

OPINION 8
THE MISSING CULTURE
OF STRATEGIC THINKING**WORLD 11**
TRUMP'S CASH PLEA COULD
COMPLICATE GOP FUNDRAISING**SPORT 14**
AUS BEAT NZ
IN THIRD T20I

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY MARCH 4, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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Covaxin efficacy 81%: Biotech

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

AP

Chairman and Managing Director Krishna Ella said.

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

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

paving the way for a massive inoculation drive.

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

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

vaccine and placebo groups, the company said.

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

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

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

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Eligible citizens can take Covid jabs 24x7, says Health Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

CM: UP no more a 'BIMARU' state

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said UP was no longer a 'BIMARU' (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) state and during the last four years of the Bharatiya Janata Party rule, the ranking of the state's economy had improved to second position from the fifth.

The chief minister said four years ago the state gross domestic product was Rs 10.90 lakh crore and now it had increased to Rs 21.73 lakh crore.

Targeting the previous Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party governments, Yogi Adityanath said, "During polls, opposition parties issued election manifesto while the BJP had issued a Sankalp Patra (document of resolve). Sankalp ka vikalp (alternative) nahi hai, so we have to implement it."

"Samajwadi Party lacks an inclusive approach for development in Indian context and they followed the principle of Charvak of having fun on borrowed money. The focus of the SP government budget was immediate political gains without long-term vision which alienated all sections of society," the chief minister charged.

"After taking over as chief minister in 2017, I visited the chief minister's office in Shastri



Bhawan. I was told that the previous chief minister was irregular in attending the office and the cabinet meetings used to last 10 minutes."

He said earlier the development schemes were formulated with the objective of benefitting a particular family while the BJP's focus was the development of the state and welfare of the common people.

The chief minister added, "There is nothing new, the same people, same system and same resources, the only difference is intention and the change is now visible all around."

The chief minister claimed "our focus in the budget is not vote but development and formulating a road map for the development of the state."

Yogi Adityanath said along with increasing the size of the budget, his government's focus was on increasing the per capita income of the people of the

state. He said in 2015-16, the per capita income in UP was Rs 45,000 which had increased to Rs 95,000. He said from 1947 to 2017, ease of living was never in the agenda of all previous governments, while the BJP government focused its attention on providing basic amenities like shelter, drinking water, LPG connections and electricity connection to every household.

He said during the last four years, shelter was provided to 40 lakh families and electricity connections to 1.38 crore families. He said from 1947 to 2017, only two per cent households had the facility of piped water supply while the BJP government with its Jal Jeevan Mission would provide piped water supply to every household by 2024.

The chief minister pointed out that the eastern UP district of Gorakhpur along with a total 38 districts were suffering from encephalitis since 1977 but no government paid attention to the disease. He said the BJP government had succeeded in eliminating the disease from the eastern UP and bringing down the mortality rate by over 95 per cent.

Referring to the three agriculture related laws, Yogi Adityanath said contract farming and reforms in agriculture marketing would benefit the farmers and help in doubling

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SSB to raise 12 more battalions

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The tri-junction area is the plateau between India,

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

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

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

tiers besides bolstering the security at the eight ICPs.

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

Continued on Page 11

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

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

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

Kashyap and Taapsee were questioned by the IT department officials in Pune in connection with the searches conducted at various places.

Official sources attributed searches to the available information that the IT depart-



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

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

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



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

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

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

Continued on Page 11

Karnataka Min quits Cabinet on charge of sexual harassment

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

Continued on Page 11

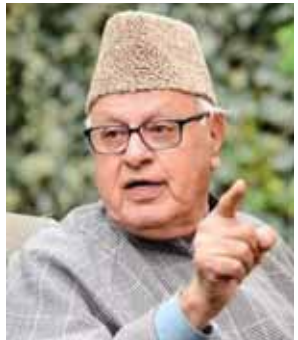
Dissent from Govt decision can't be termed seditious, rules SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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



such endeavours," the bench said.

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

The petition filed by Rajat Sharma and Dr Neh Srivastava,

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

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

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

The petitioners also referred to a statement made by BJP spokesperson

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

Will stay away from politics: Sasikala's dramatic pledge

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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



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

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

last month announced her intention to engage in active politics.

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



NOTICE

I, Dharendra Babu R/o Vill. Milkpur Tehsil & Thana Ghatampur, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. I have changed my wife name KIRAN SACHAN to KIRAN DEVI and henceforth she will be named and known as KIRAN DEVI for all purpose.

NOTICE

Original Allotment Letter Dated 19-08-1998 Of My Plot No.11, Block- MIG, Scheme- Jarauli Phase-2, Kanpur has been lost somewhere. Any unauthorized use of the same shall be illegal. - Kishan Kumar Gupta S/O Late Ram Adheen Gupta R/O A-32, Barra-6, Kanpur

सूचना

मैं राजेश शाह RAJESH SHAH निवासी पुत्र स्व० केशव लाल शाह निवासी 10/431-ए खलासी लाईन, कानपुर। मैंने अपना नाम राजेश कुमार शाह से बदलकर राजेश शाह रख लिया है। भविष्य में राजेश शाह के नाम से ही जाना व पहचाना जाये।

सूचना

सर्वविदित हो कि मेरा सही नाम DUREAFSHAN (दुरी के.एम. हलीम निवासी सी-57 सेक्टर बी अलीगंज लखनऊ) है पासपोर्ट में मेरा नाम DUREY AFSHAN KHWAJA MOHD HALEEM अंकित है मेरा पूरा व सही नाम DUREAFSHAN पढ़ा व माना जाये।

NOTICE

I Army No. JC560491N Rank SM (Hony Lt.) Shatrughan Singh Vrc, Village +Post-Dudhaila, Dist- Ballia In my Army service record mentioned my son name is Abhishek Singh & DOB- 02.02.2003 which is wrong. The correct name of my Son is Abhishek Kumar Singh & DOB- 02.02.2002

NOTICE

This is to notify that the original Allotment letter and possession letter of house no. C-005, South City, Raibareilly road, Lucknow which I purchased from Smt Premiata Mittal w/o Late A.K. Mittal on 25-10-2002, have been lost. - Chandra Singh Manral, R/O C-005, South City, Raibareilly road, Lucknow

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Waiwswat Singh to Waiwswat Singh Maunas. In future I shall be known as Waiwswat Singh Maunas. Both names waiwswat Singh & Waiwswat Singh Maunas pertain to one & the same person. Waiwswat Singh Maunas S/o, Mahendra Pal Singh, Plot No. 478, Near Mary Jesus School, Shyam Nagar, Kanpur.

NOTICE

NOTICE

Original allotment letter No. 9024 (3) Building dated 28/12/76 and possession letter dated 24/3/79 of my building number 40 LIG Ratan Lal Nagar Kanpur which was allotted to my brother Mr. Ravindra Kumar from Kanpur Development Authority is lost. Its use by another person in future will be considered illegal.

Subhash Jhingam Resident - 40 LIG Ratan Lal Nagar, Kanpur

NOTICE

A sale deed dated 25-03-2003 executed by Harikesh S/o Ramnath R/o Mauza-Rasulgarh, Pargana-Shivpur, Tehsil & Distt.-Varanasi infavour Meera Devi W/o Dinesh Kumar R/o Rasulgarh, Pargana-Shivpur, Tehsil & Distt.-Varanasi regarding the sale of S.M. Plot No. 10, Having an area 1700 sqft., Mauza-Rasulgarh, Pargana-Shivpur, Tehsil & Distt.-Varanasi in Book No. 1, Vol.No. 1622, Pages 57/82 as D.No. 1195 dated 25/03/2003 has been lost if any person/institution have any objection or information regarding this sale deed please inform within 15 days on 9451525826, Harish Chandra Rai, Advocate, B-110, Banaras Bar Building, 11nd Floor, Civil Court, Varanasi.

Yogi holds SP responsible for murder in Hathras

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday held the Samajwadi Party responsible for the murder of a farmer in Hathras on Monday. Yogi again targeted the 'lal topi' in Hathras allegedly linked to the Samajwadi Party.

"Why is it that the name of Samajwadi Party gets dragged into every incident of crime in the state? In Hathras farmer's murder too, pictures of the main accused in red cap with Samajwadi Party leaders were circulating whole day on social media," he said.

Replying to the general debate in the assembly on the 2021-22 UP budget, the chief minister took the opportunity to flay the opposition party, a day after allegations were levelled that the accused in a Hathras killing was an SP worker who was out on bail.

"Why is it so that the SP's name gets dragged into every incident of crime? Why?" the chief minister asked. He said the "Samajwadi" (socialist) movement had become impractical but its leaders were not ready to accept the truth.

Yogi Adityanath's remarks came against the backdrop of a 50-year-old man allegedly being shot dead in Hathras on March 1 by Gaurav Sharma, an accused out on bail, in a molestation case lodged in 2018. Sharma was accused of molesting the victim's daughter. The chief minister said the Samajwadi Party on Wednesday organised a rally in Aligarh where the posters and hoardings had been put up by the criminal linked with the Samajwadi Party. The chief minister said the daughter of the victim had also stated about the links of the murder accused with the Samajwadi Party.

Leader of opposition Ram



Govind Chaudhary claimed that the pictures of the main accused with Bharatiya Janata Party leaders were also in circulation on social media, however, the chief minister clarified that the posters of the main accused with Samajwadi Party leaders were pasted all over the city for the party rally.

Taking note of the incident, Yogi Adityanath on March 2 ordered strict action against the accused and directed officials to invoke provisions

of the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against them.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, in a tweet on March 2, alleged that women in Uttar Pradesh had lost hope of getting justice from the state government and tagged a video of a girl.

The BJP state unit then alleged that the main accused in the Hathras incident was SP worker Gaurav Sharma, who runs his social media pages with the name Gaurav Songra.

"Why is it that the name of Samajwadi Party gets dragged into every incident of crime in the state? In Hathras farmer's murder too, pictures of the main accused in red cap with Samajwadi Party leaders were circulating whole day on social media"

SP spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary, however, rejected the charge, saying, "Gaurav is not a leader of the Samajwadi Party but of the BJP. There are photographs of Gaurav with BJP leaders to prove this."

Rs 1 lakh cash reward announced on Hathras case main accused

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two days after a farmer was shot dead for filing a complaint against his daughter's sexual harassment, the police, on Wednesday, announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh on the main accused, Gaurav Songra, hailing from Nojapur village in Sasni area.

According to the police, rewards of Rs 25,000 each have also been announced on the other two accused. So far, one accused has been arrested in the case. Four teams have been formed to track down the whereabouts of other killers and arrest them.

Last Monday, a farmer who was getting some work done on his field, was shot dead in broad daylight. The farmer had lodged a report about two-and-half-year back that Gaurav

had entered his house and eve-teased his daughter.

The accused had allegedly been exerting pressure on the farmer to marry his younger daughter with him and withdraw the case.

The deceased's daughter has furnished a written complaint against six people, including four identified persons, based on which the police registered a case and arrested one accused.

Search is underway for the other accused.

The anguished family of the farmer had, on Tuesday, refused to perform the farmer's last rites until the accused were arrested. The officials somehow pacified them after which they agreed.

The chief minister has ordered action under the NSA against all the accused.

12-yr-old physically challenged girl killed for resisting rape

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 12-year-old physically challenged girl, missing for the last about a week, was found murdered for resisting rape attempt.

The incident took place in Bulandshahr and the nude body of the girl was found buried in a pit inside a villager's home along with her half-buried clothes, on Tuesday.

The accused was arrested by the police from Shimla on Wednesday and he confessed to strangulating the girl to death for resisting rape attempt. He also revealed that he had buried the body to conceal the crime.

The Bulandshahr cops, who arrested the accused, said the girl was working in a field on the evening of February 25 along with her family when she felt thirsty and went home for water. On February 28, the girl's parents filed a

missing person's complaint.

The girl was working in the field with her mother and two sisters, about 100 metre from the house where her body was recovered, Bulandshahr district police chief Santosh Kumar Singh told reporters. The victim left for home and when she did not return her sisters called out for her but there was no response. The family members assumed she had gone home and went back to work in the field. However, hours later when they did not find her there, they started searching for her, Singh added.

As per a media report, later in the evening, the family suspected the hands of a local resident in the disappearance of the girl and went to his home but found him badly drunk so they returned.

The search operation was on for two-three days before the family went to the police on February 28, the

police officer said. The victim was traced during the search operation when people found a spot inside a house where it seemed a fresh pit had been dug. The victim's frock was also found lying half-burnt. When the pit was dug, the cops found the girl's body.

The district police chief said the house from where the girl's body was recovered belonged to a father-son duo. The father was taken in custody as the son was absconding. Later, on the clues collected from the father, the main accused was arrested on Wednesday.

In another sensational incident in Bulandshahr, a man murdered his wife and two daughters with a hammer while critically injuring another daughter in Shikarpur area, police said on Wednesday.

Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar said that Sayeed, a resident of Ambedkarnagar on

Barakhamba Road in the Shikarpur town, suspected that his wife had illicit relations and the couple used to have frequent fights over this issue.

They had a fight over the same issue on Tuesday night during which Sayeed attacked his wife and three daughters with a hammer. All four were critically injured and were taken to hospital. However, his wife and two daughters were pronounced dead by the doctor. The third daughter was still in a critical condition.

A manhunt is on to nab the accused. In Banda, a 70-year-old man was held for raping an 8-year-old Dalit girl. According to Circle Officer of Baberu, Siyaram, on Tuesday evening, they received information that a Dalit girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour, Jagdish Pal aka Muchhad. The girl was playing outside her house when the incident took place.

SP walkout over cane price

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party members, on Wednesday, walked out of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly during the Question Hour over the issue of cane price, accusing the government of being anti-farmer.

The opposition party was not satisfied with the reply by the government.

During the Question Hour, SP member Narendra Verma wanted to know from the government whether the cane production cost had increased due to rise in prices of diesel, fertiliser, pesticides and agricultural equipment, and if the government was considering an increase in cane price.

In his reply, Sugarcane Minister Suresh Kumar Rana said the state advisory price (SAP) of cane was declared after taking into note cane production and sugar production cost and other factors, and the state had already done so for 2020-2021. He said while the price for early variety was fixed at Rs 325 per quintal, for unapproved varieties it was Rs 310 per quintal and for common variety the price was Rs 315 per quintal. On increasing the SAP, the minister said, the "question does not arise" as for 2021 it had been already fixed.

The minister also cited some data of payments made to cane farmers by the previous Samajwadi Party regime and said the present government was committed to the welfare of farmers.

Leader of opposition Ram Govind Chaudhary (SP) said the minister did not answer the important question.

"When you are not raising the SAP, how can you double the income of farmers? He asked, adding that the present government was anti-farmer.

He then walked out of the House along with other SP members.

Maya slams BJP, Cong for oppression of Dalits

Lucknow (PNS): Bahujan Samaj Party supreme Mayawati questioned the oppression of Dalits in the entire country, especially in Uttar Pradesh, and also put the Congress in the dock along with Bharatiya Janata Party for adopting a similar approach towards the members of her community.

In a tweet on Wednesday, the BSP chief said, "Under the UP government, although crime is at its peak, crime control is in a very bad condition, but there is a wave of anxiety everywhere, especially from the painful and shameful incidents of Dalit and female harassment and insecurity. The insensitivity and negligence of the government even in such serious matters is extremely

ly sad."

In another tweet, she said, "Woman harassment and murder of a father in UP's Hathras and the ruthless killing of Dalit RTI activist in Gujarat proves that under the BJP government, like the Congress party, the life and property and dignity of Dalits, exploited and women is not secure."

Charging the government over its insensitive approach towards crime against Dalits, the BSP supreme said that the government should immediately pay attention to this.

Mayawati's remarks come against the backdrop of a 50-year-old man being shot dead in Hathras district allegedly by a man accused of molesting the victim's daughter.

GOVT SPREADING MISINFO ABOUT FARMERS: JAYANT

Rashtriya Lok Dal Vice-President Jayant Chaudhary, while addressing a Kisan Panchayat in Nakud in Saharanpur on Wednesday, said the Narendra Modi government was busy in appeasement of industrialists like Adani and Ambani.

