic Meteorological Office said Saturday.

The fissure eruption began at around 8:45 p.m. Friday in the Geldinga Valley, about 32 kilometers (20 miles) southwest of the capital, Reykjavik, the Met Office said. The eruption is "minor" and there were no signs of ash or dust that could disrupt aviation, the agency said.

"The more we see, the smaller this eruption gets," geophysicist Pall Einarsson told *The Associated Press* on Saturday after monitoring the volcano throughout the night.



A long dormant volcano on the Reykjanes Peninsula flared to life Friday night, spilling lava down two sides in that area's first volcanic eruption in nearly 800 years AP

Afghan President appoints two Mins, angers ruling partner

Kabul: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has made two key Cabinet changes, a move condemned on Saturday as "unacceptable" by his powerful governing partner, Abdullah Abdullah, at a time when the US is ratcheting up the pressure to reach a peace agreement with the Taliban.

In May 2020, Ghani and political rival Abdullah signed a power-sharing agreement, two months after both declared themselves the winner of the September 2019 presidential election. Under the deal, Ghani remained president of the war-torn nation while Abdullah was named head of the country's National Reconciliation Council, which has the authority to handle and approve all affairs related to Afghanistan's peace process. AP

| WESTERN RAILWAY STORES DEPARTMENT | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| e-AUCTION SALE DURING APRIL, 2021 FOR P-WAY & OTHER VARIOUS SCRAP | | | |
| SPECIAL ATTENTION : ALL STEEL PURCHASERS & RE-ROLLERS | | | |
| Public e-auction for disposal of P. way scrap, rail scrap & other various scrap material will be held in April, 2021 as per program given below:- | | | |
| IST Round | Depot | Depot Officer in Charge | Contact No. |
| 16.04.2021 | SBI | Deputy Chief Materials Manager-SBI | 07927500080 09724093774 |
| 19.04.2021 | BVP | Sr. Divisional Materials Manager - BVP | 02782444360 09724097750 |
| 20.04.2021 | MXI | Deputy Chief Materials Manager - MX | 022-24929571 09004495750 |
| 22.04.2021 | ADI | Sr. Divisional Materials Manager - ADI | 07922205888 09724093750 |
| 23.04.2021 | RTM | Sr. Divisional Materials Manager-RTM | 07412230080 09752492750 |
| 17.04.2021 | PRTN | Deputy Chief Materials Manager - DHD | 02673241295 09724090455 |
| 26.04.2021 | BRC | Sr. Divisional Materials Manager - BRC | 02652641592 9724091750 |
| 28.04.2021 | RJT | Sr. Divisional Materials Manager - RJT | 02812476943 09724094770 |
| 29.04.2021 | MMCT | Sr. Divisional Materials Manager - MMCT | 022-23094142 09004499006 |
| | DHD | Deputy Chief Materials Manager - DHD | 02673241295 09724090455 |

For detailed information please contact the concerned Depot Officers
 Note:- 1. Railway reserves the right to withdraw any lot from e-Auction. 2. e-Auction will start as per scheduled time. 3. e-Auction Catalogues will be available on site www.ireps.gov.in e-Auction portal. 4. In case of any assistance required regarding e-Auction, digital signatures, Registration procedure and participation, please contact above mentioned Depot Officer. 5. All payment transactions shall be done through the online payment gateway.
 (No. S III/Auction Programme-1/April - 2021 Dated 18.03.2021)
 Deputy Chief Materials Manager (Sales)
 For PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER
 743
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Phone/Fax No.:- 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgr), 0191-2459029/2459255 (Jmu)

Website :- www.jkpolice.gov.in, E-mail :- phqj@jkpolice.gov.in

TENDER EXTENSION NOTICE

Due to administrative reasons, date for tender submission and online opening of technical bids in respect of PHQ J&K NIT No. 03 of 2021 dated 13.02.2021 floated for purchasing of Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) is rescheduled as per following details :-

I). Last date for tender submission - 27.03.2021
II). Date of Online opening of technical bids - 30.03.2021
 Other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged.

DIP/J-13524/20
 Dated: 19.03.2021

Sd/- (Rayees Mohammad Bhat) - JKPS,
 AIG (Private/Transport),
 For Director General of Police, J&K Jammu.

CSB Bank

Formerly The Catholic Syrian Bank Ltd.
 (SCO-4, Sector-14, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001)
GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

CSB Bank Limited, Gurgaon branch has granted gold loan against pledge of gold ornaments to the below mentioned borrower/s. Notice has been issued to them demanding repayment of the amount with interest and charges thereon. Since they have failed to repay the balance outstanding in the respective account/s, we are constrained to recover the amount by sale of gold ornaments in public auction and if the auction does not fetch required amount, bank will proceed with the sale by private treating/contract. Bank reserves its right to change/extend the date and venue of auction without assigning any reason.

| Sl No | Name of borrower | Gross Weight of Pledge Items (in grams) | Overdue Gold Loan Account No. | Amount | Balance as on 19.03.2021 |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Sakshi Yadav | 71.9 | 0316-03748753-00005 | 177000 | 194831 |
| 2 | Satbir Singh | 285.8 | 0316-03988138-00004 | 975000 | 1034896.41 |
| 3 | Kuldeep Kumar Sial | 18.7 | 0316-04069378-00003 | 65152 | 69230.36 |
| 4 | Gaurav Singh Pundir | 57.6 | 0316-04087323-00003 | 175940 | 184586.87 |
| 5 | Jatin Arora | 130.6 | 0316-04089695-00007 | 492000 | 512977.71 |
| 6 | Jatin Arora | 49.8 | 0316-04089695-00008 | 173600 | 179788.96 |
| 7 | Sunil Yadav | 192.9 | 0316-04091085-00005 | 749600 | 794405.02 |
| 8 | Bipul Kumar Jha | 162.3 | 0316-04202563-00001 | 560000 | 594025.44 |
| 9 | Bipul Kumar Jha | 38.63 | 0316-04202563-00002 | 72000 | 75530.5 |
| 10 | Bipul Kumar Jha | 59.22 | 0316-04202563-00003 | 196000 | 20564.64 |
| 11 | Swati Sharma | 126.9 | 0316-04126971-00002 | 452000 | 470660.2 |
| 12 | Akshay Panwar | 67.4 | 0316-04138660-00002 | 216000 | 225699.21 |
| 13 | Amir Kumar Singhal | 146.3 | 0316-04139625-00002 | 508000 | 528282.75 |
| 14 | Arun Kumar | 17.63 | 0316-04205572-00001 | 52000 | 54587.93 |
| 15 | Manvendra Singh | 37.62 | 0316-03841770-00009 | 121000 | 125360.61 |

The auction will be conducted at the premises of CSB Bank Limited, Gurgaon branch premises situated at SCO-4, Sector-14, Gurgaon-122001 on 30.03.2021 at 3.00 pm. Interested parties may contact the Branch Manager in the above address. Participants should attend the auction along with copy of Pan Card, passport size photo, valid identity proof and address proof on the date of auction.
 Place: Gurgaon
 Date: 20-03-2021
 BRANCH MANAGER

20 States complete ease of doing biz reforms: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 20 States have successfully completed ease of doing business reforms, the Finance Ministry said on Saturday.

States completing the reforms are eligible for additional borrowing of 0.25 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

"The number of States who have successfully completed the 'Ease of Doing Business' reforms has reached to 20.

Five more states namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Meghalaya and Tripura have completed the 'Ease of Doing Business' reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure," the Ministry said in a statement.

The Department of Expenditure has granted permission to these 20 States to raise additional financial resources of Rs 39,521 crore through Open Market Borrowings.

The ease of doing business is an important indicator of the investment friendly business climate in the country. Improvements in the ease of doing business will enable faster future growth of the state economy.

Therefore, the government of India had in May 2020, decided to link grant of additional borrowing permissions to States who undertake the reforms to facilitate ease of doing business, the Ministry added.



Expenditure has granted permission to these 20 States to raise additional financial resources of Rs 39,521 crore through Open Market Borrowings.

The ease of doing business is an important indicator of the investment friendly business climate in the country. Improvements in the ease of doing business will enable faster future growth of the state economy.

POWERGRID signs agreement with Jaiprakash power ventures limited

Gurugram: Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has signed a SharePurchase Agreement with Jaiprakash Power Ventures Limited (JPVL) to acquire 74% stake in Jaypee Powergrid Limited-JV (JPL) in which POWERGRID holds 26% equity. JPL will become a wholly owned subsidiary of POWERGRID following this acquisition. JPL-JV has developed a 214 Km long EHV power transmission project to evacuate power from Karcham-Wangtoo project in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The power transmitted is meant for distribution and consumption in states of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. POWERGRID is a Maharatna PSE under Ministry of Power, Government of India.



POWERGRID officials and Jaiprakash Power Ventures Limited representatives at the signing ceremony.

Fuel prices unchanged for 3 weeks

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Fuel prices in the country have remained steady for three weeks now as softening crude and upcoming assembly elections in a few states have kept Oil companies from revising the retail prices.

Accordingly, petrol continues to be priced at Rs 91.17 a litre and diesel Rs 81.47 a litre in the capital on Saturday. Fuel prices have not been revised now for 21 days.

Across the country as well, the petrol and diesel prices remain unchanged. But the

pause has not helped in bringing down petrol prices that have crossed Rs 100 per litre-mark in several parts of the country. Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur said in Parliament on Tuesday that states and Centre should look at taxes on petroleum products

to see if relief could be provided to consumers. Since the beginning of February, crude has gained more than \$7 per barrel that has pushed OMCs to increase fuel prices on 14 occasions raising the prices by ₹4.22 per litre for petrol and by ₹4.34 a litre for diesel in Delhi.

EPFO's net new enrolments up 28 pc to 13.36 lakh in Jan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Net new enrolments with retirement fund body EPFO grew 27.79 per cent to 13.36 lakh in January compared to the same month in 2020, according to the payroll data released on Saturday, providing a perspective on formal sector employment amid the pandemic.

"The provisional payroll data of EPFO published on 20th March, 2021 highlights a growing trend of subscriber base with the addition of 13.36 lakh net subscribers during January 2021," a labour ministry statement said.

It stated that the data reflects growth of 24 per cent for January 2021 over December last year.

"Year-on-year comparison of payroll data indicates an increase of 27.79 per cent in net

subscribers as compared to the corresponding period last year (January 2020), indicating return to the pre-COVID levels of subscriber growth for EPFO," it said.

Despite the pandemic, EPFO added around 62.49 lakh subscribers during the first ten months of the ongoing fiscal year, the data showed.

During 2019-20, the number of net new subscribers rose to 78.58 lakh as compared to 61.12 lakh in the preceding fiscal.

The number of net enrolments with the body was revised downwards to 10.81 lakh for December 2020 from earlier provisional estimates of 12.53 lakh for the month released in February 2021.

Since April 2018, EPFO has been releasing payroll data covering the period September 2017 onwards.

According to the latest

data, net new enrolments in April were in the negative zone at (-) 2,55,559 against the figure of (-) 2,35,911 released in February.

This means that the number of members who exited the EPFO subscription was more than those who joined or rejoined the scheme.

In July, provisional showed that net new enrolments for April stood at 1 lakh, which was revised down to 20,164 in August and further lowered to (-) 61,807 in September, (-) 1,04,608 in October, (-) 1,49,248 in November, (-) 1,79,685 in December 2020 and (-) 2,11,073 released in January 2021. The number of net new enrolments in May was also revised downwards to (-) 2,47,991 from (-) 2,19,810 estimated last month and from (-) 1,86,659 estimated in January 2021 and from (-) 1,43,540 estimated in December 2020.

PSU oil companies expanded retail operations during pandemic though product demand remained sluggish

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Public sector oil marketing companies Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum and privatisation bound Bharat Petroleum remained active in the country's oil market in 2020 even though the pandemic and lockdown severely dented demand for petroleum products.

Even with petrol and diesel sales remaining below the pre-COVID levels in the last part of 2020, the PSU oil companies continued to invest in expanding their retail outlets with the three adding 5482 retail outlets in the 10-month period of FY21 up to January end 2021.

The private sector on the other hand remained mute on their marketing initiatives adding a mere 376 fuel outlets.

Among the PSUs, IOC added 2147, BPCL - 1,792 and HPCL - 1543 retail outlets in the April-January period of

FY21. According to a report by Emkay Global Financial Services, retail outlets' market share increase has been the highest for BPCL followed by HPCL, though IOCL and others saw a decline. RIL added only 12 new outlets, while Nayara added 298 during the April to January period.

BPCL also maintained the lead in retail outlet petrol throughput: the company's petrol throughput per retail outlet (RO), a key efficiency indicator, was 56.2kl/month in Q3FY21 vs 52.4 for HPCL and 49.5/48.3 for IOCL/others.

For diesel, the brokerage said, it cannot be properly ascertained due to the lack of proper bulk-direct sales data company wise. Players like RIL have reported much higher overall throughput/RO, though diesel has a B2B character, which can be utilized to push higher volumes.

Make 71% recycling must for packaging producers, Govt urged

New Delhi: Seeking to boost Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan to eliminate single-use plastics waste by 2022, over 45 academicians, scientists, and NGOs have come together to appeal to the FSSAI and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change "not consider any non-recycled, non-biodegradable materials (Tetra pack, plastic/glass bottles, aluminum cans) for new food/beverage packaging, till the time packaging waste producers do not deploy their resource under the EPR framework to collect and recycle waste generated by their products."

The group has proposed 61%-71% recycling rate as a benchmark to allow any non-biodegradable packaging material for new product/beverage categories.

Mining reforms to increase employment, GDP: Ficci

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The reforms in the mining sector will play a fundamental role in enhancing the sector's contribution to the employment and GDP of the country, and contribute immensely to the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat, industry body Ficci said on Saturday.

The Lok Sabha on Friday passed a bill to amend the Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, that aimed to create employment opportunities by allowing the entry of private enterprise and enhanced technology in mining activities.

The bill is yet to be tabled in the Rajya Sabha.

The industry body said that it has always been advocating for increasing the contribution of Indian Mining industry to national GDP, focusing upon increasing min-

eral exploration, production and domestic supplies, reducing financial stress for the miners, attracting investments into the sector and enhancing Ease of Doing Business Quotient.

Tuhin Mukherjee, Chair, Ficci Mining Committee and Managing Director, Essel Mining and Industries Ltd., termed the amendments as a step forward for enabling mining sector's contribution to the nation's economic growth.

"With these reforms in the Indian mining and mineral sector, the Government has embarked on increasing the sectoral contribution to the Indian GDP and also to increase the competitiveness, ease of doing business and creating a favourable investment environment for the sector," he added.

Rahul Sharma, Co-Chair, Ficci Mining Committee and

CEO, Aluminium and Power, Vedanta Ltd., said: "Amendments in the MMDR are reflective of the fact that the government considers mining sector as a key contributor to the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

These amendments shall result in enhancement of mineral production across the spectrum, creating more jobs and will be a major boost to critical industries like cement, aluminium and steel, which are primarily dependent upon key raw materials provided by the mining sector.

A renewed focus on exploration will attract huge investments."

He also applauded the Government's move for promoting ease of transfer for non-auctioned captive mines to increase mineral production from such mines in the country.

DESI CONSTRUCTION PRIVATE LIMITED
REGD. OFFICE:
FARM NO. 100, SILVER OAK LANE-3,
OPP. SAHNI FARM HOUSE,
GHITORNI, NEW DELHI-110030
Website: www.dcl99.com
Email Id: legal@dcl99.com
Telephone: 9953463800, 9999310694
CIN: U45200DL2011PTC212556

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, we Desi Construction Private Limited are in the process of undertaking development of an Affordable Residential Plotted Colony under DDJAY in Village Sohna, Sector-5, Sohna, District Gurgaon, Haryana over an area measuring 10.83125 Acres in the revenue estate of Sohna, Distt. Gurgaon (Haryana) in accordance with the license granted for an Affordable Residential Plotted Colony, License no. 68 of 2019 dated 26.06.2019 by Director General, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh. And whereas, the Layout cum Demarcation Plan earlier approved at the time of grant of license for the said colony is now proposed to be revised on account of request made by Desi Construction Private Limited for revision of Layout cum Demarcation Plan of the said colony.

And whereas, the office of Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has required seeking of objections against the revision of Layout cum Demarcation Plan, as a pre-condition for allowing such revision in the Layout Plan.

