

OPINION 8
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LUCKNOW, TUESDAY MARCH 2, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3

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China blacked out Mumbai in Oct

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

China-linked threat activity group RedEcho may have planted malware in key power plants in India, said the study. "The Mumbai power cut provides additional evidence suggesting the coordinated targeting of Indian Load Dispatch Centres," said the study.

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

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



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

File photo

prompt actions are taken on advisories issued against such threats.

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

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

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

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

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

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

protection.

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

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

The Maharashtra cyber

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

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

"From mid-2020, Recorded Future's midpoint collection revealed a steep rise in the use of infrastructure tracked as AXIOMATICAS-YMPTOTE, which encompasses ShadowPad command and control servers, to target a large swathe of India's power sector. 10 distinct Indian power sector organisations, including four of the five regional load dispatch centres responsible for the operation of the power grid through balancing electricity supply and demand, have been identified as targets in a concerted campaign against India's critical infrastructure. Other targets identified include two Indian seaports," the report said.

Continued on Page 11

Modi takes Covid jab; 1 mn register for shots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Vaccines provided to beneficiaries at the Government health facilities will be entirely free of cost, while private facilities cannot charge the beneficiary a sum above ₹250 per person per dose (₹150 for



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

vaccines and ₹100 as operational charges.

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

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik also received their shots.

Similarly, NCP chief

Sharad Pawar, his wife, and MP daughter Supriya Sule too received the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine at a civic hospital in Maharashtra while Kumar said vaccines will be provided free to everybody.

Continued on Page 11

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

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

CM inspects primary school, greets children

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath carried out a surprise inspection of a primary school in Narhi on Monday. The primary schools which were closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic for almost a year reopened on Monday.

The chief minister inspected the work which was being car-

ried out in the school under the 'Operation Kayakalp' and also interacted with children. He asked the children how they studied when the schools were closed, and the students told him that they were attending online classes. The children were all masked-up and the CM asked them to keep following Covid-19 protocols for their own safety.

The CM was informed that

two smart classes have been established in the school, one in 2019 and the other in 2020.

The school had a total of 138 classes I-V students. The work under 'Operation Kayakalp' was carried out in the school by LMC in 2019.

The CM was accompanied by Additional Chief Secretary Navneet Sehgal, District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash

and other senior officials.

Basic Shiksha Adhikari Dinesh Kumar said the CM asked the students whether they were feeling happy on coming back to school, and the students said that they were happy. Chocolates were also distributed among the students. Kumar said there was a 40 per cent attendance of students in government schools on the first day.

North, east India to be hotter till May: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

In its summer forecast, India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday forecast that day temperatures are likely to be above normal in north, northeast, parts of east and west India except for south and central India between March and May, which represents the pre-monsoon season for the country.

"The maximum temperatures will be as high as 0.86 degrees celsius higher than normal across northern, eastern, and western India," the IMD said.

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

The worst impact of the summer will be felt in Odisha and Chhattisgarh, where maximum temperatures will deviate 0.86-degree celsius from their usual averages. Last week, Bhubaneswar was the first region to record 40 degrees celsius anywhere in India this year. North Indian States such as Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh

Continued on Page 11

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JEWAR AIRPORT

CM: Rehabilitation of displaced families to be govt priority

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that rehabilitation of the families that would be displaced during the construction of Jewar airport in Noida was the priority of the government and there should be better rehabilitation mechanisms and the whole process should be carried out after consultation with the families concerned.

The chief minister issued these directions while reviewing the progress of the project on Monday on the occasion of the signing of the State Support Agreement between Yamuna International Airport Private Limited and Noida International Airport Limited constituted by Zurich Airport International AG, the selected developer for Jewar airport.

The chief minister said that the population of Nagla Ganeshi and different hamlets of village Rehi coming on the way of the proposed runway should be shifted first.

"This issue should be addressed by March 6. The process of allotment of plots to the displaced population should be conducted with complete transparency. It should also be broadcast live," he said.

The chief minister said that a committee should be constituted for the rehabilitation process under the chairmanship of Additional Commissioner of Meerut division. "It will be appropriate to nominate retired IAS officers and retired judges as observers. Even the Chief Minister's Office should regularly review

Yogi nod to set up film institute

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

There is good news for youths aspiring to make a career in film production and acting. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has given the go ahead to set up a film institute in the state.

"This institute will be set up in 40-acre land within the film city where one can be trained in various genres related to film and TV production such as direction, production, choreography, editing, screenplay writing and sound recording, and also learn the nuances of acting," the chief minister said while reviewing the action plan for the development of the proposed 'Film City' in Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Talking about making 'Film City' a new destination for the entertainment industry, the chief minister described the proposed film institute as

the work of the Jewar airport project," the chief minister said. The district magistrate of Gautam Buddha Nagar informed the chief minister that 48,0979 hectare land had been arranged in Jewar Bangar for rehabilitation of the displaced population.

Yogi said that the state government would provide a four-lane connectivity facility for Jewar airport besides upgrading, modernising and maintaining the existing roads. He said all efforts would be made to connect the airport



a dream of the youth.

A report by world class consultants CBRE, selected for film city's development, and the officials of Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) has been submitted to the chief minister. It contains in-depth study of the Infotainment City developed in different countries of the

world. The chief minister said that reputed filmmakers, directors, studios and technicians of the world should be consulted so that their inputs could help in making the Film City of Uttar Pradesh as a truly world class destination.

He said that such efforts should be made that the shooting could start there by the year

2022. The chief minister directed the officials to execute various projects of Film City on public private participation (PPP) model.

Representatives of YEIDA and CBRE were present during the presentation along with Additional Chief Secretary (Information) Navneet Sehgal and Director of Information Shishir.

will make Uttar Pradesh soar in the field of civil aviation," he said. On behalf of the state government, Additional Chief Secretary to CM, SP Goyal, and Secretary to CM and Civil Aviation Surendra Singh, CEO Dr Arun Veer Singh and nodal officer Shailendra Bhatia on behalf of Noida International Airport Limited and Christophe Schnellmann, Kiran Jain and Shobhit Gupta on behalf of Yamuna International Airport Pvt Ltd signed the agreement.

Noisy scenes in Assembly over unemployment issue

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh assembly witnessed noisy scenes and heated exchanges between the ruling BJP and the opposition parties over the issue of unemployment and forcing the Speaker HN Dikshit to adjourn the House for half an hour.

The government claimed that it had provided employment to several lakh youth during its four-year tenure while the opposition parties accused the government of taking the unemployed youth for a ride and cheating them.

Raising the issue through adjournment notice, leader of opposition and senior Samajwadi Party leader Ram Govind Chaudhary said the joblessness had reached alarming proportions. He said the demonetization of high value currency notes in November 2016 followed by the implementation of Goods and Services Tax in July 2017 had dealt

a severe blow to the economy.

He said the unplanned nationwide lockdown due to the pandemic imposed in March last year was a huge blow to the unorganised sector of the economy.

The SP leader said even as the three blows to the economy caused the closure of a large number of small and medium business establishments, the failure of the BJP-led UP government to honour its election promise during 2017 assembly elections for filling all the vacancies in government departments, had further aggravated the crisis for the jobless youth within 90 days of coming to power.

He said as many as five lakh posts were lying vacant in various government departments.

He said the government's claim of providing employment during the last four years was far from the truth. He alleged that to stall the recruitment in

government departments, the state government was using various tricks like postponing written examinations for recruitment.

Congress member Ajay Kumar Lallu said unemployment was the biggest crises before the youth of the state and many were forced to commit suicide. He said despite the large number of vacancies in government departments, recruitments were not being done.

Rebutting the charges of the opposition, Labour Minister Swami Prasad Maurya said the state government had adopted a very transparent recruitment process. Taking a jibe at the opposition, he said, "We do not sell jobs, we make actual recruitment."

Targeting the previous Samajwadi Party government, the minister said, "During the SP government's tenure, Subordinate Service Commission, UP State Public Service Commission and

other recruitment bodies were known for rampant corruption and irregularities."

He said the BJP government was making recruitment in government departments in a transparent manner.

Giving details of the recruitment made by the government, Maurya said during the last four years over three lakh persons had been recruited. He also rebutted the contention of the opposition that the number of the registered unemployed persons had increased during the last four years.

Irked by the claims of the labour minister, the opposition members were on their feet and started raising anti-government slogans.

Speaker HN Dikshit tried to pacify the irate opposition members. The opposition members, however, refused to be persuaded, forcing the speaker to adjourn the House for 15 minutes and later extend it by another 15 minutes.

UP Assembly passes Anti-defacement law

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amidst resistance by the opposition parties, the UP assembly on Monday passed the Uttar Pradesh Prevention of Defacement of Public and Private Property Bill, 2021.

The law seeks to prevent the defacement of private and public property by pasting

pamphlets, posters or writings, marking with ink, paint and chalk.

The law also provides for punishment on violation for a term which may extend to one year or with fine not less than Rs 5,000, which may extend to Rs 1 lakh or with both.

The statement of objects and reason of the bill states that the distortion of the public and private property on the invocation of political processions, illegal demonstrations, strikes, shutdown and agitations in the state is done by the people participating in the aforesaid activities.

It has been noticed that public property is defaced by pasting pamphlets, posters by wall writing.

It states that house, walls, fences and other structures of private properties are also defaced during such activities and such defacement spoils the public view and beauty of the properties and creates a bad image of the state in the minds of the citizens and tourist/visitors, forcing the owners to remove such disfigurement or repaint the property at their own cost.

The bill lays down procedure of investigation and trial of offences. The municipal commissioner, executive officer of nagar palika, nagar panchayat, lekhpal or secretary of village panchayat, arup mukhya

adhikari of zila parishad and chief executive officer of Cantonment Board or any other authority notified by the state government shall be responsible and duty bound to remove defacement from any public property in their respective area.

On violation of the law the authority shall issue notice to the person or company responsible to remove the defacement.

The person on receipt of the notice shall be duty bound to comply with the direction within a period of one week in normal course and within 24 hours if the model code of conduct is in force during the elections.

Leader of opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary said the model code of conduct of the Election Commission had already imposed many restrictions on the political parties and other organisations.

He said the new law would impose more restrictions on the political parties in conducting publicity for carrying legitimate political activities.

Ujjwal Raman Singh of the Samajwadi Party said the new law was totally uncalled for and unwarranted. He said it was none of the business of the state government to decide the colour of the paint to be painted on the boundary wall of the private house.

Cong Lucknow city unit gets another chief

Lucknow (PNS): In yet another experiment just before the panchayat elections, the Congress on Monday appointed one more president for the Lucknow City unit. His name was included in the list of seven new presidents of district and city Congress committees (DCC) in Uttar Pradesh announced on Monday.

Interestingly, the party had come under sharp criticism when it announced a second president for Lucknow city unit a few months back. After Mukesh Chauhan, the party declared Ajay Srivastava 'Aju' as another president. The Congress leaders claimed that it would only lead to a conflict between Chauhan and Srivastava as both would try to blame or take credit for failure or success of any programme.

Now the party has announced Dilpreet Singh also as Lucknow city unit president (South) along with Mukesh Chauhan and Ajay Srivastava 'Aju'. Interestingly, the area allocation is yet to be announced by the party high command for the three Lucknow city unit presidents. Interestingly, some veteran leaders hailed the decision of UPCC chief Ajay Kumar Lallu for making three leaders president of the party's city unit in Lucknow. "All the major

demonstrations and protests against the government were organised by the party in the state capital but as the lone Lucknow city unit president failed to ensure a respectable crowd, now at least three presidents would fill that gap and ensure good crowds," said a senior spokesman of the party, adding that every leader should be made office-bearer in the party with a promise that he/she must attend all the party's functions with one or two followers so that big gathering can be ensured at all functions.

It may be mentioned that on the directions of party president Sonia Gandhi, UPCC chief Ajay Kumar Lallu appointed new district unit presidents in Deoria, Maharajganj, Jalaun, Kanpur Nagar/Dehat, Unnao, Bulandshahr, Lucknow City (South). An official statement from the All India Congress Committee said that the Congress president had approved the proposal for appointment of chiefs of seven district/city committees of Congress in UP with immediate effect. Ramji Giri has been appointed president of Deoria DCC, Sharad Singh Babloo of Maharajganj DCC, Rajiv Narayan Mishra of Jalaun DCC, Amit Kumar Pandey of Kanpur Nagar/ Gramin.

Yogi's poll campaign in Bengal today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will, on Tuesday, kick-start his election campaign in Bengal where he is likely to give a glimpse of the development model of UP that can be replicated in Bengal which is mired by poverty and backwardness.

"The Yogi model of dealing with mafia and criminals in Uttar Pradesh, enriching cultural heritage and self-reliance in economy will be the main talking points in West Bengal," said a person close to Yogi here on Monday.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's strategy in West Bengal is to take on Mamata Banerjee through the Yogi model.

"The party is now preparing to repeat the success of Yogi Adityanath's rallies in Bihar and Hyderabad in West Bengal. Yogi will have many questions to ask on the situation of migrant labourers in West Bengal, love jihad, zero tolerance towards corruption besides highlighting the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya," the source said.

Yogi is likely to be the biggest star campaigner after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. He will address rallies in those areas dominated by people from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

"In view of Yogi's aggressive campaigning style and influence on Hindu votes, he has become the most demanded leader after PM Modi," the source said, adding that the party was busy planning a long schedule of Yogi's election tour in West Bengal.

"Yogi is in big demand in Bengal. Local leaders are asking for dates," the source said.

Yogi Adityanath, besides being a firebrand leader, has the image of an honest and strict administrator. This is the reason why BJP's dependence on him has been the most after Prime Minister Modi. This can be gauged from the fact that he is the only chief minister of BJP who campaigned in the municipal elections in Hyderabad.

The effect of his election campaign was seen in the election results. The BJP won 48 seats, pushing Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen (AIMIM) to number three, and became the number two party.

Earlier in the Bihar elections, people have seen the wonders of Yogi Adityanath's prowess as an election campaigner. Yogi influenced the results on more than 75 seats in the Bihar elections as he addressed 19 meetings in 17 districts.

NOTICE
Notice is hereby given by the undersigned for and on behalf of LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Lucknow, pursuant to circular No.422/Annexure-E of LIC HFL that the original sale-deed dated 09-12-1996 vide Serial No. 5094, registered in the office of Sub-Registrar-Hardaoi, U.P. executed by Mr. Ram Vilas S/o Mr. Madhur Pal in respect of Plot, Part of Khasra No.1581 Ka Min., admeasuring 900 sq.ft., situated at Village-Uchha Thook, (Under Nagar palika), Bangar, Hardoi, which have been lost. It is informed to us that the above noted original saledeed is mortgage with any person(s), Financial institution(s), Bank(s) or any other one, may inform immediately to LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Lucknow, or Anoop Kumar Singh Advocate, LIC HFL, Mobile No.9455032691, 9554472272 otherwise the above noted proposal shall be finalized immediately after the expiry of 15 days of this publication.

In the Office of the Administrator General and Official Trustee, Uttar Pradesh, ALLAHABAD
Dated Allahabad, the 08 day of फरवरी 2021 Case-No. F 03/2020 In the matter of the goods of रत्न गोनी प्रभा होरे deceased निवासी :- 16 /4थी, एल आई जी, कालोनी, गोविन्दपुर, इलाहाबाद.
Citation under rule 26 of the Administrator General's (U.P.) Rules, 1929 Whereas an application has been made to this office by सुलतानगोरी होरे resident of निवासी :- 16 /4थी, एल आई जी, कालोनी, गोविन्दपुर, इलाहाबाद।
पुत्री of the deceased for the grant of a certificate under section 29 of the Administrator General's Act, 1963 (Act 45 of 1963) in respect of the estate of, गोनी प्रभा होरे who died at इलाहाबाद on the 05 day of दिसम्बर 2011 this citation is issued calling upon all persons claiming to have any interest in the estate of the deceased, to come and see the proceedings before the grant of certificate in this office on the 15 day of मार्च 2021 at 11:30 a.m. in the forenoon.
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Possession Notice
Appendix IV (Rule 8 (1)) of the SARFAESI Act (for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Standard Chartered Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 09.11.2020 calling upon the borrower MR. QAZI SAMIUL HAQ Having Home Loan Number 43319971 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 11,16,260.71/- (Rupees Eleven Lacs Sixteen Thousand Two Hundred Sixty and Paise Seventy One Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/s having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described hereinbelow in exercise of the powers conferred on him/her under sub-Section 4 of Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 20th day of February of the year2021.

The borrowers' attention is invited to the provisions of sub-Section 8 of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Standard Chartered Bank for an amount of Rs 11,16,260.71/- and interest thereon.

Description of the Immovable Property: -

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LIC of India invites sealed application for emppanelment from the reputed agencies/firms/ vendors service providers for supply/jobs mentioned below for Divisional office Faizabad & Branch/Satellite offices under its jurisdiction -

Supply and maintenance of all types of furniture & fittings (Wooden, Iron Aluminium & Steel Modular), Safes, Slotted angle racks, Water cooler, Water purifiers, RO Systems, Air Coolers Telecommunication equipments such as EPABX, Intercom, Telephone instruments, Note Counting Machine, Fake note Detectors, Flex Board, Employees name plates, Information Display Board, Electrical appliances, Wall clocks Fans, Bed Linen, Mattress, Hand Towels and Cloth traders. Supply of Table & office Stationery, Printing & supply of forms etc. (Offset/Screen printing), Computer Continuous Stationery, Craft papers Envelope, Policy Dockets, PVC/Plastic/ECO friendly Policy Wallet, Rubber stamps/ Nylon stamps, Binding work, Xerox (photo copying) work. Housekeeping & Maintenance services for Office Premises & Guest House, Furniture fittings repairs, Waste paper purchase and scrap lifting services, Courier Service, Catering services, Railway and Air Ticket Booking, News paper Advertising Agencies, Transportation Service (3 wheelers & 4 wheelers), CCTV cameras, Fire extinguishers & equipments, Supply of office upkeep & cleaning material, Laundry Services.