Jayant Chaudhary said the kisan panchayats were sending out a message to the government that its arrogance would not be tolerated any more.

"The Modi government is spreading misleading information against the farmers to defame them. They initially spread wrong information by terming the farmers' agitation as pro-Khalistani, then of Punjab and now they are calling it agitation of Jats only. I want to make

it clear to them that it is not an agitation of any caste or cult but an agitation of all farmers of the country," he said.

Jayant also hit out at Haryana minister JP Dalal, saying the minister was in the habit of making a joke of the farmers and their agitation.

Reacting to PM Narendra Modi's 'andolanjeevi' jibe, Jayant said if farmers and their supporters were 'andolanjeevis', then Kabir Das, Chaudhary Charan Singh, Dr BR Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi were also 'andolanjeevis'.

He demanded withdrawal of farm bills. He said oppression of journalists writing against the BJP government misrule should be stopped.

The RLD leader spoke at length on farmers' cane arrears, sugarcane price, MSP, hike in train fare and other issues related to farmers.

Lucknow to host jaggery festival

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To explore more potential avenues for jaggery, considered having medicinal value, the AYUSH department will be holding a jaggery festival this month to discuss the prospects of its co-products.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate the event at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan on March 6.

The experts will hold discussions on packaging, marketing, e-marketing and export potential of jaggery and will share their experiences of making fine quality jaggery

products."

"Experts of the Sugarcane department will discuss issues like co-harvesting, improved species and making sugarcane farming more beneficial," a government official said.

Besides, entrepreneurs associated with the production and trade of jaggery will also have opportunities to know about various aspects related to new technologies, product variety, storage and marketing and export avenues.

"The festival will also be beneficial for the jaggery manufacturing industry. Besides, the consumers will

also get a chance to see various quality products of jaggery that are often not available in market," the official said.

The event will further boost the ODOP (One District, One Product) as gur (jaggery) is an ODOP product of Muzaffarnagar and Ayodhya districts.

This is the reason that the first jaggery festival was held in Muzaffarnagar.

"Now, the event in Lucknow will inspire the sugarcane farmers of Purvanchal, including Ayodhya, to make processed products of jaggery," the official said.

North Eastern Railway Notification No.46/2021						
It is notified for information of general public that following Unreserved Express train will run as under-						
Train No. -05086 Ex. Lucknow Jn. from 07.03.2021 daily						
Train No. -05085 Ex. Mailani from 07.03.2021 daily						
05086 (Lucknow Jn.-Mailani)			↓ Station ↑	05085 (Mailani-Lucknow Jn.)		
Arr.	Dep.			Arr.	Dep.	
--	06.20	Lucknow Jn.		20.45	--	
06.31	06.33	Aishbagh		20.22	20.24	
06.40	06.42	Lucknow City		20.10	20.12	
06.49	06.51	Daliganj		19.55	19.57	
07.00	07.02	Mohibullapur		19.35	19.37	
07.11	07.13	Bakshi Ka Talab		19.24	19.26	
07.24	07.25	Itaunja		19.12	19.13	
07.36	07.38	Ataria		19.00	19.02	
07.43	07.44	Manwa		18.52	18.53	
07.53	07.55	Sidhauli		18.42	18.44	
08.02	08.03	Suraincha Halt		18.32	18.33	
08.08	08.10	Kamlapur		18.25	18.27	
08.18	08.19	Barai Jalalpur		18.14	18.15	
08.29	08.31	Khairatabad		18.03	18.05	
08.47	08.52	Sitapur Jn.		17.50	17.55	
09.06	09.07	Bhurjiha Bargaon		17.31	17.32	
09.13	09.14	Jharkapur		17.24	17.25	
09.20	09.21	Parsehra Mal		17.17	17.18	
09.28	09.30	Hargaon		17.09	17.11	
09.37	09.38	Oel		16.54	16.55	
09.44	09.45	Kadipur Sani Halt		16.47	16.48	
09.53	09.54	Khiri Town		16.40	16.41	
09.58	10.00	Lakhimpur		16.32	16.34	
10.10	10.11	Deokali		16.20	16.21	
10.21	10.23	Pharadahan		16.09	16.11	
10.34	10.35	Razaganj		15.56	15.57	
10.41	10.42	Bahelia Buzurg		15.49	15.50	
10.55	10.57	Gola Gokaran Nath		15.37	15.39	
11.16	11.18	Banke Ganj		15.21	15.23	
12.45	--	Mailani		--	15.00	
Composition- General Second Class - 08, SLR/SLRD - 02 = 10 Coaches						
Train No. -05088 Ex. Lucknow Jn. from 07.03.2021 daily						
Train No. -05087 Ex. Mailani from 07.03.2021 daily						
05088 (Lucknow Jn.-Mailani)			↓ Station ↑	05087 (Mailani-Lucknow Jn.)		
Arr.	Dep.			Arr.	Dep.	
--	13.45	Lucknow Jn.		12.10	--	
13.56	13.58	Aishbagh		11.30	11.32	
14.05	14.07	Lucknow City		11.15	11.17	
14.14	14.16	Daliganj		10.56	10.58	
14.24	14.26	Mohibullapur		10.40	10.42	
14.35	14.37	Bakshi Ka Talab		10.24	10.26	
14.48	14.49	Itaunja		10.10	10.11	
15.00	15.02	Ataria		09.58	10.00	
15.08	15.09	Manwa		09.50	09.51	
15.18	15.20	Sidhauli		09.40	09.42	
15.28	15.29	Suraincha Halt		09.31	09.32	
15.35	15.37	Kamlapur		09.24	09.26	
15.46	15.47	Barai Jalalpur		09.14	09.15	
15.57	15.59	Khairatabad		09.03	09.05	
16.15	16.20	Sitapur Jn.		08.50	08.55	
16.34	16.35	Bhurjiha Bargaon		08.32	08.33	
16.42	16.43	Jharkapur		08.25	08.26	
16.50	16.51	Parsehra Mal		08.18	08.19	
17.06	17.08	Hargaon		08.10	08.12	
17.20	17.21	Oel		08.00	08.01	
17.28	17.29	Kadipur Sani Halt		07.53	07.54	
17.36	17.37	Khiri Town		07.46	07.47	
17.55	17.57	Lakhimpur		07.38	07.40	

Police: Son of BJP MP staged attack on self to frame rivals

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

BJP MP Kaushal Kishore's son Ayush Kishore allegedly staged an attack on himself by his brother-in-law late Tuesday night to frame his business rivals and settle scores with them. Police claimed to have blown the lid off the plot after they detained Ayush's brother-in-law.

The police registered a case against Ayush and his brother-in-law for criminal conspiracy, fraudulent practice and for spreading false and mischievous content which led to fear or alarm for the public.

Ayush (30) suffered bruises in the left side of his chest and was rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre, where he was administered primary treatment and discharged later. Ayush had a love marriage recently and was living with his

wife and brother-in-law Adarsh Singh in Kamlabad Badhuali area in Madaion.

The police made this revelation after they scanned footage of some CCTV cameras installed around the crime scene and a youth, later was identified as Adarsh Singh, was spotted there. Sub-inspector Radheshyam Maurya, who lodged a case against Ayush and Adarsh, stated that he was patrolling the area when he was informed that a youth had been shot at around 2 am on Wednesday.

The SI, along with a team, reached the scene and found a youth lying on the ground. He was later identified as Ayush and was rushed to KGMU Trauma Centre. Ayush told the police that three black SUV-borne miscreants shot at him. The police team reached the crime scene and scanned

CCTV footage. The police spotted a youth in a footage and he was detained. Identified as Adarsh Singh of Bahraich, the detainee said he is the brother-in-law of Ayush.

"Ayush had asked me to attack him as he wanted to frame his rivals to settle scores," he told the police. He also disclosed the names of Ayush's rivals. The police recovered a country-made pistol from Adarsh's possession and it reportedly belongs to Ayush.

It also surfaced that Adarsh had dialled the police control room and said that some unidentified miscreants had shot at the son of BJP MP from Mohanlalganj Kaushal Kishore.

Meanwhile, Kaushal Kishore told reporters that he had got a call from Ayush who informed him that he had suffered a bullet injury. "When I met Ayush, he did not name

anyone for the attack," he said.

He also confirmed that Ayush, the youngest of his four sons, had a love marriage against the wishes of the family 6-7 months ago and was living separately with his wife and brother-in-law ever since.

"After Ayush's call, I also got a call from police and informed that he has been taken to KGMU. I reached there and when I asked Ayush about the attack, he told me in front of policemen that there were three attackers but he could not identify them. If he wanted to frame someone, why would he say that he could not identify them?" the BJP MP said, adding that he had no idea about people Ayush allegedly wanted to settle scores with.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the police probe so far, the BJP MP said he had firm faith in the police.

Interfaith couple consumes poison, hospitalised

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An interfaith couple consumed some poisonous substance before they were caught by family members of the youth and taken to police station. During interrogation and physical checking, the police got a suicide note in which the couple had written that they had consumed poisonous substance. Following the revelation, the police rushed the couple to a hospital where their condition was said to be improving.

As per reports, a resident of Jankipuram lodged a case against a youth and alleged that he lured the girl into marrying him on Tuesday night. As the police started conducting raids to trace the couple, the family of the accused informed them that they were bringing the couple to the police station.

During interrogation the couple said they were adults and married with mutual consent. The police found a suicide note from the possession of the youth after which they came to know that the couple had consumed some poisonous substance. The police rushed the couple to hospital and started further probe into the case.

Meanwhile, an employee of an insurance company was found hanging at his office in Deen Dayal Nagar in Hasanganj police station area on Wednesday. He was identified as Ravi Prakash Mishra. Police said Ravi was a native of Basti. There were reports that he ended his life due to some family discord.

Vaccine jabs to be given at 64 hospitals today



A city zoo visitor being tested for Covid-19 at the gate on Wednesday

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

25 people tested Covid positive in Lucknow on Wednesday while 19 patients recovered. There are 280 active cases in the city

Health Centre (PHC), Kathwara PHC, Gangaganj PHC, Kasmandi Kalan PHC, Fatehganj PHC, Harroni PHC, Sisendi PHC, Nadarganj PHC, Katarabakkash PHC, Suspan PHC, Nigoha PHC, Rahimabad PHC, Cancer Institute, Rani Laxmi Bai Hospital etc.

The 13 private hospitals include Ajanta Hospital, Chandan Hospital, Apollomedics, TS Mishra Hospital, Dr OP Chowdhary Hospital, Shekhar Hospital, Sushma Hospital, Raj Chandra hospital, ERA's Medical College and Hospital, Mayo Medical College, Charak Hospital,

Vidya Hospital and Saraswati Hospital.

He said that on March 8 (International Women's Day) too, vaccinations will be as per the state government instructions. Singh said registrations have already started at the CoWIN portal by senior citizens and those with co-morbidities. "Those who have not been able to register can go for a walk-in," he said.

Meanwhile, 25 people tested Covid positive in Lucknow on Wednesday while 19 patients recovered. There are 280 active cases in the district.

Across the state, 105 people tested positive for coronavirus, including six in Gautam Buddh Nagar, five each in Ghaziabad & Varanasi and three in Kanpur, taking the UP case tally to 6,03,788. There was no Covid death reported from anywhere in the state. Besides, 134 patients managed to beat Covid-19, pushing the recovery figures to 5,93,035 even as there are 2,025 active cases in the state.



Police stop protesting lawyers at 1090 crossing on Wednesday

Pioneer

Four divisional commissioners, 6 DMs shifted

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government ordered a reshuffle in bureaucracy late Tuesday night, shifting four divisional commissioners and six district magistrates.

Surendra Singh, Secretary in CM secretariat, has been posted as Divisional Commissioner of Meerut, while Estate Officer Shubrant Shukla has been posted as District Magistrate of Chitrakoot.

AK Singh, DM of Rampur, has been posted as Commissioner of Moradabad division. R Ramesh, Commissioner of Prayagraj

division, goes as Commissioner of Bareilly division while Sanjay Goel, Relief Commissioner will take over as Commissioner of Prayagraj division.

DM of Basti, Ashutosh Nirranjan, will be the new DM of Deoria while Saumya Agarwal, MD of Dakshin Vidyut Nigam Agra, goes as DM of Basti.

JP Singh, director Mandi Parishad, has been posted as DM of Kanpur Dehat. Ravindra Mandar, municipal commissioner of Mathura-Vrindavan goes as DM of Rampur. Deepa Ranjan, additional commissioner, goes as DM of Budaun.

‘Uttarakhand tragedy triggered by melting of fresh snow’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Ashort-lived massive flood on the morning of February 7 in Uttarakhand killed more than 200 people and devastated two hydropower projects. The avalanche was probably triggered by the melting of fresh snow in the crest wall of the accumulation area which must have punctured the subglacial water.

This was stated by former scientist, Physical Research Laboratory (Ahmedabad), Dr Naveen Juyal while delivering a lecture at Birbal Science Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP) on Wednesday. He explained what happened on that fateful morning and incidentally, he was there at that

time. "The flood that originated from the Rishi Ganga valley which drains through the snow-clad Nanda Devi National Park inflicted severe damage to life and property. It is important that the Himalayan cryosphere is monitored continuously so that an effective early warning system can be developed along with monitoring the change in hydrological conditions," he said.

Giving a background, he said: "The Rishi Ganga catchment that has an area of 625 square kilometers has one of the highest concentrations of snow-clad peaks and glaciers in Uttarakhand Himalaya and supports diverse bio-habitats in their near-pristine state and surrounded by eight

major peaks rising above 6 km. Nanda Devi, the second highest peak in India, is located in the headwall of the east-west trending Rishi Ganga valley and is the feeder of ice to nearly six major glaciers located along both north and south facing slopes. In addition to this, there are few hanging glaciers that have the potential to trigger snow and debris avalanches. Thus, the valley has a potential to generate high magnitude floods by impounding the glacial streams by a combination of snow, ice and debris avalanches."

He said it was fairly clear that the flood originated from Raunti Gad (river) a small tributary of Rishi Ganga located on the north facing slope

which is fed by Raunti glacier and Nanda Ghunti glacier. "Raunti Gad is one of the most degraded valleys in Rishi Ganga catchment having few supra glacial lakes. The meteorological data indicates that during between February 3 and 5, the area experienced a drop in temperature which led to fresh snowfall in the Rishi Ganga valley, including the Raunti Gad. It was followed by an abrupt rise in temperature on February 6," said Dr Juyal.

He further pointed out, "In view of this, it can be suggested that the snow avalanche was probably triggered by the melting of fresh snow in the crest wall of the accumulation area which must have punctured the subglacial water. As

the glacial lake water mixed with sediment moved down the valley, it was temporarily obstructed on the way forming transient lakes. Breaching of such lakes caused the force amplification."

The amount of sediment transported down the valley could be assessed from the fact that as the sediment-laden water reached the confluence with the Rishi Ganga, it obstructed the Rishi Ganga temporarily, he said.

Further down as it moved, the flow was further obstructed by the hydropower barrages on Rishi Ganga (near Reni village) and Dhaul Ganga (at Tapovan) which further amplified the magnitude of destruction," he added.

CMS student wins abacus contest

Lucknow: Mihir Singh, a class III student of City Montessori School, Rajajipuram Campus I, brought laurels to the institution by being declared the champion in International Online Abacus Competition. The competition was held under 'Brainbrainfest-2021', which was organised by educational institute 'Brainobrain'. Students from various countries participated in the competition to showcase their analytical skills. Mihir opted for various abacus tricks to solve mathematical problems and was declared the champion.



Stress on need for awareness about hearing screening in children

Lucknow (PNS): On the occasion of World Hearing Day, the neuro-otology unit of SGPGIMS organised a public awareness programme called 'Suno Sunao' on Wednesday. The programme was presided over by SGPGIMS director Prof RK Dhiman, who congratulated the neuro-otology unit on its services. The unit runs the successful cochlear implant programme through which more than 200 implants have been done till date.