Accordingly vide this public notice objections are hereby invited from any of the public in the said colony on the proposed revision of the Layout Plan of the said colony. A copy of the earlier approved Layout cum Demarcation Plan bearing drawing no. 7438, dated 17.06.2020 & Zoning Plan bearing drawing no. 7439, dated 17.06.2020 and the layout now proposed to be revised bearing drawing no. 7696, dated 16.03.2021 is available for perusal at our Registered Office. The said layout can also be perused at the office of undersigned as well as in the office of District Town Planner (Planning) / Senior Town Planner, Gurgaon and also on company's website i.e. www.dcl99.com

Any public having any objection on the proposed revision in the approved layout Plan, may file his objection in the office of District Town Planner (Planning), / Senior Town Planner, Gurgaon, within 30 days of the publication of this notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed revision of the Layout Plan.

बिहार सरकार
जल संसाधन विभाग
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, मुजफ्फरपुर
E-mail - wwdivsion2014@gmail.com / mobile-7463889909
अल्पकालिन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या -19 / 2020-21
राष्ट्रीय स्वयं निविदा
(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

1. कार्य का विवरण -

| शुप सं. | कार्य का नाम | प्राकृतिक राशि (लाख रु में) | अग्रघन की राशि (लाख रु में) | परिमाण-विपन्न का मूल्य (केवल ऑन लाईन मोड में मुद्रित) रु में | बेडरूम को देय बिड प्रोसेसिंग फी (केवल ऑन लाईन मोड में मुद्रित) रु में | कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि / तिथि |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | तिरहुत मुख्य नहर के विदू 790 से निरस्त निकास प्रणाली के 0.347 कि०मी० से 0.612 कि०मी० तक का मरम्मत एवं सुदृढीकरण कार्य। एलजा सं०-174 / 05 / 2021 | 379.25 | 7.585 | 10000.00 | 5900.00 | 15.05.2021 |

2. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत करने की तिथि : दिनांक: 17.03.2021

3. निविदा कागजात डाउनलोड करने की अवधि : दिनांक: 26.03.2021 से दिनांक-01.04.2021 के 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक (सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

4. प्री-बिड मीटिंग का समय, स्थान एवं तिथि : दिनांक: 27.03.2021, 12.00 बजे अपराह्न में, कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, मुजफ्फरपुर।

5. निविदा अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय : दिनांक: 03.04.2021 समय 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक। (सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

6. तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : दिनांक : 06.04.2021 समय 3.30 बजे अपराह्न। (सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

7. वित्तीय बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : सक्षम पदाधिकारी द्वारा बाद में घोषित की जायेगी (सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

8. निविदा खोलने का स्थान : 120 दिन

9. निविदा की वैधता अवधि (निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि से) : 120 दिन

10. विज्ञापनदाता का पदनाम एवं पता : कार्यपालक अभियंता, बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, मुजफ्फरपुर।

11. विशेष जानकारी प्राप्त करने हेतु वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in एवं वेबसाईट state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
बाढ़ नियंत्रण प्रमंडल, मुजफ्फरपुर।
PR- 14723 (WRD) 2020-21
नोबल कोरेना के संकट में निरस्त जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु Toll Free No.: **104** पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely Pooja D/o Ravinder R/o 532, Gali No.7, Shalimar Village, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 07.03.2021 at 10.30 AM her house. In this regard a DD No. 008A Dated 08.03.2021 has been lodged at PS, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. The description of missing/kidnapped girl is as under :

Name: Pooja, **Father's Name :** Ravinder, **Age :** 19 year 9 Months, **Height :** 5'3", **Face :** Oval, **Complexion :** Fair, **Built :** Thin, **Wearing :** White Pant Blue Shirt and Black Jacket, **Black colour Shoes in feet.**

If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers.
Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
e-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641
Extn.-210
Fax: 011-24368639

SHO
P.S., Shalimar Bagh, Delhi
Ph. : 011-27495198, 8750870227
DP/719/NW/2021

India cities to be greener with E20 fuel-run transport network

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

This is one reform initiative that is set to be a big positive change in the use of fossil fuel to run country's transportation sector.

The central government has proposed to advance the deadline for blending 20 per cent ethanol in petrol from the earlier announced 2030 to 2024.

The use of 20 per cent doped petrol or E20 decreases the carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons emissions significantly, compared to normal gasoline in two-wheelers and four-wheelers. The increased blending will also reduce use of polluting fossil fuel in the country.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has already notified the use of E20 and issued mass emission standards for the same.

Now it is up to the oil companies and automobile companies to build capacities for both production and use of E20. The next two years would also give sugar mills time to convert excess sugarcane or sugar for producing higher quantity of ethanol required for blending with petrol. The government had earlier fixed a target of 10 per cent ethanol blending by 2022 and 20 per cent by 2030. But the plan now is to directly migrate to 20 per cent as the level of blending is successively being used in a few countries such as Brazil. This is akin to taking the emission standards vehicles directly from BS-IV stage to BS-VI skipping one stage to ensure that vehicles turn less polluting sources.

SRM launches new online degree programmes

Kattankulathur: SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur has launched new online degree programs approved by UGC in response to high demand for online education to boost GER and Employability. This is done through the Directorate of Online Education.

The launch of online degree programs approved by UGC are MBA specialization in Finance/ HR/ Marketing/ Business Analytics, MCA, BBA specialization in Digital Marketing, BCA specialization in Data Science. SRMIST has developed an online delivery robust cloud based technology stack, called SRM Online Learning Platform. It provides the flexibility to learn from anywhere, anytime supported by live interactive sessions and powerful online assessment system.



Master of business administration (MBA) is a two year internationally accepted experiential master degree program designed specifically for professionals who want to develop leadership skills, strategic capabilities and competencies that enables them to contribute higher order value in Industry. The core courses in an MBA program cover various areas of business such as accounting, finance, marketing, human resources, operations, and statistics and many.

Book on Biodiversity unveiled by DDA

The success story of DDA Biodiversity Parks is now available in the e-book "Biodiversity Parks: Nature Reserves of Delhi" which was unveiled today on 19th March 2021 by Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Shri Anil Bajjal. The book depicts the journey of country's first initiative in bringing back the lost ecosystems of the city and pictorial guide for kinds of plants and animals and diverse ecosystems found in the Biodiversity Parks and also illustrates how scientists, engineers and landscape architects transformed barren landscapes of Delhi into lush green forest, grassland and wetland ecosystems. This book is useful for all policy makers and planners, particularly urban planners and architects, nature lovers.

ICICI Bank
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CALL AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of Immovable assets

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

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

| Sr. No. | Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ | Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any | Amount Outstanding | Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit | Date and Time of Property Inspection | Date & Time of Auction |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | (E) | (F) | (G) |
| 1. | Sharad Mahawar (Borrower), Neha Mahawar (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00003103265 | Flat No. 8- E, 4th Floor, Pocket-C, Sector- 3, Phase-I, Dwarka, New Delhi- 110075, Area- 307 Sq. Ft. | Rs. 16,64,208.99/- as on March 11, 2021 | Rs. 11,50,000/- Rs. 1,15,000/- | April 03, 2021, From 12:00 Noon to 02:00 PM | April 13, 2021, From 12:00 Noon Onwards |

The online auction will be conducted on website ([URL Link-https://disposalhub.com](https://disposalhub.com)) of our auction agency M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. The Mortgagors/noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till April 12, 2021 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005 and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before April 12, 2021 before 05:00 PM along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, incase prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005 on or before April 12, 2021 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank in favour of "ICICI Bank Limited" payable at Delhi.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Bank Limited on 8657476284 or M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/9810029926/01244233933

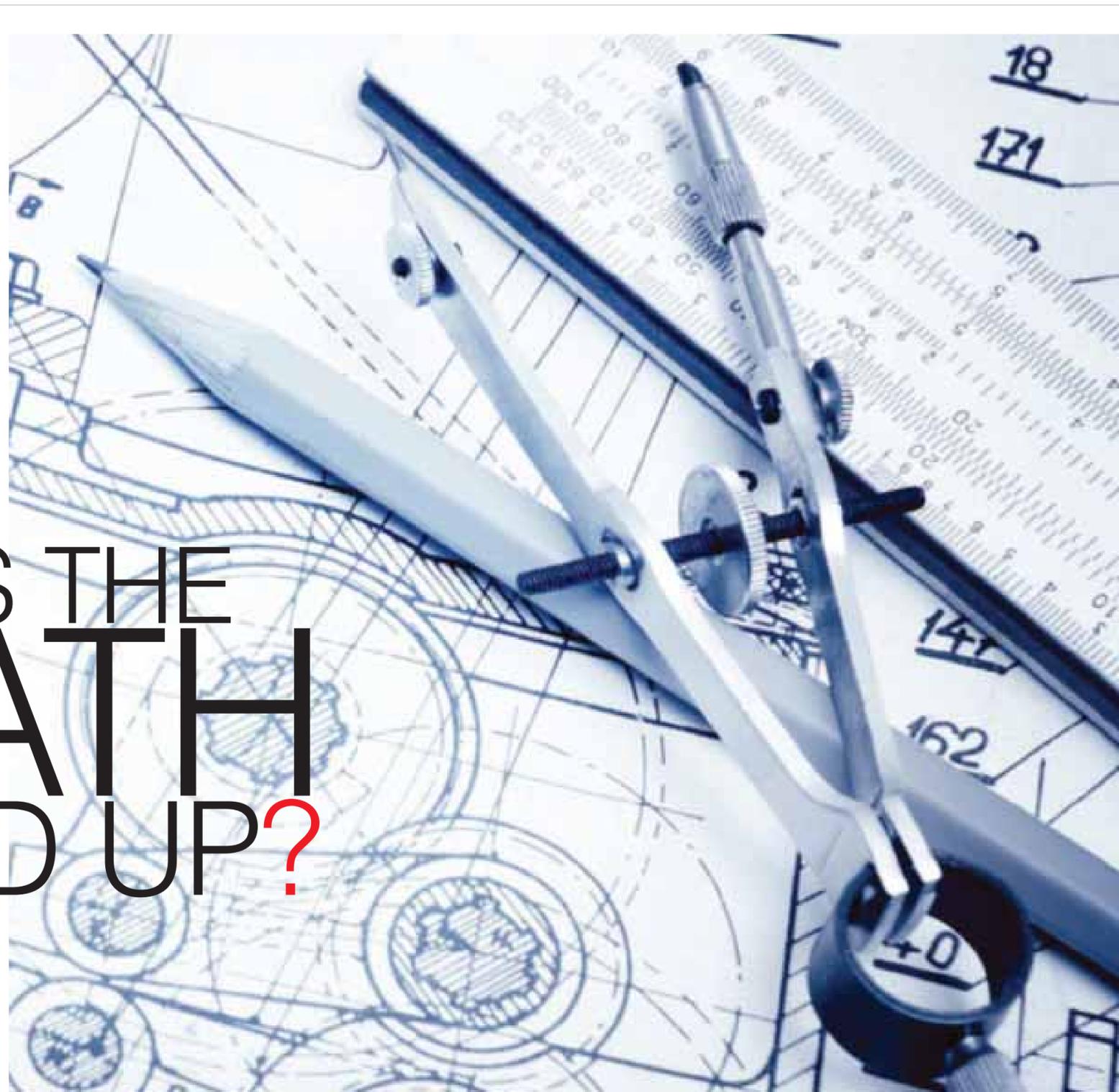
Please note that Marketing agencies 1. NexXen Solution Private Limited 2. Augco Asset Management Pvt Ltd 3. Props AMC have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: March 20, 2021
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

AICTE's proposal to drop Maths and Physics from the list of mandatory subjects to seek admission in engineering courses has stirred up disbelief, controversy and memes. MUSBA HASHMI speaks with experts to analyse the fallout and feasibility of this pathbreaking recommendation



DOES THE MATH ADD UP?

Soon after the All India Council for Technical Education's (AICTE) decision of tweaking the guidelines for engineering entrance examinations and removing Maths and Physics as mandatory subjects, the Internet got flooded with memes that left people in splits.

A tweet read: #AICTE: Maths and Physics not mandatory for Engineering. Pakistani Cricket Fan: *Ek dum se waqt badal diye, jazbaat badal diye, zindagi badal di.* Another read: Engineering students to AICTE: *Aapne to humse humara dimension hi cheen liya* (with a picture of Priyanka Chopra from *Bajirao Mastani*).

Here is some more, but only comedian Akash Gupta's fans will get this. Maths and Physics not must for Engineering, says AICTE. Meanwhile those Numerical of Engineering. (On a pic of Akash Gupta) Excuse me, brother... brother, *eedhar*.

While all this is on a lighter vein, the decision is a serious topic of debate which has left academic experts divided. Some say it is a welcome move, while others say that the decision will change the essence of engineering.

"AICTE's decision to remove Maths and Physics is certainly a decision not taken in the spirit of engineering. The reason being, it will adversely affect the research and development activities in various fields of engineering, especially Aeronautics, Automotive, and Computer. Evidently, engineers with unsubstantial knowledge about the fundamentals of Physics and Mathematics will constantly face challenges while measuring the problems precisely and developing cutting-edge solutions. Interpretation and analytical skills which are known as the core strengths of any successful engineer cannot be honed to perfection without mastering oneself in Maths and Physics," Nitin Vijay, MD — Motion Education Pvt Ltd, VP — Byju's JEE NEET Division says.

He adds that otherwise, budding engineers will always lack certain qualities that are quintessential in shaping a calculative mindset. "Maths and Physics are not just very important subjects of Science, but their knowledge also enables a student to observe and contemplate the surroundings rather scientifically and logically. When one understands the things and the processes that govern them, then only one can identify the problems and find solutions for them. Hence, Maths and Physics of secondary school level should be reincorporated to produce quality engineers in the future," he says.

Not that this move will encourage students from diverse fields to take up engineering or make the admission process to top colleges easy.

"There are a good number of engineering colleges already existing in India

THIS VAGUE DECISION IS GIVEN BY THE AICTE TO JUST INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ENGINEERS IN THE COUNTRY. I DOUBT IF THEY HAVE EVEN EVALUATED THE NUMBER OF ENGINEERING JOBS IN THE COUNTRY AND WHETHER HAVE THOUGHT OF INCREASING THEM. IF THEY DON'T THINK OF RE-CONSIDERING THEIR DECISION, 10 YEARS DOWN THE LINE SOMEONE WILL QUESTION THIS DECISION AND WILL REALISE THAT IT DIDN'T PRODUCE GOOD QUALITY ENGINEERS
— DR KH RAVEESHA, HEAD OF BASIC SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES, CMR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BANGALORE

where a lot of seats remain vacant every session. Entry to the top colleges is not going to be easier even after these changes to maintain their reputation; they will never compromise to strict selection procedures. A good score in Physics and Maths will always be a deciding factor for admission to the top engineering colleges of India. Those who have completed the engineering programmes from top institutes or about to complete them can better understand the importance of Physics and Maths in the curriculum. In fact, these two subjects help form the structure of all types of engineering and they cannot be separated. Just removing these subjects is not going to push people with intentions to pursue something else or drop their idea and run behind engineering. A slight increase might happen, but anyway that's already happening with every year, seeing an increase in the total number of students appearing for JEE and NEET," Vijay opines.

Dr Meenakshi M, Head of Mathematics, CMR Institute of Technology Bangalore, says that this is not a good move and the basic Sciences should stay mandatory for Class XII.

"In fact, the AICTE should think of reconsidering the decision since this doesn't seem to benefit students," she adds.

Dr KH Raveesha, Head of Basic Science and Humanities, CMR Institute of Technology Bangalore, agrees with his colleague Meenakshi and says that the new decision can prove to be detrimental to engineering students who are willing to become innovators. Students need to have good hold on both the subjects, it is a must. "The decision seems to be benefitting the private universities which want to make admissions with other subjects like Biotechnology. Here these universities are given an option to offer a bridge course for about three months for students from non-engineering backgrounds. These bridge courses don't hold any credits and will not be in any way equivalent to the PCM knowledge that a Science stream students otherwise would have. Without any credits, students will not be interested in learning all these

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Students wishing to pursue textile, agriculture engineering and biotechnology will be benefitted from the decision.
- Maths and Physics will continue to be important for streams like Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering.
- Despite the relaxation, the change is not binding on State Governments and Engineering Schools.

things and will end up missing the two years of rigorous Maths and Physics training which otherwise they would have got. If this happens, who will come up with digital innovations, who will make the next generation rockets which have less weight with more power and who will make driver-less cars? Not to mention, who will give them critical thinking and problem solving skills that come with handling these subjects," Raveesha, who has been into the profession for 25 years, asks.

What would have helped, he says, is a one-year mandatory bridge course with full credits for students from non-engineering backgrounds. This way the students can seriously learn the skills of these subjects and continue do innovations.