1. Complete details & Application form may be obtained from Office Services department, Divisional Office-Faizabad from 02-03-2021 to 22-03-2021 between 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM on all working days on payment of Rs. 295 (250+45 GST) in cash or DD in favour of "LIC of India" payable at Faizabad or from our website www.licindia.in/tenders. The last date of submission of completed application form along with other requisite documents is upto 3:30 PM. on 22-03-2021.
2. Vendors/ Agencies/Firms already working/enlisted with us should also apply for fresh emppanelment.
3. Further communications, corrigendum, if any & extension of date for submission of tender if required, will be uploaded in the above given web-site only.
4. LIC of India reserve the right to accept/reject any or all of the application without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Sr.Divisional Manager

PUBLIC NOTICE
Our client Mr. Virendra R. Pandey, of M/s. Viren Infra Projects, having his address at 10, Kulsumbai CHS, Prabhat Colony, Santacruz(East), Mumbai 400 055, has tried on various occasions to contact Mr. Mohamad Parvez son of Mr. Mohamad Atique by sending letters / Notices but every time the letters / Notices sent on 21 / 10 / 2015, on 12 / 06 / 2020, 15 / 06 / 2020, and finally on 08 / 07 / 2020, however, all the letters / Notices return back due to insufficient address furnished by Mr. Mohamad Parvez, which were sent on the last known address as mentioned in the Agreement interred and executed between our client M/s. Viren Infra Projects and Mr. Mohamad Parvez, which was duly registered on 20 / 07 / 2014. Our client thereafter issued a Public Notice published on 25 / 06 / 2014 in three Newspapers inviting objections and claims from any person / persons, whereby, neither our client nor by us have received any objections claims till date. Our client, therefore inform all concerned department associated with property development and Mr. Mohamad Parez son of Mohamad Atique and all the public at large as mentioned below.

Our client has come to understand through his sources that some unscrupulous / people / agents are trying to sell the property by misrepresentation also the people mentioned in the joint venture Agreement as the confirmation party have started black mailing our client, by this notice we call upon Mr. Mohamad Parvez to contact our client immediately or with us as their Advocates so that process of development of the property can be initiated. It is to further to inform Mr. Mohamad Parvez, son of Mr. Mohamad Atique that as the project has come to complete halt and our client has incurred huge financial losses after submission of the building plans with "LIDA" due to non compliance of few terms from your side like providing motorable 60 ft road from Lucknow Kanpur Highway upto the site, providing proper surveyed and marked boundaries of the plot with sufficient distance from high tension wires etc. which has not been done till date, our client now informs you that our client intend to develop the property as may be suitable and profitable to both of us and if you do not get in touch with our client immediately or with us as their advocates our client shall have complete signing authority to submit new plans for approvals with the concern authorities or sell / dilute his rights to any 3rd party to recover his losses. Your share will be held with us in the event nobody approaches us.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAID PROPERTY
All the peace and parcel of land or ground including structures as may be situated at Miranpur Pinvat, Pargana Bijanaur Tehsil and zilla Lucknow having City Survey number (khasara number) 0-22sa rakaba (area of the property) 1.126 hectares as per the records of the Sale Deed and informed by the owner / vendor Mr. Mohamad Parvez and registered with registrar of assurances in its respective circle.
Date :- 02/03/2021.
Place - Mumbai.

AJS Legal
Sd/-
Advocates and Consultants, 206, Pinky Palace, 2nd floor, S. V. Road, Khar (West), Mumbai 400 052.

1,217 get vaccine jabs against target of 900

CM takes stock of vaccination drive at Civil hospital

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A total of 1,217 people were vaccinated against a target of 900 at four hospital in Lucknow on Monday. The beneficiaries included those above 60 years and others aged between 45-59 years with co-morbidities. District immunisation officer Dr MK Singh said it was a soft launch of vaccinations for the general population through walk-in registration.

Dr Singh said those who were administered Covid vaccine jabs on Monday included 868 who were aged above 60 years and 154 aged between 45-59 years. Besides, 195 health care workers were also vaccinated. The district immunisation officer said that 892 beneficiaries got the Covishield while 325 Covaxin jabs. The coming sessions will be through pre-registrations on this link (<http://selfregistration.cowin.gov.in>).

"The next session will be on March 4 and 5. People can also register through the Aarogya Setu app," he said. He added that there was a massive rush of people aged above 60 years at the Civil hospital.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Civil hospital



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the inspection at Civil hospital and people getting vaccine jabs

to take stock of the vaccination and he also interacted with the beneficiaries. By 1 pm, 160 people had been vaccinated though the target was only 100. With the frontline and health workers already getting vaccinated, people were not apprehensive of the vaccine jabs, the district immunisation officer said.

On some senior citizens having problems in coming to the hospitals for vaccination, he said, "If senior citizens are bed-ridden and have severe diseases, they should not be vaccinated. However, in other cases, they will have to come to the hospitals to get vaccinated.

We have all kinds of facilities but we cannot go from door to door to administer vaccine jabs to people."

At RMLIMS, KGMU and Civil hospital where the vaccine jab was free of cost, a number of senior citizens turned up. At Shekhar Hospital where beneficiaries had to shell out Rs 250, there was 100 per cent vaccination. Former chief engineer (PWD) Jitendra Srivastava said he went to RMLIMS after his friend told him that vaccination was taking place on a walk-in basis. "I also got my wife vaccinated. Later, I called my friends and told them about the

vaccination drive," he said.

Vishwadeepak, chief general manager of a government department, also got vaccinated on Monday. He said his friend told him about the vaccination. "I also got my 76-year-old father and 72-year-old mother vaccinated after I learnt that it was only a one-day walk-in drive. All of us were perfectly fine after getting the vaccine jabs," he said.

Rakesh Srivastava, a retired government official who came to the hospital early in the morning, said he was amongst the first ones to reach the hospital and was vaccinated soon after. "I contacted several of my



friends and told them to get themselves vaccinated," Srivastava said.

"I also wanted my wife to get vaccinated but the doctor suggested that since there is a feeling of general malaise after vaccination, it would be better if husband and wife get the jabs on different days," he said.

RMLIMS spokesperson Dr Shrikesh Singh said people were not very much aware about walk-in vaccinations. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself got vaccinated to dispel apprehensions. After 12 noon, the vaccination picked up pace at the hospital," he pointed out. Since the CoWIN

portal was slow, the names could not be fed and people kept waiting.

At KGMU, nodal officer for Covid Dr Nishant Verma said the response was good because it was a walk-in registration. However, he pointed out that most of the people were not aware about onsite registrations.

"At our hospital, most of the employees brought their parents and relatives and it was massive rush at all the booths. Most of them were related to frontline and health workers. We mobilised most of our own employees to get their parents vaccinated," he said.



Pioneer

15 more test Covid +ve, 12 patients recover

Lucknow (PNS): Amidst fears of the spike in fresh Covid cases in some of the districts, 15 people tested positive in Lucknow on Monday while 12 patients recovered. The state capital's death toll stands at 1,186 while there are 254 active cases. According to a senior health official, those who tested positive included three each from Indiranagar and Gomtinagar. Across the state, a total of 87 people test-

ed Covid positive, including six in Kanpur, four each in Ghaziabad & Gautam Buddha Nagar, two in Varanasi and one in Meerut, pushing the UP case tally to 6,03,527. Besides, there were three deaths in the state, including one each in Gorakhpur, Hardoi & Unnao, taking the state toll to 8,727. With 104 patients recovering, the recovery figures reached 5,92,803. There are 2,078 active cases in the state.

KMCLU CONVOCATION

'Research needed to conserve languages facing extinction'



Governor Anandiben Patel doing the honours at Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University on Monday

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

There has been a drastic reduction in the number of research works at local level in the field of language and as per an earlier census report, there are many languages on the verge of extinction. Therefore, research work needs to be encouraged, special efforts made to conserve the extinct languages. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University can contribute significantly in this direction.

These views were expressed by Governor Anandiben Patel at the fifth convocation of the language university on Monday. The chief guest and keynote speaker at the convocation was Prof Ashok Chakradhar, who was also awarded an honorary DLitt degree on the occasion. Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma was present at the convocation as a special guest.

As many as 482 degrees and 85 medals were awarded at the convocation. The Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti and Chancellor medals were received by Maryam Hafeez while the Vice-Chancellor medal was given to Rashid Khurshid Ahmed.

In her address, the governor said that KMCLU has formed a high-level committee for languages and it will conduct high-level multi-disciplinary research along with reading and speaking areas of Indian and foreign languages.

The governor appreciated Prof Ashok Chakradhar's convocation address and said his vision can bring a new revolu-

tion in the field of language. She said the university should work under his guidance and establish new records in the field of language.

Addressing the school children who also attended the convocation, Patel said she hoped they would be able to take inspiration from the programme and mark their names in the field of higher education.

Prof Chakradhar said that several languages are facing extinction and some people blame it on globalisation and computers, but computers are a tool through which these languages can be retrieved.

He said that an Indian Institute of Language Technology Centre should be established in the university to consolidate and co-ordinate the field of Hindi technology, save its documents and see the feasibility of open source. He also mentioned IMALI, which can be an alternative to Alexa for India and provide information to Indians in their personal languages. He also spoke about his plan, National and International Knowledge Accreditation Standards for Hindi, through which multi-level Hindi proficiency examination can be conducted and students who succeed in it can be given online certificates. The examination would be on the lines of TOEFL and IELTS which is conducted by the foreign embassy, he added.

Prof Chakradhar said that a good word processor is needed to store Indian languages so that the work of language technology can be done successfully. He added that

this university should emerge as a carrier of change in language preservation, standardisation and digitisation.

Deputy CM Dinesh Sharma said that research work can protect the languages which are on the verge of extinction. "In our historical evidence, a special type of script has been used and if we can perform excellently in research work, we can get that glorious knowledge. In the field of language, this university is the only educational institution in the state where such research is being done," he added.

He urged the university teachers to make available information about their research activities on the 'ShodhGanga' portal so that the flow of knowledge could reach everywhere beyond geographical boundaries.

KMCLU Vice-Chancellor Prof VK Pathak presented the progress report and pointed out that in the last three months, many positive improvements have been made in the university. The university has launched 'One View' app for students through which they can get their results at one place. Also, for the first time, the students have been provided the facility of filling examination forms online, he said.

During the program, the announcement of Chakradhar's association as an honorary professor of the university was also made by the VC. A souvenir was also released and schoolchildren were presented gifts.

Sanitation worker found hanging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A safai worker employed at the Gomti Nagar Vistar STP was found hanging in his house on Monday. Police said he committed suicide but failed to explain the reason. The deceased was identified as Ram Baran Prajapati of Mohanlalganj. Brother-in-law Lavkush said Ram Baran was staying in a rented accommodation in Bahiswara locality. "He ended his life around 10 am on Monday. When we reached there, we found him hanging from the ceiling with a rope tied around his neck," he said.

Meanwhile, two youths looted a motorcycle from a man after throwing chilli powder into his eyes in Sushant Golf City area on Sunday afternoon. Satyanand Singh of Gomtinagar was targeted near a shopping mall in the area. An unidentified youth stopped him to ask for an address. "As soon as I stopped the bike, another youth reached the scene and threw chilli powder into my eyes. Later, they pushed me and sped off on my bike," he told police.

3 held for heist at jewellery showroom

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prior to heist at Lala Jugal Kishore and Bankers' showroom in Aminabad, the thieves had stayed in a house adjacent to the establishment for a day. The thieves gained access to the 3-storey showroom and reaching the ground floor. The stunning facts surfaced after their arrest by a team of police that was investigating the case since February 27.

Commissioner of Police, Lucknow, DK Thakur announced a cash prize of Rs 50,000 to the team that cracked the case. The police recovered gold ornaments (10.159 kg), precious gems worth Rs 25 lakh, diamonds worth Rs 25 lakh, over 70 lakh in cash, a pistol and cartridges stolen from the showroom. The police also recovered gold ornaments, worth over Rs 8 lakh, which were stolen from jewellery stores in Mahanagar and Thakurganj. A scooter was also recovered from their possession. The total cost of the goods recovered was estimated at over Rs 7.5 crore. The accused arrested were



identified as Shueb (28) & Sabruddin Ansari (39) of Hasanganj and Ansari Ahmad of Thakurganj.

Joint Commissioner of Police N Chaudhary said the accused were tracked down with the help of CCTV footage in which they were seen transporting goods in sacks. The accused entered the adjoining house which has been lying vacant for the last three months and started their operation from there. The thieves chose Thursday which is a weekly market closure day in the area.

The miscreants tried to cut the iron doors of the house in which they were holed up by 4 pm on Thursday and later leapt to the terrace to reach the

showroom where they used gas-cutters. They unsuccessfully tried to cut the doors of the strong room where gold ornaments and precious stones were kept in bulk, and later managed to cut doors of the showroom on the ground floor. They collected booty on Thursday night and transported it to another place by a scooter, which was seen in a CCTV footage. The accused owned up their crime and disclosed that they had also committed theft at two jewellery stores in Mahanagar and Thakurganj in the past.

ADCP (West) Rajesh Srivastava said the miscreants used to choose showrooms close some houses or places.

"The thieves were adept at scaling high-rise buildings, leaping from one building to another through the terrace. They used to make limited use of mobile phones and their gang consists of a limited number of thieves," he said.

He added that Sabruddin has been named in attempted to murder, attempted theft and other cases in Lakhimpur district. The police were tightlipped when asked if there was any insider involved in the theft. However, they said there were some arrests to follow. The thieves were arrested following a tip-off. Sources said the accused had been conducted the recce of the showroom for the last one month. "It is possible that someone tipped them off about the showroom details and items stored there," the sources said.

In February 26 night, the miscreants had sneaked into the showroom in Aminabad, which is one of the busiest markets in the city. The thieves were well-versed with the topography of the area and layout of the showroom, the police said.

NHRC seeks compliance report in rape case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The National Human Rights Commission directed the state government to submit proof of payment to the victim of a gang-rape in Moradabad the amount it had sanctioned on the recommendations of the NHRC but apparently did not release it. The NHRC, reiterating its earlier recommendation issued on February 23 last, called for a compliance report within four weeks. The NHRC directed deployment of lady police officers in all police stations and sought a list of police stations where there was no lady police officer. It also sought disciplinary action against the erring police officers and to register a case under Section 166A IPC against police personnel who did not register case on allegation of rape.

The NHRC had registered the case on the basis of a complaint that some men of her locality, under the jurisdiction, PS Civil Lines, in Moradabad, had barged into her house on November 18, 2018, while she was alone. She was tied up, gang-raped and tortured by the men in broad daylight before leaving the house. On hearing her groans, a person reached the house and set her free. Thereafter, when she was taken to the Civil Lines police station to report the matter, she was made to wait till midnight but no FIR was registered.

NHRC, REITERATING ITS EARLIER RECOMMENDATION ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 23 LAST, CALLED FOR A COMPLIANCE REPORT WITHIN FOUR WEEKS

During the course of inquiry, through its investigation division, the NHRC found that the police did not register the case or take action on the victim's complaint. The case was registered only after the intervention of the court. This caused one and a half months' delay in the registration of the case by the police.

The NHRC observed that this delay led to the destruction of vital evidence of the case. It said this act of negligence of police officials violated human rights of the victim for which the state government was liable.

Therefore, a notice under Section 18 of the PHR Act, 1993 was issued to the UP government through its chief secretary, to show cause why Rs 2,00,000 should not be recommended to be paid as relief to the victim.

In response, the report of the state government said that the victim's complaint dated November 25, 2018 was

received by the PS Civil Lines on December 12, 2018. Thereafter, investigation started. The report further stated that in the interim, the complainant filed an application U/S 156(3) CrPC in the court.

On the directions of the Court, an FIR No. 1308/18 u/s 452/376/ (d)/ 323 were registered against the six accused persons. After investigation, final report No. 47/19 dated February 6, 2019 was submitted before the court. The complainant also filed a protest petition against the final report.

Again, on the directions of the court the matter was re-investigated and the final report was submitted in the court. The report from the state government also revealed that two police officials, including the Chowki in-charge, were found negligent for not registering the FIR immediately on the complaint of the victim. Hence, the state government stated that the relief of Rs. 2 lakh, as recommended by the NHRC, was allowed to be paid to the complainant for violation of her human rights. However, the NHRC observed that the report by the state government was not conclusive as no inputs were provided on the actions taken by the authorities concerned on the three actionable points recommended by the NHRC. Therefore, the NHRC issued a reminder notice to the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

Villages to get optical fiber network

Lucknow (PNS): Aiming at fast-track growth of digital communication infrastructure and universal access of broadband at every village, the Yogi Adityanath government, under the National Broadband Mission, has connected as many as 31,149 gram panchayats of the state with optical fiber.

To connect every village in the state with high-speed broadband connectivity, the Yogi government has set a target to connect 58,194 gram panchayats in 75 districts of the state with optical fiber by December 31, 2022.

As many as 14,100 gram panchayats will get internet connection in the next 60 days, according to an official spokesman. Under this mission, launched by the Government of India, 50 lakh kilometres optical fiber is to be laid to ensure availability of high-speed broadband service in rural and remote areas of the state. In

addition, the tower density is set to be increased from 0.42 to 1.0 per thousand populations so that access to government schemes in rural areas can be facilitated.