The director stressed on the need for spreading awareness about hearing screening in children and also the need to expand the services to cater to a larger population suffering from hearing loss. Chief medical



superintendent of SGPGIMS Prof Sonia Nitayanand addressed the gathering and emphasised on the need for hearing rehabilitation in geriatric population to improve their quality of life. Head of Neurosurgery department Prof Sanjai Behari explained the amount of work done by the

neuro-otology unit and the role of parents and community in identifying hearing impairment in children and how early identification and rehabilitation can change a child's life altogether. A special patient information

booklet for patients explaining the process of cochlear implantation was also released on the occasion. The neuro-otology unit is headed by Dr Amit Keshri and has a team of dedicated senior residents and audiology & speech therapy professionals.

लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण (ISO 14001 : 2004, ISO 9001-2008 प्रमाणित संस्था) प्राधिकरण भवन, विपिन खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ (उ.प्र.), फ़ो. नं. : 0522-2307845, 2307839, 2307833, वेबसाइट: "http://www.ldalucknow.co.in"						
--सार्वजनिक सूचना--						
सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण की आवासीय / व्यवसायिक / रेन्ट / नजूल / इम्प्लूमेंट ट्रस्ट योजनाओं के निम्नलिखित आवेदकों द्वारा उनके नाम के सामने अंकित सम्पत्ति का हस्तान्तरण / नामांकरण किये जाने हेतु प्राधिकरण में प्रार्थना-पत्र प्रस्तुत किया गया है :-						
क्र.सं.	मूल आवंदी का नाम	भवन / मूखण्ड / प्लेट संख्या	योजना का नाम	मृत्यु का दिनांक	मूल आवंदी के उत्तराधिकारी अथवा आवेदक का नाम	मूल आवंदी (मृतक) से आवेदक के सम्बन्ध
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	श्रीमती राधिका खानू	मूखण्ड सं-0-365	विभूति खण्ड गोमती नगर योजना	23.05.2013	1. श्री सितारुद्दीन सिद्दीकी 2. श्री मोमद अमीर 3. श्री समीरुद्दीन 4. श्रीमती अजरा खानू पत्नी स्व. मेराज अहमद 5. श्रीमती समुखा खानू, 6. श्रीमती राना खानू	पुत्र, पुत्र, पुत्र वधू विवाहित पुत्री विवाहित पुत्री
2	श्री बनवारी लाल	मू सं-ई-4 / 464, सेक्टर-ओ	मानसरोवर योजना	06.02.2020	श्री कृष्ण नन्दन	श्रीमती राजकुमारी-पुत्री (विवाहित)
3	श्रीमती शान्ती देवी लाल (केत)	मूखण्ड सं-0-44 सेक्टर-जी, अलीगंज	अलीगंज योजना	04.06.1997	श्रीमती पुष्पाजली लाल	1. श्री श्रेय लाल पुत्र
4	श्री चौधरी मोहन लाल (मृतक)	मू सं-549 / 14	टीजीवी न्यू सिविल लाइन्स योजना	16.12.2006	श्री रमेश कुमार पुत्र स्व. चौधरी मोहन लाल	पुत्र वधू
उपर्युक्त नामान्तरण के आवेदन के सम्बन्ध में यदि किसी भी व्यक्ति को कोई आपत्ति हो तो वह साक्ष्य सहित प्रकाशन तिथि से 30 दिनों के अन्दर अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में प्राप्त करा दें। निर्धारित तिथि तक कोई आपत्ति प्राप्त न होने पर प्राधिकरण अभिलेखों में कॉलम-6 पर लिखित व्यक्ति का नाम दर्ज कर लिया जायेगा तथा उसके बाद किसी आपत्ति पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।						पंजीकृत वसीयत दिनांक : 27.05.2004
						सचिव



Governor Anandiben Patel at Godbarai function in Varanasi on Wednesday

Pioneer

Governor for making Anganwadi centres strong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Governor Anandiben Patel emphasised on making the Anganwadi centres strong and called upon the local universities and colleges to adopt such centres where children come from poor families. 'There is a section in the country which has everything but another lacks the same. Both these sections should be connected,' she said, calling upon all the universities and colleges to adopt Anganwadi centres. She was addressing a function during her visit to Anganwadi Centre and Primary School in gram sabha Shahshapur under Aarajline block here on Wednesday.

'In Lucknow, 80 Anganwadi centres were given useful items as the educational institutes provided articles worth ₹ 50,000 to each Anganwadi centre,' she informed, appealing to the universities/ colleges of Varanasi to do the same. She

further said 'every educational institution can adopt 2-3 Anganwadi centres and promote cleanliness drive in the villages which would help in increasing sensitivity among the people of poor section,' she said, informing that now every university/ college is inviting 50 children from Anganwadi centres to its convocation so that they the people can know about the needs of such poor children. She praised Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University for donating ₹ 50,000 to this Anganwadi centre at Shahshapur. During her visit to Anganwadi centre, the children presented group songs.

The Governor Anandiben Patel also garlanded pregnant women Neetu and Nargis at a 'Godhbarai' programme. She also gave tips to these women, asking them to eat healthy food, go to hospitals for delivery, take equal care after babies irrespective of their gender and maintain hygienic condi-

tion.

She also performed 'Annprashan' rituals of six-month-old daughter Riya and boy Arpit by offering them food by the spoons. She also inspected a primary class and talked to the children apart from going through an exhibition of various items like nutritious dishes, pre-school corner, holy corner, kishori corner, weight corner items, along with displays on inspirational subjects of science, language, mathematics, environment, mission and motivation.

Anandiben also released a magazine mentioning the work done by Red Cross Society (Varanasi) during the corona pandemic and lauded the efforts of District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma and his team. The Governor said that during her work for 12 years in Gujarat, a health kit was prepared and she presented some health kits to Anganwadi centre, appealing to the people to support Prime

Minister Narendra Modi in a drive to make India TB-free by 2025.

In another programme organised by Banas Dairy at Shahshapur Gaushala, she distributed Gir cows brought from Gujarat to 14 cattle owners. 'Gujarat and UP have been linked with the inspiration of the PM so wherever there is good work, it is taken to another place,' she said, informing that Banaskantha of Gujarat was a backward district but since Modi came to the power in Gujarat (as Chief Minister), education improved and water from river Narmada reached the fields, making Banaskantha as the best district today. 'The Banas dairy produces 84 lakh litres of milk daily and its milk products are sold in the world. Malnutrition is an issue of concern as almost every minute a child dies in the country so the PM has launched several schemes in this direction which have brought good results,' she said.

IIT-BHU startup selected for next round

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A startup impact enterprise 'Appadata' founded by three students of Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU)—Akarsh Vatsa, Shashwat Khare and Vibhanshu Chaubey—has been shortlisted for the 2021 Hult Prize USIM Challenge regional final round. In partnership with the United Nations Office of Partnerships, the Hult Prize Foundation organises the world's largest startup programme aimed at social impact and offers a grand startup prize of US\$1,000,000 awarded by President Bill Clinton at the United Nations Headquarters on an annual basis. Appadata

has beaten the odds, outperforming a record number of 350,000 programme participants who began the journey this past fall. 'It's an amazing experience being selected for the next round and we truly believe our idea can and will change the world,' said Akarsh, Shashwat and Vibhanshu.

The team is now preparing for the next stage where they will travel to the Hult Impact Summit - Kuala Lumpur where they will pitch for a coveted spot in the Hult Prize Global Accelerator - a best in class programme, regularly ranking as the world's number one accelerator for social impact. This year's 2021 Hult Prize Challenge asks entrepreneurs to rethink food and build the foundations of

a venture that will create jobs, stimulate economies, re-imagine supply chains and improve the overall outcome for 10,00,000 people by 2030. Appadata does that through A B2B SaaS Forecasting model for the retail stores of their city to predict the ideal stock of a particular food item in the store's inventory, which prevents problems of over/under stocking of food items, and in turn, food wastage. Appadata's Mission is simple, 'Reducing Global Food Wastage while maximising the profits for their clients,' they said.

Hult Prize Impact Summits have a history of being life changing experiences for attendees and bring together a community of people with an outlook of chang-

ing the world through business. Events are open to college and university students, industry professionals, academic leaders, and non-profit / government executives. Planned programming includes professional networking mixers, social events, inspirational keynote speeches, workshops, and the headline activity. More than 200 short-listed entrepreneurs will be pitching startups that solve this year's UN issued food challenge.

At stake for one lucky team is a golden ticket invitation to attend the award winning Hult Prize Accelerator programme getting them one step closer to winning US\$1,000,000 in startup capital.

Bankers Sensitisation Programme held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uco Bank, in association with NABARD, organised Bankers Sensitisation Programme to discuss about challenges in the field of agriculture and micro finance.

Speaking in the programme held at zonal office here, the DDM, NABARD Anuj Kumar Singh threw light on strategies in the field of agri and micro finance and apprised about the use of available resources for the purpose. The NITI Ayog is launching drive to develop Varanasi as the modern district, he said and added, the district is hub of agro-export. The maximum GI products are in the district and there is also possibilities of employment in the district he said adding, there are maximum micro products in the district. The leading district manager Mithilesh Kumar appealed the district coordinators to provide maximum loans under agriculture and MSME and said, they should make effort for the successful implementation of schemes. There is



Uco Bank organising Bankers' Sensitisation Programme in Varanasi recently

better opportunities of fisheries industry in Chandauli, he said further. The senior manager Amit Khanna conducted the programme and the sub-zonal head of the bank Sanjay Kumar Sinha offered a formal vote of thanks at last.

CLINIC SET UP: With an aim to get the benefits of Ayurveda medicine reached to common people, the Deep Ayurveda established its first-ever clinic and branch office in Varanasi and launched its Ayurveda Arogya Mitra project in the state. The MD & CEO of the company Vishnu Dutt Sharma informed, the clinic opened at Awas Vikas Colony

in Pandeypur will provide genuine Ayurvedic treatment and medicines at an affordable cost, based on 100% herbal extracts and 100% vegetarian capsules without any adulteration or synthetic ingredients. We have appointed RADMA Pvt. Ltd. as our Business Associate to promote and develop Deep Ayurveda Clinics in 12 district headquarters of the Varanasi division in the next three months, he said and informed, a team of highly qualified Ayurvedic doctors trained by Dr Baldeep Kour, Founder & Chief Ayurveda Consult of Deep Ayurveda, will be available at the clinic in Varanasi to

offer treatment for diseases like Arthritis, Liver failure, Kidney Failure, Cancer, Diabetes, Infertility, Psoriasis, Thyroid and so on. The facility will also provide distance consultation and online consultation to patients.

TRADERS STAGE DEMONSTRATION: The traders on Wednesday adopted a unique way of demonstration by cooking food on coal-stove to draw the attention of government towards the gradually rising price of domestic cylinder and petro-products. Under the banner of UP Udyog Vyapar Pratinidhimandal (Kanchhal Group), the traders gathered at Bhartendu Park in Maidagin, here and demonstrated by making tea and cooking food on coal-stove. 'We adopted this way to state token protest to draw the attention of the government towards the skyrocketing price of domestic cylinder, petrol and diesel,' the traders said adding, the resentment is brewing among common people with the gradual increase in the price of domestic cylinder.

Whole world looking towards India over COVID-19 vaccine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The whole world is looking towards India over the COVID-19 vaccine. All the scientists and doctors of the country are also being praised for their utmost efforts. The opposition is singing its own melody apart from all this. They do not trust the scientists of the country. The mockery of Indian intelligence is being made by raising a variety of questions. This was said by Dr

LS Ojha, State Convenor of BJP Medical Cell.

The state convenor of the BJP Medical Cell said in Prayagraj that the vaccine made in the country is completely reliable. So far, there has not been a single case that can create any discrepancy. Despite this, the opposition is confusing the people. They are criticising the government while the time is to stay organised and encourage the scientists of the country.

Now Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also taken a dose of vaccine, this is also being talked about in various ways. By the time he had not got the vaccine, the opposition was saying why he was not getting the vaccine. Now, who he got it, then the opposition is also raising many questions over it. What does the opposition want to gain from such a negative thought?

Meanwhile, Phulpur MP Kesari Devi Patel said that the

opposition is trying to create an environment against the Covid vaccine. The real face of the opposition parties has to come to fore in front of the country. The general public is with Prime Minister Modi. They have got themselves vaccinated as well. Other people are also motivated for this. Soon the vaccine will be available to all the people of the country. This will be possible through the hard work of the country's scientists.

Woman's murder case worked out

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

With the arrest of the prime accused, the Mauaima police claimed to have worked out the sensational murder case of Ronika Singh which took place on the night of February 19. However, when the police interrogated the arrested accused Sonu Kumar Patel, he informed that Ronika was strangled to death in the moving car by using a rope. He was accompanied by his two aides Nanchu Pasi alias Sandeep resident of Udaychandrapur police station Soroan and Ramnaresh Prajapati resident of Gaddopur police station Phaphamau.

The body was disposed of in the Sharda tributary near Dubahi village, while Ronika's purse, mobile, ID, photo, etc. were dumped in a wheat field some distance away.

Ronika knew Sonu Kumar Patel's friends Sandeep and



Ramnaresh. Many times Sonu took both of them with him to Ronika's rented house. Motor mechanic Sonu was a good mechanic, so he used to earn a decent amount of money as well. When Sonu left with the

car, he was accompanied by his friends.

In police interrogation, Sonu said that in the car he was explaining to Ronika that he could not marry her because he is already married.

But Ronika was not ready to listen. She was adamant on getting married. She was also giving various threats, due to which she was murdered.

The body of a young woman was found on the morning of February 20 in the Sharda tributary canal located near Dubahi village in the Mauaima police station area. Two days later, Gayatri, wife of late Gulab Singh, a resident of Khajuri Khurd village, under the Koraon reached the post-mortem house and identified the body as her daughter Ronika Singh (28).

She informed the police that due to a dispute with her husband, Ronika lived alone with a rented room in Naini area.

After this, the police took out the CDR of Ronika's mobile number and then arrested Sonu Kumar Patel resident of Matadin ka Pura of Phaphamau.

NCR GM reviews safety measures

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

General Manager NCR and GNER Vinay Kumar Tripathi reviewed status of safety, asset reliability, punctuality, loading, revenue and HR development on North Central Railway. This meeting organised through video conferencing was attended by AGM NCR Ranjan Yadav, PHODs of NCR, DRMs of Prayagraj, Jhansi and Agra divisions and other officials from Divisions and HQ.

Besides constructing 33 RUBs, six ROBAs and closure of 45 manned LCs during current financial year, North Central Railway has also undertaken various awareness campaigns to curb incidents of trespassing. In this connection a 35 days

campaign spread over three divisions through mobile video van has been started by NCR on February 24, 2021. This mobile video van is being deployed to rural and trespassing prone locations, schools and markets to create awareness on level crossing safety and to bring down incidents of trespassing etc. While reviewing safety in train operations GM stressed that each trespassing location must be identified and preventive measures be taken immediately.

Under the leadership of Tripathi, guidance of PHODs and DRMs loading, mobility, infrastructure development, revenue, human resource development and other important performance indices have been on upswing during

February 2021. Ever best throughput of average 492 trains per day has been achieved in February 21 which is an improvement of 13.9 per cent over previous best figures of 432 trains per day achieved in February 20. All other train operation indices like loco and wagon utilisation etc. also improved substantially in February 2021. So far in current financial year North Central Railway has registered improvement of 8.4 per cent in originating freight loading, 86.4 per cent in average speed of goods trains and 55 per cent improvement in punctuality of trains over the corresponding period of last financial year. On the front of mobility and throughput improvement work during February 2021,

automatic signaling has been commissioned on 25.46 Kms of New Delhi-Howrah trunk route besides removal of one permanent speed restriction and increasing maximum permissible speed in five sections over North Central Railway.

On the front of Human resource development, 4902 employees of NCR got benefit of promotion and 1645 retiring employees have been given timely settlement and other dues during current financial year till February 2021.