"This vague decision is given by the AICTE to just increase the number of engineers in the country. I doubt if they have even evaluated the number of engineering jobs in the country and whether have thought of increasing them. If they don't think of re-considering their decision, 10 years down the line someone will question this decision and realise that it didn't produce good quality engineers," he says.

Such decisions, he says, should only be made by taking into consideration teachers, stakeholders and serious students who are enthusiastic of making a career into these fields.

Ravi Kaushik an IITB alumnus, and CEO AiRTH, who has been a close witness of the importance that Maths and Physics holds in the life of an engineer says that the recent tweaks are more hollow than helpful. "Although the regulatory body mentioned certain specific courses such as textile, agriculture engineering, and biotechnology only, they have certainly overlooked the prerequisites of engineering. The government intends to include students from diverse backgrounds which is great but I can very well imagine the struggle they will have to face," Kaushik says.

Kaushik supports his views by giving an example. "Picture this. A biotechnology student is working on a drug for a certain disease. He/she has to do a lot of experiments followed by compilation and analysis. The analysis of that data needs a clear understanding of the fundamentals of mathematics. This comprises mostly what the students study in senior high school. Hence, it is impossible to disintegrate such crucial subjects from the rest of the course or call it non-compulsory. Instead, to make our education system more inclusive and productive, the Government can focus on arranging additional lectures on Mathematics or Physics for such students," he says.

While teachers and students believe that this is a decision without logic, some stakeholders are in favour of the

announcement and see it as a welcome change. "With the AICTE announcement of making Math & Physics not mandatory for some technical courses like Textile, Biotechnology, Agriculture engineering etc, this move will help the Textile and the Biotechnology sector as these courses had several vacant seats every year. There are thousands of jobs in the Textile sector, but there is a lack of workforce due to the unavailability of undergraduates in some specific sectors. This move will give opportunities to students from diverse fields to opt for an engineering degree. This, in return, will contribute to Nation building," Abhishek Gupta, CEO and Co-founder, Hex N Bit, opines.

In addition, statistics say in the year 2,000 there were around 7,000 foreign students pursuing various courses in India which have crossed to 50,000 just before pandemic so with the ease declared by AICTE there will be an opportunity for foreign students to opt various courses in India and that will internally going to impact GDP in a positive way.

The education system, therefore, needs to incorporate something that exposes the young minds to the realities of the technicalities in the existing world. That should make them more responsible, mature, good decision-makers, and highly focused. These things certainly happen, but at a later stage in the learning process.

"Facilitation and fostering of entrepreneurial learning at schools can be a big game-changer. And this introduction should happen at an early stage. Entrepreneurship teaches many things, like being practical in thought and approach, being efficient in managing time, money and relations, being good in problem identification and finding the right solution and many more practical skills. Entrepreneurial skills must be infused in the young generation that eventually paves the leadership path for them. By giving the young people an entrepreneurial mindset right from the start, we can certainly have more dynamic leaders emerging in the future," Vijay says.

QUOTE UNQUOTE

This is a great move by AICTE. This will open endless opportunities to students who may not have been able to decide their career path. It is beneficial for those too who explored one domain and would like to explore more. This move may also break the barriers to learning and stereotypes that have been built over the past many decades.
— Ketki Shrivastava Bhagat, Academic Expert, Toppr

It is a welcome move for two reasons. First, the decision allows more students from non PCM background to take part in engineering; they could take bridge courses while in first year of college for PCM and get up to speed on the requirements for physics and maths fundamentals required in engineering. This is in line with the multi-disciplinarian approach National Education Policy suggested. Second, it allows more engineering enrolments across the country. The enrolments in 'Engineering & Technology' institutions went down from 17.53 lakh in 2012-13 to 13.84 lakh in 2018-19, a reduction of more than 20% in seven years. By allowing a diverse set of students, the total applications for seats across these courses could go up in the near future.
— Suresh Nair, Co-founder & CEO, Board Infinity

This is a great move by AICTE. This will open endless opportunities to students who may not have been able to decide their career path. It is beneficial for those too who explored one domain and would like to explore more. This move may also break the barriers to learning and stereotypes that have been built over the past many decades.
— Ketki Shrivastava Bhagat, Academic Expert, Toppr

It's a good move because there are engineering streams which are not core science dependent like textiles, fabrics, agriculture and many others. They require minimal knowledge of PCM, which can be learnt as a crash course later on. This move will encourage students to take up engineering.
— Nirmal Singh, an ex-IT student

KING OF SHORTS

England lose plot after fiery start as India wrest T20 series 3-2 with resounding last match win of 36 runs

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Dishing out a dominating all-round show, India toppled England in the high-scoring fifth Twenty20 to not only claim the series 3-2 but also prove that their preparations for the T20 World Cup are moving in the right direction. Rohit Sharma's sensational 64 off 34 balls and skipper Virat Kohli's unbeaten 80 off 52 balls powered India to a massive 224 for two, their best ever total against England, after the visitors won the toss for the fourth time in the series and opted to field on Saturday.

In the run chase, Jos Buttler (52 off 34) and Dawid Malan (68 off 46) kept India on the edge with a threatening 130-run stand but England's challenge fizzled with the fall of the wicket-keeper-batsman in the 13th over bowled by Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

England's innings eventually ended at 188 for eight as they lost match by 36 runs.

The dew was a factor in the second innings but the Indian bowlers overcame that to defend the target on a batting beauty. Bhuvneshwar was impressive in his comeback series and saved his best for the decider to end with two wickets for 15 runs in four overs.

Apart from Bhuvneshwar's successful return from injury, the big plus for India was the emergence of Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan. Hardik Pandya was back to bowling



regularly, marking another positive for Kohli's team which proved in the series that it can win while chasing as well as batting first.

England were dealt a big blow at the start of the daunting chase with Bhuvneshwar casting Jason Roy's stumps with an inswinger.

However, incoming batsman Malan ensured the

required big hits kept coming and in the company of the dangerous Buttler, took England to 104 for one in 10 overs.

Malan, the world number one batsman, who did not fire earlier in the series, was in his elements. His off side play was the highlight of his innings which comprised nine fours and two sixes.

The momentum shifted

decisively in India's favour when Buttler holed out at long off with Bhuvneshwar conceding only three runs in that over.

Buttler's dismissal also fired up Kohli, who was involved in an exchange with the opposition players, something that needed umpire's intervention.

Three more wickets, including Malan's, in quick succession effectively sealed the

game for India. Earlier, preparing themselves for success in all conditions ahead of the World Cup, India thrived under the pressure of a series-decider to produce their batting performance of the series.

Jofra Archer and Mark Wood had troubled the Indians with their extra pace in earlier games but Rohit and Kohli sent them to the cleaners on way to their 94-run stand off 54 balls.

The other major contributions came from Suryakumar Yadav (32 off 17 balls) and Hardik Pandya (39 not out off 17 balls).

The hosts hammered 67 runs in the last five overs to give the innings a perfect finish.

Barring Ben Stokes and Adil Rashid, all England bowlers leaked more than 10 runs per over with Chris Jordan (0/57) being the most expensive.

India decided to drop opener K L Rahul to accommodate an extra bowling option in left-arm pacer T Natarajan for the all important game.

With no Rahul at the top, Virat Kohli moved himself up the order to open with Rohit, a move that worked wonders.

Rohit did the bulk of the scoring in their partnership as Kohli was more than happy to enjoy a sensational display of stroke-making from the other end.

Rohit, who was rested for the first two games and did not get much in the next two, enhanced his reputation of a big match player on Saturday.

Most of his five sixes were his trademark shot, the seemingly effortless pluck over deep square leg. Also a treat to the eye were his rasping straight drives off a seriously quick Mark Wood in his first over.

Kohli too pulled Wood into the stands, a shot that got him fully pumped up.

As Kohli paced his innings beautifully at the other end, he had the company of a supremely confident Suryakumar, who carried on from where he left in his debut game.

Kohli then partnered with Hardik to get India past 200.

India start T20 series with defeat

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

All-rounder Anneke Bosch first pegged the Indian women with a couple of wickets and then smashed an unbeaten 66 off 48 balls to ensure an easy eight wicket victory for South Africa in the first T20 International here on Saturday.

Harleen Deol's (52) confident maiden international fifty was the only silver lining for the Indians who posted a modest 130 for 6 after being invited to bat.

The South Africans chased down the target easily with five balls to spare with opener Bosch (66 not out) and captain Sune Luus (43 off 49 balls) sharing 90 runs for the second wicket. SA reached to 133 for 2 in 19.1 overs.

India scored just 26 runs from the last five overs and that's where they again lost the match with distinct lack of power hitters.

The Indian bowlers never put any sort of pressure on the Bosch-Luus duo for a long stretch in the match.

Bosch hit nine fours and a six in her 48-ball unbeaten innings after she took 2 for 11 during Indian innings.

Poor fielding also cost India dear as they conceded runs on the field.

India got rid of dangerous South Africa opener Lizelle Lee (8) who had topped the batting charts in the preceding ODI series with pacewoman Arundhati Reddy (1/20) removing her in the third over as she miscued her shot.

But Bosch and Luus denied the Indians any further success till the 16th over with a solid and flawless batting display.

Lee's early dismissal put the South Africans on the backfoot



but Luus and Bosch negated the early Indian advantage. Luus hit Reddy for a six and a four in consecutive deliveries in the fifth over as South Africa got to 36 for 1 from powerplay overs.

The duo gained in confidence gradually as the Indian bowlers could not find a way to break the partnership.

South Africa needed 68 from the last 10 overs and they kept up the tempo without taking too much risks, needing 33 from the last five overs.

Rajeshwari Gayakwad dropped Luus, failing to hold on an easy catch in the 16th over but the next ball, the South Africa captain was dismissed by Deol (1/21).

But by the time Luus was out, the match had already tilted in South Africa's favour. SA needed 14 from the final two overs but the equation was down to two from the final over and Bosch hit a four to win the match in style.

Earlier, rookie batter Harleen Deol top-scored with a confident 52 in India's 130 for six.

The 22-year-old Deol hit six fours in her 47-ball innings to score the bulk of India's runs after being invited to bat.

She shared 60 runs for the third wicket with Jemimah Rodrigues (30) to help India

Mandhana doubtful for 2nd T20

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Star India opener Smriti Mandhana was on Saturday rendered a doubtful starter for the second Twenty20 against South Africa after suffering an injury during the series-opening match, here on Saturday.

Mandhana fell down with twisted legs while backing up a Shafali Verma throw after SA captain Sune Luus had scampered for a run in the sixth over. Mandhana was in pain and she limped off the field with the help of the support staff. She returned in the South African run chase but it was apparent that she was not comfortable while fielding.

recover from 11 for one after the fall of stand-in-captain Smriti Mandhana (11) in the second over.

Young talent Shafali Verma, who was not in the squad for the preceding ODI series which India lost 1-4, made 23 from 22 balls with the help of two fours and a six.

Boult too hot to handle



AFP ■ DUNEDIN

New Zealand captain Tom Latham called it "awesome" as star performers Trent Boult and Martin Guptill powered the Black Caps to an emphatic eight wicket win over Bangladesh in the opening ODI in Dunedin on Saturday.

With swing king Boult moving the ball both ways, New Zealand dismissed Bangladesh for a mediocre 131 and a blistering cameo with the bat by Guptill saw them cut down the target with more than 28 overs to spare.

In New Zealand's first ODI in 12 months, Boult took four for 27 while Guptill blazed away for 38 off 19 deliveries.

"We haven't played for a while and it was about setting the tone, winning the toss and bowling and I thought Trent and Matt Henry did that great, and for us to chase 130 in 20-odd overs was awesome," captain Tom Latham said.

"And we know how destructive he (Guptill) can be when he plays like that, and to break the back of the chase was awesome and for the guys to finish it off then was a pretty clinical performance all round."

All but two of Guptill's 38 runs came from boundaries with four sixes and three fours before Taskin Ahmed found a faint edge and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim completed the dismissal.

Devon Conway in his maiden ODI was the other wicket to fall for 27 while opener Henry Nicholls was left 49 not out. Nicholls was denied his 12th half century when another debutant Will Young (11 not out) brought up the winning runs with a boundary.

Earlier in addition to Boult's four-wicket haul, Jimmy Neesham took two for 27 and Mitchell Santner finished with two for 23.

Bubble transfer for Indian, English players

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The cricketers, who are part of the ongoing T20 series between India and England, will not have to undergo mandatory seven-day hard quarantine ahead of the IPL as they will be transported from one bubble to another as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) released on Saturday.

The BCCI has made it clear that no individual associated with the IPL will be vaccinated as of now as the government of India has put a system in place which is currently being adhered to.

According to the SOP, "Players who are coming from bubble created for India vs England series may directly join the franchise squad with-

out serving mandatory quarantine period provided.

"After the conclusion of series, they directly move to team hotel either by bus or chartered flight...If travel arrangements are to the satisfaction of CMO, such players can directly enter team bubble without need to serve quarantine or undergo RT PCR tests," the SOP stated.

Similarly, for all franchises who are having prior camps in bio-secure bubbles, if their travel arrangements are satisfactory they will be entitled bubble-to-bubble transfers.

However, if the CMO is not satisfied, then all those players will need to undergo seven days of hard quarantine and return with three negative tests.

The SOP stated that at this point, the government has not specified anything on vaccination of elite athletes.

"In India, the first group to get vaccinated is healthcare and frontline workers. The second group is persons above 60 years of age as of January 1, 2022 and person between 45 to 59 years with comorbid conditions.

The government is yet to announce the schedule of vaccination of other groups of people including elite athletes."

Some of the other key points are as follows:

Concept of Bubble Integrity Manager

BCCI will appoint up to 4 security staff with each franchise team who will be the des-

ignated Bubble integrity managers. They will be part of the respective team Bubbles and travel with the teams for the entire duration of IPL 2021. Their job will be to report any Bio-secure Environment protocol breaches by members of franchises to Chief Medical Officer.

HOTELS

Preferably, smaller hotel properties will be chosen which may be fully booked for the exclusive use by the participants within the Bio-Secure Environments. This will avoid teams coming in contact with other guests in the hotel.

If a larger hotel is chosen, then the participants will be accommodated in a separate wing of the hotel. No other hotel guests will be allowed in the team zones/floors.

Dedicated floors/zones will be allotted to each franchise team, Match Officials and Match Management Teams to avoid mixing of the various groups within the hotel premises.

o Dedicated check-in coun-

ters will be arranged for the different groups.

o A separate entry and exit gate will be available for the team members.

o A dedicated lift will be available for the exclusive use of team members.

o Exclusive access to a gym and swimming pool will be available for use of team members. If exclusive access cannot be given then each team will be given specific time slots.

o Each hotel will have a designated hotel manager who will be responsible to ensure that the guidelines for hotels as mentioned in these Health & Safety protocols for IPL 2021 are followed by all hotel staff.

o Within their zones, players and team support staff will be provided safe corridors for movement within the hotel.

NO MEDIA ALLOWED

The general public and media persons will not have access to the Bubble facilities as well as stadiums for any activities. Media were also not allowed during last edition of Indian Premier League.

Sindhu falters at All England semis

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

An erratic P V Sindhu suffered yet another semifinal defeat at the prestigious All England Championships as she went down tamerly in straight games to sixth seed Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand in the women's singles here on Saturday.

Sindhu, the reigning world champion, couldn't match the pace, power and precision of her younger world number 11 rival Chochuwong and lost 17-21, 9-21 in a match that lasted 43 minutes.

"I think it was her day, everything she was hitting was on the line, I just couldn't do anything about it. Overall, I should've controlled my unforced errors, maybe things could've been different," Sindhu said. "I knew it was going to be



a good match, she's not an easy player. Her strokes are really good and she's going to be a really good player."

The world No 7 Indian had also lost at the semifinal at the 2018 edition of the tournament. "Everybody aims to be in the final, it's over for now so I have to learn from my mistakes and take the positives. I don't have a tournament for another month so I have time to prepare and come back stronger," Sindhu, the Olympic Silver medalist, said.

Sindhu, seeded fifth, came into the semifinal contest with a 4-1 head-to-head lead over the 23-year-old Chochuwong, whom she had beaten at the World Tour Finals in January.

But all that statistics didn't matter as Chochuwong showed immaculate defence and agility to outclass the Indian.

Sharath, Manika seal mixed doubles Olympic berth

PTI ■ DOHA

India got its best shot at a maiden table tennis medal at the Olympics on Saturday when Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra became the first Indian pairing to qualify for the mega event in Tokyo, beating world No 8 duo of Sang-Su Lee and Jihee Jeon 4-2 in the final of the Asian Qualification Tournament here.