On the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Chief Secretary RK Tiwari constituted a state-level Broadband Committee under his chairmanship. In its meeting, it was decided to run the mission in three phases. In the first phase, 17,903 gram panchayats in east UP and 10,481 gram panchayats in West UP were provided broadband access by December 31, 2020. In the second phase, the target has been set by the officials of the IT and Electronics Department to provide internet access to 17,032 gram panchayats of east UP and 2,195 gram panchayats of West UP by March 31 (which will be extended to April 30). After this, the third phase will begin.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of "Rashtriya Samvidhanwadi Party" office of the party is located at Village - Rampura, Post - Haidarpur, Distt - Auraiya Uttar Pradesh, pin code - 206129. This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for the registration as political party under section 29(A) of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951- Name/Address of the office-Bearers of the party are follows : (1) **President : Ashok Kumar Dohre**, Village - Rampura, Post - Haidarpur, Distt - Auraiya Uttar Pradesh, Pin code - 206129. (2) **General Secretary : Ramdas Suman**, Village & Post - Kalani, Distt - Chhatarpur, State - Madhya Pradesh, Pin code - 471001, Treasurer : Tula Ram, Village & Post - Sanpher, Distt - Auraiya, State - Uttar Pradesh, Pin code - 206121. If any one has any objection to the registration of "Rashtriya Samvidhanwadi Party" they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the secretary (Political Party) Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi - 110001. Within 1 Month (30 days) of the Publication of the notice.


Two kids burnt alive as tenant set house of landlord afire

PNS ■ LUCKNOW


Two minors were burnt alive after a tenant threw petrol and set the wife and kids of his landlord on fire at Nehru Nagar in Akbarpur area of Kanpur Dehat, police said on Monday.

Superintendent of Police Keshav Kumar said that corporator Jitendra Yadav was living with his wife Archana and two children daughter Akshita (4) and one-and-half year old son Hanu in Nehru Nagar near Akbarpur Kotwali. A woman constable Usha, who is deployed at the Kotwali, and her husband Avneesh were tenants in Jitendra Yadav's house. As per the neighbours, Avneesh poured petrol on Archana and her two kids late Sunday night and set them on fire. As the trio started screaming, Jitendra, who was sleeping outside, and his neighbours rushed to rescue the victims. They somehow doused the flames and rushed all the four, including Jitendra, to district hospital in critical condition where both the kids succumbed to injuries.

Meanwhile, the people chased Avneesh to nab him when he was trying to flee. To make a safe escape, Avneesh tried to cross the highway but he failed to notice a speeding truck and was hit by it and critically injured. The locals shifted him to a hospital and informed the police. SP Keshav Kumar, who visited the spot along with local police, said



U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD.
E-TENDER NOTICE Following E-Tenders are invited from the experienced/reputed contractors for execution of following works. For more details login on website www.etender.up.nic.in. 1. **E-Tender No.71 / AETC /2020-21**- Work of annual grass cutting and spraying round up (glycol chemical) in switchyard of 220 kV S/s, Hafizpur, Azamgarh. Earnest Money: Rs. 2500.00 (Rs. Two Thousand Five Hundred) only. Tender Cost: Rs. 296.00 (Rs. Two Hundred Ninety Six) only. 2. **E - Tender No.72 /AETC/2020-21**- Maintenance of 5x16.5 Ton AC system at 400 kV S/s, Hafizpur, Azamgarh. Earnest Money: Rs. 4000.00 (Rs. Four Thousand) only. Tender Cost: Rs. 472.00 (Rs. Four Hundred Seventy Two) only. Earnest money will be in the shape of RTGS/NEFT duly pledged in favour of Superintending Engineer, Etecy. Transmission Circle, UPPCLT, Azamgarh.Tenders can upload their tender bids against E-Tender No 71 & 72 upto 17.00 hrs. of 5.04.2021 and the same shall be opened on dated 6.04.2021 at 13.00 Hrs. & 14.00 Hrs. In case the tender opening date is holiday or the undersigned remains out of headquarters, the date of opening of the tender will stand extended to the next working day. Undersigned has the right to reject/divide any tender without assigning any reason thereof. Conditional tenders shall not be accepted. **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (TRANS.) AZAMGARH** No. 265 Date 27.2.2021 SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION



मध्यांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि०, हरदोई ई-निविदा सूचना
अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा अनुमोदी एवं कार्य में दक्ष ठेकेदारों से ई-निविदाये दो भागों में उद्घरण सरकार की पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा सूचना www.mvwnl.in पर भी अवलोकित की जा सकती है। सभी निविदाओं को अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि 15.03.2021 समय 17:00 बजे तक तथा प्रथम भाग खुलने की तिथि 16. 03.2021 समय 14:00 (निविदा सं० 160 को छोड़कर) बजे नियत है। निविदा में संशोधन, तिथि विस्तारण, पुनर्प्रकाशन आदि की सूचना भी उक्त पोर्टल पर एवं वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध करायी जायेगी। 1. **अति अल्पकालिक ई-निविदा संख्या 160/विमिंह/2020-21** :- विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, हरदोई के समस्त वितरण खण्डों हेतु एक मुश्त समाधान योजना के प्रचार-प्रसार हेतु पम्पलेट्स, बैनर एवं फ्लैक्स बोर्ड की आपूर्ति एवं स्थापना का कार्यनिविदा मूल्य रू० 1180.00 जीएसटी सहित एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू० 2000.00। निविदा अपलोड करने की तिथि 06.03.2021 समय 14:00 बजे तक एवं खुलने की तिथि 06.03. 2021 समय 17:00 बजे नियत की जाती है। 2. **अल्पकालिक ई-निविदा संख्या 161/विमिंह/2020-21** :- विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-शाहाबाद, हरदोई में कार्यरत उपखण्ड अधिकारी, प्रथम, शाहाबाद, हरदोई हेतु एक नग जीप, नुमा डीजल चलित चार पहिया वाहन मय ड्राइवर 12 माह के लिये किराये पर आपूर्ति हेतु। निविदा मूल्य रू० 1180.00 जीएसटी सहित एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू० 2640.00। 3. **अल्पकालिक ई-निविदा संख्या 162/विमिंह/2020-21** :- विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-शाहाबाद, हरदोई के विभिन्न उकपेन्द्रों हेतु कम्प्यूटर, प्रिन्टर इत्यादि की आपूर्ति हेतु। निविदा मूल्य रू० 1180.00 जीएसटी सहित एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू० 1980.00। **अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, हरदोई** पत्रांक-618 दिनांक-01.03. 2021 "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये"

that the accused was in mental stress for many days. He said the police had also detained woman constable Usha and were grilling her to find out what prompted her husband to kill the landlord and his family.

Meanwhile in Pilibhit, police detained a 16-year-old boy for allegedly raping a four-year-old girl. Police said the boy allegedly took the four-year-old to a secluded place in the village on Saturday and raped her.

"The boy has been caught and will be produced before the Juvenile Justice Board. He studies in class VIII. Both the boy and the girl are for the same community," the local SHO said.

The girl's father stated in the complaint that his daughter along with other children were playing outside the house on Saturday evening when the accused came and gave something to his daughter to eat. The boy then took the child to a secluded place and raped her; the police said quoting the complainant.

In Aligarh, the body of a 16-year-old Dalit girl was found in a field in the Akrabad area, following which villagers clashed with police and indulged in stone pelting, police said on Monday. The girl had gone to the fields on Sunday afternoon to collect fodder for cattle but did not return. Later, her body was found in a field when her family members started searching for her. Police said prima facie the girl was strangled. As the news spread, irate villagers pelted stones at a police party which was trying to take the body for post-mortem. Inspector Pranendra Kumar was injured in the attack, police said.

Senior Superintendent of Police Muniraj G told reporters that they rushed to the spot and pacified the villagers who then handed over the body to policemen. He said the allegations of sexual assault were being probed and they were waiting for the autopsy report.



NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice
On behalf of the President of India, acting through Chief Administrative Officer/Con., North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur invites the following E-works Tenders: **S.N. 1-, E-Tender No.: DYCE-Con-G-GKP-04-2020 Dated 23.03.2021, Name of work:** Supplying and Fixing of barricading with the help of fencing along the running track between Domimgarh (incl.)-Gorakhpur-Gorakhpur Cantt.-Kusumhi third line and Gorakhpur-Nakaha Jungle (incl.) doubling section in connection with Domimgarh-Gorakhpur-Gorakhpur Cantt. Kusumhi third line and Gorakhpur-Nakaha Jungle doubling of Lucknow/Varanasi Division of N.E. Railway. **Approximate Cost: ₹ 1,32,52,020/- Earnest Money:-, Cost of Tender Form:-, Completion Period: 18 (Eighteen) Months. Note:-** * Bid starting date- on 09.03.2021, * Last date of submission of above E-Tender up to **15.00 hrs on 23.03.2021, * Date of opening of above E-Tender 15.30 hrs on 23.03.2021, * Detailed tender notice, eligibility, criteria, terms & conditions is available on website <https://trep.gov.in>. * In case any disparity arises between Hindi and English version of tender notice, English version will hold good and will be followed.**

XEN/CON/General Gorakhpur
CPROW-284
About any purchasing amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 05794845955
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उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रान्समिशन कार्पोरेशन लिमिटेड ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना प्रतियुक्त, अनुमोदी एवं ई-निविदा हेतु पंजीकृत निर्माताओं या उनके अधिकृत प्रतिनिधि/आपूर्तिकर्ताओं से पारेक्षण दक्षिण-पूर्व क्षेत्र, प्रयागराज के अन्तर्गत निम्न सामग्री की आपूर्ति हेतु निविदायें दो भागों में उसके समूचे अंकित तिथि एवं समय तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा के भाग प्रथम एवं भाग द्वितीय, निर्धारित तिथि एवं समय तक उद्घरण सरकार के ई-प्रोक्वायमेंट सिस्टम के अन्तर्गत वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड किये जा सकेंगे। निविदा शुल्क एवं धरोहर राशि आरटीजीएस/एनईएफटी के माध्यम से जमा करायी जायेगी। निविदा खुलने की निर्धारित तिथि एवं समय (यदि अवकाश हो तो अगले कार्यदिवस में) पर खोली जायेगी। निविदा की कैशता खुलने की तिथि से 06 माह होनी चाहिए। सशरार् निविदायें किसी भी दशा में स्वीकार नहीं होगी। **अति अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं०-20/मु०अ०(पाठशुभ०)/2020-21:** विद्युत पारेक्षण खण्ड राबर्ट्सगंज के नियंत्रणाधीन 220 केवी० ए०टी०पी०ए०एस० आबरा के सिचवाई में कार्य हेतु हाईवोल्टेज फिटिंग एवं विभिन्न क्लैम्प्स की आपूर्ति। निविदा प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि 11.03.2021 समय 17:00 बजे। निविदा खुलने की तिथि 12.03.2021 समय 14:00 बजे। निविदा प्रमत्र शुल्क (जीएसटी० सहित) रू० 11,800/- (रू० ग्याह हजार आठ सौ मात्र)। धरोहर राशि रू० 1,00,000/- (रू० एक लाख रुपये मात्र)। निविदा प्रमत्र की हॉर्ड कॉपी उक्त द्वारा अथवा व्यक्तिगत सप्ताहक के माध्यम से किसी भी दशा में स्वीकार नहीं किये जायेगे। निविदाओं से सम्बंधित विवरण/डाउनलोड/संशोधन/विस्तारीकरण हेतु निविदा खुलने के दिनांक तक वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर देखी जा सकती है। निविदाओं को बिना कारण बताये अस्वीकृत/विनाशित करने का अधिकार मुख्य अभियन्ता (पाठशुभ०), प्रयागराज के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा। अधिकारी अभियन्ता (१०) कृते मुख्य अभियन्ता (पाठशुभ०) पत्रांक – 386 दिनांक 1.3.21 "राष्ट्र हित में ऊर्जा बचायें।"



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Hooch tragedy claims four lives in Mirzapur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In yet another hooch tragedy, four people died after consuming spurious liquor in Nevadhiyaghat village in Dehat Kotwali police area of Mirzapur, police said on Monday. Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjay Verma said that in the first incident, two people identified as Chhedhi Nishad and Mahesh Nishad died at the district hospital. He said that both had bought liquor from an individual who makes illicit alcohol in the village on Saturday evening. When their conditions deteriorated, their families admitted them to the hospital where they died early Monday morning while receiving treatment.

The bodies were sent for post-mortem. The ASP said that Raja Tiwari and Suresh (50) also died in the village on Sunday. He said the duo were habitual drinkers. Their bodies have been cremated and an investigation is underway.

Based on the statements of the deceased's families, police have arrested one Kashi on charges of making illegal liquor and recovered 250 illegal pouches of alcohol and paraphernalia used in making liquor from his house. Commissioner of Mirzapur division, Yogeshwar Ram Mishra, District Magistrate Praveen Kumar, Superintendent of Police Ajay Singh inspected the spot.

Police jawans have been

deployed in the entire village to avert any untoward incident.

It may be mentioned that about a month back, four people had died after consuming suspected spurious liquor at Jeetgadi village of Bulandshahr.

Reacting strongly to the tragedy, the state government had placed four policemen, including a station house officer, in Bulandshahr district, under suspension.

A departmental probe was initiated against Joint Excise Commissioner Meerut Zone Rajesh Mani Tripathi, Deputy Commissioner Suresh Chandra Patel and Bulandshahr District Excise Officer Sanjay Kumar Tripathi for laxity in supervisory work over the incident.

44 students awarded medals at Bhatkhande Institute convocation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The music of Uttar Pradesh is not only traditional but also very rich because it carries the treasure of folk apart from being classical and devotional. Youth should be encouraged to learn Indian art and music, Governor Anandiben Patel said while speaking at the 10th convocation of Bhatkhande Music Institute Deemed University on Monday.

As many as 44 students were awarded medals. The girls won 13 gold, five silver and six bronze medals. The

maximum medals were awarded to Usmeet Singh in vocal music.

"Every student's first aim is to get a degree at an educational institute and to achieve other goals on the basis of their capabilities. The students who have been awarded the degrees will make a name for themselves, not only in the country but also abroad," Patel said.

The governor said Indian culture is an invaluable heritage of knowledge, music, art and science, in which education plays an important role. "Education gives a combina-

tion of social, philosophical and moral values enriching the lives of students," she said.

She added that under the New Education Policy, 70 per cent of the course would be as per the interest of students. The governor said that regular medical check-ups of female students should be carried out because a newborn dies every 53 seconds, primarily because girls are anaemic and married at a younger age. "It is important for universities to look after the health of female students," she said.

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari said here on Monday that the Centre owed a sizeable sum of Rs 29,290 to the Shiv Sena-led MVA Government as Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation.

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

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

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

Finance Commission.

"Last year was not only a year of medical emergency but also presented several economic challenges. As jobs and livelihoods were affected, my Government undertook massive humanitarian aid programmes," he said. The Governor said that in view of the pandemic situation and the economic condition, the State government is pursuing with the Centre to increase the latter's contribution to central schemes "To stimulate the economy, my government has provided for 75 per cent of the budgetary provision for capital expenditure and released 100 percent money to the Local Development Fund, DPC schemes and Dongri Vikas Karyakram," the Governor noted.

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

launched," the Governor said.

Koshyari said that the state government had effectively combated the pandemic by reducing the number of active cases, dealing successfully with problem areas like Dharavi (Mumbai slum), first to set up jumbo (field) corona hospitals, implementing the Mahatma Phule Jeevandayi Yojana to prevent exorbitant charges for treatment.

The government had also augmented testing facilities and regulated testing fees, hiked capacity in public hospitals and reserved beds in private hospitals at affordable rates, for public benefit, he said.

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

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

Bovines smuggled in water tanker rescued by Kathua police

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NJAMMU

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

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

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

Senior Superintendent of Police, Kathua Shailendra



Mishra said, "late Sunday night a rare type of bovine smuggling bid was noticed in which a water tanker was being used for illegal transportation of animals".

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

from the spot taking advantage of the darkness"

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

According to a written statement issued by the Kathua police, "A case vide FIR No. 100/2021 Under Sections 188 IPC,11 PCA Act has been registered in P/S Kathua and further investigation has been set into motion".

CISH helping farmers grow strawberries

Lucknow (PNS): Farmers from Kakori and Mall blocks have started producing strawberries of excellent quality under the supervision of Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) scientists. Although this is their maiden effort, they are determined to continue the cultivation in near future.

Director Shailendra Rajan said CISH has been making efforts to make strawberry commercial crops for the farmers of Lucknow since 2014.

"The institute standardised technology and demonstrated it in the field of farmers in Mahiabad, Kakori, Mall and Mohanlalganj. Package of practices was standardised and planting material procured from temperate zones of the country, mainly from Himachal Pradesh. Now for these farmers, strawberry is not a new crop," he said.

He added that CISH arranged tissue culture strawberry plants for SC farmers during the past, but crops failed due to inferior quality plant material. "The steps taken up by the institute have empowered 25 farmers during this year and now they are producing the crop successfully. For popularising the cultivation, a field day on strawberries in subtropical areas at Sarasanda village of Kakori block in the field of Manish Rawat was organised. Over 120 farmers from the villages of Sarasanda, Gopramau, Hasanapur Kakrabad, Sarai Alipur etc of Mall and Kakori blocks attended it," Rajan said.

Principal scientist Dr Ashok Kumar interacted with the farmers and told them that the strawberry is a crop of temperate climate, but it can also be grown successfully in subtropical climate with advanced technology, hard work and guidance of scientists.

CITYBRIEFS

VISTA-2021 CONCLUDES

The 2-day online science and computer festival, 'Vista 2021', organised by City Montessori School, Aliganj Campus 1 to mark National Science Day, concluded with a prize distribution ceremony on Monday. Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma called upon teachers and parents to develop scientific, human and global outlook in students from the beginning. The winners of various competitions were honoured amidst a colourful educational-cultural presentation.