During February 2021 North Central Railway has sold scrap of ₹ 41.20 crore and total scrap sale revenue till has been 227.18 crore which is higher than the last year scrap sale as well as target set for current financial year.

Cleanliness drive held on banks of Arail ghat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

A cleanliness drive was undertaken on the banks of Arail ghat at Someshwar Nath Ghat in Prayagraj. Cleanliness campaign was carried out on behalf of social workers. Devotees were also made aware on this occasion. People were told not to offer flowers, garlands etc in the Ganga water, only then the Ganga water will remain neat and clean.

During Kalpavas in the month of Magh, devotees offered flowers and garlands at the Someshwar Ghat in Ganga. Aarti was also performed by lighting a lamp. After bathing on Maghi Purnima, the Kalpavas went back to their homes from the Arail Ghat, but the dirt spread here and there. Seeing this, volunteers of Sumitra Devi Gramin Seva Sanstha launched a cleanliness drive on the Ganga Ghat. Social workers gathered at the dawn of Wednesday and cleaned the Arail Ghat on a large-scale. At Someshwar Ghat, the debris was collected and dug a pit in the sand and buried it.

On this occasion, social workers also appealed to the bathing men present there to keep the ghat clean. Appealing, Sanjay Srivastava and Dharmendra Patel said that the water of Maa Ganga is like nectar. The ultimate duty of all of us is not to throw garbage in it. They must come forward to keep it clean. All the devotees should dedicate the first half hour before Ganga bath at the feet of the Ma Ganga and remove the garbage which is

strewn in the Ganga water and dump it in the pit.

On this occasion Babuji Yadav, Chhotu Yadav, Rampal, Ramesh Tiwari, Dharmendra Patel, Manu Sharma, a prominent social worker, was present.

BUDGET OF PEOPLE'S KITCHEN DISTURBED: In order to get rid of the tight economy, the government has once again burnt the pockets of the common man. The prices of cylinders ranging from domestic gas to commercial use have increased four times in 28 days. Due to this, the budget of the people's kitchen has been disturbed excessively. With the increase in domestic gas prices, the government has kept the subsidy as it is. According to Petroleum Company officials, there has been no increase in subsidy on domestic cylinders. The subsidy on 14.2 kg cylinders is ₹ 48 only.

According to the report of the Petroleum Ministry, the prices of gas cylinders were increased on February 3, February 14 and February 25. On Monday March 1, it has been increased by ₹ 25. Even before this, the price of domestic gas cylinders was increased by ₹25-25 each on February 3, February 14 and February 25. However, subsidy is fixed at ₹ 48 only.

Like 14.2 kg, the price of subsidised cylinder of five kg has also increased. According to the report of the petroleum companies, on February 3, a five-kg domestic gas cylinder was getting ₹285, which increased by ₹36 to ₹321 on March 1. However, there has been an increase of ₹ 81 on

commercial gas cylinders. On February 3, the 19 kg commercial cylinder was worth ₹ 1,640, which increased by ₹81 to ₹ 1721 on March 1.

KP Mishra, national vice-president of the LPG Federation Association, said that since February 3, the total price of gas cylinders has increased four times so far. The increased rate has been implemented on March 1.

On the other hand, due to the continuous increase in the price of gas cylinders, people's anger is also brewing. Women said that this has also messed up their kitchen budget. The government is increasing rates arbitrarily. Due to this, the two square meal of the economically weaker sections of the people is also becoming miserable.

SHUATS STUDENT BAGS AWARD: A student of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Science and Technology (SHUATS) got young biochemist award along with best oral presentation award during an international conference held in Meerut.

A conference on Global approaches in natural resource management for climate smart agriculture (GNRSA-2020) during pandemic era of COVID-19 was held on Shobhit Deemed University Meerut.

Divya Singh, a PhD scholar of Biochemistry and Biochemical Engineering is working under supervision of Dr Kapil Lawrence, co-supervisor Dr Suresh BG at SHU-ATS. She delivered a lecture titled Anti-Diabetic activity of foxtail millet (Setaria italica L. Beauv). In her presentation she gave important information about nutritional benefits of foxtail millet, the most important being the anti-diabetic effects. She shared that the global diabetes prevalence in 2019 is estimated to be 9.3 per cent (463 million people), rising to 10.2 per cent (578 million) by 2030 and 10.9 per cent (700 million) by 2045. Its treatment in very important but allopathy although being readily available, gives short term benefits and also has side-effects. Through her research and survey Divya has observed that foxtail millet can be used as herbal medicine for treatment of diabetes along with regular exercise, yoga and proper precautions.

PRAYAG SANGEET SAMITI CONVOCATION TO BE HELD: The 83rd convocation of the internationally acclaimed Prayag Sangeet Samiti will be held on Thursday. Justice Yashwant Varma will be the chief guest on the occasion, informed the secretary Arun Kumar while addressing a press conference here on Wednesday.

Prayag Sangeet Samiti was established in 1926 to promote Indian Classical Music. Samiti conducts regular classes of music besides examinations. It has its branches in the USA, UK, Australia, Russia, South Africa, UAE, and Abudhabi. The convocation will begin at 6 pm. The chief guest will honour the meritorious students of Praveen and Prabhakar standard in different streams of music.

GHSIMR tie-up with Moscow’s Synergy University

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Another feather was added to the cap of Gaur Hari Singhania Institute of Management and Research when it inked a memorandum of understanding with Synergy University of Moscow.

With the signing of this MoU, GHSIMR has become the first educational institute in Uttar Pradesh to have this tie-up. Synergy University is among the top three universities in Russia. It is not only internationally recognised but is also AMBA (Association of Master of Business Administration) accredited.

GHSIMR Director Dr Rahul Goyal, said that with this tie-up, the students would be benefitted by short-term academic exchange programmes, summer school, long-term exchange programmes and this facility would be extended to the faculty level for curriculum preparation, joint seminar and



Gaur Hari Singhania Institute of Management and Research signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Synergy University, Moscow on Wednesday.

conferences, preparing case studies and other such academic and mutual activities.

The GHSIMR will be able

to pass on the international recognition and benefits to its students.

Prof. Devendra Jaiswal,

media chair along with Prof Shekhar Trivedi, Prof. Monika Srivastava and Mr Manoj were present on the occasion.

Maharashtra Guv felicitates LIC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari has felicitated the Life insurance Corporation of India (LIC) for the commendable work done during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LIC Managing Director Vipin Anand received the honour at a function organised by Pasban-e-Adab, a socio-cultural organisation.

During the pandemic, LIC rendered exceptional services to its policyholders and society as a whole. The death claims arising due to COVID-19 were treated at par with other causes of death and settled on priority.

LIC also ensured that other policy payments like survival benefit, policy maturity, annuities and loans etc. were made to policyholders promptly by crediting the amount into the bank account registered with the LIC.

For collection of premium, all digital channels were available 24X7 during the lockdown period to ensure that the policies did not lapse. Special concessions in claims and premium payments were also given.

For combating the coronavirus, LIC contributed handsomely to the PM Cares Fund and CM Relief Fund in different states. LIC also contributed



Governor of Maharashtra, Bhagat Singh Koshyari, felicitating the LIC of India at Raj Bhavan for its commendable work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

towards Covid ward for cancer patients in Tata Memorial Hospital and funded purchase of ambulances with life saving equipment like ventilators, multi-channel patient monitoring systems etc. to other organisations.

LIC employees and agents also rose to the occasion and stepped in to combat the chal-

lenges posed by COVID-19 and suo motu launched various initiatives such as distributing food packets, masks, grocery packets, vegetable bags, sanitiser etc.

To encourage continuation of risk cover in the current circumstances of coronavirus pandemic and high risk, LIC provided another opportunity

to policyholders to revive their lapsed policies by launching a Special Revival Campaign from January 7, 2021 to March 6, 2021. Till date more than 20 lakh policies have been revived under this campaign.

LIC is committed to its objectives and responsibilities, keeping in mind the welfare of the nation and its citizens.

DGP praises city cop for rescuing girl

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

For the alertness and bravery shown by a city cop, Kamal Kant, in rescuing a minor girl from a 30-foot deep dry well, Director-General of Police Hitesh Chandra Awasthi is all praise for him as the cops act upheld the image of UP Police working with the tagline ‘Aapki Suraksha, Hamara Sankalp’.

ADG Bhanu Bhaskar and DIG/SSP Dr Pritinder Singh have decided to felicitate the cop for his Samaritan work to encourage others in the police force.

It may be recalled that a 9-year-old girl of a village in Bilhaur Kotwali police area had gone missing on Sunday. On failing to trace her, the parents had filed a complaint with the police and the cops immediately launched a search operation. On Monday, a sniffer dog



Constable Kamal Kant posted at Bilhaur police station.

squad was also deputed on the job. On Tuesday afternoon, when cops were searching the girl in a dilapidated house of

the village, a sub-inspector suddenly threw stone into a dry well situated there and heard someone moaning in it. After

confirming the presence of the missing girl in the well, the cops decided to rescue her without wasting any time as she could be seriously injured and precious time would be lost waiting for the fire brigade to reach the spot. Though there was no water in the 30-foot deep well, because of the dense bushes, nobody came forward to enter it. However, Constable Kamal Kant posted in Bilhaur police station came forward and without wasting any further time, alighted into the well. After a few minutes, he rescued the girl with the help of a rope. As she was unconscious, the girl was immediately sent to hospital.

When this incident came to the notice of the DGP, he praised the efforts of Kamal Kant and directed ADG Bhanu Bhaskar and DIG/SSP Dr Pritinder Singh to felicitate the constable.

World Hearing Day observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

World Hearing Day was observed on Wednesday to create awareness among the masses for action towards addressing hearing loss and ear diseases across the life course.

The theme this year was ‘Hearing Care for All! Screen, Rehabilitate, Communicate’. As per World Health Organisation, the prevalence of hearing impairment in India is around 6.3 per cent and the estimated prevalence of adult-

onset deafness in India is 7.6 per cent and childhood-onset deafness is 2 per cent.

Addressing a session to mark the World Hearing Day, noted cochlear implant surgeon and ENT specialist Dr Rohit Mehrotra said hearing was impaired either due to congenital or some trauma or disease.

He said one should manage blood pressure and cardiac health or else it could damage the fragile mechanisms that helped one hear. He advised that one should stop smoking,

be it direct or passive, and excessive use of alcohol as both created a toxic environment in the ear.

He said uncontrolled diabetes was another reason for hearing impairment and diabetics had double the chance of hearing loss. He said diabetes also damaged the cells in the inner ear. He said exercise was very helpful and healthy as it improved blood flow and helped the body - and ear health - in countless ways.

He also advised people to eat foods high in vitamins and

minerals and said vitamin B12 was vital to good hearing. He said iron-deficiency anaemia was also linked to loss of hearing. Dr Mehrotra said one should know about one’s family history because if hearing impairment was in the family then it should be diagnosed early to reduce risk of negative impacts of hearing loss.

He said self medication often caused hearing loss and even if one were healthy one still had risk of hearing loss if one did not protect hearing in noisy environments.

All police stations to have woman advisory & safety committee

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In a bid to strengthen the Mission Shakti campaign in the city, the Kanpur Police will soon constitute a Women Advisory and Safety Committee at each police station.

The members of this group will act as a link between the female victims and the police, ensuring quick disposal of cases. With the strength of 10-20 individuals, the committee is also expected to help settle domestic matters with counselling-based interventions.

Superintendent of Police (West) Dr Anil Kumar said directives had been received from the state administration to set up a women advisory and safety committee at each police station.

He has directed the station house officers/station officers to identify elite women of their area and encourage them to be a part of this committee.

The committees would be set up at each police station soon, the SP (West) said.

Usually, women are hesitant to visit the police station to report their matters. Even if they do, they find it difficult to explain their problems to the male police officers. Keeping this in mind, a women’s help desk was established to facilitate such women under Mission Shakti. Now, this will be coupled with the women’s advisory and safety committee which will aid in the fast-paced and trouble-free disposal of the cases.

The new group, proposed to be formed on the lines of the Thanewar Peace Committee, shall comprise of elite women. As per reports, the group shall have women leaders including socialites, educationists, political activists, advocates and industrialists amongst others. These women shall act as counselors in matters of domestic disputes so that easy solutions can be reached without violating the dignity of the woman. The troubled women would be able to communicate with this group easily, thereby helping in the speedy resolution of the cases.

It is anticipated that this step will be of advantage to the police department and the women in the city alike.

Women’s health a major cause of concern: Doc

KANPUR (PNS): Nodal officer of the maternity hospital of LLR Hospital, Dr Neena Gupta, while addressing women under the Mahila Sashaktikaran (women empowerment) campaign on Wednesday, said women health was a major cause of concern and the UP government had decided to lay special emphasis on it. She said poor nutrition and poor awareness of hygiene was the major reason for women failing victim to bone disease and cervical cancer.

She said osteoporosis meant reduced bone mass and the disruption of bone structure architecture. She said osteoporosis was a major public health problem in Indian women and the reason was low calcium intakes with extensive prevalence of vitamin D deficiency. She said increasing longevity, sex inequality, early menopause, genetic predisposition, lack of diagnostic facilities and poor knowledge of bone health had contributed toward the high prevalence of osteoporosis.

Dr Gupta said bone health could be optimised by creating an environment to achieve peak bone mass during adolescence, maintenance of healthy bone throughout the life cycle, and prevention of bone loss post-menopause.

She said in Indian women, calcium, vitamin D, and bisphosphonates were the common first-line therapies used today. She added that the major gaps still remained in the diagnosis and management of osteoporosis.

She said research had proved that low blood levels of vitamin D had a greater risk of a heart attack, heart failure, stroke, diabetes or high blood pressure later in life. She added that in pregnant women, low vitamin D levels were linked to pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Combing operation conducted

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

SP Ajay Kumar Singh on Tuesday conducted a combing operation in Durga hillocks under Chakgambheera police outpost under Chunar police station in order to strengthen communication between public and police for thwarting the nefarious designs of Naxals. During the



The possible hideouts of the suspects and directed the cops to continue collecting the feedback from the area which was very important for effective policing. He directed the cops to do regular patrolling not only on vehicles but on foot too. Ground-level information was a way to solve the problems, he added. During the combing operation the SP was accompanied by SHO Chunar, incharge of Chakgambheera police outpost and Kajarahat,

PRO to SP and heavy police force.

REVIEWED: ADG (Security) BK Singh reviewed preparations for the three-tier security at Vindhyachal temple on Monday evening. In the review meeting at Ashtabhuj guest house, the ADG interacted with the officers and received a feedback. He was apprised that under the proposed plan 750 security personnel were to be deployed under the supervision of one Deputy SP and one magistrate. After the completion of Vindhya Corridor work the area was to be divided into three zones — yellow, green and red. Moreover, close watch was to be kept through 110 CCTV cameras, watch towers and drone cameras. It was also apprised to the ADG that not only streets but ghats were also to be covered under security plan apart from temples located at Ashtabhuj and Kalikhoh. At these temples additional 80 CCTV cameras were to be installed. The meeting was attended by IG range Piyush Srivastava, DM Praveen Kumar Laxkar, SP Ajay Kumar Singh and other officials concerned. Besides, the ADG visited Vindhyavasini temple, performed rituals and inspected the spots regarding the security arrangements.

Kashipur-Kasganj unreserved exp to run from today

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration will for the convenience of passengers run 05335/05336 Kashipur-Kasganj-Kashipur, 05337/05338 Kasganj-Bareilly City-Kasganj, 05339/05340 Bareilly City-Pilibhit-Bareilly City, 05341/05342 Pilibhit-Tanakpur-Pilibhit and 05351/05352 Bareilly City-Kashipur-Bareilly City unreserved express special trains daily from March 4. The passengers travelling in them will have to comply with the Covid-19 prevention guidelines, CPRO PK Singh said.