The 2018 Asian Games Bronze medallists staged a remarkable comeback after being two sets down to outwit the top seeded Korean pair 8-11, 6-11, 11-5, 11-6, 13-11, 11-8 in a thrilling final to seal their Tokyo qualification in mixed doubles. Only the winner of the event qualified for the Games.

The Indian pairing had beaten the Koreans en route to a historic medal in Asian Games before losing to them on the pro tour the following year.



is very important for her to play with flow so that I am able to play my power game. That is the only way we complement each other. She was outstanding.

"I never thought we could win the tournament. Now we are three games from winning an Olympic medal. It will be tough but it is our best shot," Sharath said referring to the 16-pairing draw at the Tokyo Games.

Sharath, who has also qualified for the singles event alongside G Sathiyan, has now set sights at reaching at least the mixed doubles quarterfinals at the Games.

"I think if we can reach the quarters, it would be a fantastic result for us at the Games. Anything else from there is a bonus," said the world number 32.

The unprecedented result in mixed doubles means India will now have five entries in Tokyo (two each in men and women singles besides mixed).

"I was really happy with myself to be able to withstand the attack and services of a player like lee Sang Su and Jion Jihee. Sharath bhैया capitalised well with his attack to keep the pressure on them."

"I am very happy that along with singles we could even make by beating the Korean and Singapore pairing in the mix," said Manika.

Following the incredible results, Sharath said the two now need to play more often to hit a good rhythm ahead of the Games.

"We will have to sit down and chalk out our plans. We cannot tour Europe or elsewhere because of the Covid situation. Probably, the WTT China hub could be the best option for the moment," said Sharath.

While Sathiyan and Sutirtha emerged winners in their respective categories of the South Asian Group to qualify, Sharath and Manika sealed Tokyo berths by virtue of being the highest-ranked second-placed players.

Geeta Phogat readies for comeback

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rules have changed and wrestling has become faster from the time when Geeta Phogat was active on the mat but the path-breaking Dangal girl is gearing up for a comeback, confident that the sport that runs in her blood will help her adapt and get battle-ready for stiff challenges ahead.

Geeta, who made the Phogat clan famous with her remarkable journey from local dangals to International fame, has not competed much since she attempted to qualify for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games unsuccessfully.

She competed in only two tournaments in two years after that, got married to fellow wrestler Pawan Saroha in 2016 and gave birth to their first child in 2019.

When she was active, the bout consisted of three rounds of two-minutes each, wrestlers could hold their opponents for a longer time and keeping long hairs was not allowed. A lot has changed now.

The 32-year-old, who became the first Indian woman wrestler to win a Gold at the



Commonwealth Games in 2010, is now eyeing a berth in the Indian team for the Asian Olympic Qualifiers.

With a special permission from the national federation, Geeta joined the national camp a month back and is putting in hard yards, dreaming of more success at the international level.

"I never thought of quitting wrestling. I still dread the day when I would have to actually leave it. That thought scares me. It's not just me, but it is same with most athletes that it

becomes difficult to quit, it's in blood," Geeta said.

"I started training about six months back. I was working out at home, lost 20-25 kgs post delivery but I needed to train on mat, needed training partners so I joined national camp. I needed to assess myself, so I approached WFI and they allowed me, thanks to the federation, I am preparing for a comeback.

"Rules have changed. Two rounds of three-minute each is good for Indian wrestlers because we are better in stamina. We have to be in action continuously now but it's not something that worries me."

All eyes will be on her when she competes in the 62kg category on Monday during trials for the Asian Olympic Qualifiers. It's a category which fast-rising Sonam Malik is making her own while Rio Olympics Bronze medallist Sakshi Malik is struggling.

The 2012 World Championship Bronze medallist is realistic that she will not get instant success since wrestling as a sport has grown a lot in India with talented youngsters putting seniors under pressure.

Yashaswini steals limelight with Gold

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Yashaswini Singh Deswal stole the limelight from her more celebrated compatriots with a Gold medal as India's pistol shooters called the shots in the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday, the start of which was rocked by three Covid-19 positive cases.

Saurabh Chaudhary and Abhishek Verma settled for the Silver and Bronze medals respectively in the men's 10m air pistol final on the second competition day of the tournament.

Those medals were won after world number one Divyansh Singh Panwar opened India's tally with a Bronze in the men's 10m air rifle event.

However, world number four in women's 10m air rifle, Anjum Moudgil, settled for a fifth-place finish after shooting 187.8 in the final.

Yashaswini, 23, was confidence personified as she claimed the Gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol event with a score of 238.8, far ahead of second-placed Manu Bhaker's 236.7, at the Dr Karni Singh Range.

Viktoria Chaika of Belarus bagged the Bronze medal with 215.9.

The other Indian in the event, Shri Nivetha, started well but finished fourth with 193.5.

Deswal also topped the qualifications with 579, her sequence of scores reading 99, 96, 97, 97, 98, 92.

Bhaker, 19, shot a total of 577 for second place (94, 95, 97, 95, 98, 98), while Nivetha shot 574 to be placed fourth (97, 96, 94, 94, 97, 97) in the qualifications.

Both Deswal and Bhaker are Tokyo Olympics quota holders.

In a strong start to the 24-shot final for India, Bhaker topped the first series with Deswal and Nivetha following her in second and third place,



respectively.

However, Deswal pipped her compatriot Bhaker at the top position before the final entered the elimination stage.

There was no looking back for Deswal from thereon as the 2019 Rio de Janeiro World Cup Gold medalist led the field from start to finish.

Such was India's dominance in the event that after their three shooters finished in the top four in the qualifying, they held the top three position till the end of the fourth series when Nivetha was pipped by Mexican, Alejandra Zavala Vazquez, who finished fifth.

The fancied world number four Chaudhary was humbled in the final shot by Iran's Javed Foroughi, currently ranked 107th in the ISSF rankings.

Foroughi, who had only 14 seconds on the clock to fire his final shot, scored a winning 10.5 after the 18-year-old



Chaudhary managed 9.8 in his last attempt of the Gold medal round.

Foroughi shot a total of 243.6 to claim the top prize and Chaudhary fired 243.2 to win

silver while Verma aggregated 221.8 to bag the Bronze at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting

Range. Former world number one Indian Shahzar Rizvi bowed out in fifth place with a score of 177.1.

Three successive 9.6 by the Iranian opened a window of opportunity for Chaudhary, but the 41-year-old Foroughi sealed the issue in his favour with his last shot in an exciting final.

Youth Olympic and Asian Games Gold medalist Chaudhary topped the qualifications with 587 after a sequence of series that read 96, 98, 97, 98, 99, 99.

Verma was second with 583 after a series of 96, 98, 99, 97, 97, 96 while Rizvi was fourth with 580 (98, 97, 97, 97, 95, 96).

Before the women's 10m air rifle event, the 18-year-old Divyansh shot 228.1 to finish third on the podium.

The other Indian participant in his event, Arjun Babuta, finished in fifth place.

American Lucas Kozieniesky claimed the Gold medal with 249.8, while Istvan Peni of Hungary bagged Silver with 249.7.

A 10.6 and 10.3 in the seventh series saw Divyansh survive elimination as Sergey Richter of Israel fell behind.

Divyansh, a Tokyo Olympic quota holder, shot 10.6 before bowing out with the Bronze medal. He was placed sixth in the 60-shot qualification with a total of 629.1, while Babuta was third with 631.8.

Earlier in the day, three shooters, including two from the Indian pistol men's team, tested positive for Covid-19. The shooters are currently self-isolating in their team hotel.

In all, four shooters have already been afflicted by the dreaded virus since the teams started arriving for the tournament, prompting the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to ask National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) to take stock of the situation and submit a report on a bio-bubble breach by some international shooters.

TECHNOFAB ENGINEERING
 Regd. Office: 913, Hemkunt Chambers, 89 Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110 019.
 CIN : L74210DL1971PLC005712
 Tel : +91-11-2641-1931 / 2641-5961
 Email : cs@technofabengineering.com
 Website : www.technofabengineering.com

NOTICE
 This is to inform that a Board meeting is scheduled to be held on 26 March 2021 at the corporate office of the Company to consider and approve the financial results for the quarter ended 30 June 2020 and Half Year & quarter ended 30 September 2020. Please take note that the trading window will remain closed for the concerned persons upto 48 years of the announcement of all financial results upto 31 December 2020.
 This information is also available on the portal of Company/Stock Exchanges.
 For Technofab Engineering Limited
 Date: 20/03/2021
 Place: New Delhi
 Suman Kumar Verma
 Company Secretary

BANARAS LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI - 221004
 Bid No. E-82/2020-21 E-Tenders Date : 15.03.2021

E-Tenders are invited for & behalf of the President of India for the supply of following items. Only E-offers will be accepted for which vendors must have Class III Digital Signature and registration on IREPS. The details of tenders are in the following sequence :- S. No., Tender No. (Due Date), Description and Quantity.

S. No. 1. 05215049 (06.04.2021), Adapter for Profile Checking, 01 Nos., S. No. 2. 05215050 (06.04.2021), Adapter for MW No. 3131, 01 Nos., S. No. 3. 05215052 (06.04.2021), Adapter for Cam Profile Checking, 01 Nos., S. No. 4. 05215052 (06.04.2021), Master for Calibration, 01 Nos., S. No. 5. 05215053 (07.04.2021), HSS T/S Extra Long Drill, 05 Nos., S. No. 6. 05215054 (07.04.2021), Solid Carbide Endmill Cylindrical Shank, 20 Nos., S. No. 7. 05215055 (07.04.2021), Thruster, 05 Nos., S. No. 8. 05215056 (07.04.2021), Current Sensor, 01 Set, S. No. 9. 05215057 (09.04.2021), Motor for Hoist Motion, 01 Nos., S. No. 10. 05215058 (09.04.2021), Motor for CT Motion, 01 Nos., S. No. 11. 05215059 (09.04.2021), Snap Lock Limit Switch, 02 Nos., S. No. 12. 05215060 (09.04.2021), Load Cell, 04 Nos., S. No. 13. 05211007 (07.04.2021), Tungsten Carbide Rotary Burr, Part No. 72357113, 249 Nos., S. No. 14. 05211008 (07.04.2021), White Clad Steel Tape, Part No. 72160109, 696 Nos., S. No. 15. 05211006 (12.04.2021), HSS Combination Centre Drill, Part No. 72201008, 72 Nos., Corrigendum S. No. : 1, Tender No. : 05215030, Bid No. : E-78, Rev. : 01, Existing Due Date : 15.03.2021, Revised Due Date : 07.04.2021. All other terms & condition shall remain unchanged.
 PRO/BLWS-93 SMM/G-II
 f /banaraslocowork "Website: https://blw.indianrailways.gov.in"

CSB Bank
 Formerly The Catholic Syrian Bank Ltd.
 Faridabad Branch located at A/2-B, NH-1, Nehru Ground, Neelam Bata Road, Faridabad-121001, Phone No. 9072601300

GOLD AUCTION NOTICE
 CSB Bank Limited, Gurgaon branch had granted gold loan against pledge of gold ornaments to the below mentioned borrowers. Notice has been issued to them demanding repayment of the amount with interest and charges thereon. Since they have failed to repay the balance outstanding in the respective accounts, we are constrained to recover the amount by sale of gold ornaments in public auction and if the auction does not fetch required amount, bank will proceed with the sale by private treaties/contract. Bank reserves its right to change/extend the date and venue of auction without assigning any reason.

| SI | Name of borrower | Gross Weight of Pledge Items (in gm) | Overdue Gold Loan Account no. | Amount | Balance as on 18.03.2021 |
|----|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Raj Rani | 91.7 | 0300-04092907-000003 | 3,15,000/- | 3,28,356/- |
| 2. | Deepak | 19.5 | 0300-04182690-000001 | 72,000/- | 76,893.14/- |
| 3. | Ratnesh | 282.8 | 0300-04143409-000003 | 10,00,000/- | 10,76,537/- |
| 4. | Ratnesh | 59.3 | 0300-04143409-000004 | 2,00,000/- | 2,17,208/- |
| 5. | Ratnesh | 47.2 | 0300-04143409-000005 | 1,38,000/- | 1,49,654/- |
| 6. | Ratnesh | 18.7 | 0300-04143409-000006 | 65,000/- | 64,017.07/- |

The auction will be conducted at the premises of CSB Bank Limited, Faridabad branch premises situated at A/2-B, NH-1, Nehru Ground, Neelam Bata Road, Faridabad-121001 on 30.03.2021 at 03.00 p.m. Interested parties may contact the Branch Manager in the above address. Participants should attend the auction along with copy of Pan Card, passport size photo, valid identity proof and address proof on the date of auction.
 Place: Faridabad
 Date : 21-03-2021 BRANCH MANAGER

No fans from abroad in Tokyo Olympics

AFP ■ TOKYO

International spectators will not be allowed to enter Japan for this summer's Olympic Games amid public concerns over coronavirus, organisers said on Saturday, setting the stage for a drastically scaled-back event.

Some 600,000 Olympic tickets purchased by overseas residents will be refunded, as will another 300,000 Paralympic tickets, Toshiro Muto, the chief executive of the Tokyo 2020 organising committee told a news conference.

He declined to say how much the refunds would cost.

The Olympic Games were postponed last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. While the outbreak has chilled public opinion toward the event, both organisers and Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga have vowed to press ahead with the Games.

The decision on International spectators will "ensure safe and secure Games



for all participants and the Japanese public," Tokyo 2020 organisers said in a statement following five-way talks that included the head of the

International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, and the Tokyo governor.

"People who are involved in the Olympics in some way may be allowed to enter the country, whereas regular visitors will not be able to," Tokyo 2020's Muto said.

He said costs for hotel cancellations would not be covered. Organisers may also consider reducing the number of staff members who will participate in the Games.

The Games are scheduled for July 23 to August 8, and the Paralympics from August 24 to September 5.

Media polls have shown that a majority of the Japanese public are wary about letting in International spectators to watch the Games as the country grapples with the tail-end of a third wave of the pandemic.

STRIPPED-DOWN GAMES

A stripped-down Games means the Government will not get the tourism boom it

had long counted on. Japan has grown increasingly reliant on foreign tourists, particularly from Asia, to bolster its weak domestic economy.

Saturday's decision did not cover local spectators. Muto said organisers will decide next month on caps for spectators in venues.

"It's very unfortunate," Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike said of the decision on international spectators, speaking to reporters after the meeting.

But she added that the conclusion was "unavoidable" given that the main priority for holding a successful Games would be the health of the athletes and the Japanese public.