MARATHON RUN



The School of Management Sciences and Electric One organised a 'Marathon Run for Green', which started from gate number 4 of Janeshwar Mishra Park at 7 am. About 700 people participated in the run. Dignitaries from government and non-governmental institutions also registered their presence in the event. The closing ceremony was held under the chairmanship of Sharad Singh, secretary and chief executive officer of the School of Management Sciences and managing director of Electric-One Shweta Singh. Prizes and e-certificates were given away to the winner and runners-up.

SAFETY WEEK

Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation (UPMRC) is commemorating Foundation Day of National Safety Council on March 4 by celebrating Safety Week from March 1 to 6. National Safety Council is entering its 50th year and Lucknow metro is actively involved in renewing the com-

mitment of employees and general public for work safety. The theme for National Safety Day is 'Learn from disaster and prepare for a safer future.'

HOCKEY TOURNAMENT



The Lucknow Circle of State Bank of India has got the opportunity to organise the 'All-India Inter Circle Hockey Tournament 2020-21'.

Lucknow Circle had successfully organised table-tennis and hockey tournaments in past years. In earlier days, there were lots of national and international players in the Lucknow Circle team, including Olympian & gold medallist Ravinder Pal Singh and Olympian Syed Ali. CGM & president of CWC Ajay Kumar Khanna said: "I hope all the Circle teams from different parts of India will show good sportsmen spirit during the tournament. A total of 10 teams will participate in the tournament from all over India. The teams will be divided into three groups and 12 league matches will be played from March 3 to 5. Semi-final will be played on March 6 and final on March 7.

BJP MP MEETS DRM

BJP MP from Faizabad (now Ayodhya) Lallu Singh had an informal meeting with the DRM of Northern Railways, Lucknow division, at the latter's office on Monday. Singh discussed in detail the ongoing works in Ayodhya. He stressed on the need of timely completion of projects. An official spokesman of NR said the DRM took immediate cognisance of the proposals by the MP and assured him swift redressal.

Arunachal reports zero Covid cases for 10 days

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

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

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

Sikkim's recovery rate is 97.05 per cent and mortality rate is 2.20 per cent, the third highest in India after Punjab (3.20 per cent) and Maharashtra (2.42 per cent). The northeastern state of Mizoram among the 28 states in India has the distinction of having the lowest death rate of 0.23 per cent and the state's recovery rate is 99.21 per cent.

Mizoram was the lone state in India where there was no Covid-19 related death until October 28 last year even as the first death was reported in India on January 30, 2020. According to the health officials in Aizawl on Monday, Mizoram has so far reported 4,423 Covid-19 cases with ten people having

died. While 4,393 people have recovered from the infectious virus, there were 20 active cases as on Monday. The officials said that all the ten deaths were in two -- Aizawl (9) and Serchhip (1) -- of the state's 11 districts.

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

According to the officials of the Health and family Welfare Department of Assam, the state had reported its first death due to coronavirus on April 10 last year. The first death in Assam, as well as in the northeastern region, was reported from Hailakandi district in southern Assam where a middle aged man, who had gone abroad, succumbed to Covid-19 at the Silchar Medical College and Hospital.

In Assam, 2,17,537 people have so far been infected by the dreaded virus and 2,14,830 people recovered from the disease with the recovery and mortality rates are 98.76 per cent and 0.50 per cent respectively. The state's active cases on Monday were 1,615. With 39 active cases on Monday, Tripura, where so far 32,987 people have recovered out of the 33, 417 Covid-19 infected people, did not witness any death due to Covid-19 during the past 43 days. So far, 391 people have died due to Covid-19 in Tripura. **IANS**

Around 64% voting in local body polls in Guj; counting today

Gandhinagar: There was an average of around 64% polling in the local body elections for municipalities, district and tehsil panchayats in Gujarat on Sunday. Voting for 8,473 seats in municipalities, 980 in district panchayats and 4,773 in taluka panchayats took place across 36,008 booths. The counting of votes will take place on March 2. According to the State Election Commission (SEC), around 64 per cent voter turnout was recorded in the elections to Gujarat's 81 municipalities, 31 district panchayats and 231 taluka panchayats which were held in a largely peaceful manner.

As per the figures provided by the State Election Commission (SEC), there was 58.82 percent voter turnout across 81 municipalities, 65.80 per cent in 31 district panchayats, and 66.60 per cent in 231 taluka panchayats. The average voting percentage across all these local bodies together was around 63.74 per cent.

The SEC officials said voting for 8,473 seats, comprising 2,720 in 680 wards in 81 municipalities, 980 in 31 district panchayats and 4,773 in 231 taluka panchayats took place across 36,008 booths. Out of them, 237 seats remained unopposed, and no forms were filled for two seats in taluka panchayat. The elections were held on a total 8,235 seats for which the BJP had fielded 8,161 candidates, Congress 7,778, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) 2,090, among others, said the SEC. Besides these, by-elections for two seats in taluka panchayats and 24 seats in municipalities, was also held on Sunday, where there was 47.63 percent voter turnout in municipality by-elections and 68.65 per cent in taluka panchayats by-elections. **IANS**

Stalin turns 68, DMK releases campaign song

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



BJP President JP Nadda at Pt Deendayal Upadhyay Smriti Uppan, Parao in Varanasi on Monday

Pioneer

Nadda calls upon BJP workers to strengthen party

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In his bid to encourage the party workers of Purvanchal (eastern UP) for the next assembly election under party's Mission-2022, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President JP Nadda called upon the party workers in view to strengthen the party, telling them 'to put all their strength in social welfare, only then we will be able to fight well against the coronavirus'. He was addressing the workers of Booth Number 251 (Hartirath Ward) under Madhyameshwar Mandal unit here on Monday.

If the booth is strong then the district, state and nation will also be strong as the best place for any politics is the booth, he said, adding that once a month, booth workers collectively listen to the PM's 'Mann Ki Baat' programme, suggesting every worker to participate in each other's happiness and sorrow. According to him, six programmes of the party should be planned and celebrated at booth level, reminding the same as 6 April (Foundation Day), 14 April (Ambedkar Jayanti), 25 September (Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay birth anniversary), 25 December (Good Governance Day on the birth anniversary of Pandit Atal Bihari Vajpayee), 23 June (Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee's sacrifice day) and 11 February (Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay's dedication day).

He asked the booth chiefs to contact at least six houses every day. Booth president Rajesh Kumar Yadav welcomed Nadda while the function was conducted by Ashish Yadav. In the morning, Nadda visited Kashi Vishwanath and Kal Bhairav temples and offered prayer there. He also tasted Banarasi Kachori, Jalebi, Idli, Dhokla and Malayo, apart from sipping tea in earthen pot.

Later, the BJP chief visited trans-Ganga area located Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Smriti Uppan at Parao in Chandauli district where he met social media workers after paying tributes to Pt Upadhyay terming him, as an inspiration of crores of workers by giving a new direction to the BJP and Jansangh.

He congratulated all for the start of the second phase of COVID-19 vaccination, hailing the leadership of Modi during the coronavirus pandemic by saving the nation.

Speaking on the occasion, the CM Yogi Adityanath said that the leadership of parliamentarian of Varanasi Modi is an inspiration for all of us and we all have a moral responsibility to follow the noble lifestyle of our principal leadership and imbibe in life that paves the way for the progressive development of society. The meeting was conducted by MP and incharge of Kashi area Subrata Pathak.

The meeting was also attended by State President Swatantra Dev Singh, union ministers Mahendra Nath Pandey, Smriti Irani, deputy CM Keshav Prasad Morya, state incharge Radha Mohan Singh, Allahabad MP Rita Bahuguna Joshi, UP ministers Dr Neelkanth Tiwari, Ravindra Jaiswal, Anil Rajbhar, Nand Gopal Nandi, Girish Yadav, Rajya Sabha MP Seema Dwivedi, MLCs Laxman Acharya, Ashok Dhawan, MLCs Saurabh Srivastava, Surendra Narayan Singh, Dr Avadhesh Singh, Sushil Singh, Sadhna Singh, Anurag Singh, mayors Mridula Jaiswal (Varanasi) and Abhilasha Gupta Nandi (Prayagraj).

people participated in the padyatra under the Nadi Adhikar Yatra. It also includes Nishad of Arail, Mawiya village. All the people had left for the next stop under the Yatra Incharge Congress's Backward Classes State Unit President

Manoj Yadav.

It may be noted that on February 4, the administration took action on illegal mining of sand in Baswar. Opposition parties have made it an issue. First the Samajwadi Party opened the front and then the

Nishad Party came forward. After this, the Congress led by Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also took the government on target. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra herself came to Baswar village on Sunday, February 21. She also requested for assistance of Rs 10 lakh to 23 Nishad families for repairing the broken boats on behalf of the State Congress Committee, and also announced for taking out Nadi Adhikar Yatra.

The Congress General Secretary had spoken of fighting on this issue from the road to the Parliament. The Nadi Adhikar Yatra will conclude on March 20 at Manjhi Ghat in Ballia. During this, Congressmen will communicate with people in about 600 villages.

The Yatra will reach Ballia via Mirzapur, Bhadohi, Varanasi, Chandauli, Ghazipur. Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is expected to join the Yatra in Mirzapur.

Elderly administered vaccine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The elderly over 60 years of age were administered the corona vaccine in the ongoing war against the coronavirus here on Monday. In Prayagraj, they were now being vaccinated with Covid vaccine today i.e. Monday. The elderly were seen to have more ardor and enthusiasm than health workers. The district's Tej Bahadur Sapru (Beli) Hospital, Medical College campus and United Medicity Hospital have witnessed a surge of the elderly. Immunisation staff were also excited over this.

Vaccination today was only for the elderly and sick people



between the ages of 45 and 60 years.

There was a lot of enthusiasm among the elderly too. Today, maximum 100 people were vaccinated at each centre. Elderly people over the age of 80 were also seen coming to the hospitals. Some people were also accompanied by their relatives for supporting them.

ACMO Dr Satyendra Rai said that the vaccination was conducted by 5 pm. Phone numbers were written in the cards given to the beneficiaries who got vaccinated.

Medical assistance can be obtained by calling that number in case of any problem, he added.

Nadi Adhikar Yatra flagged off

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Congress's much-publicized 'Nadi Adhikar Yatra' began around 1 pm on Monday afternoon from Baswar village in Ghurpur. After a brief address, Pramod Tiwari, a special invitee member of the Congress Working Committee, flagged off the yatra by showing the party flag. He said that the Congress will give the Nishad community their ancestral rights.

After launching the Nadi Adhikar Yatra, Pramod Tiwari told the people present there that Maa Ganga and Yamuna have a mother-son relationship with Nishad. The BJP government has done the work of separating mother and son. On the formation of the Congress government, the law implemented at the time of former Chief Minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari will be restored and the Nishad community will have the right over the river, soil and sand.

On the first day, about 300



people participated in the padyatra under the Nadi Adhikar Yatra. It also includes Nishad of Arail, Mawiya village. All the people had left for the next stop under the Yatra Incharge Congress's Backward Classes State Unit President

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Super-speciality clinics at govt hospitals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

For private doctors treating and running OPD for patients in a government hospital, this may sound bizarre but is nonetheless true. The state government has approved the opening of super-speciality clinics at government hospitals too. To start with, the facility is being provided at Tej Bahadur Sapru (Beli) Hospital of Sangam city and Balrampur Hospital of Lucknow.

Following the instructions of the government, we would be starting these clinics from March 2 for which we are requesting the private doctors of the city, who are specialist of their own field, to kindly spare

some valuable time from their schedule and provide their consultancy to the patients who cannot afford them because of poor financial condition, said Chief Medical Superintendent (CMS) of Tej Bahadur Sapru HHospital, Dr Kiran Malik.

Since our hospital has been selected for this unique scheme of providing a super speciality clinic for the common man, private doctors would be treating the patients for free. In the initial phase the clinic will have treatment for plastic surgery, gastro and neuro-surgery which would be further extended to other fields too, she added.

To start with, the hospital

has got the acknowledgement from the eminent plastic surgeon of the city, Dr Sanjay Tiwari who would be providing his services from March 2. The CMS also informed that the system of gastro-neuro-surgery will start soon.

Dr Tiwari would provide consultation to the patients from 9 am to 11am on every Tuesday. Besides, he would also conduct operations every Thursday.

The private doctors, who would be providing their services at the hospital would also be provided with a suitable honorarium by the government.

'It is more of an opportunity for the medicos to contribute towards the society as not many people can afford the fees of private doctors', said Dr Malik. Only two hospitals in the state have been approved for super-speciality clinics and it's an honour that Beli hospital has also been included. CMS, the superintendent and the staff members of this 112 years old hospital are very excited about this scheme.

'Our efforts to provide best of the treatment will continue at the hospital but indeed the additional help that would come to us in the form of consultation of the private doctors would be an added advantage for the patients', said Superintendent of the hospital Dr Manoj Akhori.

into the areas which are earmarked for judicial functions. According to speakers, at present around 10 to 12 courts are dealing with education and education service matters in the High Court. The speakers alleged that by this proposed education tribunal, all such matters will go to the tribunal, which will be presided over by retired officers, who have no knowledge of law.

The general house meeting was presided over by HCBA president, Amrendra Nath Singh, while secretary Prabhaskar Mishra conducted it.

In a press release issued by HCBA joint secretary (press) Rajendra Kumar Singh, a meeting of the former office-bearers and senior advocates will be held on Saturday in the study room of the bar association to chalk out future strategy for the agitation.

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Smriti offers prayer at Kashi Vishwanath temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Union Minister for Textiles and Women & Child Development Smriti Irani visited Kashi Vishwanath temple here on Monday and offered prayer. In the presence of priest Dr Srikanth Mishra she also offered Dughdhabhishek and during her staying there, along with some senior officers and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders, she also inspected the premises to see the ongoing construction work of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Dream Project' Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.

During her staying there, she was apprised of the ongoing project by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kashi Vishwanath temple Sunil Verma. Smriti Irani expressed her happiness over the pace of progress in the corridor's work. She attracted the attention of the people when she stayed at a shop and tasted Golgappas. She was in the city on her two days programme of BJP. She attended almost all the programmes of party president JP



Nadda including one at Gokulghan Lawn, Harahua

where Nadda addressed the MPs, MLAs, MLCs and others of Kashi regional unit of the party.

PRIMARY CLASSES REOPEN: After a long gap since nationwide lockdown was imposed to prevent spread of worldwide coronavirus pandemic, the primary school students attended their classes here on Monday. As per the COVID-19 guidelines to the government, only 33 per cent students were called for attending the classes and by this new arrangement, the children studying from Class I to V will attend their classes only twice a week.

Since the order given by the government, for the last one week the schools were making arrangements for the same allowing only 33 per cent students for a day. The upper classes of the secondary schools have already reopened and they are running also with the same arrangements. The schools are allowing the children only after getting the consent from their parents/guardians.

Persons over 60 get COVID-19 vaccines

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Amidst prevailing of several confusions about how to enroll one's name for getting vaccine shot, the second phase of vaccination has started in the district on a lack-lustre manner as just a few hundreds of the beneficiaries were invited for vaccination in government hospitals/centres whereas the same has also started at private hospitals. Confusions are still prevailing as both the district and health departments failed to inform a huge number of old aged persons for the vaccination. In the early phase, the health and frontline workers were vaccinated for over a dozen days since the process started on January 16.

Meanwhile, only one new COVID-19 patient has been tested positive, increasing the tally of confirmed cases to 22,002 by Monday evening.

With no COVID-19 death being reported in the last 24 hours, the death toll remains at 377.

With two COVID-19 patients having been cured in home isolation, the number of COVID-19 patients recovered in the district so far is 21,581 including 18,605 in home isolation and 2,976 in Covid hospitals.

As present 44 active cases are under treatment in the district. The recovery rate in the district is 98.08 per cent and the mortality rate 1.71 per cent.

MGKVP CONVOCA-TION TO BE HELD TODAY: A total of 81,566 graduate and postgraduate students will receive degrees in the 42nd convocation function to be held on Tuesday at 3 pm at convocation place in humanitarian faculty of Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth

campus.

Tripti Singh of MPed will be honoured with Dr Vibhuti Narayan Singh Gold Medal Award for topping the university.

Secretary, Science & Technology, Government of India Prof Ashutosh Sharma will deliver convocation speech, while the Governor and varsity Chancellor Anandiben Patel will preside over it, the Vice-Chancellor Prod TN Singh informed the presspersons.

A total of 81,566 graduate and postgraduate students including 30,652 boys and 50,919 girls will receive degrees, the V-C informed adding, the degree of PhD will be given to as many as 40 students, while one student will get the degree of DLitt.

Tripti Singh of MPed will be honoured with the presti-

gious Dr Vibhuti Narayan Singh Gold Medal Award for securing the maximum marks in the university, the V-C informed and added, besides her, a total of 59 students will be given gold medals including 14 students at graduate level, 43 at postgraduate level and two from sports.

A total of 571 students secured place in top 10 of their respective courses including 154 at graduate level and 417 at postgraduate level.

On Monday, the rehearsal of the convocation function was held and a sobha yatra was also taken out on the eve of function.

The registrar Dr Saheb Lal Maurya and director of Madan Mohan Malviya Institute of Hindi Journalism Prof Om Prakash Singh were also present during the press conference.



Mayor Pramila Pandey administers oath at the launch of Communicable Disease Control Programme on Monday

Pioneer

KNN joins fight against communicable disease

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Mayor Parmila Pandey, while inaugurating a Communicable Disease Control Programme in a meeting called at Kanpur Nagar Nigam on Monday, said this drive would continue till March 31 and would be run in the entire district.