KASHIPUR-KASGANJ EXP: The 05335 Kashipur-Kasganj unreserved express special will leave Kashipur at 05.40 hrs and after stopping at Sarkara, Bazpur, Beria Daulat, 06.25 hrs from Gulbarbhoj, Rudrapur Sidcul Halt, Lal Kuan Jn, Pantnagar, Kichha, Baheri, Richha Road, Deoranian, Atamanda, Bhojipura Jn, Dohna, Izzatnagar, Bareilly City, Bareilly Jn, Ramganga, Bamiana, Makrandpur, Kartauli, Ghatpuri, Mallannagar, Badaun, Sheikhpur, Ujhani, Bitroi, Kachla, Kachhla Bridge, Manpur Nagaria, Soron Shukar Kshetra, Gangagarh Halt and Kasganj City and will reach Kasganj at 12.40 hrs. On the return journey, 05336 Kasganj-Kashipur unreserved express will leave Kasganj at 13.40 hrs and after stopping at Kasganj City, Gangagarh Halt, Soron Shukar Kshetra, Manpur Nagaria, Kachhla Bridge, Kachhla, Bitroi, Ujhani, Sheikhpur, Badaun, Mallanagar, Ghatpuri, Kartauli, Makrandpur, Bamiana, Ramganga, Bareilly Jn, Bareilly City, Izzatnagar, Dohna, Bhojipura Jn, Atamanda, Deoranian, Richha Road, Baheri, Kichha, Pantnagar, Lal Kuan Jn, Gulpurbhoj, Beria Daulat, Bazpur, Sarkara and will reach Kashipur at 21.00 hrs.

KASGANJ-BAREILLY CITY EXP: The 05337 Kasganj-Bareilly City unreserved express will leave Kasganj at 10.20 hrs and after stopping at Kasganj City, Gangagarh Halt, Soron Shukar Kshetra, Manpur Nagaria, Kachhla Bridge, Kachhla, Bitroi, Ujhani, Sheikhpur, Badaun, Mallanagar, Ghatpuri, Kartauli, Makrandpur, Bamiana, Ramganga and Bareilly Jn and will reach Bareilly City at 13.50 hrs. In the return journey, 05338 Bareilly City-Kasganj

KGM-Moradabad unreserved exp from today

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The railway administration will for the convenience of passengers run the 05331/05332 Kathgodam (KGM)-Moradabad-Kathgodam, 05333/05334 Ramnagar-Moradabad-Ramnagar and 05353/05354 Moradabad-Kashipur-Moradabad unreserved express special trains daily from March 4. The passengers will have to comply with Covid-19 prevention guidelines, CPRO PK Singh said.

KGM-MORADABAD EXP SPL: The 05331 Kathgodam (KGM)-Moradabad unreserved express special train will leave Kathgodam at 08.15 hrs and after stopping at Haldwani, Lalkuan, Haldi Road, Rudrapur City, Bilaspur Road, Kemri Halt, Chamrua, Rampur, Mundha Pandey, Dalpatpur and reach Moradabad at 11.30 hrs. In the return journey, the 05332 Moradabad-Kathgodam unreserved express special will leave Moradabad at 14.45 hrs and after stopping at Dalpatpur, Mundha Pandey, Rampur, Chamrua, Kemri Halt, Bilaspur Road, Rudrapur City, Haldi Road, Lalkuan and Haldwani will reach Kathgodam at 18.00 hrs. A total of 10 coaches will be attached in it.

RAMMAGAR-MORADABAD EXP SPL: The 05333 Ramnagar (RMR)-Moradabad unreserved express special train will leave Ramnagar at 07.25 hrs and after stopping at Pirumadara, Gaushala, Kashipur, Aliganj, Padiya Nagla, Roshanpur, Jalpur, Pipalsana, Sehla, Got and reach Moradabad at 09.30 hrs. In the return journey, the 05334 Moradabad-Ramnagar unreserved express special train will leave Moradabad at 04.30 hrs and after stopping at Pipalsana, Roshanpur, Aliganj, Kashipur and Gaushala will reach Ramnagar at 06.45 hrs.

MORADABAD-KASHIPUR EXP SPL: The 05353 Moradabad-Kashipur unreserved express special train will leave Moradabad at 13.40 hrs and after stopping at Got, Sehla, Pipalsana, Jalpur, Roshanpur, Padiya Nagla and Aliganj will reach Kashipur at 15.15 hrs. In the return journey, the 05354 Kashipur-Moradabad unreserved express special train will leave Kashipur at 17.45 hrs and after stopping at Aliganj, Padiya Nagla, Roshanpur, Jalpur, Pipalsana, Sehla, Got and reach Moradabad at 19.30 hrs. A total of 10 coaches will be attached.

Besides the railway administration will run the 05343/05344 Kanpur Anwarganj-Farrukhabad-Kanpur Anwarganj, 05345/05346 Kasganj-Mathura-Kasganj, 05347/05348 Kasganj-Achnera-Kasganj, and 05349/05350 Kasganj-Farrukhabad-Kasganj unreserved express special trains daily from March 4.

KNP ANWARGANJ-FBD SPL: The 05343 Kanpur Anwarganj-Farrukhabad unreserved express special will leave Kanpur Anwarganj at 19.15 hrs and after stopping at Rawatpur, Kalyanpur, Mandhana Jn, Chaubeypur, Barrajpur, Uttripura, Dhaurasalar, Bilhaur, Bakothikhas halt,

unreserved express will depart from Bareilly City at 17.10 hrs and after stopping at Ramganga, Bamiana, Makrandpur, Kartauli, Ghatpuri, Mallannagar, Badaun, Sheikhpur, Ujhani, Bitroi, Kasganj, Kachhla, Kachhla Bridge, Manpur Nagaria, Soron Shukar Kshetra, Gangagarh Halt and Kasganj City and will reach Kasganj at 20.15 hrs. A total of 10 coaches, including eight of general category, will be attached in the train.

BAREILLY CITY-PILIBHIT EXP: The 05339 Bareilly City-Pilibhit unreserved express special will leave Bareilly City at 14.45 hrs and after stopping at Izzatnagar, Dohna, Bhojipura Jn, Dibrnagar, Saithal, Bijauria, Shahi and Lalauri Khera and reach Pilibhit at 16.35 hrs. In the return journey, the 05340 Pilibhit-Bareilly City unreserved express special will leave Pilibhit at 15.05 hrs and after stopping at Lalauri Khera, Shahi, Bijauria, Saithal, Dibrnagar, Bhojipura Jn, Bareilly City, Dohna and Izzatnagar will reach Bareilly City at 16.55 hrs.

PILIBHIT-TANAKPUR EXP: The 05341 Pilibhit-Tanakpur unreserved express special will leave Pilibhit at 07.15 hrs, and after stopping at Nyoriya Husenpur, Majhola Pakarya, Khatima, Chakarpur and Banbasa and will reach Tanakpur at 09.00 hrs. In the return journey, the 05342 Tanakpur-Pilibhit unreserved express special will leave Tanakpur at 12.50 hrs and after stopping at Banbasa, Chakarpur, Khatima, Majhola Pakarya and Nyoriya Husenpur will reach Pilibhit at 14.40 hrs.

BAREILLY CITY-KASHIPUR EXP: The 05351 Bareilly City-Kashipur unreserved express special will leave Bareilly City at 05.55 hrs and after stopping at Izzatnagar, Dohna, Bhojipura Jn, Atamanda, Deoranian, Richha Road, Baheri, Kichha, Pantnagar, Lal Kuan Jn, Rudrapur Sidcul Halt, Gulbarbhoj, Beria Daulat, Bazpur and Sarkara and will reach Kashipur at 09.40 hrs. In the return journey, the 05352 Kashipur-Bareilly City unreserved express special train will depart from Kashipur at 12.15 hrs and after stopping at Sarkara, Bazpur, Beria Daulat, Gulbarbhoj, Rudrapur Sikhhul Halt, Lal Kuan Jn, Pantnagar, Kichha, Baheri at 14.43 hrs., Richha Road, Deoranian, Atamanda, Bhojipura Jn, Dohna, Izzatnagar and will reach Bareilly City at 16.05 hrs.

Araul Makanpur, Gangawapur Halt, Manimau, Kannauj, Kannauj City, Jalalpur Panwara, Jasoda, Khudlapur, Gursahaiganj, Malikpur, Khudaganj, Singhirampur, Kamalganj, Yagutganj and Fatehgarh will reach Farrukhabad at 23.20 hrs. In the return journey the 05344 Farrukhabad-Kanpur Anwarganj unreserved express special will leave Farrukhabad at 05.25 hrs and after stopping at Fatehgarh, Yagutganj, Kamalganj, Singhirampur, Khudaganj, Malikpur, Gursahaiganj, Khudlapur, Jasoda, Jalalpur Panwara, Kannauj City, Kannauj, Manimau, Gangawapur Halt, Araul Makanpur, Bakothikhas Halt, Bilhaur, Dhaurasalar, Utaripura, Barrajpur, Chaubeypur, Mandhana Jn, Kalyanpur and Rawatpur will reach Kanpur Anwarganj at 09.40 hrs. A total of 10 coaches will be attached in it.

KASGANJ-MATHURA JN EXP SPL: The 05345 Kasganj-Mathura Junction (MTJ) unreserved express special train will leave Kasganj at 12.10 hrs and after stopping at Marahra, Agsauli, Sikandra Rao, Bastoi Halt, Rati Ka Nagla, Hathras Road, Mendu, Hathras City, Mursan, Sonai, Raya, Mathura Cantt and will arrive at Mathura Jn at 15.05 hrs. In the return journey 05346 Mathura-Kasganj unreserved express special will leave Mathura Jn at 21.00 hrs and after stopping at Mathura Cantt, Hathras City, Hathras Road, Sikandra Rao, Marahra and reach Kasganj at 23.30 hrs. A total of 10 coaches will be attached in it.

KASGANJ-ACHHNERA SPL: The 05347 Kasganj-Achnhnera unreserved express special will leave Kasganj at 05.15 hrs and after stopping at Marahra, Agsauli, Sikandra Rao, Bastoi Halt, Rati ka Nagla, Hathras Road, Mendu, Hathras City, Mursan, Sonai, Raya, Mathura Cantt, Mathura Jn, Bhainsa, Parkham and Kheda Sandhan will reach Achhnera at 09.20 hrs. In the return journey, 05348 Achhnera-Kasganj unreserved express special will leave Achhnera at 10.25 hrs and after stopping at Kheda Sandhan, Parkham, Bhainsa, Mathura Jn, Mathura Cantt, Raya, Sonai, Mursan, Hathras City, Mendu, Hathras Road, Rati Ka Nagla, Bastoi Halt, Sikandra Rao, Agsauli and Marahra will reach Kasganj at 14.15 hrs.

KASGANJ-FBD SPL: The 05349 Kasganj-Farrukhabad unreserved express special will leave Kasganj at 17:35 hrs and after stopping at Badhari Kalan, Sahawar Town, Garhka, Ganj Dundwara, Patiali, Narthar, Daryao Ganj, Ballapur, Rudain, Kampli Road, Kaimganj, Bhataasa, Shamsabad, Shukarullahpur, Harsinghpur Goba and will reach Farrukhabad at 20.30 hrs. In the return journey, 05350 Farrukhabad-Kasganj unreserved express special will leave Farrukhabad at 04.50 hrs and after stopping at Harsinghpur Goba, Shukarullapur, Shamsabad, Bhataasa, Kaimganj, Kampli Road, Rudian, Ballapur, Daryao Ganj, Narthar, Patiali, Ganj Dundwara, Garhka, Sahawar Town and Badhari Kalan reach Kasganj at 07.50 hrs. A total of 10 coaches will be attached in it.

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

IAN S ■ MUMBAI

In a shocker, girls in a Jalgaon hostel were allegedly forced to strip naked and dance before some police personnel, the Maharashtra legislature was informed here on Wednesday. Taking cognizance of the issue raised by the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Maha Vikas Aghadi govern-

ment announced a time-bound probe into the incident.

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

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

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

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

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

Minister for Women & Child Development (Mrs)

Yashomati Thakur said that all the evidence would be collected and probed and those found guilty would not be spared. The incident allegedly took place on March 1 at the government-run Ashadeep Women’s Hostel in Ganeshnagar area of Jalgaon and a video of the dance party went viral.

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

According to the complaint, some local police personnel and others reportedly entered the hostel premises to ‘investigate’ certain things and coerced the women inmates to undress and dance before them. When the girls refused to do so, they were threatened with dire consequences like murder. The inmates later narrated their plight from the hostel windows.

Fadnavis pointed out that it was not merely some news report, but even videos of the incident have surfaced, even as his senior colleague and ex-minister Sudhir Mungantiwar slammed the government.

The government panel comprises Assistant Collector Trupti Dhodmise, mental health expert Kanchan Patil, policewoman Kanchan Kale and another official Kanchan Chavan.

IAS Officers’ Association condoles demise of former Bihar Chief Secretary KAH Subramaniam

PNS ■ PATNA

The IAS Officers’ Association, Bihar Branch on Wednesday condoled the demise of former Bihar Chief Secretary KAH Subramaniam. The 1968 batch IAS of Bihar cadre breathed his last at his home town Madurai following which the Bihar IAS association placed on record its deep appreciation of the services rendered by Subramaniam.

Among numerous important assignments, which Subramaniam held during his long career, were serving as District Magistrate of Patna and Gaya; Commissioner and Secretary, Urban development; Commissioner and secretary, Rural Development; Agriculture Production

Commissioner; Chairman, Bihar State Electricity Board.

“His colleagues shall always remember him not only for his administrative acumen, clear thinking and quick decision making ability but also for his humane side. Colleagues remember how he used to share humorous anecdotes and used to keep the atmosphere cordial even during tense situations. A stadium in Gaya is named after him. One of his unique habits, always remembered by his colleagues, was use of purple ink,” said the condolence message released on behalf of the association by Dipak Kumar Singh, Secretary, IAS Officers’ Association, Bihar Branch. A copy of the condolence message has been sent to the family of Subramaniam.

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

Patna: A final year student of Nalanda Medical College and Hospital (NMCH) in Patna died due to Covid 19, an official said. Subhendu Shekher, 23, as a native of Dahia village in Begusarai district and was pursuing MBBS course from NMCH. He had complained of cough and cold on February 24 and underwent a RTPCR test on the same day and was found Corona positive. The next day, he went to his native village in Begusarai and underwent home isolation before dying on March 1. Shockingly, the deceased had taken the first jab of vaccination in the first week of February. Dr Heera Lal Mahto, the principal of NMCH confirmed the incident. “We have directed other doctors to undergo home isolation. All doctors who are in contact with Subhendu, underwent Covid 19 test and 9 of them are tested Corona positive.” “We have initiated sanitisation in old and new hospitals in NMCH. At present, examination is underway in the college. We have allowed doctors if they want to leave the examination,” Mahto said.

IAN S

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

INTRODUCTION OF 25KV AC TRACTION “WARNING TO ROAD USERS”

It is notified for the information of the Public that in connection with introduction of 25KV AC Electric Traction over the Mau Jn. (excl.)-Shahganj Jn. (excl.) section of North Eastern Railway, height gauges have been erected at all the level crossings with clear maximum height 4.78m above road level with a view to prevent loads of excessive height from coming into contact or dangerous proximity to live traction wires (Contact wire), which shall be at a height of minimum 5.5m above the rail level at level crossings. Public are hereby notified to observe the height specified above for the purpose of loading vehicles and to see that the loads carried in road vehicles do not infringe the height gauges under any circumstances. The dangers of a load of excessive height are as follows:- (i) Danger to the height gauge and consequent obstruction to the road as well as the Railway line. (ii) Danger to the materials of equipment carried of the vehicle itself. (iii) Danger of fire and risk of life due to contact with or dangerous proximity to the conductors.

Chief Electrical Engineer/CON, CPOROEL-103 Gorakhpur
About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955

Do Not Smoke Bidi/Cigarette in train

Important clues found in teen murder case

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

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

SSP Muniraj ji reached the spot and all the five teams involved in the investigation were also present there. During this time, the police, considering the site as the center, searched every single piece of the field in its 500 meter radius and worked on the evidence there.