उपरोक्त पाठक डॉ.समिन्सन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना
 अनुमती के श्रेणी कार्यदायी संस्थाओं/आपूर्तिकर्ताओं से विद्युत पारेषण मंडल, ग्रेटर नोएडा के अन्तर्गत तिन कार्य हेतु ई-निविदाई ई-पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर एवं दो मांगों में निविदा खोलने की दिनांक को 12.00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है।
 1. अल्प कालीन निविदा संख्या टी-147/2020-21: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, बुलन्दशहर के अन्तर्गत 220 के०वी० उपकेंद्र, सिकन्दराबाद पर शतियसत 83 एम०वी००० परिवर्तक बदलने का कार्य। घरोहर राशि रु० 7,000/-निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु० 1,180/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 30.03.2021। 2. निविदा संख्या टी-05/2021-22: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, बुलन्दशहर के अन्तर्गत 220 के०वी० उपकेंद्र, सिकन्दराबाद का वार्षिक आधार पर अनुसूचना का कार्य। घरोहर राशि रु० 14,000/-निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु० 1770/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 03.04.2021। 3. निविदा संख्या टी-06/2021-22: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, हापुड के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न उपकेंद्रों पर अनुसूचना सम्बन्धित कार्य। घरोहर राशि रु० 1,500/-निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु० 590/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 03.04.2021। 4. निविदा संख्या टी-07/2021-22: विद्युत 400 के०वी० उपकेंद्र खण्ड, ग्रेटर नोएडा के अन्तर्गत विद्युत 400 के०वी० उपकेंद्र ग्रेटर नोएडा पर 33 के०वी० लाईन के अनुसूचना सम्बन्धित कार्य। घरोहर राशि रु० 12,000/-निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु० 1,770/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 20.04.2021। 5. निविदा संख्या टी-08/2021-22: विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, हापुड के अन्तर्गत 132 के०वी० उपकेंद्र, हापुड पर अनुसूचना सम्बन्धित कार्य। घरोहर राशि रु० 2,000/-निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु० 590/- (कर सहित)। खुलने की दिनांक 20.04.2021। कृपया विस्तृत जानकारी, डाउनलोड, अन्य संशोधनों एवं ई-निविदा प्रस्तुत करने के दिनांक तक विस्तार आदि के सम्बन्ध में कृपया etender.up.nic.in पर लॉग ऑन करें। असीक्षण अभियन्ता, चण्डापादाप्रकाशलि, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल, 400 के०वी० उपकेंद्र, पाली, ग्रेटर नोएडा। पत्रांक-629 वि०पाम०/शे०ना०/T-147/20-21 & T-05 to 08/2021-22 दिनांक 20.03.2021 "संप्रतिष्ठित में कर्जा बचाव"।

IMPORTANT NOTICE
 This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to extend the periodicity of the run of following Special trains as under:-

| Train No. & Name | Days of run | Presently Notified Upto | Extended Upto |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 04210 Lucknow-Prayagraj Sangam Special | Daily | 15.03.2021 | 23.03.2021 to 20.04.2021 |
| 04209 Prayagraj Sangam-Lucknow Special | Daily | 16.03.2021 | 24.03.2021 to 21.04.2021 |
| 04216 Lucknow-Prayagraj Sangam Special | Daily | 14.03.2021 | 23.03.2021 to 20.04.2021 |
| 04215 Prayagraj Sangam-Lucknow Special | Daily | 15.03.2021 | 24.03.2021 to 21.04.2021 |
| 04308 Bareilly-Prayagraj Sangam Special | Daily | 13.03.2021 | 23.03.2021 to 19.04.2021 |
| 04307 Prayagraj Sangam-Bareilly Special | Daily | 16.03.2021 | 25.03.2021 to 21.04.2021 |
| 04231/04232 Basti-Prayagraj Sangam-Basti Special | Except Thu, Sun | 16.03.2021 | 24.03.2021 to 21.04.2021 |
| 04233 Prayagraj Sangam-Mankapur Jn. Spl. | Daily | 14.03.2021 | 23.03.2021 to 20.04.2021 |
| 04234 Mankapur Jn.-Prayagraj Sangam Spl. | Daily | 15.03.2021 | 24.03.2021 to 21.04.2021 |

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'I've done films that I can take to my grave'

■ **What made you do Season 2 of Dev DD?**

The place where Season 1 left, it had scope for more and it organically led to Season 2. The conflict of characters just about begins. For me, it was a natural progression from one to two. In the prequel my character, Anurag,

is in love with his daughter's best friend, in Season 2, it takes off from where things were left.

■ **What is the story here?**

Certain stories, the central ones, Season 2 builds on them. But now, more characters have been introduced here — thriller elements have been added — Paritosh and Aditi. Anurag and Devika's story is conflicted, she tries to resolve it, one will have to see whether it happens or not. Then there is his daughter's love story that moves ahead.

■ **How tough was it to shoot for this season?**

Definitely not terms of the craft. But in terms of logistics. Initially, when we started shooting for this season, it was sometime in October, things were just opening up and one had to take a lot of precautions. This slowed down the pace of the shoot. Also, one has to get tested regularly since all the actors in

front of the camera are without a mask. There were other issues as well. Take an example — costumes. The stories didn't allow trials due to the COVID-19. This was a challenge for the stylist. So, the whole functioning changed. First two-three days, there were over a hundred people on the set. It was a bit daunting and then it became normal with the precautions of course.

■ **Two new characters have been introduced in Season 2. Did it affect the bonding that you had with your co-stars?**

Not at all. It was exciting to have two new characters; they are both wonderful people. While it is true that one develops a bond and camaraderie, Nauheed Cyrusi and Aman Uppal blended so beautifully into the team and actually took it ahead especially Aman who would greet and wish everybody after coming to the sets. We had that kind of courtesy. It was gracious of him to do so. Season 2 was shot pre-lockdown and post-lockdown in terms of time one was part of a larger journey. Time spent together virtually or otherwise was longer and we were able to bond well.

■ **Has OTT changed the dynamics for actors?**

It has definitely, sort of, democratised the whole star system. The web series is a much longer format. The story and the character graph have more time than what you get in films. The writers too it gives them a definite arc to develop the character so one remains in that role for a much longer time and explore more. This is a big boost for new actors who don't need a big launch or have the burden of a 100-crore film. There is a good amount of work for actors and even technicians. Once the lockdown opened there was a sudden rush to fill the gap of six-seven months. Unfinished projects had to be completed. New projects took off to fill the lack of entertainment. When I got calls, before talking about the role, they asked if I had dates. The OTT has been good for actors, directors, producers and the crew.

■ **Do you think that OTT has better options for actors?**

I wouldn't say it is better or worse since I don't want to weigh it in this manner. Both can co-exist. Web series in some way are structured in a format.

You end every episode with a hook. A film can be open-ended. It doesn't have to have it. Like there is a difference between a full-length film and a short film. A film is far more organic and not data driven. In an OTT, the pacing is structured since one is dealing with a diverse audience which will slip very quickly. It is not like a date with cinema.

■ **Does it bother that people still talk about My Brother... Nikhil?**

It doesn't bother me at all that despite it not being a 100-crore, people still remember me. It is wonderful. It is great that somewhere when 100-crore became the benchmark, I had movies that people remember like *Chauranga*, *My Brother... Nikhil*, *Jhankaar Beats* and *I Am*, that I can take them to my grave. Each film has a long shelf life. I am fortunate and grateful that I have done these projects.

■ **What next?**

I am shooting for a series and a film. There is another series and the shoot has to start. I also produce films and have a few feature film scripts. Time and opportunity permitting, I will take them up as well.

Talktime

SANJAY SURI

The actor who left a mark in movies like *Jhankaar Beats*, *I Am* and *My Brother... Nikhil* is back with Season 2 of *Dev DD*. Shalini Saxena chats him up about what this season is about, how OTT platforms have changed the dynamics for actors and upcoming projects

On a spiritual mission

MUSBA HASHMI chats up ACHARYA PRASHANT, an IIT-IIM alumnus and an ex-Civil Servant, who is on a mission to revive the Vedas by introducing to the world 17 different forms of The Gita

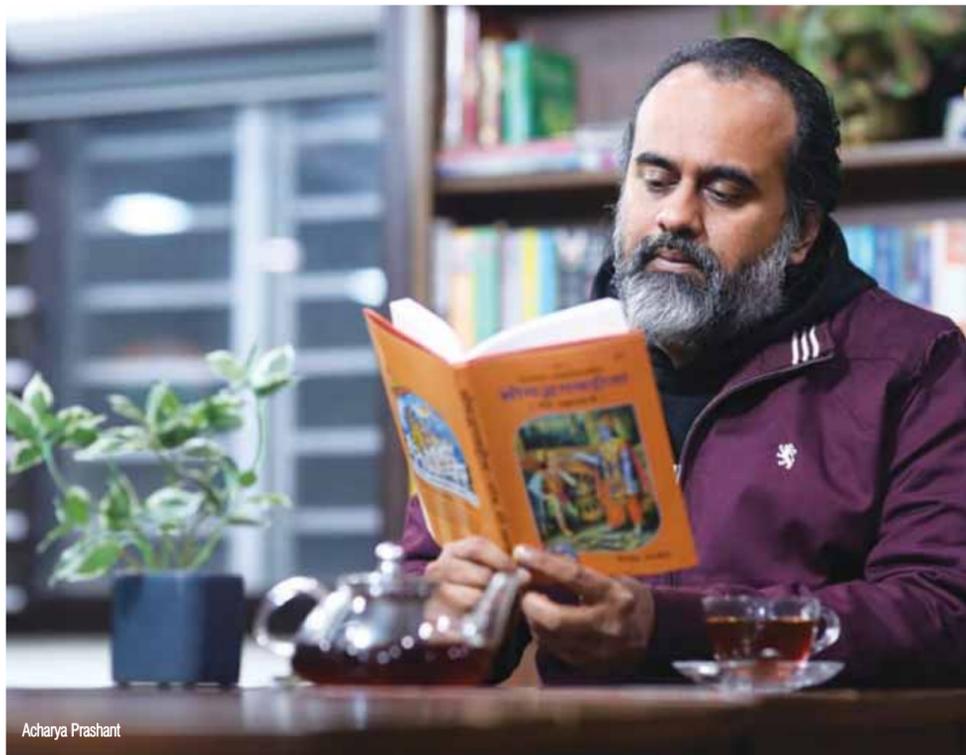
The usual perceived notion of an *acharya* — draped in saffron *dhoti*, flaunting a long unkempt beard and a *teeka* on the forehead — has now been changing because of the likes of those of Guru Gaur Gopal Das, Sadhguru and many others. One of them is Acharya Prashant aka Prashant Tripathi. However, the fact that sets him apart from all his compatriots is that he teaches 17 forms of Gita.

Surprising enough? What is even more interesting is the fact that the Acharya is an IIT-IIM alumnus and also an ex-civil services officer who decided to leave his job behind in order to attend to the spiritual call.

"There was no magical instance as such. It was a natural process and spirituality was always in the back of mind. I was always looking for the right things that I wanted to do in life. Initially, I thought that it can be done through bureaucracy. Later on, I discovered that it was to the way out. In 2000, I cleared IIM-Ahmedabad and UPSC at the same time, then took a sabbatical for three years, completed MBA and after that I left the IRPS Services. In 2006, I founded Adwait Life-Education Foundation where we were teaching spirituality to engineering students. Moving on, in 2015, I founded PrashantAdwait Foundation. This is how it happened," he tells you.

Not that his decision of leaving the Civil Services didn't meet resistance. It was his personality and his choice of people that helped him in the long run. "I have always been an off-beat person, which gives me the advantage that I didn't have people around me who would counter my decisions. I had people around me who resonated with the kind of person I am and the things that I have wanted in life. I faced some resistance when I became a missionary," he says.

While many say, criticism is the best motivation, one may wonder what made Acharya surround himself with people who only resonated



Acharya Prashant

with his thoughts.

"Criticism doesn't always come from people. The best form of criticism can come from honest self-reflection. If your worry is that by not having critical people around you, one may become myopic, for that I had wise people and immense literature to support me. Also, to add to this, all the challenging decisions that I have taken in life were appreciated by critics. I only had people around me who doesn't unnecessarily throw resistance and not the ones who doesn't have a similar vision like me and thought I didn't have much potential," he says.

However, teaching spirituality didn't come without its share of challenges. It was a task to attract students towards the subject. "In order to tackle this challenge, we developed a curriculum where we promised

jobs to students. On this pretext, we taught them spirituality and it became a major success. Apart from that, we also made sure that we are talking to students in a language and way that they are comfortable in," he says. He has recently launched Upanishad and Wisdom, an online course on Upanishads and Gitas in order to expand the learning experience.

What helped Acharya to explore different forms of Gita is that he decided to dig deep into the subject. It wasn't a difficult thing to do, he says. "The word Gita means songs. A song that is coming from deep meditation and devotion. All the ancient teachings were transformed into songs. And that there are 17 different forms of Gita, it is not a very obscure fact. Anybody who has some understanding of the

When one reads these scriptures, the usual perception is that his outlook towards things will change. However, it is not true. You will continue to see the same things, but with more clarity

Indian spiritual tradition would come to know that there are actually hundreds of Gitas.

"In fact, after Sri Krishan told Srimad Bhagwad Gita to Arjun, there is another Gita called Uttar Gita after the war got over. Here Arjun told Sri Krishan that he has forgotten whatever that was told to him and asks if Sri Krishan can tell him the Gita all over again. Sri Krishan scolds and retells Arjun the entire Gita again, hence it is called Uttar Gita. Even the Mahabharat has 18 Gitas, out of which Srimad Bhagwad Gita is just one," he explains. The retreats, he says, were started in 2012 when he would sit besides the ranges in Rishikesh and Puri and would read the scriptures for entire nights. It went on for about five years. However, it was not as if, during these years, he got some enlightenment. The only thing

which changed was his perspective towards life. It became clear.

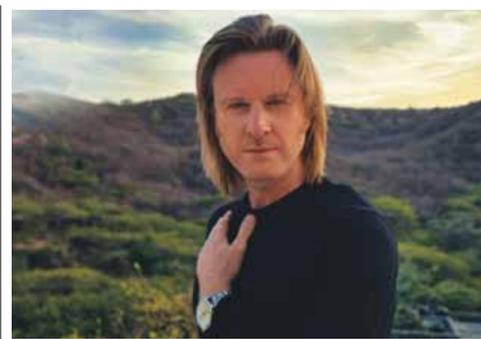
"When one reads these scriptures, the usual perception is that his perception towards things will change. However, it is not true. You will continue to see the same things, but with more clarity. I won't say I started looking at different things, instead I looked at the same things but with more clarity. So, this is what I learnt during this spiritual journey," he explains.

One of the things that his organisations stands against is superstition. Before reaching the stage of clarity, what one faces is confusion. It is not as if one sits and within five minutes he knows it all. It is a process which can be certainly frustrating at times. "You read something that is intended to give you clarity, but you end up more confused. You implement it, live with this confusion for months or even years and then something opens up and you realise that this is what it was. There have been a lot of struggle with confusion, but during this I ensured one thing that I kept moving forward," he says.

Ask Acharya what kept him going in the period of struggle and he is quick to answer — my love to gaining clarity.

"I know if I am confused, this confusion will not go away by lying down and watching Netflix for 10 hours. I have to do something about it. It was clarity itself that kept me going," he adds.

Not only teaching spirituality, Acharya also helps people across the world by motivating them to lead a better life. On a daily basis, he gets about 400 queries on depression and other things. However, the number was doubled during the lockdown. "We were shocked to see so many queries pouring in. It was then when people realised death is inevitable. It depressed them. The only solution we gave them is to do good and productive things. It will give you positivity because you will realise the value of life and time," he tells you



'I CAN SAY KEEMA BHAREY SALAAN MURG KA PULAO IN MY SLEEP NOW'

ALEX O'NEILL, who plays a documentary filmmaker in *Roohi*, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his experience of working with Rajkumar Rao, his two singles and how he began working in Bollywood

■ **For those who haven't seen *Roohi*, what is your role?**

It is my first time working in a horror-comedy. It is pretty awesome. It has been a while since I was part of a comedy film. I started off with this genre and did *Joker* (Akshay Kumar and Sonakshi Sinha starrer). It was a great way to start my career here. I play Tim in *Roohi*, a documentary filmmaker who encounters Rajkumar (Rao) and Varun's (Sharma) characters. What plays out forms the outcome of this movie. My character is the personification of the audience in the film.

■ **How did you come on board for the project?**

We started working on this project sometime back and I really don't remember how things moved forward and how I came on board for this film. I was shooting for something else at that time when this project came along. I studied journalism but have never played one on-screen. What I loved about this movie was that it has a different perspective. My name got tossed around in a room and someone got in touch with me and that was it.

■ **How was it to work with Janhvi Kapoor and Rajkumar Rao?**

This is my third project with Rajkumar Rao, the first one was *Chittagong*. The two of us come together to work once every couple of years. In both the previous movies I want to kill him. *Roohi* is a pleasant change. He is a great person and not because he is a good actor. We would have a few chats in between shots. Varun (Sharma) is a wonderful person. It was great to work with this team, especially Hardik Mehta.

■ **You released two singles as well. What are they about?**

The first, released last year, was *Still On My Mind*. Most of my music is in English but people here still listen to them; it is amazing. The statistics show that most of the viewers were in India even though the song is in English. Just after completing working on *Aarya*, I released *Bhagwad Gita* song. The reason why I did this was because I had memorised Sanskrit *shlokas* for *Aarya* and they were dancing around in my head. I sat down with a guitar and did this song and released it. It is in Sanskrit so very specific to the audience but whoever has heard it has loved it. My musical journey has just begun.

■ **Have you managed to move past the image of the waiter who couldn't pronounce the dish in *Cheeni Kum*?**

I can recite the name in my sleep — *keema bharey salaan murg ka pulao*. People say that I started my career where I was unable to pronounce the dish to now reciting, from memory, *shlokas* in Sanskrit from The Bhagwad; it has been an interesting journey. Language is not my strong point but I work really hard on it. There is a project that I am working on, I don't speak a word in English, only Hindi. I loved being part of *Cheeni Kum* and being face-to-face with the great Amitabh Bachchan. When people remind me of the movie, I smile.

■ **What made you come to India?**

I was working with a marketing company and it was opening up offices in India, South Africa and Philippines. But I was an actor on stage in the US and a model. While I was here, modeling led to my first ad and that led to my first film. Then I got super lucky and did *Nach Baliye*. I am a horrible dancer but it gave me the exposure countrywide and opened doors to films and series. I am grateful to the Indian audience for accepting me on-screen and also listening to my music.