She said the objective of this drive was to make the people aware of the vector-borne diseases like dengue, malaria, chikungunya, Japanese encephalitis and other fevers.

She later administered the oath to be part of the control programme.

She said to fight communicable disease the first and the foremost was to keep surrounding clean in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. She said the main focus had to be on drains where stagnant water was a reservoir of the vectors that spread disease.

She said the Panchayati Raj Department had been asked to lend support to KNN. She said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath wanted effective control over communicable diseases and for this both awareness and streamlining of things were essential.

She said the control of communicable diseases

depended on a healthy environment (clean water, adequate sanitation, vector control, shelter), immunisation, and health workers trained in early diagnosis and treatment. She said the conditions leading to an epidemic were caused mostly by secondary effects and not by the primary hazard, except in the case of flooding, which could cause an increase in water-borne and vector-borne diseases.

Pandey said highly contagious diseases - those spread by personal contact - were most commonly the result of crowding survivors living in crowded temporary accom-

modations without adequate ventilation or adequate facilities for personal hygiene. She said the length of time that people spent in temporary settlements was an important determinant of the risk of disease transmission and the prolonged mass settlement in temporary shelters with only minimal provision for essential personal hygiene was typical of a situation that may cause epidemic outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Prominent health officials were present, prominent among them being Dr Ajay Sankhwar, Dr Sheela Mishra, Dr AK Singh and Dr GC Mishra.

Youth killed over illicit relations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A youth was killed by the kind of a woman with whom he was in relation in Narkhurd village under Rasoolabad police station of Kanpur Dehat late Sunday night.

Police have taken four persons of the woman's family into custody for quizzing.

According to reports, Badan Singh Rajput (45) of Rasoolabad Kotwali police area was having an affair with a local woman. After the woman's family members came to know about their illicit affair, they decided to eliminate her paramour.

As per plan, they asked the woman to call her paramour on some pretext at their house on Sunday night. When Badan Singh reached there, they caught hold of him and battered him to death and locked the body in a room. Thereafter, they informed the police about the entry of an unknown person in their house.

The police rushed to the spot and found the profusely bleeding body of the youth in the room. Police also recovered a blood-stained pestle from the spot.

Police immediately took the woman's kin into custody who, on being grilled, admitted that they had killed Badan Singh.

On Monday morning, irate villagers demanded that the house of complainants be demolished. As tension prevailed in the village, a heavy police force was deployed there.

Delhi pair wins bridge trophy

KANPUR (PNS): The Delhi pair Bachiraju Satyanarayana and Kiran Nadar won the All India Sir Padampat Singhania Memorial Bridge trophy and bagged the first prize of Rs 30,000 in the online Singhania bridge tournament that concluded on Sunday.

Chennai pair MJR Vasudevan and S Vijayraghvan were at the second place and received Dr Gaur Hari Singhania memorial trophy along with prize money of Rs 20,000, while the combination of Bengal and Delhi pair of D Majumdar and Rajeshwar Tiwari won the Seth Ram Kumar Newatia second runners-up trophy and prize money Rs 12,000.

Efforts of chief technical manager TC Pant and Gajendra Singh of SPSBA for successful conduct of the tournament were praised.

TB SEARCH CAMPAIGN: Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Mishra on Monday said that the TB Control Department had decided to launch a search campaign for TB patients by visiting every house from March 10 to 24.

He said the government had decided to involve Asha and Anganwadi workers in this campaign. He said the Dastak Abhiyan was being run since 2017 but now it had included TB patients as well.

He said with the help of this campaign every effort would be made to identify the maximum number of people suffering from TB. He said the campaign would also cover malnourished children and Japanese encephalitis.

Man's body found in well

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The body of missing former village pradhan was found in a well on Sunday. As per the reports, Jivbodh Singh (80), a resident of Kelabela village under Chunar police station, who was the former pradhan and owner of a brick kiln, had gone to sleep on Saturday night and was found missing from his bed the next morning. Thereafter his anxious family members launched a search for him and found his body in a well near the house. On getting information about the matter the police personnel of Adalpur outpost reached the spot and managed to get the body out from the well. According to the police, the mental state of the deceased was not normal.

16 INTER-DIST GAMBLERS ARRESTED: The Chilh police arrested 16 inter-district gamblers, recovered ₹73,100 and seized six motorcycles on Saturday. As per the reports, Station House Officer (SHO) Raghvendra Singh dur-

ing routine patrolling on the said evening was tipped off by an informer about gambling in Pachavra village under Chilh police station. Acting swiftly the police team raided the place and found two groups involved in gambling there. The police recovered ₹61,000 from the gambling table and ₹12,100 on frisking the gamblers along with playing cards. After taking all the 16 gamblers into custody they brought them to the police station. After registering a case under Section 13 of the Gambling Act in this connection, the police arrested the accused and seized their motorcycles under Motor Vehicles Act. The accused were later identified as Vijay Prakash belonging to Kusaanv village under Jalalpur police station in Jaunpur, Rahul Kumar of Sahni village under Kerakat police station in Jaunpur, Pankaj Tiwari, a resident of Jaathi village under Gyanpur police station in Bhadohi, Prakash Mishra, a resident of Mahauria under City Kotwali, Mirzapur,

Satish Yadav of Visundarpur Neebi under City Kotwali police station, Mirzapur, Manish Chaurasia of Imambada under Kotwali Katra police station, Brijesh Kumar of Virohi village under Vindhayachal police station in Mirzapur, Raman Kumar of Ganeshganj under Kotwali Katra police station, Sunil Kumar, resident of Bhatwa Ki Pokhari under Kotwali Katra police station, Amit Sonkar of Hathia Fatak under Kotwali Katra police station, Om Prakash Shukla of Mahathua village under Aurai police station, Bhadohi, Heera L Dubey, resident of Bhawanipur village under Aurai police station, Bhadohi, Rajendra Kumar, resident of Noopur village under Suraj police station, Bhadohi, Sanjay Khatri of Ghajia Tola under City Kotwali police station, Mirzapur, Surya Prasad Shukla, a resident of Harinarainpur village under Suraj police station, Bhadohi, and Anuj Khatri belonging to Narghat under City Kotwali police station in Mirzapur.

13 couples reunite

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

As many as 13 couples got reunited under 'Project Milan' on Sunday. Report said that matters related to Chilh, Kachhawaan Vindhayachal, Madihan, Katra Kotwali, Jigna, Padari and Ahraura police stations had been referred by the police to the counselling centre located at Police Lines. The centre succeeded in pursuing the 13 couples, who were living separately due to misunderstandings, to live together. After counselling the couples returned to their residences in a joyful mood. For this success the role of woman head constable Shashibala Yadav, members, Krishna Kumar Srivastava and Salil Pandey and others was remarkable.

TRAINING PROGRAMME: MLA (City) Ratnakar Mishra while speaking at the chief guest during the

claimed that science of Treta era was more developed than today. On the occasion the speakers opined that astrology was the way to recharge life. They extended their best wishes for the success of the training programme and expressed the hope that it will be successful in increasing the knowledge of the new generation about astrology and 'vastu'. Earlier the programme started with the 'Swasti Vachan' by the team of Nitin Awasthi and was conducted by Samar Chand. Proposing the vote of thanks Kamlesh Kesarvani manager of Shiv Inter College expressed his gratitude to the organisers for selecting its building for an auspicious work. Prominent among those who graced the programme were Dr Ramlal Tripathi, Dr Brajdev Pandey, Dr Baijnath Pandey, Suryakant Malviya, Sandeep Dubey, Salil Pandey,

nuptial knot during a mass marriage programme organised by Social Welfare department at Patehra, block headquarters of Madihan, on Saturday. The beneficiaries belonged to Rajgarh and Madihan blocks. The marriages were held amidst the recital of the Vedic 'shlokas' by a team of 'purohits'. For blessing the newly-married couples, UP Minister of State for Energy Rama Shankar Singh Patel, who was the chief guest, was accompanied by MLA Rahul Kol and CDO Avinash Singh. Addressing the function at the occasion the minister said During his address the minister said that to provide direct help to the needy the government was sending ₹35,000 in the account of the bride, ₹10,000 were spent for ceremonial items like anklets, sarees etc and ₹6,000 on arrangements. In entire programme the transparency was maintained strictly, he added. He announced that the construction of roadways bus stand, government inter college and government degree college at Patehra were in the pipeline and the work will be started soon. The function was convened by Social Welfare Officer Gireesh Dubey and conducted by Vinod Srivastava. Prominent among those who also graced the function were BDO Madihan Dinesh Kumar Mishra, Raju Patel and Gyandas Singh.



MLA Ratnakar Mishra at a programme at Shiv Inter College, Mirzapur

inaugural function of the three-month training programme on astrology and 'vastu' at Shiv Inter College on Saturday,

Alankar Jaiswal, Vendheshwari Pandey and Sandarbh Pandey.

MASS MARRIAGE: As many as 107 couples tied the

Family counselling seminar held

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

A family counselling seminar was organised to make the families of the personnel working in the Dudhichua project of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) aware of the working of the mines and day-to-day challenges, for providing some important information related to their safety along with their health besides discussing topics like establishing coordination in the work area and family life. A



total of 50 families participated in the family counselling seminar organised in Dudhichua area-situated Suryakiran Bhawan and shared their experiences of workplace and daily family life. General Manager, Dudhichua Area, Bipin Kumar, who presided over the programme motivated everyone to increase production and productivity while being vigilant and alert towards safety and also praised important contribution of families in ensuring the safety

and health of the personnel. On the occasion chairperson of Sangini Mahila Samiti, Kiran Kumar, who was the chief guest, interacted with the people present there and while praising the contribution of women said that success in no major work can be achieved without the support of family. Kumar shared her experiences on the role of a good workplace environment as well as a good family environment. In the programme the imple-

mentation of mines safety standards was discussed with the employees and their family members and gratitude was expressed towards the women of all families for their special contribution. A film on the working style of Dudhichua area was also screened on the occasion. Dudhichua areas all departmental heads with their families, CMOAI general secretary Sarvesh Singh, Shram Sangh office-bearers besides other officers and employees were present during the programme.

Bank employees stage dharna against privatisation move

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Hundreds of bank employees, rallying under the banner of United Forum of Bank Unions, staged an impressive dharna and demonstration at PNB, Govind Nagar gate, on Monday as part of the nation-wide agitation against privatisation of government banks.

The bank employees, sporting masks and holding banners and placards, shouted anti-government slogans and demanded that privatisation move be stopped or they would be forced to intensify their agitation. They also decided to go on a two-day strike on March 15 and 16, 2021.

Addressing the gathering, state deputy general secretary of the union, Sanjay Trivedi, said the BJP government had decided to privatise banks but



PNB employees under United Forum of Bank Unions staged an impressive dharna cum demonstration at PNB, Govind Nagar on Monday.

Pioneer

the United Forum of Bank Unions had decided to fight it tooth and nail and prevent privatisation and ensure that the banks remained nationalised. He said it was time for all bank employees to stay united and oppose the evil designs of the government.

He said all the nationalised

banks, with the help of social banking, had opened 42 crore Jan Dhan accounts and had woven a strong network of branches from urban to rural areas. He said besides giving loans to MSME, farmers, students for education, and to primary areas or backward segments, the nationalised

banks were providing easy loans to the weaker sections of society. He said on the contrary, the private banks have till date opened only 1.25 crore Jan Dhan accounts, that too on higher interest rates. He said the objective of these banks was to earn profits.

Addressing the gathering, Anil Sonker said from March 2 a campaign would be launched to file online petitions to the prime minister along with a parallel twitter campaign. He said the bank employees would also stage massive demonstrations outside Parliament on March 15 and 16, 2021 and remain on nation-wide strike for two days.

Prominent leaders who took part in the dharna included Renu Tiwari, Pooja, Vijeta Gupta, Nitin Bajpai, Jeet Narayan, Harmendra Hazaria and Hari Om Pal.

Srilaxami: Motivate girls to achieve their dream goals

KANPUR (PNS): Sub-Divisional Magistrate (Sadar) Srilaxami VS while addressing a function organised by the Vimala Group of Institutions under Women Empowerment to felicitate outstanding women on Monday, said self-determination could help achieve any specific target. She said today women were posing a stiff challenge to their male counterparts in every sphere of profession and today not only parents but even society had clearly understood the importance of education in women's uplift. She appealed to the parents to take up challenges of society and educate their daughters and motivate them to achieve their dream goals.

She said this could be done provided the parents reflected faith in their daughters and extended all possible help to them when they felt weak. She said today if girls were fighter pilots and excelled in artillery and physical combat, it showed that if given the right motivation and support they could do wonders. Addressing the function, Assistant Income Tax Commissioner, Dr Nivedita Singh, said it was beyond doubt that family background played a critical role. She said it was true that family background, operationalised as family socio-economic status, influenced daughters' participation in school activities and the amount of resources available

for their education and several factors. She said advantaged families were able to instill high levels of learning motivation in their daughters by providing high levels of social-emotional support as well as class-based opportunities and resources at home.

Additional Superintendent of Police Niharika Singh said peers like parents and teachers were key adults who shaped students' learning, especially in girls, through classroom interactions. She said today the increasing number of women in administrative services clearly showed that women were capable of taking up any challenge if given the right direction and motivation. She said

it had been proved beyond doubt that women were nowhere inferior to men and they could perform equally well as their male counterparts.

Later, the lighting ceremony for the nurses was held where several successful nurses shared their experiences to the entrants and motivated them to excel in their area of profession. Addressing the gathering, VGI CEO Dr Shilpa Singh said although nursing was demanding, physically challenging, and required a lot of hard work, nurses were rewarded by making a difference in the lives of their clients, developing trusting relationships with other people through connecting and caring,

and being part of a professional legacy that had stood the test of time. She said good nurses had a positive attitude, were non-judgmental, innovative, confident, and committed to providing the best evidence-based care to all and to life-long learning. She said they worked well in a team and under pressure and were good communicators and promoted patient autonomy. Other prominent women officials felicitated were SDM (Ghatampur) Dr Pooja Yadav, Kshipra Patel, Savita Singh, Pinky, Akanksha, Angel Singh, Khushi Yadav, Anshika Tiwari, Kaushaki Awasthi, Shivangi Rajpur, Shivangi Verma, Geetanjali Singh and Prerna Verma.

Sewing machines distributed

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

A 'Swavalamban' (self-reliance) programme was organised by the Rural Development Department of Hindalco Renuagar Power Division at Renuagar auditorium recently. In order to make women of the nearby rural areas self-reliant sewing machines were distributed, for agricultural work spraying machines to villagers and to workers with electrical training tools kits and certificates. Besides to meritorious students from remote areas solar lamps were distributed, for making the needy self-reliant handcards and to students who had secured more than 75 per cent marks through the coaching centre being run in Garbandha and Parsi villages studying material. The chief guest, Superintendent of Police (SP), Sonbhadra, Amarendra Prasad Singh, and President (Energy) of Renuagar Division



Shailesh Vikram Singh proposed the vote of thanks. The programme was conducted by Rural Development Department incharge Anil Jha. On the occasion Hindalco Renuagar Operations department's Yogesh Prajapati, KR Babu, Hitendra Jha, BK Vajpayee along with gram pradhans belonging to the nearby areas were present. The support of the team of the Rural Development Department in making the programme a success was commendable.

Opp sees plot in PM taking Covid shot

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Several other politicians like Congress's Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and SP's Akhilesh Yadav have politi-

cised vaccination as a BJP "stunt".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maha, Kerala, 3 others lead Covid surge in country



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The Union Health Ministry said on Monday, India's total number of active Covid-19 cases was recorded at 1,68,627, comprising 1.52 per cent of the total infections. Maharashtra alone accounts for 46.39 per cent of India's total active cases, followed by Kerala with 29.49 per cent. "A total of 15 states and union territories have registered more than 1,000 active

cases. Kerala and Maharashtra are the two states with over 10,000 active cases, while the rest of the 13 States and UTs have between 1,000-10,000 active cases," the Ministry said.

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

A total 15,510 new cases were registered in a span of 24 hours. Maharashtra continues to report the highest daily new cases at 8,293, followed by Kerala with 3,254 cases while Punjab has reported 579 new cases.

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



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

tacts are strongly emphasised, the Ministry said.

"Eight states are displaying an upward trajectory in the daily new cases," it underlined.

So far, a total of 1,43,01,266 vaccine doses have been administered to beneficiaries

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

through 2,92,312 sessions. These include the first dose to 66,69,985 healthcare workers, second dose to 24,56,191 healthcare workers and 51,75,090 frontline workers who have taken the first dose.

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

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

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

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

FPOs will prevent rural migration to cities: Tomar



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

It aims at bringing small and marginal farmers on a bigger platform as a joint entity to help them become 'aatmanirbhar' (self-reliant) in the long run.

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

by aggregating land."

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

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

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

6th Swachchh Survekshan launched to foster healthy contest among cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



THE SWACHCHH SURVEKSHAN WAS INTRODUCED BY MOHUA IN 2016 AS A COMPETITIVE FRAMEWORK TO ENCOURAGE CITIES TO IMPROVE THE STATUS OF URBAN SANITATION

encouraging large scale citizen participation.

Since its launch in 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) has made significant progress in the area of both sanitation and solid waste management. 4,360 Urban ULBs have been declared ODF, 2158 cities certified ODF+ and 551 cities certified ODF++. Moreover, 66 lakhs individual household toilets and over 6 lakhs community/ public toilets have been constructed/ or are under construction. Additionally, nearly 60,000 toilets across 2,900+ cities have been made live on Google Maps. In the area of solid waste management, 97% of wards have 100% door-to-door collection while 68% of the total waste generated is being processed. A total of six cities have been certified as 5 Star, 86 as 3 star and 65 as 1 star under the Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free Cities.