PNS

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

The leader said on condition of anonymity that one cannot rule out the possibilities of the Congress parting ways with the DMK. “For us self-respect is important than a few seats. We know well that the DMK is out to throttle us,” said the leader. He disclosed

that Rahul Gandhi MP, who campaigned in southern Tamil Nadu for the last three-days returned to Delhi disappointed with the approach of the DMK.

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

Rahul Gandhi drew unprecedented crowd during his three-day visit to southern Tamil Nadu which concluded late Monday evening at Kanyakumari. Thousands participated in all the public meet-

ings he addressed in these districts. “What stood out this time was his mingling with the common man and this prompted more and more people to gather in all the venues,” said a security professional who had accompanied the leader in his campaign trip.

“We did not organise any crowd for Rahul Gandhi. The crowd turn out in all these places were spontaneous. It was a morale booster to the Congress cadre in the State. We ourselves were surprised with the ease with which he communicated and exchanged ideas with grassroot level workers and cadre. If the party could sustain this tempo, I am sure we will register impressive wins,” said C D Meyyapan, AICC secretary who accompanied Rahul Gandhi in his tour.

There is general agreement that the crowd turn-out

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

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

Wednesday saw V Ponraj, former technical assistant to

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

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

Mamata may file nomination from Nandigram on Mar 11

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

Come March 11, the Bengal Chief Minister is likely to return to file her nomination from the Nandigram Assembly seat. And according to inside reports she will face none other than her once blue-eyed boy and former Bengal Minister Suwendu Adhikari who left the TMC last November to join the BJP. The TMC sources said the Chief Minister would file her nomination for the Nandigram seat either at Haldia or Tamuk. Nandigram in East Midnapore will go to polls in the second phase.

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

The Chief Minister had

during a mass rally at Nandigram offered to contest from the seat saying “Nandigram has always been lucky for me ... it gave me overwhelming support in my land movement ... and so I will like to contest this time from this seat. For me Nandigram and Bhawanipore are like two sisters.” Apart from being a son of a former Union Minister and TMC MP Sisir Adhikari, Suwendu is the elder brother Dibyendu Adhikari also an MP.Suwendu Adhikari had openly dared Banerjee to contest from the seat and face defeat. “I challenge Didi to fight from Nandigram ... Of my party gives me a ticket from this seat I will take her on ... even if someone else contests from here I vouch for that possible BJP candidate that if I cannot defeat the Chief Minister by at least half-a-lakh votes then I will leave politics,” Adhikari said.

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

with the Left Front and the Congress may queer the pitch for her.

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

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

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

Former TMC MLA, and Asansol Mayor Jitendra Tiwari who on Tuesday joined the BJP will also be fielded from his old constituency Pandaveshwar, sources said. The central election committee of BJP is likely to finalise its candidate list for the first phase on March 5, sources said adding each district committee has been asked to send 4-5 probable names for the purpose.



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

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

Panaji : Goa’s only major port, the Mormugao Port Trust, operg the State. Speaking virtually at the Maritime India Summit 2021, Chairman of the Trust E. Ramesh Kumar said that the ferry service would connect several beach destinations in the coastal states, both in North Goa and South Goa districts.

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

“With a dedicated colour-coded ferry service, we are also contemplating to receive

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

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

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

IAN S

J&K clocks 104 fresh Covid cases

Jammu: J&K on Wednesday reported 104 new Covid-19 cases, even as 49 were discharged after recovery, health officials said. The Union Territory has recorded zero death in the last 24 hours.

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

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

IAN S

TMC wants PM posters removed

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

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

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

Owner throws lavish party on horse’s birthday, cuts 50-pound cake

IAN S ■ ARRAYSAHARSA (BIHAR)

Usually one is invited for the birthday party of a child or an adult, but in a unique case a man from Bihar’s Saharsa district celebrated his horse’s birthday by throwing a lavish party. He also cut a 50-pound cake and invited a large number of people for a delicious meal. Rajneesh Kumar alias Golu Yadav, a resident of Panchwati Chowk in Saharsa district, celebrated his horse Chetak’s second birthday on Monday evening.

Golu loves Chetak like his own child. On Monday morning, Chetak was given a bath and was decked up for his birthday celebration in the evening. Golu Yadav said Chetak is like a member of his family and refused to call him an animal. He said that Chetak’s first birthday was also celebrated in a similar fashion.

The cake was placed in front of Chetak. There was also a picture of him on the cake as well as his name. Afterwards, the cake was cut by Golu and firecrackers were burst. A large number of people living near Golu’s house attended the celebration. Golu says that he has

not celebrated his own birthday till date but celebrates Chetak’s birthday every year. He said he had brought Chetak to his home at the tender age of six months and initially reared him on milk. Golu confessed, “I have brought up Chetak like my own child. I have given him more love than my own children.”

Golu says that both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes were served at this party. Expressing unhappiness over violence against animals, Golu says that today the animals are more loyal than human beings. Golu Yadav appealed to the people that they should never consider an animal as only an animal but should treat it as a member of their family. He gave a message to the people to love animals.

Golu’s love for his horse has been the talk of the town. People say that Golu is a role model not only for Saharsa but for the whole of Bihar.

Golu Yadav celebrates birthday of his horse Chetak, cut cake, the party.Golu Yadav celebrates birthday of his horse Chetak, cut cake, the party.Golu Yadav celebrates birthday of his horse Chetak, cut cake, the party.

म.प्र. मध्य क्षेत्र विद्युत वितरण कंपनी लिमिटेड
कार्यालय महारबन्धक (सं./सं.), शिवपुरी वृत्त
क्र./महा.प्र./सं.सं./क्रय/शिव./2020-21/7421 शिवपुरी, दिनांक : 02.03.2021

संशोधन आदेश

इस कार्यालय के ई-निविदा क्रमांक NIT/03/7200 शिवपुरी दिनांक 18.02.2021 एवं टेण्डर आईडी क्रमांक 2021_MKVCV_130388_1 (Outsourcing of Manpower required for Miscellaneous Works in O&M, Circle Shivpuri under the Jurisdiction of MP/MKVVCL, Bhopal) में निम्नानुसार आंशिक संशोधन किया जाता है। टेण्डर फीस वृत्ति Exemption Allowed किया गया था जिसके स्थान पर टेण्डर फीस राशि रु. 2000/- जीएसटी राशि रु. 360/- कुल राशि रु. 2360/- का डिमाण्ड ड्राफ्ट A.O.(A.U.) MPMKVCL Shivpuri के नाम अनिवार्य रूप से जमा कराना होगा। ई-निविदा की शेष शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।
म.प्र. माध्यम/100141/2021 महारबन्धक (सं.सं.)

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, निर्माण इकाई-14,
यू पी प्रोजेक्ट्स कारपोरेशन लि
(उप प्रो सरकार का उपक्रम)
CIN : U150UP1976SGC004285
3/79, विशाल खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ-226010
पत्रांक-1286/पीसीओएल/परिपत्र-14/ दिनांक : 03.03.2021

ई-निविदा सूचना

एतद्वारा इस इकाई के अन्तर्गत जगपद रायबरेली में पशुचिकित्सालय के भवन निर्माण कार्य हेतु निविदा सूचना संख्या- 28/यूपीपीसीओएल/परिपत्र-14/2020-21 दिनांक 02.03.2021 द्वारा ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से प्रतियोगिता के आधार पर ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। उक्त कार्य की बिड दिनांक 04.03.2021 से दिनांक 10.03.2021 अपरान्ह 3:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन समिति की जा सकती है तथा उसी दिन अपरान्ह 4:00 बजे अपोहस्ताक्षरी के कार्यालय में खोली जायेगी। निविदा से सम्बंधित आवश्यक सूचना, निविदा प्रश्न, निविदा शर्तें एवं ऑनलाइन निविदा अपलोड किये जाने व डाउनलोड किये जाने की लिंकि आदि का समस्त विवरण www.upprojects.org एवं <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध है। परिशोधन प्रबन्धक

कानपुर विद्युत आपूर्ति कम्पनी लिमिटेड 14/71,
सानिल लाइन्स 'केसा हाउस' कारपुर, ई-निविदा सूचना

अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा ई-निविदा पृथक्-पृथक् दो भागों में निम्न साम. ग्रियों हेतु केस्को ई-निविदा वेबसाइट www.kesco.co.in/https://etender.up.nic.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। ई-निविदाएं प्रपत्र पूर्ण कर निविदादाताओं द्वारा वेबसाइट पर खुलने की तिथि के अपरान्ह 12:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। उक्त ई-निविदा उसी दिन 15:00 बजे से 17:00 बजे तक वेबसाइट पर सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। उक्त लिंकि को अवकाश घोषित होने पर निविदाएं अगले कार्यदिन से नियत समय पर खोली जायेगी। ई-निविदा घनराशि का भुगतान ऑन लाईन एनईआरएफओ/आरओटीओएस (खाता सं 628805018266 आईओएफओएसओ-कोड ICIC0006288) के माध्यम से किया जायेगा। ई-निविदा प्रपत्र निविदा खुलने की तिथि पर दिये गये समय से दो घण्टे पूर्व तक वेबसाइट से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रपत्रों के साथ यूटीओआर की स्कैन प्रति अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरोहर घनराशि का भुगतान ऑन लाईन एनईआरएफओ/आरओटीओएस (बीजीओ (खाता सं 628805018266 आईओएफओएसओ-कोड-ICIC0006288) के द्वारा स्वीकार किया जायेगा एवं निविदा प्रपत्र के प्रथम भाग में निर्धारित पीओयूआर एवं तकनीकी अभिलेख होंगे तथा निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में दरें एवं व्यवसायिक शर्तें होंगी, बिना धरोहर घनराशि के तथा सराई निविदाएं खोली/स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी। निविदा सं 16/20-21 पात्र फर्म मूल निर्माता/अधिकृत विक्रेता/अनुमदी ठेकेदार विवरण विभिन्न प्रकार के डीपीओसीओ कॉपर एवं एल्युमिनियम वायर की आपूर्ति हेतु। धरोहर घनराशि (रु) 70000/- निविदा घनराशि (रु) में (जीएसटीओ के साथ) 3540/- ई-निविदा अपलोड करने एवं खोलने की तिथि 24.03.2021 उपरोक्त ई-निविदा की पूर्ण प्रक्रिया केस्को की ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाइट www.kesco.co.in/https://etender.up.nic.in के माध्यम से की जायेगी। तकनीकी योग्यता पूरा न करने वाले निविदादाता के निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। सामग्री क्रय की मात्रा घट बढ़ सकती है। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के पास बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी एक अथवा समस्त निविदाओं को स्वीकृत/अस्वीकृत करने का पूर्ण अधिकार सुरक्षित होगा। (ललित कृष्ण) अधिशासी अभियन्ता (भण्डार क्रय) पत्रांक- 804 दिनांक 3.3.2021 राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये

MILITARY COMMANDERS' MEET

In a first, jawans to share views with PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



Academy(IMA), Dehradun.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

BJP VICTORY IN GUJ LOCAL POLLS

Voters' confidence rising each year: Javadekar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

"The BJP won all 31 Zila Parishads and Congress drew a zero.

"Out of the 879 seats, the BJP which had last time won 368 has now won 800 seats," said Javadekar pointing to massive surge in numbers.

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

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

In the municipalities, the BJP won



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

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

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

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

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

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



A Chin refugee from Myanmar tries to tear apart Chinese flag during a protest against military coup in Myanmar in New Delhi on Wednesday

ECI organises briefing meeting for poll observers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The meeting was a virtual cum physical gathering which saw the participation of more than 1650 General, Police and Expenditure Observers joining virtually from 120 locations across the country. Officers from IAS,

IPS, IRS and other Central Services have been included to be deployed as General, Police and Expenditure Observers.

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

CBI arrests J&K Govt official in bribe case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

PM only.

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

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

All private hospitals can give Covid shots with riders: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Congress leaders target UP Govt over law and order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

ED takes possession of accused Brajesh Thakur's property worth ₹1.45 crore



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Patna, took possession of immovable property worth ₹1.45 crore, situated at New Delhi, in connection with a money laundering case relating to NGO Sewa Sankalp Ewam Vikas Samiti and its sister NGOs, embroiled in the physical and sexual abuse of women inmates. .

The ED had initiated investigation on the basis of two FIRs registered by Mahila Police Station, Muzaffarpur, and one FIR lodged by CBI, SCB, Patna against Brajesh Thakur and others for misappropriating the funds/ grant-in-aid received from Government and other agencies in the name of NGO Sewa Sankalp Ewam Vikas Samiti and its sister NGOs.

Thakur was the de facto owner and he in connivance with others misappropriated the fund/ grant-in-aid to the tune of ₹7.57 crore and invested the same in his own name as well as in the name of his family members including Kumari Asha, Rahul

Anand, Manorama Devi and others for acquiring huge movable and immovable properties including payment of fees for his younger son Mehul Anand's medical education.

"During money laundering investigation, it was revealed that the girls' shelter home in Muzaffarpur run by NGO Sewa Sankalp Ewam Vikas Samiti was found to be running in a highly questionable manner and several girls reported about violence and being abused sexually. Thakur and others diverted/siphoned off the funds/grants-in-aid received for the welfare of girl children and others and used the funds for his personal gain by acquiring huge movable and immovable properties in his name and in the name of his family members," the ED said in a statement.

Earlier, two provisional attachment orders were issued on March 13, 2019 and August 7, 2020 whereby properties worth ₹7.3 crore and ₹1.47 crore respectively were provisionally attached and the same were confirmed by the PMLA Adjudicating Authority.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

"Gumnam of Congress too care about democracy", Khurshid said in the letter.

The senior Congress leader said the growing dark footprint of communal forces has pushed the party into "forced errors" of becoming self conscious.

"As a result we shy away from speaking about minorities and put on a public display of identifying with the cultural symbols of the majority that have largely been appropriated by the BJP. We have been forced to accept 'mistakes' made by our heroes because public mood appears to require it. Obviously this calls for careful balancing of reality and perception, strategy and ideology," he noted.

FIRST COLUMN

THE CROWN PRINCE OF AMATEURS

MBS is frightening but a Saudi leader that the US President won't even talk to does not have a great future



GWYNNE DYER

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



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

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

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

India badly needs a uniform law on bail

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

Therefore, a solution lies in

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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

A move towards self-reliance in the education system

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

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

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



SUDHIR HINDWAN

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

system to ensure that only talent gets selected.

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

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

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



international, inter-dependence and global change.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Employment falls further, says survey

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

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index rose from 52.8 in January to 55.3 in February, pointing to the sharpest rate of expansion in output in a year amid improved demand and more favourable market conditions.

The index was above the critical 50 mark that separates growth from contraction for the fifth month in a row during February as the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines led to an improvement in business confidence towards growth

prospects.

While, new work intakes expanded for the fifth straight month, panellists continued to indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions curbed international demand for their services.

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

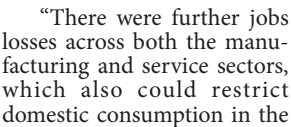
Meanwhile, Indian private sector output rose at the quickest pace in four months during February. The Composite PMI Output Index, which measures combined services and manufacturing output, increased from 55.8 in January to 57.3 in February.

“Economic activity is generally expected to recover in the final quarter of fiscal year 2020/21 after coming out of technical recession in Q3, and

the latest improvement in the PMI indicators points to a strong expansion in the fourth quarter, should growth momentum be sustained in March," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit.

On the domestic macro-economic front, after contracting for two quarters in a row, the Indian economy recorded a 0.4 per cent growth in the October-December quarter, mainly due to a good show by farm, manufacturing, services and construction sectors.

The IHS Markit India Services PMI further noted that despite ongoing growth of total new business, service sector employment fell further during February and a number of companies suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic restricted labour supply.



coming months. However, with capacity pressures mounting, business sentiment strengthening and the vaccination programme widening, it seems

IEA chief backs India on coal, says no exit without financial support

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lending his weight to India's stand on coal as an energy source, International Energy Agency (IEA) chief Fatih Birol on Wednesday said it won't be fair to ask developing nations to stop using coal without giving international financial assistance to make up for the economic challenge from such a move. Developing nations like India depend on coal for 60 per cent of their energy, and coal and associated sectors are major employment generators, he said at the Energy Horizons Leadership Dialogue organised by Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Continuing their winning run for the third session in a row, the BSE Sensex surged nearly 1,148 points to breach the 51,000-level and the NSE Nifty recaptured the 15,200-mark on Wednesday, propped up by intense buying in financial and energy stocks.