■ **You have been in the industry for over a decade now. Was there a character that you loved playing?**

There are so many. In *Urmi* (Malayalam), I play a double role. *Main Aur Charles*, with Randeep Hooda was yet another film that I loved being a part of. I loved the movie as well. I even tracked down the inspector who had tracked down Charles Shobraj. I love history and wanted to know more so that I could step into the shoes of the character that I played.

■ **What are you working on now?**

I can talk about projects that are for public knowledge. There is *The Battle of Bhima Koregaon* with Arjun Rampal. It is a period war drama. I play a positive role here. *Golondaaj* is another one, a Bengali film on football. I am excited about this film. *Chehre*, I have a cameo. For *Bhoot Police* we are still shooting, again a cameo. There are a few others as well.

WEEKLY NATTER

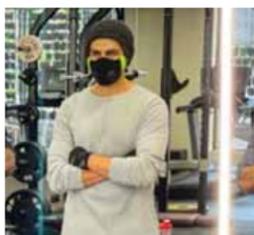
KARTIK ARYAN GEARING UP FOR SOMETHING BIG

Actor Kartik Aryan teased his fans about a new project on Saturday. The actor, who is currently shooting for *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, uploaded a picture on Instagram, where he is seen in the gym with his trainers.

"Training for something big #NextFilm #SuperPumped," he wrote with the picture.

Kartik recently informed his followers that actress Tabu had joined the shoot of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*. He had posted a picture and captioned it: "Welcome back @tabufilmi Ji But she refuses to come out of bubble, brings her own portable Z+ + Bio-Bubble to shoot #BhoolBhulaiyaa2 @kiaraaliaadvani @aneesbazmee @muradkhetani."

The film, which also stars Kiara Advani, is directed by Anees Bazmee. The film's shoot was delayed several times due to Covid.



IAN/S

SAIYAMI MISSES BEACH LIFE

Actress Saiyami Kher shared beach vibes with fans on Saturday, along with a bikini snapshot.

Saiyami wears a green two-piece with a black ripped shrug as she strikes a pose kneeling on the sand with the sea and distant hills in the background. The actress looks sultry gorgeous with her damp hair kept open. "Majorly miss the beach life," she captioned the image.

Saiyami, who made her Bollywood debut with *Mirza*, later worked in the web series *Breath: Into The Shadows* and the digitally-released films *Choked: Paisa Bolta Hai* and *Unpaused*.

Her next release is the Telugu action thriller *Wild Dog*, co-starring Nagarjuna and Dia Mirza.

IAN/S

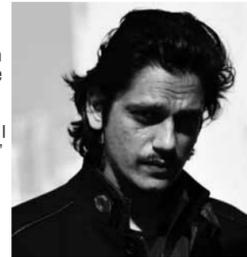
'YOU WILL SEE ME HEADLINING MORE'

Actor Vijay Varma, in his almost decade-long journey in Bollywood, has tried several genres. Although he feels he cannot run around trees, he would not mind giving it a shot.

Vijay made his Bollywood debut in 2012 with *Chittagong*, a historical film. He was then seen in genres such as action, crime drama, neo-noir action thriller, bio-pic and musical drama among others. He has also entered the space of comedy with *OK Computer*, the upcoming sci-fi web-series.

Is there something Vijay cannot do? "I am sure I cannot do running around the trees... but let me try," pat came the reply.

With all the success coming his way, where does he see himself going? "You will see me headlining more. I was participating in projects I wanted to participate in, only for the love of working with certain individuals and being part of these stories. But now I am kind of looking at headlining shows or films that have me as the central part, because I want to explore the entire arc," Vijay told IANS.



Normal is not something to aspire to, it's something to get away from
— Jodie Foster



FROM THE INSIDE

Need of mind sanitisers

We need to start using mindfulness and emotional release techniques in order to keep our mental sanity and be in peace



Clear mind, better focus

Contextual Meditation is intended to redefine the thought process through self-reflection on fresh educative inputs

IS CINEMA SAME AS 'NATYA'?

Understanding Cinema as *Natya*, there is a hope that we would rediscover the intellectual heritage and be benefitted with cross cultural debates, writes PRACHAND PRAVEER as delves into the underlying principles of *Natyashastra* and how these principles reflect in the modern cinema



Can Cinema be called as 'Natya'? Let us take a step back and understand what 'Natya' signifies? *Natya* is not the same as drama or play, rather it is the subject-matter or the essence of a play (*Nataka*). The ancient Indian dramaturgy, as illustrated in the *Natyashastra* (composed between 200 BC to 200 AD, by generations of scholars and the authorship is attributed to sage Bharata Muni), explains many concepts which claims to cover all kinds of arts subservient to *Natya*.

Natyashastra meant to serve as a practical guide for poets and artists for the successful creation and performance of 'Natya'. It begins with the mythological anecdote about how *Natya* was created. In one of the key dialogues, Indra, the king of Gods, requests Lord Brahma to create a playful medium which is both aural and visual. He asked that the new playful medium should be the *summum bonum* of all knowledge i.e. liberation or freedom, available for everyone.

THEATRE, NATYA, AND RASA

Let us have a relook on some key words such as *Nritt*, *Nritya* and *Natya*. A normal category of dance devoid of any conveyable meaning is classically called *Nritt*. When the meaning is conveyed through dance movements it is called *Nritya*. In *Natya*, there is the element of *Rasa*, which is the object of relishment as well as the relishment itself. The idea of *Rasa* is remarkably interesting for thinkers, art-theorist as well as common people as per our cultural heritage.

We commonly associate and equate 'Natya' with the theatrical performance. When we think of theatre, we tend to attribute certain histrionics or some exaggeration in speech or movements. Based on this limited outlook, we tend to overlook certain basic principles. The commonly understood exaggeration is covered in one of the ten parts of *Natya* — *dharmi*, which does not prescribe exaggeration always.

NATYASHASTRA AND ABHINAVAGUPTA

Our understanding of *Natyashastra* would have been very superficial had we not discovered the lost commentary on it by the great Kashmiri Shaivite philosopher of the tenth century, Abhinavagupta. The *Abhinavabharati*, was found in the 1910s in Kerala. With this discovery, Indian philosophical discourse found a fresh grandeur in Kashmir Shaivism, which claims to be the fruit of great classical Indian philosophical debates on Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ontology, Grammar and Bhakti traditions after the debates of Buddhism vs Sanatana, Dualistic vs Non-Dualistic traditions, assimilating the impacts of Grammarians on various schools of thoughts. Abhinavagupta's impact can be seen in the *Sangita-Ratnakara* of Sharangdeva in the 13th century.

PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS AND RASA THEORY

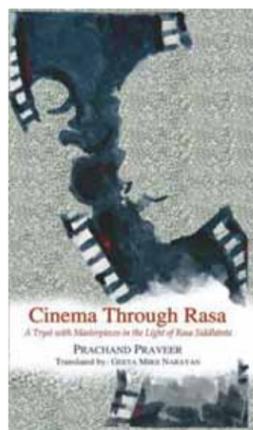
To understand the implication of philosophical discourse in aesthetics, we end up discussing attributes of consciousness and its functions. That is why, an idea of enjoyment of the arts is linked with the metaphysical and epistemological thoughts to be discussed within a coherent framework of ideas. For example, we can say our consciousness has three major functions: to know, to act and to feel. These functions are not mutually exclusive but are dominant facets to comprehend consciousness. Now the rule of knowing (involving knowledge, knower and known) and the rule of acting (involving action, agent, and object) are different from the rule of feeling (involving relishment, aesthete and an aesthetic performance).

The famous *rasa* formula illustrates that while watching a dramatic performance, the fusion of determinant, consequent and transitory emotion express *rasa* (commonly translated as 'sentiment'). The *rasa* expressed is of eight types: Love (*Shringara*), Comic (*Hasya*), Heroic (*Veera*), Marvelous (*Adbhuta*), Fury (*Raudra*), Tragic (*Karuna*), Odious (*Vibhatsa*), and Terrible (*Bhayanaka*). The key characteristic of the *Rasa* theory is the identification of a chief *rasa* in the entire performance while the other *rasas* expressed in the same drama becomes subservient to it.

CINEMA THROUGH RASA

Over a period of time, many scholars have tried to add a few more *rasas* to the above list. Great debates have filled up literary discourses over centuries, while Cinema, the new art form having a history of only 125 years, unfolds to modern audiences and has reinvented itself through various stages. The early era of silent and black & white movies was more universal. As technology progressed, sound was added to moving images and the talkies of the 30s replaced the idea of silent movies. When colour movies became affordable to all directors, the 60s witnessed the B&W movies moving out. The current change is adoption of the 3D and the business aspect is also undergoing a transformation through OTT media services.

It is interesting to note that almost all the masterpieces of world cinema can be explained within the Indian classical framework of the *Rasa* Theory. Bharata *Muni* notes three kinds of fear while discussing the Terrible sentiment and we find that Alfred Hitchcock obsessed with making films related to pseudo-fear or fear of wrong doing. It is our ignorance if we equate and limit the 'Terrible Sentiment' to monsters and the horror-genre, which is another kind of *Bhayanaka Rasa*. Similarly, our vocabulary limits our notion of heroism to fighting the bad. In a way the westerns of John Ford or the great samurai movies of Akira Kurosawa are indeed heroic and subscribe to the *Veera Rasa*, but there are other aspects of heroism such as the sacrific-



THE MODERN ART MEDIUM SUCH AS CINEMA HAS PUSHED THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT WAS NOT POSSIBLE EARLIER OR EVEN WHAT WAS PROHIBITED TO BE DEMONSTRATED. MUCH CREDIT GOES TO THE CAMERA WHICH TRANSFORMS THE DETERMINANTS AND CONSEQUENTS EFFECTIVELY, WHICH ALONG WITH EDITING ENHANCE THE EFFECTS



ing and the righteous hero. Thus, the onus is on us to perceive Charlie Chaplin as a hero in his celebrated film, *City Lights* (1931) than to think of him as a mere comedian. Substantial works of Quentin Tarantino and Martin Scorsese are limited to the Fury Sentiment (*Raudra Rasa*). It can be noticed that the protagonist in the movies such as *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Raging Bull* (1980), *Good Fellas* (1990) and *The Irishman* (2019) are not noble individuals but criminals or what can be classically called as having a demonic nature.

CINEMA CREATING NEW VISTAS

The modern art medium such as Cinema has pushed the boundaries of what was not possible earlier or even what was prohibited to be demonstrated. Much credit goes to the camera which transforms the determinants and consequents effectively, which along with editing enhance the effects. Determinants in a drama are defined as the inherent reasons for the manifestation of *rasa*, they could be objects, situations, or even beautifully dressed characters. Consequents are word play, bodily actions, physio-psychological gestures that help in developing the transitory feelings and support the persistent feelings (that help in identifying the *rasa*).

Major directors have experimented and made even the 'Odious' (*Vibhatsa Rasa*) as the chief *rasa*, many works of David Lynch and the last work of Italian director Piero Paolo Pasolini bear testimony to this. Traditionally the comic (*Hasya Rasa*) was limited to the performance of jesters in a play. And thus, it was not given much importance and was thought to be entertaining only to women, children, and persons with lesser maturity. Cinema, in its artform, exhibited that *Hasya Rasa* can be achieved without the help of a jester and also that a jester can turn it into a chief *rasa*. It is indeed a wonder that the 1920s had great stalwarts such as Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Max Linder busy in making people laugh and how we lack such individual talent in our times.

The tragic sentiment is expressed in three modes — loss of wealth, failure to act righteously and gloom born out of death. Usually, tragedy is understood as irreparable loss, whereas *Natyashastra* informs, educates, and warns us that tragedy can strike by financial loss and failure to act morally as well. The celebrated movie of Vittorio De Sica — *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) is a fine example of sorrow where despite no death being shown, the viewers witness a sense of great loss. The usual question asked about the tragic sentiment is — how can a sad performance be enjoyed?

We know that there is nothing called aesthetic sorrow. In order to explain and understand the phenomena, Abhinavagupta discusses the idea of obstacles encountered in the *rasa* perception.

OBSTACLES TO RASA RELISHMENT

The idea of obstacles in *Rasa* guides us as to how the delight in our consciousness is expressed when we are devoid of obstacles such as personal sorrow, or over-identification with the depicted sorrow. When a clear consciousness, devoid of any impurities, watches such a performance, which is an enactment and is of the nature of transcendental reality, the self-repose after the sorrow is joyous. Therefore, we are able to enjoy and celebrate the works of Andrei Tarkovsky, Ingmar Bergman, Robert Bresson, Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak.

POPULAR CINEMA: VEERA, ADBHUTA AND SHRINGARA RASA

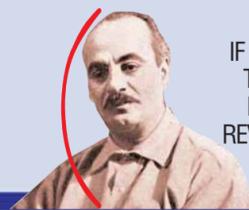
In many big-budgeted Hollywood movies and Indian movies with lavish sets, the audience are exposed to the idea of wonderment and thus the Marvelous Sentiment. Works of Steven Spielberg, James Cameron, and Christopher Nolan examine the concepts unheard of or having the qualities of magnificence. Just like the ancient Indian dramas, world over, cinemas having *Veera Rasa*, *Adbhuta Rasa* and *Shringara Rasa* as the chief *rasa* are very popular.

Shringara Rasa or the Love sentiment is considered the king of all sentiments. The *Shringaraprakash* of Bhojadeva, 11th century text, is among many other texts which upholds *Shringara* as the supreme *rasa*. Interestingly the word *Shringara* is derived from the exotic dressing of mankind and the desire for rendezvous. Usually, it is associated with the idea of eroticism. This *Rasa* creates the space for multi-faced discussion as well as philosophical enquiries. It is very strange to note that in *Natyashastra*, *Kama Shringara* (Eros Sentiment) illustrates the eroticism with a consort.

To conclude, *Natyashastra* has often been criticised for imposing strict rules for creation and performance, whereas the rules of *Natyashastra* are illustrative, meticulous, accommodative, and exhaustive. It is our inability to comprehend the principles in the correct light as well as a lack of courage to add up on the new vistas. There are ten variants of drama listed (technically called as *Rupak* in Sanskrit) viz. *Nataka*, *Prakarana*, *Ank*, *Dim*, *Prahasana*, *Veethi* etc. If the great tradition of Indian scholarship would have continued, genres of drama and web-series might have added to this list of *Rupak*.

Understanding Cinema as *Natya*, there is a hope that we would rediscover the intellectual heritage and be benefitted with cross cultural debates. Unknowingly we all are students of philosophy and connoisseurs of beauty.

The writer is the author of *Cinema through Rasa: A Tryst with Masterpieces in the Light of Rasa Siddhanta*. The book has been translated from Hindi by Geeta Mirji Narayan



IF YOU REVEAL YOUR SECRETS TO THE WIND, YOU SHOULD NOT BLAME THE WIND FOR REVEALING THEM TO THE TREES
 — KHALIL GIBRAN



HIDDEN SOULS
 PRAMOD PATHAK



Infodemic & Pharmageddon

Corona is back. As state after state once again are resorting to night curfews and lock downs, a big issue is do we still have any concrete idea of the pandemic, its origin and nature and the solutions. Apparently not, as we continue to grope in the dark. What about the measures we took, the medicines that were prescribed and the claims of exactly 99.99 percent prevention from the virus through the use of certain products. People were blindly believing those television commercials and advertisements that were making a lot of noise. It is against this backdrop that we need to examine scientifically whether we actually have an answer to the pandemic. While businesses that claim to provide protection from Corona flourished, authentic answers were not found. In fact, it was an information driven fear psychosis that created havoc more than the virus itself. To capitalise on this there was a very powerful Pharma marketing campaign that made people go for all kinds of medical options. So in a nutshell then, the pandemic catastrophe can be summed up rather neatly in just two words: infodemic and pharmageddon. Sundries like masks and hand sanitisers also added to the effect and cornered huge benefits. However, the point to ponder is where do we stand after centuries of encounters with pandemics. Human beings have been facing the onslaught of these viral attacks ever since their existence. Looking back at some 2,000 years of experience suggest that our efforts did not have much to contribute and the pandemics subsided on their own in around one and half to two years. How to explain this phenomenon, when our advances in science, technology, medicines and biology seem so helpless. It is a natural and cyclic event that keeps on visiting the earth at periodic intervals. Or is it an auto correction initiated by the big machine that nature is. Or is it a warning to humanity from mother nature to mend ways. Nothing can be said. This is not to negate the contribution of science, technology and medicine. But it certainly suggests that nature's superiority is undoubtedly established and human beings must acknowledge this with folded hands. It is this that nature has been trying to prove time and again. The inevitability of the devastating impact of natural phenomena hold lessons for humanity. To show where human beings stand in the larger scheme of things, not as the pivotal factor but as a small part of the comprehensive whole. But in this process what was evident was confusion, concentration of state power and chaos leading to rise of mental disequilibrium resulting in a psychodemic. As the corona juggernaut fails to halt, let us workout ways and means of coping with its ill effects. Not on the economic front but on the psychological front. Many people may try to convince that the two are intricately linked. But the fact is that they are not. It was the psychological intimidation that led to the economic downturn. It may be prudent to understand that the number of billionaires rose as the poor were committing suicide. The correlation may not be obvious but relationship between the rising Sensex and falling economies are intriguing. Matter is not created or destroyed. It only changes hands.