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

Apex court denies relief to married Govt servant accused of rape

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

A Bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde was hearing a plea filed by the accused who is serving as a technician in Maharashtra State Electricity Production Company Ltd and has moved the apex court against the Bombay High Court February 5 order which had cancelled the anticipatory bail granted to him in the case.

When the hearing commenced, the bench also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, asked the accused "Are you willing to marry her?"

"If you are willing to marry her then we can consider it, otherwise you will go to jail," observed the bench adding "We are not forcing you to marry."



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

As the counsel said that the accused is a public servant, the bench said, "You should have thought this before seducing and raping the girl. You knew that you are a government servant".

The counsel said that charges in the case are yet to be framed. "You apply for reg-

ular bail. We will stay arrest," the bench said.

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

said.

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

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

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

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

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

It adjourned the hearing on Majee's plea to March 10 after accepting the request of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta who was representing the CBI. Earlier, the bench had issued notices to Centre and CBI and had sought their response by March 1 on the plea which claimed that the central probe agency lacked jurisdiction to lodge an FIR in the case after the withdrawal of general consent by the West Bengal Government in 2018.

It, however, had refused to grant protection to Majee.

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

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

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

NIA arrests four drug traffickers from Srinagar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Taming the virus

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

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



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

PICTALK



A mural depicting Pope Francis in Baghdad, Iraq

AP

Overt bonhomie

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

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



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

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

Beware of Pak's softening stand

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

One mistake Indians must not make is to read Pakistan through Indian eyes. Normally, anything that leads to peace should be welcome. Similarly, we should welcome the fact that Pakistan has agreed to cessation of the ongoing hostilities with us and honour the ceasefire pact of 2003.

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

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

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



rich quickly by avoiding competition against Indian business communities and crossing over to the new State, where they would have to compete only against the Punjabi and Sindhi farmers. For the rest, Jinnah pleaded brilliantly for those Muslims who wanted or half-wished a separate homeland. This was Jinnah's role in actuality; his fee was his place in history's hall of fame. Fortunately for him, he died within 13 months of Independence. The word *mohajir*, a term for Muslims from Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar migrating to Pakistan, came into circulation soon thereafter. But *mohajirs* soon found themselves not only unwelcome but also the target of ethnic hostility in the newly carved out Muslim homeland. Jinnah's deputy Liaquat Ali Khan, from UP, was assassinated a mere four years after Pakistan had been carved out. What prevails in Pakistan now is the will of the West Punjabis who are two-thirds of the country's population. Their need for Kashmir has been to keep the country together and paper over their dominance of everything, which is now a bone of contention. Plus, they portray India as a great threat to the



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

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

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

some settlement with the US. If not, the rulers would wait for circumstances to change; for a true *momin*, his faith in Allah the Merciful is infinite. We must not compare it with the mind of a thinking or reticent Hindu.

Another possibility might be that Pakistan's real ruler, General Bajwa, wants to ease India's pressure on his eastern Indian front and use it to settle his scores with Baluchistan, like General Tikka had tried to do in East Pakistan in 1971. Bajwa may have been advised that the Baloch province is so rich in resources that it could greatly help in solving Pakistan's economic problems. But to exploit these resources would take time, peace and complete control. I concede that this possibility may sound too farfetched, but unless Islamabad takes some drastic steps, how can it keep the economic wheels of Pakistan rolling? If it depends on Chinese loans, Pakistan could become a Beijing protectorate inch by inch, as one has already begun to see with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor coming into play.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HAIL INDIA'S VACCINATION DRIVE

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

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

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

CK Ramani | Mumbai

PINK-BALL TEST MATCH MAGIC

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

Win-win situation for India, Pak



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

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

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

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

P Senthil | Mumbai

gloss on it. Also, there have been only 16 pink-ball Test matches in the world and many of those have finished fairly early. There have been some abysmal batting performances, like in the pink-ball Tests India and England have played.

The pink ball is bringing new dimensions to the game, and the players need to adopt these. If one plays more and more, he would obviously get used to it. Cricketers were playing with the red ball for a long period of time, then they shifted to the white ball. That's how the format keeps on evolving and, with this new dimension, more action is expected in the coming days. Not only the players but also spectators will enjoy more pink-ball game in the coming days.

V Nagendra Kumar | Hyderabad

CONDUCT AN IMPARTIAL INQUIRY

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

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

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

MR Jayanthi | Coimbatore

SOUND BITE

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

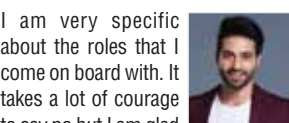


Delhi Health Minister —Satyendar Jain



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

American President —Joe Biden



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

Actor —Vijayendra Kumeria



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

Former Australia captain —Steve Waugh

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



UP Chief Minister —Yogi Adityanath

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN


MANY FORTUNES AT STAKE

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



KALYANI SHANKAR

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



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

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

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

CPSU privatisation an uphill task

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

Under a big bang approach to privatisation announced in the Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has divided the Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) in two broad categories i.e. strategic and non-strategic. Whereas the former is broken up into four subgroups: Atomic energy, space and defence; transport and telecommunications; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; banking, insurance and financial services, the latter includes all other sectors such as hotel and tourist services, industrial and consumer goods, trading, marketing and so on. As per the plan, all PSUs in non-strategic sectors will be privatised and all loss-making enterprises in this category will be closed. In the strategic sector, too, the Government will be open to privatisation with the caveat that at least one undertaking (and a maximum of four) will be retained in the public sector.

When seen in the backdrop of the Union Government having made an indiscriminate entry in almost every conceivable business activity, including areas such as hotel and tourist services where it had no business to be present in the first place, any initiative aimed at exiting from all of these is welcome. This has the potential to unlock value and generate huge revenue because of the high valuation that the real estate and properties under these PSUs command. As regards the strategic sector, though the Government does not rule out privatisation, the caveat of retaining a maximum of four undertakings in the public sector can defeat the purpose. For instance, currently there are around 12 oil PSUs ranging from upstream oil producers like the ONGC and OIL to downstream oil refining and fuel marketing firms IOC, BPCL and HPCL to gas transporter GAIL India Limited and engineering firm Engineers India Limited. These 12 could be consolidated into four behemoths through a process of merger and amalgamation, leaving no space for privatisation whatsoever.

Why does the Government want to put this caveat? What does it fear? Sans this, will it compromise national interest? In the above example, consider an extreme scenario, in which there is not even one PSU and the entire oil and gas space is occupied by private enterprises. Are we to infer that this will compromise India's energy security? If this were to be the case, then why not reserve this sector exclusively for PSUs? Why allow even one private company? This line of argument is bizarre. For ensuring security in strategic items, the critical requirement is to have a minimum number of companies to ensure there is adequate competition and supply in the market. Who those firms are —whether owned by private promoters or the Government — should not matter.

In the 1970s-80s, when India needed to develop these sectors and private players were unwilling to invest, it made sense for the Government to take the lead. Since then, lot of water has flown down the Ganga. Currently, there is considerable interest among private investors and the Government itself is inviting them. Therefore, any arbitrary restriction should be avoided. Any decision to privatise a PSU



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

The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.



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

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

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

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

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

realisation from every sale.

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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

AI making a place for itself in modern healthcare

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

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

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

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



KM CHERIAN

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

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

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

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

patients and medical personnel.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With the potential application of AI within the

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

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

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

Sensex surges 750 pts as investors cheer Q3 GDP

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex surged nearly 750 points and NSE Nifty rallied over 232 points on Monday as investors cheered the domestic economy returning to positive territory after two quarters of contraction.

The 30-share BSE index briefly traded above the 50,000-mark in day trade before closing at 49,849.84, showing a rise of 749.85 points or 1.53 per cent. Of the Sensex constituents, 29 closed with gains.

Likewise, the NSE barometer Nifty settled with a gain of 232.40 points or 1.60 per cent at 14,761.55.

Top performers were PowerGrid, ONGC, Ultratech Cement, Asian Paint, Kotak Bank and Titan – rising as much as 5.94 per cent.

“Positive global cues and US yields retreating from highs led to a strong opening today with Indices sustaining gains throughout the day. The broader markets saw energetic buying momentum across PSU basket and sectors like Paints & Speciality Chemicals,” S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities said.

After two consecutive quarters of contraction, the Indian economy has finally

entered an expansionary path.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew 0.4 per cent in the October-December 2020 period compared with the same period a year back, data released by the National

Rupee drops 8 paise to 73.55 against dollar as oil spikes

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee dropped by 8 paise to close at 73.55 against the US dollar on Monday, extending its falling streak to a third day due to spike in global crude oil prices and strong American currency.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened lower at 73.76 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 73.19.

The local currency finally ended at 73.55 against the American currency, registering a fall of 8 paise over its previous closing.

On Friday, the rupee had settled at 73.47 against the American currency.

Statistics Office on Friday showed.

High-frequency indicators were pointing towards the fact that the domestic economy is slowly entering the recovery path.

Gold price rises ₹241; silver jumps ₹781

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices on Monday rose by ₹241 to ₹45,520 per 10 grams in the national capital in line with the strong global bullion market trend, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had closed at ₹45,279 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. Silver also jumped by ₹ 781 to ₹68,877 per kg, compared with the previous close of 68,096 per kg. HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said, “Spot prices for 24 karat gold in Delhi rose by ₹241, in line with the recovery in global gold prices while rupee appreciation capped upside.” The spot rupee was trading around 16 paise stronger against the dollar, halting three days of loss, during the intra-day session, HDFC Securities added.

₹77,146 cr bids for spectrum on Day 1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's first auction of spectrum in five years attracted Rs 77,146 crore of bids on the opening day on Monday with Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea participating in the bidding process - a response that the government said was better than expected.

There were, however, no takers for spectrum in 700 MHz and 2500 MHz bands on the first day, and the auctions will continue and conclude on Tuesday.

About 2,308.80 MHz of spectrum, that carry telecom signals, in seven bands worth nearly Rs 4 lakh crore at the reserve or start price, was offered for bidding in the auction that began on Monday. Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said Rs

77,146 crore worth of spectrum was bid on the first day but there were no takers for the airwaves in the premium 700 MHz as also 2500 MHz bands.

The response from players and the bids received surpassed government's internal estimates, that had anticipated bids worth Rs 45,000 crore.

“The winning bids that have come till 6 PM today is Rs 77,146 crore. We thought since there are only three players, and spectrum replacement is happening...Our estimation was that the bids will touch about Rs 45,000 crore, but it is a matter of assurance that it has gone as high as Rs 77,146 crore,” Prasad said.

The bidder-wise details were not available immediately. A total of 2,308.80 MHz spectrum is being put to auction, out of which there have

been bids for 849.20 MHz so far, an official release said.

Bids were received in 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz and 2300 MHz bands, as players gave the prized 700 MHz band a miss on the first day of auctions.

“Total value of spectrum put to auction was about Rs 4 lakh crore. In this, 700 MHz band was a costly band, and that cost itself is Rs 1.97 lakh crore,” the minister said adding that the government will take a call on 700 MHz band, used for 5G, in case it remains unsold in the ongoing auctions. Excluding 700 MHz and 2500 Mhz bands, the bidding accounted for 60 per cent of the spectrum that was put to auction.

The 700 MHz band went unsold during the 2016 auctions, too. During 2016, when

there were seven bidders, the spectrum sold was 41 per cent by quantity and 12 per cent by value of the total spectrum put to auction. The corresponding figures in the 2021 spectrum auction so far are 37 per cent and 19 per cent respectively, with three participants.

Spectrum will be offered for assignment for a validity period of 20 years. Successful bidders can pay entire bid amount in one go (upfront), or exercise an option to pay a certain amount (25 per cent for spectrum won in 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz bands or 50 per cent for spectrum won in 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz bands) upfront with remaining amount in a maximum up to 16 equated annual instalments, after a moratorium of two years.

Automakers report double digit sales growth in Feb

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading car makers Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai and Tata Motors reported robust sales growth in the domestic market in February as the demand for personal mobility amid COVID-19 pandemic continues to drive the market.

Others, including Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM), Mahindra & Mahindra, and Honda Cars India, also reported strong wholesale dispatches to dealers last month.

The country's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its domestic sales increased 11.8 per cent to 1,52,983 units last month, as against 1,36,491 units in February 2020.

PM says farmers should get more avenues to sell crops

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday emphasised on farmers getting more avenues to sell crops and said a food processing revolution was needed in the country for value addition to farm produce and to realise better prices.

Addressing a webinar on effective implementation of Budget provisions regarding the

Agriculture Ministry, he underlined the need for increased participation of private players in the farm sector, including in research and development (R&D) work.

Without making any direct reference to the three new farm reform laws or to the three-month-old agitation by farmers, Modi said there is a need for expanding options for the country's farming community to sell agri produce.

LPG price hiked again by ₹25; ATF price up 6.5%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cooking gas LPG price was on Monday hiked by Rs 25 per cylinder across all categories, including subsidised fuel and those availed by Ujjwala scheme beneficiaries - the fourth increase in rates in a month's time.

LPG prices have gone up by Rs 125 per 14.2-kg cylinder since the beginning of February, price data from state-owned oil

marketing companies showed.

Also, jet fuel prices were hiked by a steep 6.5 per cent on the back of a rally in international oil prices. A 14.2-kg cylinder in Delhi now costs Rs 819 as against Rs 794 at which they were supplied on Sunday.

The increase is applicable across all categories, including subsidised and non-subsidised users. LPG is available only at one rate, market price, across the

country. The government, however, gives a small subsidy to select customers.

However, this subsidy has been eliminated in metros and major cities through successive price increases over the past couple of years.

So, in places like Delhi, there is no subsidy paid to customers since May 2020 and all LPG users pay the market price, which currently is Rs 819.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	14,702.50	14,806.80	14,638.55	14,761.55	232.4
POWERGRID	2175	2288	2174	2288	145
ONGC	1143	11765	1135	11765	665
GRASIM	1,206.95	1,220.00	1,202.20	1,220.00	69.2
UPL	570	592.7	570	590	28.45
SHREECEM	26,600.50	27,832.50	26,600.50	27,665.00	1,163.30
ULTRACEMCO	6,218.80	6,389.80	6,170.60	6,362.00	247
ASIANPNT	2,300.00	2,369.90	2,300.00	2,368.00	90.8
HEROMOTOCO	3,255.00	3,363.05	3,250.00	3,352.00	128
KOTAKBANK	1,811.00	1,854.90	1,801.40	1,846.40	66.05
TITAN	1,421.50	1,466.00	1,416.60	1,454.00	47.1
DIVISLAB	3,396.70	3,485.00	3,381.35	3,475.00	111.9
ADANIPTS	6846	70465	6733	6976	21.7
IOC	101	101.5	99.8	100.9	285
JSWSTEEL	4026	40845	39335	4065	1105
HDFC	2,556.00	2,614.60	2,548.60	2,610.00	70.6
EICHERMOT	2,523.00	2,568.90	2,497.15	2,559.75	61.15
HCLTECH	916	934.5	916.65	931	21.55
MARUTI	6,977.00	7,032.85	6,917.05	7,024.90	158.75
TATASTEEL	724	738.25	711.35	730.9	15.75
IT	1,456.00	1,486.00	1,438.20	1,473.50	31
GAIL	1441	14565	1425	1448	3
TECHM	935.45	957	926.35	947.95	19.1
ICICIBANK	607.55	611.85	602	609.5	11.75
SUNPHARMA	600	610.8	597.05	606	11.4
HDFCBANK	1,564.00	1,572.55	1,540.70	1,560.35	25.95
COALINDIA	1555	1571	1537	1546.5	2.45
M&M	821	852.7	816.2	839	12.6
ITC	205.45	207.75	204.05	207	3.15
BAJAJFINSV	97,990.00	98,484.60	96,613.70	97,900.00	141.4
TATAMOTORS	330	331.85	322.7	327.7	4.75
BRITANNIA	3,371.50	3,420.00	3,367.05	3,412.00	48.25
TCS	2,926.00	2,965.00	2,901.80	2,935.50	41.2
INFY	1,263.30	1,284.50	1,259.00	1,271.00	17.7
HINDALCO	342	347	334.6	345	4.75
WIPRO	411	418.7	409.2	416	5.7
BPCL	456	463.85	450.1	455.9	6.05
SBIN	395.1	397.7	391	395.2	5.05
NESTLEIND	162,360.00	163,667.60	161,000.00	162,310.00	199.4
SHLIFE	860	879	863.2	875.6	8.7
HINDUNILVR	2,135.20	2,154.00	2,128.00	2,150.24	20.55
NTPC	1095	1098	1071.5	1083	1
HDFCLIFE	711.3	713.5	701.5	707	6.35
RELIANCE	2,110.20	2,110.00	2,062.50	2,103.00	17.2
AXISBANK	738	743.5	722.25	730.45	5.65
DREDDY	4,445.00	4,478.00	4,400.25	4,459.00	32.45
BAJAJ-AUTO	3,978.70	3,958.80	3,971.00	3,822.00	23.3
INDUSINDBK	1,075.00	1,096.60	1,063.15	1,069.20	6.25
CIPLA	795	800.5	782	789.5	2.45
BAJFINANCE	5,315.00	5,369.90	5,195.00	5,279.00	14.1
BHARTIARTL	558	559.1	521	532.8	-23.5