At the closing bell, the 30-

share Sensex was up 1,147.76 points or 2.28 per cent at 51,444.65 — the biggest single-day rise since February 2. Intraday, the index swung 1,243 points. Likewise, the NSE Nifty climbed 326.50 points or 2.19 per cent to end at 15,245.60 with 43 of its constituents closing in the green. Over the last three sessions, the Sensex has risen by 2,344.66 points or

4.77 per cent while the Nifty has added 716.45 points or 4.93 per cent. The Sensex rally was driven by Bajaj FinServ, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, HDFC and Axis Bank. Of the 30 Sensex constituents, 27 closed in the green. Bajaj Finserv rose the most by 5.15 per cent. Reliance Industries rose by 4.52 per cent a day after its tele-

com arm emerged as lead buyer in spectrum auctions. Reliance Jio picked up 488.35 MHz of spectrum in bands such as 800 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2300 MHz for ₹57,122.65 crore. Analysts said strengthening of spectrum footprints by Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio in the auctions is expected to yield market share gains for the two telcos.

2700	2863.25	2700	2791.05
918.95	944	895.1	923.25
96.55	100.4	96.55	99.8
458	472.5	455.85	462.2
1935	1985	1935	1977.3
767.8	800	761.1	768.9
3707.35	3710	3643.65	3662.55
14877.95	14945	14143.9	14333.85
179.05	182.1	170.45	175.85
142	142.85	140.2	141.25
282	284	279.1	281
328	331.35	321.35	326.65
2258.65	2340.8	2243.2	2302.7
472.45	478.9	466.6	467.4
2110	2121	2081	2092.95
555.8	573.45	555.8	558.8
617	617	590	601.75
251	251	247.05	247.8
4099	4150	4051	4115.1
31.35	31.5	30.65	30.75
297.25	308	297.25	301.4
283.5	294.5	283.5	288.35
6622.35	6679	6600	6649.05
816.6	835.4	816.6	828.3
98.15	101.85	97	99.2
1400	1421.55	1351	1374.25
2759	2799.05	270.4	274.85
1216	1244.45	1214.35	1222.75
295	295	284.55	286.35
7050	7050	1943.05	1964.6
465.9	472	474.75	752.55
465.9	771	460.05	461.85
603.6	605	585.65	598
611.6	613.8	601.25	610.9
6828.65	6840	6748.6	6802.15



	73.47 (+1.04 p)	73.55 (-8p)	73.37 (+18p)
5	26	1	2
PHICS	Inverted Scale		MAR
	2377.4	2391	2365
	5203.95	5235.95	5194.65
	487.9	490	476.5
	1420.4	1433.65	1387.8
	436	436	424.05
	120.6	120.75	118
	1171.5	1207.75	1136
	89.5	89.9	87.6
	7.88	8	7.88
	530.15	530.15	513
	590.6	592.6	587.05
	6486.8	6536	6427.3
	191.2	1936.8	1901.2
	918	954.1	900.05
	299	299	294.5
	4681.5	4729.7	4630.1
	400	402.3	397.3
	496	504.6	491
	1911.55	1926.25	1890.2
	2609.85	2630	2592.05
	186.65	189.65	184
	925	925	908.6
	145	145.6	142.8
	87	88.35	86.1
	731.55	755.05	731.55
	1930	1951.85	1902.85
	434	435	423.8
	728.75	732.55	718.85
	3438.3	3465	3421.75
	112.5	112.5	109.4
	329.1	331.8	323.8
	5999.6	6201	5950.2
	1339.05	1352	1325.3
	983	983	952
	230.45	231	228.9
	5599.55	5622.15	5575
	327.05	330.95	322.9
	178	182.7	174.25
	1274	1301	1274
	2046	2050.25	2013.95
	241.75	241.75	231.6
	1572	1591	1549.8
	231.9	234.2	228.7
	100.15	104.7	100.15
	294.6	295.95	291.1
	1911.75	1911.95	1895
	1212.05	1214.8	1185.9

Trump’s cash plea could complicate GOP fundraising

AP ■ ORLANDO

Trump needs you,” one fundraising email implored.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

Biden health pick taking heat for support of abortion rights

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

US forces: Rockets hit airbase in Iraq hosting US troops

AP ■ BAGHDAD

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

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

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

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

Myanmar security forces kill at least 6 protesters



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

AP ■ YANGON

Myanmar security forces shot and killed at least six people on Wednesday, according to accounts on social media and local news reports, as authorities extend their lethal crackdown on protests against last month’s coup. Multiple reports from several cities and towns, difficult to independently confirm, said police used live ammunition as well as tear gas and rubber bullets to violently disperse protesters.

In Myingyan in central Myanmar, multiple social media posts reported the shooting death of a 14-year-old

boy. A second death was reported later.

At least four other deaths were reported elsewhere.

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

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

Myanmar authorities charge Associated Press journalist

AP ■ YANGON

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

The six were arrested while covering protests against the February 1 military coup in Myanmar that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The group includes journalists for Myanmar Now, Myanmar Photo Agency, 7Day News, Zee Kwet online news and a freelancer. Lawyer Tin Zar Oo, who represents Thein Zaw, said the six have been charged under a law that punishes anyone who causes fear among the public, knowingly spreads false news, or agitates directly or indirectly for a criminal offense against a government employee.

The law was amended by the junta last month to broaden its scope and increase the maximum prison term from two years. AP’s Thein Zaw, 32, was taken into custody on Saturday morning in Yangon, the coun-

try’s largest city. He is reported to be held in Insein Prison in northern Yangon, notorious for housing political prisoners under previous military regimes.

According to the lawyer, Thein Zaw was remanded into custody by a court and can be held until March 12 without another hearing or further action. The AP has called for his immediate release.

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

The Committee to Protect Journalists joined that call.

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

Kuwait swears in new Govt amid mounting crises

AP ■ DUBAI

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

Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al Hamad Al Sabah swapped out four ministers whose selections had angered various lawmakers for less contentious, veteran politicians, an apparent gesture to appease parliament. The worsening rift between Kuwait’s emir-appointed government and elected parliament presents the first significant challenge to Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who ascended the throne last fall.

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

Yemen’s rebels say latest US sanctions will prolong war

AP ■ CAIRO

Yemen’s Iran-backed rebels on Wednesday warned that the U.S. Sanctions imposed the previous day on two of their military leaders would only prolong the conflict in the improvised Arab country.

President Joe Biden’s administration slapped sanctions on Tuesday on two Houthi leaders, citing their alleged roles in cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia and shipping vessels in the Red Sea.

Rebel leaders Monsour al-Saadi and Ahmed al-Hamzi were responsible for attacks “impacting Yemeni civilians, bordering nations, and commercial vessels in international waters,” the departments of State and Treasury said.

They said the Houthis play “a significant role in the conflict in Yemen and exacerbate the dire humanitarian plight of the Yemeni people.”

Mohammed Abdul-Salam, a spokesman for the Houthis, said the sanctions have shown the U.S. “does not attempt to stop the aggression and lift the siege on Yemen.”

The sanctions have also shown that the U.S. “is responsible for prolonging the war and worsening the humanitarian crisis,” according to al-Saadi.

Al-Saadi heads the Houthis’ naval forces and masterminded attacks on ships in the Red Sea, while al-Hamzi supervised missile and explosive-laden drone attacks in Yemen and on Saudi Arabia, the Treasury Department alleged.

The sanctions came some weeks after the Biden administration removed the Houthis from a broader terrorism blacklist in a bid to ease civilian suffering in the country.

However, since the reversal of that designation, which was made in the waning days of former President Donald Trump’s administration, the Houthis have stepped up attacks in Yemen and on Saudi Arabia, mainly with ballistic missiles and explosive-laden drones. Yemen’s war started in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of the country’s north.

Ambedkar International Centre moves California court to join caste discrimination case

WASHINGTON: The Ambedkar International Centre (AIC), a US-based organization fighting against caste discrimination on Tuesday approached the California Supreme Court to be admitted as an amicus curiae in a case that involves caste discrimination in the workplace.

Amicus curiae, literally meaning “friend of the court”, is a person or organization who is not party to the litigation at hand, but is allowed to advise the court on a point of law or fact directly concerning the lawsuit.

The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) vs Cisco Systems Inc, Sundar Iyer and Ramana Kompella case of caste discrimination in the workplace is scheduled for hearing on March 9.

California regulators last year sued Cisco Systems, saying an engineer faced discrimination at the company’s Silicon Valley headquarters because he is a Dalit Indian.

The State of California alleges that a major tech-industry employer violated civil rights laws by discriminating against a worker of Indian-origin because he was born into a lower caste. PTI

FROM PAGE 1

COVAXIN EFFICACY 81%: BIOTECH

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

Bharat Biotech said more than 40 countries globally have expressed their interest in Covaxin.

Covaxin and Covishield, both vaccines were cleared by the DCGI in early January, at a time when late-stage trial data for Covaxin was not available; it was cleared on the basis of Phase 1 and 2 data that confirmed its “safety and immunogenicity”.

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

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

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

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

SSB TO RAISE 12 MORE BATTALIONS

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

roles in the hinterland.

The Ministry, however, approved creation of only one sector headquarters and 12 battalions in phases, they said, adding the new sector formation will be created in the National Capital Region (NCR).

A battalion comprises over 1,000 personnel.

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

IT RAIDS KASHYAP, TAAPSEE’S ASSETS, QUESTIONS 2 LATER

Kashyap had also raised his voice against the Citizenship Act. Last year, Kashyap extended his support to actress Rhea Chakraborty in the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case. So much so that Taapsee had hit out at the Government for the manner in which it was running down international pop star Rihanna’s tweet drawing attention to the farmers’ agitation. Taking to twitter, the actress had said: “If one tweet rattles your unity, one joke rattles your faith or one show rattles your religious belief then it’s you who has to work on strengthening your value system not become ‘propaganda teacher’ for others”.

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

Govt is chasing social activists, journalists & artists to threaten them against calling spade a spade”.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Minister Nawab Malik slammed the Modi Government saying the way in which raids were conducted in the homes and offices

of Anurag Kashyap and Taapsee Pannu was definitely misuse of its agencies against those who take a stand against the Government or its policies. “Anurag Kashyap and Taapsee Pannu have raised their voice against the Modi Government’s policies. This action is an attempt to suppress their voices,” Malik said.

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

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

CM: UP NO MORE A ‘BIMARU’ STATE

their income. He said irrigation projects pending for several decades were completed by his government and it would bring down the input cost of the farmers, thus adding to their incomes.

The chief minister said during the last four years, the state government had ensured payment of over Rs 1.25 lakh crore to the sugarcane farmers and for the current cane crushing (2020-21) season, Rs 10,757 crore, or 52 per cent, cane price had been paid to the farmers.

Rebutting the charges of the opposition, the chief minister said during the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party rules, over two dozen sugar mills were either closed or sold off to the private sector while his government had reopened several closed sugar mills.

“What kind of criticism is this? We revived the closed mills and ensured the operation of 119 sugar mills at the peak of coronavirus pandemic in April-May 2020 yet we are dubbed as anti-farmer while those who closed the sold the mills are being claimed to be the messiah of farmers,” the chief minister said, adding that the opposition was lev-

elling baseless charges as they had no agenda for development and they were speechless when facts were placed in the public domain.

KARNATAKA MIN QUILTS CABINET ON CHARGE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Though I’m confident about my innocence, taking moral responsibility, I’m resigning from my position as the cabinet Minister. I request you to accept it,” he said.

Social activist Dinesh Kallahalli had on Tuesday lodged a police complaint against Ramesh, alleging he had sexually harassed a ‘job aspirant’ and threatened the woman and her family with dire consequences. Dubbing it as ‘sex for job’ scandal, purported video clips showing Ramesh Jarkiholi getting intimate with an unidentified woman was widely aired by Kannada news channels.

According to sources, Jarkiholi tendered his resignation on the directions from the party high command. BJP National General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Arun Singh and party national General Secretary (organisation) B L Santosh reportedly held discussions on the charges and CD this morning and communicated the party’s decision to the state leadership, keeping in mind the assembly polls in five states and also bypolls and panchayat elections in Karnataka.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa then called party MLA from Arabhavi, Balachandra Jarkiholi, who is Ramesh’s brother and informed him of the decision.

Reacting to the charges, Ramesh on Tuesday night had said he was shocked and the videos were “100 per cent fake.” He had also sought a probe, while asserting that he would quit as Minister and also from politics if proven wrong.

Balachandra Jarkiholi had said after meeting the CM in the morning that there was no need for

Ramesh to resign if he has not done anything wrong and a thorough probe has to be done, either by the CBI or CID, to find out the truth behind the allegation and the CD, also those behind it.

Terming it as an attempt to defame the family as they have made it big in politics, Balachandra also threatened to file a Rs 100 crore defamation suit against those who released the “fake CD”.

According to sources, Yediyurappa reportedly assured Jarkiholi that he would be inducted to the Cabinet again if he was cleared of the charges levelled against him.

There were also reports he was promised that Balachandra Jarkiholi would be inducted in his place.

However, clarifying that there were no conditions put before the resignation was tendered, Balachandra Jarkiholi said the CM sent the resignation to the Governor, a probe would take place and Ramesh would come out innocent.

Asked if he had been assured of a ministerial berth, he said, “no nothing like that... Let’s see later. The allegation, just ahead of the Budget session of the state legislature starting from Thursday has come as a huge embarrassment to the B S Yediyurappa-led BJP government.

The opposition Congress and JD(S) also demanded his immediate resignation and both parties staged demonstrations on Wednesday at various places, including Belagavi, which is Jarkiholi’s home district. Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah had earlier in the day said, “If that party (BJP) has an iota of shame and if they respect human values, they have to seek his resignation immediately.

This is national news. If the government has shame, it has to take his resignation and FIR has to be registered immediately.” Police had said necessary action would be taken after obtaining more details and that they would also question the woman.

Asked about the probe, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said on Wednesday that police, based on

whatever complaint has been given, are conducting inquiries as per law.

Meanwhile, Police said they have summoned Kallahalli to appear before them on Thursday as part of the investigation. The activist has been asked to depose before the Investigating Officer at the Cubbon Park police station, where he had lodged the complaint against the former minister.

Deputy Chief Minister C N Ashwath Narayan said it was not right to comment on the issue without knowing the facts, and the charge may have been levelled out of malice.

According to reports, the Chief Minister noted during the cabinet meet that the allegation against Jarkiholi has caused huge embarrassment to the government.

But Bommai told reporters during the briefing that the issue did not come up for discussion as Jarkiholi had resigned. Asked whether any decision had been taken on the inquiry, he said, “none has been taken at the government level. A complaint has been registered and police are probing it.”

Ramesh Jarkiholi, a MLA from Gokak, who was earlier with Congress, was among the chief architects in causing the downfall of the Congress-JD(S) coalition government that eventually paved the way for the BJP to come to power.

As the news about the resignation spread, his supporters swarmed Basaveshwara circle in Gokak and staged demonstrations by burning tyres and raising slogans, holding aloft his photograph.

According to sources, shops and establishments were forcefully shut in parts of the town as a mark of protest. One man doused petrol on his body during the protest and tried to set himself ablaze, but policemen prevented him from doing so and took him into custody. Kallahalli told PTI that some people were following him and he apprehended a threat to his life. He said he has lodged a complaint in this regard with the Kanakapura Rural police in Ramanagara district.

Japan weighing extension of coronavirus emergency in Tokyo

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said Wednesday he is considering extending a coronavirus state of emergency in the Tokyo region for about two weeks because of concerns that infections have not slowed enough and are continuing to strain medical systems in the region.