Pathak is a professor of management, writer, and an acclaimed public speaker. He can be reached at ppathak.ism@gmail.com

NEED OF MIND SANITISERS

We need to start using mindfulness and emotional release techniques in order to keep our mental sanity and be in peace, writes VIVEK BANSAL

In recent times, we all have become extremely conscious about cleansing. Nowadays there is much emphasis to keep our hands and surroundings clean so that we can save ourselves from different viruses. There are so many detox methods, which are becoming popular to keep us healthy. Fasting, high-fibre and raw-food diets, enemas and high colonics, saltwater baths, *panchakarma*, mud bath are some of the popular ones. There is so much emphasis on keeping our physical immunity strong by exercise, yoga and different ayurvedic herbs.

To keep our body clean externally, every day we brush our teeth, shower and wear fresh clean clothes. During the day we wash our hands many times. We are using antibacterial products to cleanse kitchen surfaces, disinfectants in laundry detergents, air-filtering in a car, purified water instead of tap water. And a lots of people carry "hand sanitisers" to cleanse their hands of germs after coming out of store or restaurant and also time to time after touching any surface outside.

This awareness of external cleanliness is very important. We also need to feel the real need to cleanse our minds from suppressed emotions like worthless anxieties, stale outlooks, anger, guilt, frustration, dull resentments, jealousy, betrayals and an endless array of shabby self-images. Our mind keeps on storing this unwanted dirty matter which causes many blocks in our personality and we are unable to move further in our life.

Most of us keep on ignoring the bad smell coming out of this and continue to push ourselves with normal daily life. Our minds become like stuffed refrigerators that emit peculiar odours. Pick any shelf and you will see items in the back so old we don't even remember storing them there. Many things are hiding in some corners. Some of these things are now so thick with mould and mildew that they have taken on lives of their own. Indeed, the back recesses of our refrigerator mind are in revolt and have set up sour and stinky kingdoms of their own. It's so scary a sight that our impulse is to shove all the front-line items quickly back in place so that now sunny orange juice, freshly picked mangoes, and organic celery once again appear to be all that's in there.

It's not a small task to clean out our overstuffed minds. It takes a little time, courage, patience and we have to brace ourselves for some unpleasant discoveries. If a house has been closed for many many years and when we open it and start cleaning it, we will have to face lots and lots of dirt during the



process of cleaning. But we if continue the process of cleaning without becoming fearful and discouraged by the amount of dirt, we can feel the fresh aromas coming out of it. And then we will realise, we have made a very small sacrifice for such a reward.

If you want to know what it feels like to stock your refrigerator with the items you choose rather than those chosen for you by culture and family dynamics, just look at little children playing — which they do most of the time. The average preschool child laughs over 350 times a day. The average adult laughs about ten. Why? Because children come into the world with clean refrigerators.

Most people are very busy accumulating more and more things in life, professional status, physical attractiveness, social acceptance etc. They hardly have time to clean their mental environment because they are too busy just decorating the outer layer of their personality. These people hardly realise that having inner ease and peace is not a luxury rather the most important need which can not be neglected and can be achieved along with our other duties and aspirations of life. We just need to start becoming aware of it and

RELEASING DESTRUCTIVE EMOTIONS AND DARKER IMPULSES DON'T REQUIRE TIGHT CONTROL OF OUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS. WE DON'T HAVE TO BE AT WAR WITH CIRCUMSTANCES, BEHAVIOUR, FEELINGS OR THOUGHTS — OUR OWN AND THAT OF THE OTHER PEOPLE

begin the process of learning various mindfulness techniques to keep our mental hygiene.

We need to start with observing our state of mind and start taking responsibility for our thoughts and emotions instead of finding other people or situation to blame. We need to make a resolve. Do I sincerely want to look at my life in peace? Do I sincerely want a mind that knows stillness, wholeness, and a deep bond with my partner, children, parents, siblings, and friends? Or do I just want to continue in a miserable position of judgement, control and be right?

Releasing destructive emotions and darker impulses don't require tight control of our thoughts and feelings. We don't have to be at war with circumstances, our behaviour, other people's behaviour, our feelings, other people's feelings, our thoughts, or other people's thoughts. We simply are not at war. It is just reverse. The emotional release process is freedom. And when we will start realising that we have been fighting a useless battle with our stuffed up useless thoughts and emotions, we merely walk off the battlefield.

We will start investing in learning

and practising more and more emotional release processes. With the help of many breathing exercises, we can release stuffed up emotions from within. Sharing our emotions with some trustworthy and mature person is another very powerful way to keep our mental hygiene. Writing down on paper and then just burn it is another technique. Chanting different *mantras* can help to burn the negativity in the mind and also create positive energy and vibes around us. It's like immersing our mind in the best of the perfumes along with detoxifying it.

If we want to keep our mental sanity and work from the whole mind of peace and happiness and not from our conflicted mind, we need to start using some of these mindfulness and emotional release techniques. By investing in mind sanitisers, not only we will be healthy mentally but also physically because most of the diseases in the body are just manifestation of different kinds of suppressed emotions, stress and tension. So start the process of emotional release immediately, it's not a luxury rather the most important basic necessity to be happy.

The writer is a spiritual life coach

5 habits to be stress-free

Changing our lives and steering it towards prolonged peace and health can be as simple as adopting five daily habits to conquer stress, says MANOJ JAIN

Medical science explains stress to be our natural physical and mental reaction to life's experiences. Our body reacts to stress by flooding our systems with hormones, resulting in rapid breathing, sweating, elevated pulse rate, and a myriad of other immediate symptoms. Prolonged exposure to stress, much like the situation we are facing today, can push us towards headaches, heartburn, depression, insomnia, heart trouble, fertility problems, a weakened immune symptom and a whole host of other well-documented adverse effects.

Fear not. Changing our lives and steering it towards prolonged peace and health can be as simple as adopting five daily habits to conquer stress:

DEDICATE SOME 'ME' TIME

Whether it's the first thing in the morning, last thing at night, or even a few stolen moments between errands, it is important to remove a little time solely for ourselves. Put aside your daily chores and find a quiet place to escape demanding family members. Use this time to indulge in any activity that gives you joy and peace. It can be anything from reading the newspaper while savouring a flavourful cup of coffee; flipping through the pages of an exciting book; taking an online class; or even soaking in a warm bath with scented candles and salts.

PUT A SMILE ON SOMEONE'S FACE

Nothing that can bring us more joy than the knowledge that we made another person happy. Make it a personal goal to do at least one good deed per day, no matter how small. Give a helping hand to family. Call your friend and check in with what's happening in their lives. Compliment your colleague. Send your spouse flowers. Donate some clothes or supplies to those in need. A small act of charity on our end can truly brighten up someone else's life.

KEEP YOUR BODY MOVING

Physical activity in any form is a tried and tested stress

buster. Health professionals recommend getting in at least 20 minutes of exercise three to four times a week. Walk to the stores instead of driving short distances. Take the stairs. Run around the local park. Breathe in as much fresh air as you can. Sign up for online yoga/fitness classes. Just keep your body moving. Regular movement triggers the release of powerful endorphins in our bodies, heightening happiness and reducing stress.

TUNE IN TO MELODY

Music has always been a well-known mood changer. So hit play on your favourite playlist and hum along when performing mundane tasks.

Keep your radio on while driving or cooking. Sing in the shower, however off-key you may be! Research proves that music reduces anxiety, blood pressure and pain; and improves focus, sleep quality and memory.

SLEEP, BREATHE, MEDITATE

Get adequate sleep every night and keep your bedtimes fixed. Upon awakening, breathe deeply, practise *Pranayama*, and meditate for a short while before hitting breakfast and tackling your daily to-do lists. Starting your morning right sets the tone for a peaceful day to follow.

The writer is the author of book, Meeting Yama



Nature, fate and faith

According to Lord Krishna, each one's faith is according to their nature. This makes us different, writes AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

As I have begun reaping many rewards due to my faith in God getting stronger gradually, I have wondered why more people do not pursue the spiritual path. I got the answer from the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the verse #17.3, Lord Krishna states that faith of all is according to their natures only. He states that in the human species, whatever faith one has he is that only. (17.3)

We know that the human species has faith and that is what makes them different from other species. A lady, though highly educated, chooses to engage herself in household activities; she is known as a housewife. Similarly, a person pursuing an acting career is known as a filmstar; a person playing cricket as a profession is known as a cricketer, etc. They do so because they have faith that these activities are the best for them, and are known as such.

Fate has two parts. One, which is commonly known, is connected with events such as someone landing a highly lucrative job. The other, which is not so well known, is the personal nature. People are born with certain natures due to their past acts. And we know that personal natures are products of the three modes. Lord Krishna has stated that faith of human beings are of three kinds, i.e. in goodness, in passion and in darkness. (17.2) An IAS officer retired from serve chose to live in a tribal area to sever them. His faith is in goodness. A boy born in a family of businessman is in passion, because he pursues a business career later in his life. Some unfortunate souls are born in the mode of darkness and turn out to be criminals, etc. Their faith is in such activities.

Fortunately, our natures are not fixed, they can be changed, but it will



take enormous efforts to be able to successfully do so. I was not entirely happy with my life. I looked for reasons and found that my nature was defective in many respects. Therefore, I set about to change it. This is how I began. We constantly desire something. Most of them are not serious, and we know it. For change of nature, we require deep desire, i.e. from deep inside of us; we must really want it. Then and then only we will be able to do the required 'tapasya' for achieving it. Those, who got started in the childhood, are the fortunate ones; their parents set examples for them to emulate. My father was a 'bhakta' of Hanumanji and my mother was a devotee of Ramji. They tried to live very exemplary lives, which left deep impression on me. I knew from their examples what was really desirable but couldn't apply myself till much later in my life. I took help from God through the *Gita*. This book of eternal wisdom became my guide. God became my

teacher and I got started. Subtle changes began to take place in my nature, but the price was not small, because we are what our natures are, as stated earlier. And to reject the self is not very pleasant. But I persevered. What really helped was change in the proportion of the mode of goodness in my nature. The other two modes began to get subdued somewhat. Don't we know that the three modes are forever trying to become dominant by overpowering the other two. (14.10) My spiritual acts, which I had started doing seriously by now helped. Purification of the body, the mind and the intelligence was taking place. All these began contributing towards reinforcement of faith in God.

I can honestly state that it has been tough going and it is not easy even now, but I have progressed. My nature is better or let me say somewhat more tolerable and my faith in growing stronger. Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

Odds stacked in favour, still a test for Sonowal

The Assembly elections in Assam, the most populous North-East State, are pregnant with possibilities because of various issues, according to political pundits. However, given the prevailing socio-economic situation in the State and lack of a strong anti-incumbency factor coupled with clean and strong Central leadership by Prime Minister Narendra Modi even during the Covid-19 pandemic, it will not be a daunting task for the Sarbananda Sonowal-led BJP Government to retain power.

In the run-up to the Assembly elections, what matters most for the people of Assam is the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, concerns over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Register of Citizens (NRC), but most importantly the job scenario in the State.

Despite vociferous protests against the implementation of the CAA in Assam, the voters' attention is not fixated on the CAA sentiments. The ruling BJP and its alliance partner, the most prominent regional party, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), are in favour of implementing the CAA in Assam. However, some prominent student bodies of the State, such as the All Assam Students Union (AASU), Asom Jatiyatadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP), and parties like the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) and the Congress have clung to the emotional issue. For them, the CAA is unconstitutional. Many view the CAA as an immediate threat to the survival of the indigenous people of Assam and the violation of the historic Assam Accord signed between the leadership of AASU and the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress Government at the Centre in 1985.

The polls in Assam are a two-way contest. On one side, it is the BJP and its allies, including the AGP, the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) of the current Bodo Territorial

Council (BTC), and the Rabha Joutha Mancha (RJM). On the other side, it is the Congress-led Mahajot with AIDUF and the Bodo People's Front (BPF) of Hagrama Mahilary, the former BTAD chief. However, there are two newly formed regional parties in the fray, the Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP), born out of the AASU and the AJYCP, and Rajior Dol, from the Krisak Mukti Sangram Samiti of jailed activist Akhil Gogoi. And a few poll pundits consider the Assam elections as a triangular fight, with the coalition of the AJP and the Rajior Dol (RD) as third formidable force.

However, considering the AJP and the RD alliance as a political force to be reckoned with stretches the ground reality. It would be a Herculean task for the new entity to make a mark on the anti-CAA sentiments, prime its past. It is true that the AASU, the parent organisation of the AJP, has a mass following in the State as it has retained the status as one of the strongest students' bodies in the State. It must be noted here that this is the same students' body that in 1985 gave birth to the AGP, one of the most successful regional political party in Assam. And the AGP under the leadership of its veteran AASU president Prafulla Kumar Mahanta ruled the State for 10 years, once from 1985 to 1990 and then again from 1996 to 2001. However, during the Tarun Gogoi-led Congress Government's three consecutive terms from 2001 till 2016, the AGP, once termed as the voice of the "sons of the soil", was relegated to a mere regional force. And over the years, bitter rivalry, defection and non-injection of young blood into the party hierarchy has led to its massive loss of political space in the State.

This time, when the BJP-AGP alliance has released the list of 70 candidates for the first phase of the poll, the party has dropped Mahanta's name from Barhampur, the constituency



View of an eight kilometre-long rangoli made on a street of Silchar to create voters awareness, ahead of the three-phased assembly elections in Assam, in Cachar district on March 15, 2021

PTI

he represented for seven consecutive terms since 1991. Though there are rumours that he may join the Congress, reliable sources say that the two-time former Chief Minister may not contest this poll because of his poor health. Despite all these hiccups, the AGP may be able to retain some seats. But there is high probability that the AJP may make inroads into the AGP's traditional base. Also, the voters may get confused and the AGO loyalties may shift to the two regional parties, born out of the AASU. The RD may spoil the vote banks of both the AGP and the BJP to an extent.

However, what has been remarkable in the last four

Assembly elections in Assam is the gradual and quite big rise of the BJP. Considering this trend, the prevailing situation, and the tendency of the Assam electorate to vote the same parties or alliances to power, the writing on the wall is clear: incumbent Sonowal regime has high chance to retain power. There has been a record of repeating the existing Governments in the past in Assam. Late Congress veteran Gogoi, though entangled in myriad problems and corruption scandals, won three consecutive terms. Of course, during his one and a half decade of rule, both the BJP and the AGP had not much stake in the State politics. And other small-

er parties such as the AIUDF of perfume baron Ajmal and BPF could hardly play the role of a kingmaker, except exploiting their respective traditional vote banks.

What could catapult Sonowal back to power is his cogent reassurance to the voters that his Government will successfully address the concerns of high unemployment, flood problem and all about the positive impact of both the NRC and the CAA. Modi's persona and performance at the Centre will certainly influence voters' choice. However, in an Assembly election, only the State leadership's performance on the ground can help them win back the trust of the peo-

ple. Assam being an ethnically sensitive State, with an ever-emerging problem of Bangladeshi migrants since the starting of the historic Assam Movement, political parties must take into account the confidence of the large indigenous Muslim population. Instead of treating the immigration issue on the lines of religion, it must be addressed on the basis of its legality. It is the duty of the BJP-led Government to allay the fears from the minds of the local Muslims. And if it is not addressed properly, and in time, parties such as the AIUDF, the Congress, and other left-leaning platforms could misguide voters of the State to cash in on the confu-

sion. Therefore, despite possibilities stacked in favour of the Sonowal Government, this Assembly election will still be a test for the BJP. If it romps home, the much-needed long march of the saffron party in this remote part of the country will continue. Certainly, this will reassure Prime Minister Modi's leadership and popularity across the region. Further, the party and its allies would be able to continue its developmental projects and win the trust of the electorate of Assam.