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	34,401.40	34,655.05	34,336.60	34,552.05	325.7
MOTHERSUMI	216.95	233.5	216.15	228.7	15.7
BERGEPAINT	681	723	681	720	40.15
GICRE	192	206.3	188.25	198	8.95
ALKEM	2,743.10	2,855.00	2,722.10	2,833.85	111.8
OFSS	3,050.00	3,168.75	3,050.00	3,155.90	112.3
NMDC	129.3	132.25	127.7	131.65	2.35
INDIGO	1,621.00	1,685.00	1,620.05	1,673.60	53.65
SIEMENS	1,864.35	1,925.00	1,848.15	1,909.65	59.65
TATACONSUM	614.9	628.5	609.2	627.05	17.9
PEL	1,862.30	1,945.60	1,855.00	1,880.10	50.85
SBICARD	1,078.25	1,110.70	1,076.00	1,097.50	28.9
PFC	125.4	127.5	123.2	127.3	3.3
AUROPHARMA	855.1	879	849.4	876.9	21.7
UBL	1,167.50	1,194.20	1,160.10	1,188.55	27.2
WELCORP	464.05	477.2	464.05	472	10.45
MCDOWELL-N	376.9	547.5	532.2	547	11.9
HINDPETRO	244.4	252.4	243.55	247.8	5.35
ACC	1,754.40	1,779.85	1,725.70	1,771.20	38
BOSCHLTD	15,000.00	15,345.05	14,905.00	15,175.00	320.1
BIOCON	395	399	387.4	397.8	7.6
AMBUJACEM	275.55	279.65	273.5	278.3	4.8
DLF	365.8	310.7	302	307.8	5.3
CONCOR	502.9	573	556.25	565.8	7.95
ADANTRANS	757.7	768	736.9	759.6	9.6
MARICO	400.9	402.7	396.05	402.4	4.85
HAVELLS	1,124.00	1,125.35	1,096.05	1,117.05	11.5
INDIANTID	1,706.00	1,710.00	1,684.65	1,703.00	17.05
HINDZINC	300.1	304.55	298.25	300.1	2.6
PGHIL	13,086.80	13,096.80	12,946.75	13,029.35	110.25
ABBOTINDIA	14,450.00	14,520.00	14,250.00	14,300.00	110.55
DABUR	591	597.85	502.8	596.5	3.4
ICL	494	501	490.3	494.9	2.95
LUPIN	1,023.45	1,034.90	1,011.00	1,024.00	5.65
COLPAL	1,577.00	1,591.00	1,565.25	1,588.25	7.05
ITI	3,590.00	3,695.20	3,590.00	3,615.00	15.15
MUTHOOTFIN	1,297.30	1,330.35	1,285.00	1,303.00	3.3
NAUKRI	4,920.00	5,018.70	4,875.05	4,921.00	10.65
ICICI	1,430.00	1,454.95	1,406.00	1,428.50	2.5
GODREJCP	690	692.4	673	687.3	0.9
KRBL	41.4	41.5	40.55	40.9	0.05
TORNTPHARM	2,406.80	2,450.00	2,400.00	2,430.50	2.3
HDFCAMC	2,935.00	2,980.00	2,930.00	2,937.30	0.3
CADILAH	437	438.4	430.4	435	-0.2
ADANGREEN	1,170.00	1,170.00	1,130.15	1,144.80	-15.05
BAJAJHIND	3,693.30	3,693.30	3,561.00	3,580.00	-50.2
PETRONET	349	351.25	350.45	351.6	-3.55
BANDHANBNK	349	351.25	336.25	339	-6.25
INDUSTOWER	261.15	265	250.7	253.1	-4.7
BANKBARODA	85.4	86.35	82.9	83.5	-1.9

BSE 500

Script	Open
TATAMOTORS	329.25
BHARTIARTL	556.55
HSCIL	53.95
SBIN	395.95
KOTAKBANK	1811
AXISBANK	739.95
MOTHERSUMI	215.15
RELIANCE	2114.45
JUSTDIAL	740
IRCTC	1792.4
TCS	2930
ADANIANT	841.95
IDEA	11.36
BHEL	48.8
TATASTEEL	725.25
MARUTI	6950
TATACHEM	752
BAJFINANCE	5310
ICICIBANK	606
ASHOKLEY	130.2
INDUSINDBK	1072
VPIND	404
DEEPAKNI	1390
ONGC	114.4
TATAPOWER	97
NBCC	43.9
SAIL	77.5
M&M	81
ADANIAPORTS	680
TAT	202
HEROMOTOCO	3236
INDIANSPAIN	204.4
PZB	41.4
CHOLAFIN	85.85
MMTC	41.4
UPL	565.25
HD	2555
INDIALCO	145
BHEL	138
NMFR	85500
DEEPCBANK	126
VEDL	209
DFCFSRBT	64
TITAN	1438
POWERGRID	218.1
P	1884
AURAPHARMA	868
LUPIN	1034
GNFC	330
APOLLOTRE	204
NMDC	136
DLF	101
IOC	79.1
TATAMATI	109
COALINDIA	151
ALKEM	2725.15
BPCCL	45
BHEL	1082.12
CHITCHE	919
BAJFINANS	9820
ENERGYS	81
SUNLHSGFN	22
SUNPHARMA	600
NATIONALUM	6
QUESS	76
TECHMOTOR	938
TVSMTOR	61
HINDUNILAK	2140.05
SOUTHBANK	10
GSFC	90
SWSTEEL	40
INDIGO	104
L&T	161
TRANSFRANS	1308
SBICARD	1075.05
BAJAJ-AUTO	380
BAJAJ-LBANK	2309
WIPRO	41
ABFRL	18
INDIAEMCO	6200
DEEPAKFERT	972.83
INDIACEM	164.83
ESCORTS	109
FINTECH	154
CANIRK	139
LAURUSLABS	354
GASCHITD	1442
BREALEST	149.25
INDOXON	91.99
MAFINS	205.7
CAPILOHOSP	306.49
GUJGAS	125
ABCARPITAL	125
HAVELLIS	120
INDIASTEL	33
DREDDREY	4478
BRITANNIA	337
SHANKHA	138
BANDHANBANK	115.35
USHCEN	11

DEFYING LETHAL SHOOTINGS Myanmar protesters back on streets

AP ■ YANGON, MYANMAR

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

The protesters in Yangon were chased as they tried to gather at their usual meeting spot at the Hledan Center intersection. Demonstrators scattered and sought in vain to rinse the irritating gas from their eyes, but later regrouped.

The coup reversed years of slow progress toward democracy in Myanmar after five decades of military rule. It came Feb. 1, the same day a newly elected Parliament was supposed to take office. Ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi's party would have led that government, but instead she was detained along with



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

AP

President Win Myint and other senior officials.

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

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

UN atomic watchdog: Deal with Iran key to full inspections

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

France's Sarkozy convicted of corruption, sentenced to jail

AP ■ PARIS

A Paris court on Monday found French former President Nicolas Sarkozy guilty of corruption and influence peddling and sentenced him to one year in prison and a two-year suspended sentence.

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

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

Sarkozy's co-defendants — his lawyer and longtime friend Thierry Herzog, 65, and now-retired magistrate Gilbert Azibert, 74 — were also found guilty and given the same sentence as the politician.



Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrives at the courtroom on Monday

AP

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

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

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

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

Hungarian PM threatens to quit conservative political group

AP ■ BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

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

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

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

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

Democratic voting Bill would make biggest changes in decades

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

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

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

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

Though 74-year-old Trump multiple times in his

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

Trump indicates to run for 2024

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

Netanyahu claims Iran behind blast on Israeli-owned ship

AP ■ JERUSALEM

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

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

"Iran is the greatest enemy of Israel, I am determined to halt it. We are hitting it in the entire region," Netanyahu said.

The mysterious explosion struck the Israeli-owned MV Helios Ray, a Bahamian-flagged roll-on, roll-off vehicle cargo ship, as it was sailing out of the Middle East on its way to Singapore on Friday.

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

AP ■ GENEVA

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

on Monday.

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

Nepal President summons lower house session on March 7

Kathmandu: Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari on Monday summoned a session of the House of Representatives on March 7, days after the apex court reinstated the lower house in a landmark verdict that annulled embattled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's "unconstitutional" decision to dissolve it.

President Bhandari called for the commencement of House on recommendation of Government of Nepal, in accordance with Article 93 (1) of the Constitution of Nepal, according to a notice issued by the President's Office on Monday. As per the notice, the 275-member lower house will begin at 4:00pm on the slated date. **PTI**

GLOBE TROTTER

PAK-IRAN-TURKEY FREIGHT TRAIN TO RESUME OPS

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

RACE ON IN UK TO TRACK BRAZIL VARIANT CASES

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

NEPAL PLANNING TO PURCHASE 2M VACCINES

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

FROM PAGE 1

MODI TAKES COVID JAB; 1 MN REGISTER FOR SHOTS

He also appealed to everybody to come forward and get themselves vaccinated.

"Happy to share that I took my first dose of #COVID19 vaccine today. Grateful to our scientists, health workers for their race against time to deliver the vaccine to people. Appeal to all eligible people to come forward and get the vaccine for a #COVIDFreeOdisha," Patnaik said on Twitter.

Union Health Minister Harshvardhan said he will take the Covid-jab on Tuesday.

In the nationwide vaccination drive, Covaxin and Covishield are being offered to citizens under phases. Covaxin has been indigenously developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Besides Covaxin, Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII) is the other vaccine being administered in the country.

The Union Health Ministry said citizens can register and book an appointment for vaccination, anytime and anywhere, using the Co-WIN 2.0 portal Cwin.Gov.In or through other IT applications such as Aarogya Setu.

There is also a walk-in provision for the beneficiaries to get themselves registered at the near-by session site to get vaccinated, it said.

The eligible beneficiaries can choose the centre of their choice and book an appointment based on the slots available.

Citizens can register through their mobile number, said the Ministry as it also released a user manual to handhold the citizens to register and schedule an appointment for vaccination. Amid reports of glitches and some people saying they were finding it difficult to navigate the Co-WIN 2.0 app to register and book an appointment, the Ministry clarified to say the app on PlayStore is meant for use only by administrators. Registration and booking for appointments has to be done through the portal, it said.

NORTH, EAST INDIA TO BE HOTTER TILL MAY: IMD

should brace for summer temperatures anywhere from 0.46-degrees celsius to 0.71-degree celsius above normal.

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

However, below normal seasonal maximum temperatures are likely over most of the subdivisions of the South peninsula and adjoining central India," the IMD said.

The IMD said above normal seasonal minimum temperatures are likely over most of the subdivisions of north India along the

foothills of Himalayas, Northeast India, the Western part of Central India and Southern part of peninsular India. Kerala and South interior Karnataka would experience the coolest summer this season, followed in that order by Tamil Nadu, North Interior Karnataka, Rayalaseema and Madhya Maharashtra.

The next coolest on the list are Telangana, Marathawada, Vidarbha, West Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Laddakh.

"However, below normal season minimum temperatures are likely over most of the subdivisions of the Eastern part of Central India and few subdivisions of the extreme Northern part of the country," it said.

The onset of summer began a little earlier than normal this year, with most of the Northern, Western, and Eastern parts of the country breaching the 30 degrees celsius mark nearly two to three weeks before they usually do.

The IMD said moderate La Niña conditions are prevailing over the equatorial Pacific and sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are below normal over the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. The latest model forecast indicates that La Niña conditions are likely to sustain during the upcoming hot weather season (March to May), it added.

La Nina is associated with the cooling of the Pacific waters and El Nino is its antithesis. The phenomenon has an impact on the weather of the Indian sub-continent. The IMD said it will release the second summer forecast for April to June in April.

The IMD last month had said the minimum temperature recorded in the country in January was the warmest for the month in 62 years. South India was particularly warm.

The month was the warmest in 121 years, with 22.33 degrees Celsius in south India, followed by 22.14 degrees Celsius in 1919 and 21.93 degrees Celsius in 2020 as the second and third warmest months.

Central India was also the warmest (14.82 degrees Celsius) in the last 38 years after 1982 (14.92 degrees Celsius), while 1958 with 15.06 degrees Celsius was the warmest in the 1901-2021 period.

CHINA BLACKED OUT MUMBAI IN OCT

"There was a clear and consistent pattern of Indian organisations being targeted in this campaign through the behavioral profiling of network traffic to adversary infrastructure," said Recorded Future. The Chinese hacker targeted a total of 21 IP addresses linked to 12 Indian organisations in the power generation and transmission sector - classified as critical.

"At this time, the alleged link between the outage and the discovery of the unspecified malware variant remain unsubstantiated. However, this disclosure provides additional evidence suggesting the coordinated targeting of Indian Load Dispatch Centres," said the report.

Anand Sharma slams Cong poll pact with ISF

'It militates against Congress' core secular ideology

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

The dissident Congress camp continued to criticise the party decision-making, with senior Congress leader Anand Sharma questioning the party's alliance with the Indian Secular



Front (ISF) for the West Bengal elections.

Taking to Twitter, the for-

mer Union Minister in the Manmohan Singh Government said that Congress alliance with parties like ISF and other such forces "militates against the core ideology of the party" and Gandhian and Nehruvian secularism, which forms the soul of the party. Sharma is also the Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha.

Stating that these issues need to be approved by the party's highest decision-making body, the Congress Working

Committee (CWC), Sharma said the Congress cannot be selective in fighting communists but must do so in all its manifestations, irrespective of religion and colour.

"The presence and endorsement of West Bengal PCC president is painful and shameful, he must clarify," Sharma said in an apparent reference to visuals of Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury at a joint rally with the Left and the ISF.

Responding to Anand Sharma's remarks, Chowdhury said that all decisions are taken with the consent of the party's top leadership and not unilaterally. "We are in charge of a State and don't take any decision on our own without any permission," the State Congress chief clarified on the same social media platform. Chowdhury is also the leader of the party in the Lok Sabha.

Tejashwi, AKY back Mamata ahead of West Bengal polls

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In the battle royal for Bengal, two Yadav chieftains from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have thrown their weight behind Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Both Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav have declared their parties' support for the Trinamool Congress in the coming Assembly elections.

The RJD leader, who called on Mamata in her office at State Secretariat Nabanna on Monday,

appealed to the people of Bihar who live in Bengal to support the TMC in the coming elections. He had an hour-long meeting with the Chief Minister during which the duo reportedly discussed seat-sharing.

Lending his support for the TMC chief, former UP Chief Minister Akhilesh

Yadav, too, said that the BJP was trying to wrest power in Bengal by hook or by crook.

Supporting Mamata in her contention that "Election Commission should not be guided by the BJP," Yadav said, "Mamata ji is right in opposing the eight-phase polls in Bengal ... it is BJP's old policy to hold elections in multiple phases because more a number of phases give them the opportunity to create more problems."

Centre gets 3 weeks to examine WhatsApp's new privacy policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday told the Delhi High Court that WhatsApp's new privacy policy, which is scheduled to come into effect from May 15, was being examined at the highest level and they were seeking some clarification from the instant messaging platform on the issue.

Taking note of the submission, Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva granted three weeks time to the Centre for the purpose and asked it to file a status report while listing the matter for further hearing on April 19.

The court was hearing a petition by a lawyer against the new privacy policy of Facebook-owned WhatsApp on the ground that it violates users right to privacy under the Constitution.

Central government standing counsel Kirtiman Singh said they are in the process of gathering more clarity on the issue and are seeking clarifications from the instant messaging platform.

He said the matter is being examined at the highest level and sought three weeks time to file the status report.

The Centre had earlier

informed the high court that WhatsApp was treating Indian users differently from Europeans over opting out of its new privacy policy which was a matter of concern for the Government and it was looking into the issue.

It had also said it was also a matter of concern that Indian users were being "unilaterally" subjected to the change in privacy policy by the instant messaging platform.

The High Court had earlier observed that WhatsApp was a private app and it was optional whether to download it or not.

Sticky bombs' arrival new phase of terrorism in J&K

Jammu: The recovery of 'sticky bombs' from Samba sector in this region last month has set alarm bells ringing within the security establishment in Jammu & Kashmir as this indicates initiation of a new phase of terrorism in the union territory, officials said on Monday.

The BSF had recovered the bombs dropped by a drone along the international border in the Samba sector of Jammu region on February 14, putting security agencies on high alert with an assumption that some of the IEDs could have already found their way to the Kashmir valley, the officials said.

According to the officials, the drone-dropped consignment had six pistols and 14 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) with inbuilt magnets, which could be used as 'sticky bombs' by sticking them on vehicles and controlling them using a timer and a remotely-held device.

The consignment was meant for The Resistance Force (TRF), believed to be a shadow outfit of banned Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group, they said.

This definitely was the first such recovery of 'sticky bombs' which has found much use in Afghanistan and Iraq. In India, it was used by suspected Iranian terrorists in February 2012 by sticking a bomb on the car of an Israeli diplomat resulting in injury to his wife.

The recovery is a cause of concern in Kashmir and the standard operating procedures for the movement of security

forces' convoys need to be revised to eliminate this kind of a threat, a senior official said.

The development comes two years after a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist carried out a sensational attack when he rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into a bus carrying security forces that left 40 CRPF personnel dead in 2019.

In response, India had carried out an air strike on terror camps located across the border.

Sticky bombs, which were also used by the British forces during World War II, can be put on any vehicle and detonated through a remote control or an in-built timer, the officials said.

This is yet another significant recovery after security forces had found three Point Detonating (PD) fuzes, used by the Pakistani army in their 82 mm mortar shells, from a terrorist in North Kashmir.

The three PDs were recovered by the Baramulla Police on the eve of New Year when the force intercepted a vehicle. Unaware of the material recovered, the police had declared it "unique grenade" which was later found to be the PD, used by the Pakistani army for the 82 MM mortar shells, they said.

The PD could be used during the fabrication (manufacture) of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) to increase its impact. It helps in super-quick detonation of explosives or at times can delay the impact mode for a bigger damage, the officials said. **PTI**

DOCYARD
DR COL VIJAY DUTTA

Senior Consultant
- Internal Medicine

INDIAN SPINAL INJURIES
CENTRE



Take care of your throat



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

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

The inflammation of vocal cords is exacerbated by long periods of coughing. Such an effort makes the vocal folds put extra effort to clear any mucus from lungs and throat, in the process making them swollen and inflamed.

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

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

If you are in hospital then you must keep a few things in mind that comprises immediately informing the concerned Doctor or paramedical staff immediately if you are feeling more short of breath during or after the meals.

If you are recovering at home, then you must be careful about a few things and directly inform your General Physician if you are facing problems while eating or drinking something and coughing or choking while having your food. Such patients should avoid shouting, smoking or chewing tobacco and going in dusty areas. Medicated lozenges can also be used.

SUMMERCoolERS

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

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

It is also a rich source of phytonutrients and flavonoids that prevent your cells from undergoing free radical damage. Some studies have also linked the con-

sumption papaya to reduced risk of colon and prostate cancer.

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

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



Get ready for COVID jab

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

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

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

Therefore, as your much awaited turn rolls in, here are some precautions you should remember to adhere to before you go to the health facility for your inoculation.

Some of these precautions apply to any vaccine you may have taken before this.

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

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

India has issued clear guidelines and your physician will be aware of this).

Precautions specific to the COVID-19 vaccine:

- The three basics of COVID-19 preventive measures will have to be followed (i.e. wearing a mask, hand hygiene and social distancing) at the

How to get your dose

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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BEAUTY LIES WITHIN



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is founder of The Shahnaz Husain Group

DadiKaKehna

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

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



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

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

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

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

apply it to the affected area and let it sit for five minutes. Alternatively, you can also chew a clove of garlic.

Cloves can help. Cloves are known to relieve toothache and reduce inflammation for many years. Dab a small amount of clove oil onto a cotton ball and apply it to the affected area. You may want to dilute the clove oil with a few drops of water and make a mouthwash. Use it twice daily for best results.

You can also add a drop of clove oil to a small glass of water and make a mouthwash. Use it twice daily for best results.

‘Regular exercise is key’

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

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), one of the apex trade associations of the country successfully organised another edition of the webinar series on ‘Illness to Wellness’ campaign, themed around ‘Thyroid & Related Disorders – Impact on Health’.

ASSOCHAM organised this webinar with an objective to cascade mass awareness and disseminate knowledge & wisdom for prevention and treatment of thyroid.

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

habits, diet, exercise, and holistic health.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INBRIEF

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Welcome the nano influencers

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

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



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

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

New-age celebs

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



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

Taking over competition

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

The need of the hour

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

A helpful companion

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

TREND TOOL

Decoding fusion

Design your spaces by combining elegance with durability



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

A SOOTHING FACELIFT

The entry of your house is usually through the living room which sets the tone for the entire home and leaves the first impression. Therefore, a minimal and clean look is needed for such spaces. Calming shades give your mind, body and soul a certain level of relaxation. Throw muted shades of yellow

and grey to your cushions placed on a sofa set in muted blue. These colours will instantly infuse a comforting vibe around your space. The best way to distinguish your colour scheme is by keeping your walls, door and floor crisp white.

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

WONDERS OF NATURAL WOOD

The majestic grandeur and simplicity of a natural element like wood is just limitless. Wood holds the power to make an unmatched statement and looks absolutely charming when used for home interiors. If you have cream or off-white interiors, opting for a darker shade of wooden doorset to complement the entire ambience. Keep your area spick and span by placing minimal kitchen essentials out in the open. Make it look more modern by showcas-

ing your silver crockery and glassware in open cabinets.

OPTIMISTICALLY YOURS

We all have stepped into a new year with positivity and hopefulness. How about we paint this outlook all over the house to ensure every touch point encourages you? Spill the pantone colour 'Ultimate Gray' on your walls to add an instant warmth and comfort. Since, we are talking about all the earthy tones, we suggest going for a crisp yet classic white shade for doors. It will not only exude sheer panache but also a strong sense of calmness. Make your space functional and minimal; this can be done by placing a statement sofa and a mini-breakfast table in opposite directions.

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

REMEMBERING HIS CANVAS

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

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

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

Shantibindu tryst

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

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



his *bindu* was the device of a spiritual firmament. The softly nuanced pastel toned circles resonate with a harmony emanating from the epicentre. Their terracotta and soft tinted colour tones form an elegant exemplar. The *Shantibindu* became

an iconic nucleus in which the central core was an energy that created a ritual.

Nostalgia and memory

Looking at this show highlights the power and prowess of his paint-



ings that come rushing into human memory. His early landscapes of European cities, churches, glowing ember like landscapes that spoke of his passion for nocturnes, his mid-night moorings of works like *Tapovan*, *La Terre*, *Saurashtra*,

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

Ayushmann praises CISF

The armed forces of India have been on the front-line of the COVID-19 pandemic in India, protecting the citizens of the country while being in harm's way. Bollywood star Ayushmann Khurrana, who is currently shooting for his next, *Anek*, directed by Anubhav Sinha, has been deeply moved seeing the commendable work that the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in Guwahati has been doing. The youth icon was requested to send a video message to the entire unit stationed in Assam and Ayushmann sent them a heartfelt thank you.

In the video, Ayushmann says, "I would like to congratulate all the majors and soldiers from the CISF Guwahati regiment on how right since COVID-19 unfolded, until now, they have contributed to the aviation security with patience and valour. I truly salute all your efforts to serve. I truly hope you stay safe and healthy."

Ayushmann has always been inspired by the army men in India who selflessly devote their lives to protect others. The actor has also been deeply moved by the pandemic and how it has impacted people from every strata. He has also composed some heartfelt poems on this sufferings of



people during the pandemic, which instantly became a rage in the country. The actor will be shooting for *Anek* right through March before jumping onto his next film, *Doctor G*.

TRENDBLAZER



KANGANA REMINISCES ABOUT CHILDHOOD

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

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

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

fairtalk

ADAH SHARMA



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

dailytalk

VINAY PATHAK



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

HOW ELLIE KEPT HER PREGNANCY PRIVATE

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

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





India opener Rohit Sharma bats during nets session ahead of fourth Test against England @BCCI

India's top guns go full throttle at nets

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Big guns Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane went full throttle at the nets as the Indian cricket on Monday trained in earnest for the upcoming fourth and final Test against England.

The fourth Test starts here on Thursday.

Captain Kohli, his deputy Rahane and senior opener Rohit were seen batting at the nets in a video posted by the BCCI on Twitter.

The three senior players drove, pulled and flicked against the fast

bowlers and spinners at the Narendra Modi Stadium here.

Head coach Ravi Shastri was seen interacting with Rohit and Kohli before the two star batsmen sat together for a discussion.

Left-arm spinner Axar Patel, who bagged 11 wickets in India's thumping win in the pink ball third Test at the same venue, was seen rolling his arms over at the nets against some of the world's best batsmen.

They were also seen fielding with Rahane, standing next to Rohit in the second slip position, taking a one-handed diving catch to his right.

Eng didn't prepare well for spin challenge: Richards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

West Indian batting legend Viv Richards is not amused with past and present English cricketers "moaning and groaning" about the spin-friendly pitches in India and said the visitors did not prepare well for the challenge.

The newly-laid Motera track in Ahmedabad became a subject of debate after India crushed England inside two days in the third Test to go 2-1 up in the four-match series. The severe criticism came from former England captains like Michael Vaughan and a section of the British media.

All the chatter has not gone down well with Richards, whose incredible range of strokes and fearless approach to the game terrorised the best of bowlers in his prime in every corner of the cricketing world.

"I've been asked questions recently about the Test match that was played in India, the second and third Test match against England.

"And I am a little confused about the question really because there seems to be a lot of moaning and groaning about the wicket that they were playing on," Richards said in a video posted on his Facebook page.

"I just felt that the ones who are moaning, in my opinion, should realise that there are times that you're going to get a seaming track, a ball that is basically jumping off a good length and everyone thinks that's a problem for batters," he reasoned.



England all-rounder Ben Stokes plays shot against India during third Test in Ahmedabad @BCCI/Twitter

The 68-year-old pointed out that playing in India has mostly been about tackling quality spinners and that England may not have done their homework properly ahead of the tour.

Weighing in on the debate, the batting great said, "... But now you've seen the other side, and this is why I think it was given the name Test match cricket, because of the test of the mind and will and everything else that goes with it when you're competing.

"And the complaints have been that the wicket is spinning too much and all that sorts of stuff. This is another

side of the coin guys.

"People seem to forget that if you're going to India, you should expect that. You are going to spin land. You should basically prepare yourself to know what you're going to encounter."

Richards said that India have pushed England out of their comfort zone, weeks after the visitors started the series with a big win.

"Ever since that first Test match, England were in their comfort zone. They have now been taken out of their comfort zone at present and they have got to find ways and means to cope with what they are going

to encounter.

"Spin is also a part of the game, this is what a Test match brings. The Indian pacers have been brilliant over the past few years in terms of substance, the wicket-taking ability and stuff like that."

The legend urged the English team to work harder and face the challenge resolutely.

"... Now that you're in India, you are going to encounter things and have got to find a way. You're going to get dirty. There is nothing in the rule book that says I've got to score my runs in pretty, classical ways," he said.

England appoint Trescothick as batting coach

London: England on Monday appointed former opener Marcus Trescothick as the new batting coach of the national team, besides roping in Jon Lewis and New Zealand's Jeetan Patel as bowling and spin bowling coaches on permanent basis.

These three are part of the four new appointments to England's coaching set-up, which is being headed by chief coach Chris Silverwood.

Trescothick will take over from Jonathan Trott, who replaced South African Jacques Kallis in the ongoing tour. Kallis had played the role of a batting consultant for England in Sri Lanka.

"...I'm really excited about the calibre of the individuals that we've appointed into these specialist roles. Marcus, Jon and Jeetan have demonstrated their ability at the highest level and also show huge potential for the future," ECB performance director Mo Bobat said in a statement.

Trescothick, who scored over 10,000 International runs across formats between 2000 and 2006, is expected to take up his new role in mid-March after stepping down from his position as assistant coach at Somerset.

PTI

Maxi eager to learn from Kohli



PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell is chuffed about playing alongside and learning from Virat Kohli in the upcoming IPL, calling the Indian captain "the pinnacle of the game" for his dominance across formats. The Kohli-led RCB bought Maxwell, who was released by Punjab Kings, for a whopping ₹14.25 crore at the auctions last month.

"It's (RCB stint) going to be next level," Maxwell told *Australian Associated Press*. "He's (Kohli) been the pinnacle of the game for a while as a multi-for-

'Virat is like modern day hero'

New Delhi: Australian great Steve Waugh feels that Virat Kohli is like a "modern-day hero" who represents the "new attitude of India" of taking everything head on with a mind set of nothing is impossible.

In a 60-minute documentary titled, *Capturing Cricket: Steve Waugh in India*, the former Australia captain said that Kohli is loved by the fans for his attitude of not being intimidated by an opposition.

mat player from Tests all the way to T20s. "He's been able to adapt his game, dominate for a long period of time and deal with the Indian pressure of being their captain and their best player," Maxwell added.

The Indian Premier League is scheduled to start in the second week of April and the swashbuckling all-rounder hopes to pick up some leadership qualities from the Indian skipper, who will also be Maxwell's captain at RCB.

"I'm looking forward to watching him go about his work, not just in games but in training, and hopefully tapping into some of the leadership stuff and try and learn off him."

"What they love about Kohli is that it's like the new attitude of India, get stuck in, don't be intimidated. Take everything on and anything is achievable and possible. But he's like the modern-day hero," Waugh was quoted as saying in a media release after the launch of the documentary.

The documentary captures the very essence and undying love for the game in India through the lens of Waugh and is brought by *discovery+*. PNS

Mumbai trounce HP by 200 runs

lyer-led side remain unbeaten in league stage to advance in Hazare knockouts

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Domestic giants Mumbai trounced Himachal Pradesh by 200 runs in their final Elite Group D game here on Monday to remain unbeaten in the league stage of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Mumbai had won their first four matches against Delhi, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Rajasthan.

Opting to bat at the Sai Mansingh Stadium, Mumbai posted an imposing 321/9, courtesy Shardul Thakur's 92, Suryakumar Yadav's 91 and Aditya Tare's 83 after a top-order failure.

Himachal were then bundled out for a meagre 121, with leg-spinner Prashant Solanki (4/31) shining with the ball.

After losing four for 49, Suryakumar began the rescue act and toyed with the Himachal attack, striking 15 boundaries on his way to a 75-ball 91.

He found an able ally in the experienced Tare (83 off 98 balls; 6x4; 1x6) who played the perfect second fiddle as the duo forged a 99-run fifth wicket stand to rally the innings.

After Suryakumar fell in the 31st over, Tare and Shardul added 112 runs for the sixth wicket, as they tackled the



Himachal attack with ease.

Shardul, one of the heroes of the Brisbane Test against Australia, hammered six boundaries and as many sixes, as he cantered to 92 in just 57 balls.

Thanks to Shardul's hitting, Mumbai crossed the 300-run mark, but Tare's patient knock was equally important as he anchored the innings and supported the aggressors.

In the other two Elite Group D league games, Maharashtra thrashed Puducherry by 137 runs, while Delhi defeated Rajasthan by eight wickets.

SAURASHTRA IN Q/F

In Group E games at Kolkata, Saurashtra suffered a shocking 62-run loss at the

hands of Services but still managed to finish as group toppers and qualified for the knock-out phase.

Saurashtra finished with 16 points, four clear of Chandigarh whose direct qualification hopes were dashed with an eight-wicket loss to Jammu & Kashmir at the Jadavpur University second campus in Saltlake.

At the 22 Yards Academy in Saltlake, Services rode on Rahul Singh Gahlaut's career-best 158 to post a challenging 301 for seven and in reply Saurashtra were bundled out for 233 in 43.1 overs.

Elsewhere at Eden Gardens, hosts Bengal lose by five wickets against Haryana.

U'KHAND PIP ASSAM

Uttarakhand thrashed Sikkim by 145 runs to remain unbeaten in the Plate group, and clinch a spot in the knockout phase, pipping Assam by virtue of a better net run-rate.

Assam completed its engagements with a crushing 182-run win over Mizoram.

Both Uttarakhand and Assam finished with an all-win record but the former qualified for the next stage due to a higher NRR (3.273) as against the latter's 1.909. Meghalaya edged Nagaland to the third spot by virtue of a superior NRR despite securing 16 points. They were followed by Sikkim (4 points), Arunachal Pradesh (2), Mizoram (2) and Manipur (0).

Reds answer critics with win

AFP ■ SHEFFIELD

Jurgen Klopp believes Liverpool can prove the doubters that have written their season off wrong after snapping a four-game Premier League losing streak to win 2-0 at Sheffield United on Sunday.

The English champions' title defence has been decimated by injuries and they face a battle just to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top-four finish.

Klopp's men remain in sixth, but are now just two points behind fourth-placed West Ham and can leapfrog Chelsea in fifth when the Blues visit Anfield on Thursday.

"Plenty of people have written us off. That's fine," said Klopp. "With all the problems we have had, we're still around the exciting places."

Jordan Henderson has been added to Liverpool's long-term injury list, while goalkeeper Alisson Becker was absent after



he lost his father this week.

But the Championship-bound Blades proved the perfect opponents for Klopp's men to restore some confidence as Curtis Jones' second-half strike and Kean Bryan's own goal got the Reds back to winning ways.

"This was about us showing we're still there," added Klopp.

"We play Chelsea on Thursday, we have to show it again. We have to win football games, we know that. There's no way into the Champions League without results."

Sheffield United are still 15 points adrift of safety at the bottom of the table and manager Chris Wilder admitted his side lacked the quality to challenge even a depleted Liverpool.

Milan back on track

AFP ■ ROME

Milan won an intense battle with rivals Roma at the Stadio Olimpico in the Italian capital on Sunday night, as Stefano Pioli's side push for a first league title since 2011.

A Franck Kessie penalty gave Milan the lead five minutes before the break after Federico Fazio fouled Davide Calabria.

Jordan Veretout pulled Roma level five minutes after the break with an arrowed shot, but the away side were soon back in front.

Ante Rebic drilled home the winner eight minutes later after collecting a pass from Alexis Saelemaekers following a poor clearance from Roma goalkeeper Pau Lopez.

Off-form Milan star Zlatan Ibrahimovic had been substituted shortly before Croatia international Rebic scored the decisive goal.

"I told the lads that two games (losses) cannot take away the confidence build up

over a year," said Pioli.

"It's an important win at a decisive moment in the season which takes us out of



Atlético keep rivals at bay

AFP ■ VILLARREAL

Atletico Madrid bounced back from recent poor form with a hard-fought 2-0 win at Villarreal on Sunday that allowed the La Liga pace-setters to extend their lead to five points.

An own goal from Alfonso Pedraza and Joao Felix's powerful strike gave Atletico a precious win after a wobble which had allowed Barcelona and Real Madrid to gain ground in the title race.

Diego Simeone's side had come into the match off the back of a Champions League last 16 defeat to Chelsea and a league run in which they picked up just five points from

two very strange weeks."

Earlier, Napoli's record goalscorer, Dries Mertens, returned from injury to help the southerners boost their Champions League hopes with a 2-0 win over local rivals Benevento, to



Joao Felix scores Atletico Madrid's second goal against Villarreal @ATM/Twitter

their previous four matches. However, the win ensures Atletico hold second-placed Barca at bay and crucially

keeps the gap between them and rivals Real Madrid at six points ahead of next weekend's local derby.

half a point behind Roma in sixth.

Mertens started for the first time in over two months after injuring his ankle in mid-December, and the 33-year-old got his boot to a Faouzi Ghoulam cross after

half an hour for his 131st Napoli goal.

Matteo Politano turned in the second in the 66th minute, with Gattuso's side holding on for the points despite Kalidou Koulibaly's sending-off 10 minutes from time.