(The writer belongs to Assam and has a deep understanding of the social-political situations there)

What could catapult Sonowal back to power in Assam is his cogent reassurance to the voters that the BJP Government will successfully address the concerns of high unemployment, flood problem and impact of both the NRC and the CAA. The Government should take Muslims in confidence that instead of treating the immigration issue on the lines of religion, it will be addressed on the basis of its legality



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

New chapter in India-US relations under Biden

Can we earnestly hope and anticipate that President Biden will adhere to the moralism of US foreign policy which can be deftly utilised to strengthen and deepen the bonds of the India-US partnership? Such an optimistic talk intended to drum up a furtherance of India-US convergence needs to be the order of the day as straightjacket stipulations of liberalism, idealism and realism are no longer what the global international relations doctor prescribes



MANAN DWIVEDI

The global media has placed the agenda upright and has aptly covered the slew of executive orders signed by US President Joe Biden on the first day of his Presidency.

The "Make America Great" again agenda of former President Donald Trump could not prop him up as a successful candidate as his mishandling of the Covid-19 crisis seemingly did him in if one adheres to the casus belli of a section of American observers.

Still, what seemed akin to being a diplomatic tour de force for Prime Minister Narendra Modi vis-a-vis his American counterpart might turn into a stringent and stern tight ropewalk during the Presidency of Biden. President Trump emphatically declared Modi to be the "true friend" of his during his various negotiations and summities ranging from the razzmatazz of Howdy Modi in Houston, Texas, to the summitry at the Motera stadium in Ahmedabad. The blitz of the Trump-Modi tango might have been cut short by the mathematics of plain-Jane electoralism in the American homeland but the show must go on, as they contend!

New Delhi is also much relieved with the immigration related executive orders promulgated by President Biden which improve the numerical health of the Indian nationals to reach the shores of the United States as legal immigrants.

Seemingly, it might seem like an early bird call but, still, the India America camaraderie along with the insistence on Malabar naval exercises might be good and pious indicators of the larger feel of the India-America relations which have often been referred to as "a special relationship," since the recent past.

President Biden and the quintessential pet peeve of the traditional Democrats have always been centered on to the narrative of human rights. The American and the



Democrat standpoint on Kashmir, the abrogation of Article 370 and the farmers' agitation in India, have raised disgruntled voices and refer-ee calls from the US.

This American standpoint will appear as a grave challenge for the New Delhi denomination where-in India will have to up the ante against its adversarial nation states and several other international actors by attaining the supporting voice of the Americans.

Still, the talk of the "demos", which has been promptly put down

and relegated to the backburner by a few IR observers, has made a comeback with the "value commonality" between New Delhi and Washington. A White House release significantly briefs us about the Biden tango with India in next four years, to unfold before our eyes. The release contends, "The President underscored his desire to defend democratic institutions and norms around the world and noted that a shared commitment to democratic values is the bedrock of the US-India relationship."

What needs to be ebulliently underscored, is, the fact that the shared value argument is welcome in the India-US narrative with the traditionalists in the Democrats seated in the Capitol Hill making a grand comeback and delivering a blow to the neutrally aligned nay sayers in the establishment in the United States.

President Biden, formerly as the Vice President of the United States and being the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has, always stood by the Indian diaspora. President Biden's releases

inform us that diversity and communities' empowerment will be the new motto of the new White House dispensation.

The Biden release contends, "Biden will work in partnership with these communities; celebrate their extraordinary contributions to America's success, prosperity, and safety; listen to Indian Americans' needs; and put in place policies that address their priorities. Indian Americans, like all Americans, are deeply invested in the core elements of our future — education, access to high-quality, affordable health care, addressing the climate crisis, and reforming and modernising our immigration system in a way that aligns with our values."

One "elemental" is there for the reckoning that former President Trump's role play with China ranged from getting his daughter sing for Xi Jinping to announcing a full-fledged and lethal trade contest with China. Such an approach often enraged and confused both the liberal and rightwing observers of US foreign policy in the context of Beijing.

Still, New Delhi depended on the American succour on the border standoff and stealthy aggressions of China at conflict hot spots ranging from Doklam to Pangong lake. The American beneficence in the light of the hegemonic and interventionist tirade of the People's Liberation Army has been a crucial win-win component of India's foreign policy which makes us anticipate dearly about President Biden's policy on India and China.

The American intransigence for Beijing is the need of the hour in a post-Trump era of ruminations and foreign policy making. It is this stand of the future pertaining to the US foreign policy, which, needs to be understood and deciphered by an immediate response by New Delhi and other affected nation state actors in the Asia Pacific.

Still, the immediate American reticence on curtailing the 25 per cent tariffs on all Chinese imports, along with the stress on rebuilding alliances and coalitions with a new, "Let's Re-engage" policy, needs to be welcomed by India.

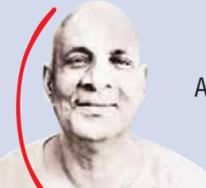
What is being feared is that this policy statement arising from the White House pulpit need not turn into unwelcome interventionism by former Presidents in the nineties.

Quite significantly, Joseph Nye Junior in his recent work, "Do Morals Matter: Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump," has noted the change in strumming between the various Democrat and Republican Presidencies in the political firmament in the United States of America.

Joseph Nye Jr stresses, "Wilson was a liberal idealist but he did not practice universal human rights. As a southerner, he shared the racial prejudices and as well as the prevailing Anglo-Saxon chauvinism of his times as American liberalism had long accommodated first slavery and segregation."

Can we earnestly hope and anticipate that President Biden will adhere to the moralism of US foreign policy which can be deftly utilised to strengthen and deepen the bonds of the India-US partnership? Such an optimistic talk intended to drum up a furtherance of India-US convergence needs to be the order of the day as straightjacket stipulations of liberalism, idealism and realism are no longer what the global IR doctor prescribes. We are bound to experience an era, where in the United States led by President Biden has surfaced with the global engagement stratagem for the entire international system thus bearing positive ramifications for New Delhi.

(The writer teaches at International Relations and International Organisations, IIPA)



PUT YOUR HEART, MIND, AND SOUL INTO EVEN YOUR SMALLEST ACTS. THIS IS THE SECRET OF SUCCESS — SWAMI SIVANANDA



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

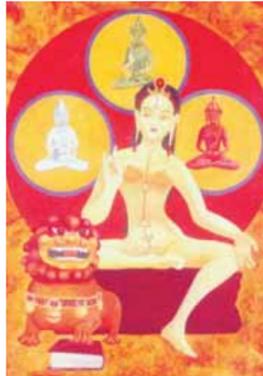
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This is a period of self-evaluation and to think about your mistakes. This will help you release the feeling of guilt and sorrow about the past. This is a good time to take fresh decisions. Share your experiences with others and help in healing within a group. Professionally, you have logical and analytical strength and the courage and intellect to accomplish all that you desire. You need to detach yourself in a specific situation, to discover the truth. You need to use your intellect to prove your point and succeed. You can also solve problems through diplomacy. On the personal front, you are filled with unbounded energy. This energy needs to be balanced with a realisation of responsibility and compassion.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Wednesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week you will feel contented, both emotionally and mentally. Your physical health will be good. Little carelessness like overeating or over comfort could be harmful. Be careful of your diet and avoid junk and fried food. You are open to the risk of getting overweight, BP and acidity problems. Professionally, the money will come from various sources and you would want to spend lavishly. Save your income this week and feel happy. This is the time to decide things on financial terms, it would be productive and fruitful in the future. This week your relationship area may suffer. You feel disappointed and want to walk away from everything you have built up so far. Your attitude is the reason for your situation today.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Sunday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week you feel inspired to start a creative project. You are not afraid to express yourself to the others. Allowing your creative pursuits will bring new potential. Stimulating your imagination will allow your new talent to unfold. You will enjoy good health. Career-wise this is the time to dream and enjoy the pleasures of life. You are likely to spend more time on your happiness. Executing your ideas to achieve a target will put you in your senior's good book. You are rich financially and by heart too. Your generosity and kindness will nurture your relationships. This week you are at ease with yourself and others. You are likely to create a positive environment at home. Trust will give you the strength and confidence to overcome the obstacles in life.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week negative energies will be at play around you. Food poisoning, dehydration or other seasonal ailments could make you feel low. Thyroid or hormonal imbalance could make you consult a health professional. Get the medical examination done and take all care possible. On the career front, your logical and analytical approach to things would make you busy. You follow truth and discipline. You are likely to experience challenges but understand that this is just a phase of your journey to something much more positive. Stay focused on your long-term goals. On the relationship front, a new romance is on the cards. You want to start afresh in your relations. Fun and entertainment with your family are indicated.

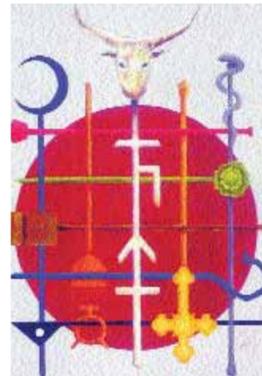
Lucky number 9
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Saturday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Be careful about your health this week. More work and no relaxation could be harmful. Your body needs rest. This is a time to create a detailed plan and to follow a schedule. Good time management will pay off and you will enjoy both work and health. Be persistent and focused. On the career front, you are now headed towards a much better position. Use the opportunities for changing your beliefs about yourself. At some point, you may feel offensive. Stay away from such a situation, this may give you an upper edge in the times to come. On the personal front, romance is on the cards. Trusting your partner will give you the strength and confidence to overcome the obstacles in life.

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

You are about to bring a fresh perspective on life and some significant positive changes are likely to be made. You will feel rejuvenated. You are likely to go on a deeper spiritual journey that will bring greater meaning and purpose into your life and renew your inner energy. There is a call of destiny that motivates you to go on. Professionally, you may have to bring changes in your lifestyle and working schedule. If you are not able to meet the demands of your professional responsibilities, think over it. Try to bring about balance and moderation in your life. On the personal front, there will be issues while communicating with your family. It is time to know the importance of family bonding and this will help you to focus your energies on good life.

Lucky number 6
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week there is a sense of fulfilment health-wise. You are in the right place, doing the right thing to be in good health. You are following the strict regime of diet, exercise, and relaxation. The motto of healthy living is also reflected in your personality. Overall, you will enjoy the week. On the career front, you are filled with renewed energy and enthusiasm. A breakthrough moment is on the card. This week you are likely to embark on a new journey of the self-made person. An idea or passion will inspire and motivate you. On the personal front, you have a crush on a person who is beyond your approach. The danger is hidden in illusions and chances are there that you may face difficulties in the future. To move forward avoid daydreaming.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Wednesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week you are full of energy. You are a visionary. You dream beyond your current limitations and move confidently into new areas. Take this leap of faith to develop the real you. Think big in terms of where you want to be and what you want to discover along the way. On the career front, you feel immense satisfaction once you find your work is on the right path after a long time. All this while despite putting your heart and soul into your work, some hurdles appeared making you frustrated. Now you can bid adieu to the failures and accomplish your tasks. You can start a business that sells items for children this week. This week happy close-knit family and enjoyment in love relations are on the cards. You enjoy a happy family life even if you are single.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week you will be filled with a great amount of energy. Use this energy in creative pursuits and to hone your skills. Risk-taking and creative energies will open new areas in your life. If you are facing a moment of doubt, then believe in yourself and follow your heart. On the career front, you feel kind towards others and may decide to use abundance in your life for the benefit of others. You are likely to work for welfare schemes or maybe volunteer for a religious organisation for your happiness. It will give you immense satisfaction. You may lend money to someone in need. On the personal front, you will experience a spiritual spark and divine feeling will fill you with faith. This is a time when you seek solitude and isolation from others.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Tuesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week you need to have control over your taste, touch, passions, lust, and illusions. Be smart and know how to make the best use of everything. You will be healthy, charismatic, and inspiring. Be positive and in control. Overconfidence could be harmful. On the career front, you will be more stable and mature in terms of finance as well as emotions. You take situations that come and turn them in your favour. You are more traditional in your ways of working and believe in rules and regulations. Enjoy the confidence because of your self-control. You need to take time to meditate and spend some time alone even if you are in a committed relationship. Maintaining your inner balance is equally important.

Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week you may need a medical examination. Do not ignore your health. Take timely action which would be to your advantage. Learn to live in the moment and seize the time. You will be radiating good energy. Share these good energies with the people around you who are feeling low. On the professional front, you are likely to make decisions with your mind than heart and very disciplined. You are independent in thought and action. For a better understanding of the situation and a person, you like to know the how, what, why, where, when and who of everything. Your relationship is taking a turn this week. Everything was going fine but some sudden changes could change your life. Your spouse or partner starts doubting you or becomes over-demanding.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Tuesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week you may be tempted to fight every conflict to prove yourself right or to defend yourself. You feel aggressive, annoyed by other people's attitude towards you. Beware as there is a conspiracy against you. Analyse and introspect, perhaps you too may be at fault. Stay calm. On the career front, you are firm and determined towards your goals. You are clear in your communication and straight forward with your colleagues. Avoid being rude and stay away from conflicts. Utilise your strength and reasoning powers for good cause. If you are in an authoritative position, then think about the benefits of your subordinates. On the personal front, your mental stability is your greatest strength. Your family needs your support and attention.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Blue
Lucky day Thursday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Clear mind, better focus

The driving spirit of mind-detoxification process is to root out all such thought-seeds that disorient our thought process. Remember, as the seed gets a congenial ground, it will breed out into a plant. If, however, the seed is fried, it loses its productive ability. Similarly, the thought seeds parked at deeper layers of mind are invoked and then resolved through fresh educative inputs, where after they won't chase you anymore. It is, however, difficult to remain oblivious to the thoughts visiting your mind space again and again. To remain disengaged, give a self suggestion to the mind — say 'neti-neti'. The word *neti* means 'not this'. It's a way to push away thoughts that are no longer relevant. It is important to note that mind-detoxification process does not call for developing concentration. In fact, distraction is a necessary part of the process. More you distract, faster the mind becomes unburdened.

A case in point is that of two medical graduates, who earned their medical degree from a foreign university. They had earlier failed to clear off qualifying examination to find entry into a medical college in India. But they were bent

upon becoming a doctor. So, they paid capitation fee to join a medical school abroad. Having earned their medical degree, they had to clear a qualifying examination to earn license to serve as a doctor here in India. They made three attempts, but in vain. Now, the only choice left before them was to either to move to the country where from they had graduated or shift to other vocation for their living.

In a state of desperation, they came seeking guidance. Going through their history, I realised that having failed to join a medical school in India, they carried an anticipated sense of failure and insecurity. Consequently, they could not absorb what they read, or recall what had learnt during examination. To get over their sense of insecurity, as a remedial measure, they were advised to pursue Mind-Detoxification process before they sat for studies every day. The intent was to drive away all distracting thoughts from their consciousness.

Consequently, they could focus on their studies for much longer than before. In the process, their sense of fear, insecurity, and frustration, too, was cleared out of their consciousness. So,



they could absorb the study material better. No wonder, a month and half thereafter, they did not only qualify but scored high marks. The stage is now set to move on to the next course — Contextual Meditation.

Contextual Meditation: Contextual Meditation is primarily intended to redefine the thought process through self-reflection on fresh educative inputs and give it a meaningful turn. In fact, it is time tested tool to empower oneself better. The process is named as such because the seeker is supposed to focus attention either on some concept or iconic figure carrying valued educative import. The iconic figure has to be individual-specific depending on what particular virtue would be wanting, calling for its augmentation. It is pursued in self-reflective mode. Purposely so as to absorb and imbibe the specific virtue identified with the iconic figure through continued self-reflection. Over a period of time, as the concept gets absorbed in the inner realms of mind, it eventually begins to spontaneously reflect in one's usual conduct.

Some of the iconic figures suggested may apparently look like religious sym-

bols. The intent, however, is not to promote any religious belief. It rather serves a twofold purpose. First, it serves as a focal point for mind to dwell upon. Second, it helps induce particular value system through repeated self-reflection on the educative import that the symbol carries. Those averse to the idea could improvise a symbol suited to their belief or perception.

The fact that the imageries in use carry valuable educative import, in the Indian tradition, each one of them has been accorded the status of a deity to make it worth reverence. The purpose is to draw people's attention to the inlaid import, bring it into one's cognitive domain, reflect upon repeatedly, and absorb it in the inner realms of mind. Following which, it may spontaneously find reflection in one's usual conduct. Remember, in prayer mode, you may progress faster as you get emotionally involved with the iconic figure, following which you pursue the process with a sense of love and belongingness.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com