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

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

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

“In order to protect people’s lives and health, I think we need to extend (the state of emergency) for about two weeks.” Tokyo is to host the Olympics, delayed by one year because of the virus, starting July 23. The state of emergency centers around asking restaurants, bars and other businesses to voluntarily close at 8 p.m. Japan has never had a mandatory lockdown, but has managed to keep infections relatively low, Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike and the heads of neighboring prefectures have raised concerns that a lifting of the emergency this weekend could trigger a quick rebound in infections.



Bollywood
I used to be a big star once upon a time but things didn't work out.
—Bobby Deol

TREAT FOR THE EYES

Catering to the changing consumer psyche of spending over experiences, hotels now focus on enhancing their aesthetics and opt for theme-based decor. SONIA SOOD shares a few looks

The hospitality business is one of the thriving businesses in India. Despite experiencing a sluggish period with the occurrence of the pandemic, the industry is focusing on revival now. They are coming with state-of-the-art solutions to boost their business and increase the footfall.

In an attempt to adopt innovative ways, they increasingly focus on hotel art and decor. The industry and hotels have an inseparable connection. Hotels across categories are recognised for their ambience and decor. They are preferred for their visually appealing interiors. Catering to the changing consumer psyche who now prefer spending their finances over experiences, hotels now focus on enhancing the aesthetics of their property and opt for theme-based decor.

They not only enhance the beauty of the rooms but also adorn the walls, the public spaces, in-house eateries, and other guest visiting zones with traditional interiors, modern decor and artsy masterpieces.

Here are 10 hotel decor themes to look forward to this year.

VOCAL FOR LOCAL

The vocal for local strategy has been adopted in the hotel business as well. There has been a shift from modern art decoration to local artistic designs. The properties will now stress on highlighting the local art and architecture and will exhibit the same in their interiors.

This will not only enhance the brand image but hotels will also be able to adorn their interiors with the expertise of the local artisans. From the customer's perspective, they will be in for a treat as for them stay in such hotels will be value for money. Additionally, the local flavor in the hotel's interiors will also boost the industries of the region.

GLAMPING

It is a refined term for glamorous camping. This refers to the plush tent or yurt stays that offer high-end furnishing,



superior restroom facilities and plush interiors. The hotels will be focusing to offer glamping experiences to their guests as these will offer stylish decor at its prime.

SIMPLICITY IS THE KEY

Gone are the days when hotels used to stress on eye-popping and attention-seeking interiors. The hoteliers now focus on adorning their property with simplistic designs. Minimalism is the new fad. Hence, they prefer less patterned designs and vibrant colours and opt for soft hues and pastel shades along with textures.

They have realised that creating a cosy environment with minimal designs radiate elegance and hence the customers are able to gather a memorable experience.

THE HOMEY TOUCH

With the work from home and workation trends picking up pace, the hotels are focussing on creating a homey environment, especially in their rooms. Guests prefer staying for long and have to work during their stay. Having a homey environment is their criteria while they book any property.

Hence, the hotels are extending a plush yet home away from experience. Wood furnishing, carpets, curtains, fireplace, TV unit set up, music playing technology are imbued to ensure that the customers get

a homely environment.

GO GREEN AND NATURAL

In order to support the go green initiatives, hotels are now giving a natural look and feel to their interiors with nature-themed decor. Opting for green walls and roofs along with the planting of green grass, stone-based decorations, indoor waterfalls, and wood-themed decor is something that they are inclined towards now.

SUSTAINABLE ART AND INTERIORS

Sustainability is a prime area for hotels and they wish to minimise their short-term expenditure. There is indeed a cut throat competition and hence they aim to have unique interiors that will demarcate them from the other competitive properties.

Over-sized windows to allow natural light and sun rays to enter, construction with natural building materials, setting up recycling processes of the natural resources for guests, coming with smart and tech-savvy electronic faucets, providing organic locally grown food are a few of the tactics that they are adopting.

PERSONALISED SPACES

Customers have been long awaiting their stay in the hotels. Now with unlock-



ing and working with the new normal, they are opting to stay for a long stretch at the hotel properties. Hence, hoteliers are now leaning towards personalising the spaces as per the guests' requirements.

They are coming up with strategies like theme-based guestrooms, customisation and personalisation features with the help of the relevant decor.

TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN DECOR

Being technologically advanced is the need of the hour in the present modern times. There are certain categories of guests that desire to be connected with technology despite being on a vacation. They desire to have tech-savvy rooms and hence the hotels also design and decorate certain rooms the techie way.

Adjustable lighting, air conditioning, window blinds, electronic door lock and key system, smartphone or tablet-driven features in the rooms along with tablet check-in and check-out processes extend the requisite tech experience.

RECYCLING ART

Keeping into consideration to minimise the wastage of natural resources, the hotels are now focusing on inculcation of recyclable art in their decor. This trend has recently picked up and will continue to grow in the coming months.

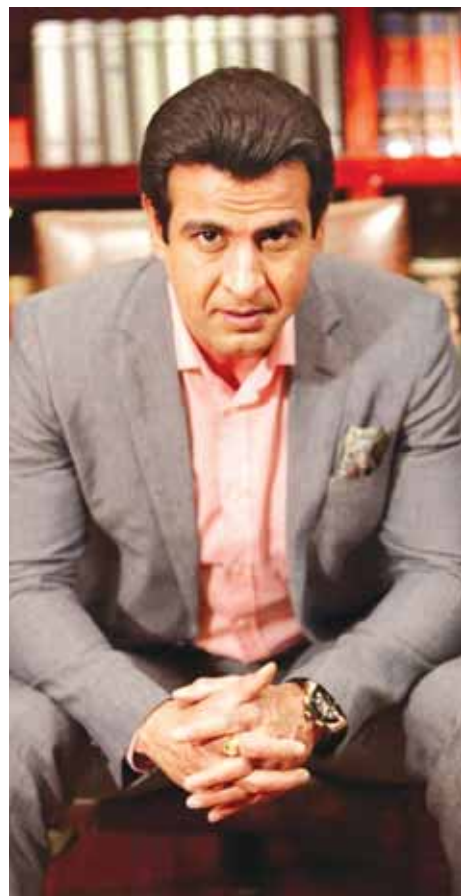
Reusing and recycling the materials and transforming them into decor is indeed unique. Glass bottles used for lighting, vintage windows, and doors used as decor, transforming paper tubes into tables, chairs, wall decorations, mosaic marble art, are some of the ways how hotels are reusing and recycling materials.

STORY-BASED THEMES

Hoteliers have incorporated the storytelling format in the art and decor of their properties as well. Understanding that stories attract customers and also touch their emotional and sensitive side, they lean towards incorporating story theme-based decor. Not only does it exhibit their creativity and innovation but also provides the guests a vibrant and intriguing environment.

Realising the value of hospitality art, the hoteliers are collaborating with museums, boutique art firms, designers, and painters, and are also roping in art and decor experts to extend a luxurious stay with grand interiors and aesthetic decor. While there are various themes in 2021, it is anticipated that local art, tech-based decor and minimalism will rule. This makes the future of hospitality art and decor promising.

(The writer is founder and director, Karabi Art Community.)



Owe my career to TV: Ronit

Ronit shot to fame with his portrayal as the suave Rishabh Bajaj in the show *Kasauti Zindagi Kay*. He was later seen in shows such as *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, *Bandini* and *Adaalat* among many others. Over the years, he has also made his space in Bollywood with roles in films such as *Udaan*, *Boss*, *Sarkar 3*, *Kaabil*, *2 States*, *Student Of The Year*, and *Shootout At Wadala*, among others.

Ronit, however, says he never left television. "I never left television and this is not a full length role, I am a host. I always love to work on television and the way people react to it. I owe my career to television," he said.

The actor is currently busy with his forthcoming crime show *Jurm Aur Jazbaat* for Shemaroo TV. "I am shooting for *Jurm Aur Jazbaat* and a project called *Candy*, and there are quite a few projects in the pipeline," he said.

—IANS

TREND TOOL



VINTAGE VIBE

Make your contemporary spaces chic and warm with these end tables

A mix of styles and textures, here are a few end tables launched by Ashley Furniture Home Store that might create a visual interest in any interior set-up. Brought to India by Dash Square, these vintage-inspired pieces never go out of trend. With their weathered, rustic look, the new accent tables, made of wood, allow you to add that much-needed extra chicness and warmth to

your contemporary space.

LUVONI TABLE

The Luvoni round coffee table set ups your style game. Faux Carrara marble tabletops bring an upscale look to the scene. Finished in a sleek matte black, the sculptural bases with canted legs are cool from every angle. This set includes one coffee table and two

accent tables. The tables' base is made of veneers, wood and engineered wood and the tabletops are made of faux Carrara marble.

BOLANBROOK TABLE

Round up country chic style for your living room repertoire with the Bolanbrook occasional table set. Its round coffee table and two round end tables are in a popular two-tone finish that works great with the set's casual farmhouse design. Antique white bathes the lower shelves and turned legs, while a weathered oak colour covers the top with planked look. The lower shelves can be used for displaying accents or open storage. The tables are made of white oak veneers, wood and

engineered wood.

FERLIN TABLE

With a two-toned approach to style that's both earthy and elegant, the Ferlin coffee table set rounds out your living space. Rich and rustic wood-colour tops with grooved accents are a lovely complement to the metal framing with crossbar design. The Ferlin Table set instantly enhances the interior decor of any space. The set includes one coffee table and two end tables. These accent tables are made of veneers, engineered wood and metal.

ROYBECK TABLE

Similar to mixed media art, the Roybeck accent table set combines the modern appeal of metal with the rustic qualities of wood for a striking meld of earthy elements. Beautiful butterfly-patterned veneer transforms the everyday in an extraordinary way. The Roybeck Table set includes one coffee table and two end tables. The tables are made of veneers, wood and engineered wood and have a dark bronze-tone metal frame and a natural acacia finish.

BELLENTEN TABLE

Tin is in. Bring it home in a farmhouse fresh way with the Bellement coffee table set. This trio pairs a classic trestle design with a mottled faux tin top for a striking contrast. The Bellement Table set includes one coffee table and two end tables. These exquisite tables are made of veneers, wood and engineered wood and feature a faux metal top. Each table in this set includes an undermount shelf with plank styling.

AIRDON TABLE

The Airdon coffee table set goes off centre in a beautiful way with an eye-catching cantilevered design. A sleek metal base in an aged bronze tone seamlessly merges with the wire-brushed veneer tabletop. This hand-finished table set includes one coffee table and two end tables. These minimal tables are made of veneers, wood, engineered wood and metal.

Tribute to the legends

Actors AJAY KESWANI and URVASHI RAUTELA feel blessed for remaking the song *Ek Ladki Bheegi Bhaagi Si*



Well-timed in the middle of the spring season, Cool Lip Music in association with White Billionaire X Beyond Music brings the remake of *Ek Ladki Bheegi Bhaagi Si*. The original song that was helmed by legends Kishore Kumar and Madhubala has a special place in our hearts. Celebrating both the evergreen artists, producers Viral Motani, Pakkhi Hegde and Manoj Lakhiani present a reimaged version of the song.

Written and directed by Varun Prabhudayal Gupta and with music by Vicky-Hardik, the newly released song has been sung by renowned singer, Ajay Keswani and it features him along with actress, Urvashi Rautela. The remake has been

shot in the scenic Al Qudra Desert. The music video captures sunlit sand dunes, a vibrant festival party, a bathtub in the desert, and an underwater sequence.

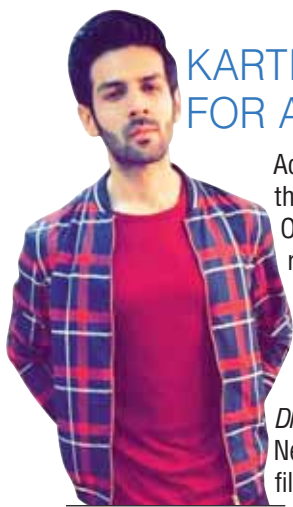
Singer, actor and multi-instrumentalist, Ajay Keswani says, "This song is iconic and has withstood the test of time. It feels fresh every time I hear it. I'm paying my respect to my most favourite Kishore Da through this recreation. I think the efforts that the entire team has pooled to give a memorable tribute is evident in its music and video."

Urvashi says, "The chance to be Madhubala ji for a song is a dream come true. I'm excited that the song is out now and I

can't wait to know the response to it. I thank producers Viral Motani, Pakkhi Hegde and Manoj Lakhiani for having me on board this extremely special song."

Viral Motani, Producer, Beyond Music says, "We offer the remake of the song to viewers and listeners and now it belongs to them. It has been an absolute pleasure recreating the song with Ajay, Vicky-Hardik and Urvashi. As a trio, Pakkhi Hegde, Manoj Lakhiani and I have been fortunate to witness the love of the music buffs with our earlier remakes. We hope the streak continues with the release of our new song." The song is available on the YouTube channel of *Saregama*.

TRENDBLAZER



KARTIK'S DHAMAKA SET FOR AN OTT RELEASE

Actor **KARTIK AARYAN's** forthcoming thriller *Dhamaka* will drop directly on OTT platform, bypassing theatrical release. Kartik confirmed the news to fans with an Instagram post, although the date of release is yet to be officially declared.

"Jo bhi Kahunga Sach Kahunga. *Dhamaka* coming soon, only on Netflix," wrote Kartik, with a clip of the film.



fair talk GAUAHAR KHAN

"I pat my back for making it in the industry with absolutely non-filmy background and no godfathers and people to guide me. The only person who gave me advice right at the beginning of my career was (*Rocket Singh* writer) Jaideep Sahani, who is one of the finest writers we have. He told me that 'you need to know that your potential is vast.'"



daily talk BADSHAH

"Everyone has their own thoughts and views. For instance, I am happy being in Chandigarh, Punjab and would never want to leave. That is my choice. Eventually, it is an individual's perspective. If anyone wants to go abroad, it's their choice and I respect that. I do have an option to settle in Canada, but I don't want to."

HARD YEAR FOR MOMS: JENNIFER

Last year's lockdown stretch wasn't easy, especially for mothers, asserts Oscar-winning actress **JENNIFER GARNER**, who is a mother to three kids.

"This has been such a hard year for moms. We had to watch our kids be home, miss out on things," said she.



CELEBRATE LADAKH

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

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

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

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



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

The deputy secretary of Ladakh's Department of Culture,

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

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

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

IN BRIEF

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



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

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



Maharashtra Governor felicitates LIC

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

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



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

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

toring system and more.

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



If everything goes well, the colour of Hindon river will be changed soon. Regarding this, the DM of Ghaziabad, Dr Ajay Shankar Pandey, held a review meeting with officials of the Municipal Corporation and other related departments regarding cleanliness and other arrangements of the Hindon River. In this meeting, the District Magistrate gave tips from rejuvenation of Hindon River to permanent beautification. He said that now a long-term action plan is being made for permanent beautification of the Hindon River so that the river can remain clean.

—Ashok Nirwan

Delhi Govt GST revenue for Feb is 1,982 crore

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

HUDCO organises DoPT training

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

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



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

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



Empowering tribals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PFC extends financial support

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

The building block com-

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

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

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

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

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

VIT-AP signs MoU



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

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

Dr S Jeyavelu, Dean, VIT-AP

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

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

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

Match of high-stakes

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

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Kohli, despite two fifties, hasn't

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

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

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

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

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

expected to be back in action.

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

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

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

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

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

Virat bats for rotation policy

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

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

"The kind of systems you have

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

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

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

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

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

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

Too much noise about spin-friendly tracks: Kohli

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI



LOCAL SPORT

UP OPEN \$15000 ITF TOURNAMENT

Myneni, Rawat reach 2nd Round

LUCKNOW: Top seeded Saketh Myneni, second seeded Siddharth Rawat and Dalwinder Singh along with six foreign players moved into the second round of the UP open World Tennis Tour ITF Men's \$15000 event at the Vijyantkhand Mini Stadium here on Wednesday. In the first round, Saketh Myneni eased past qualifier Ishaque Eqba 6-3,6-3, while Sidharth Rawat breezed past Great Britain's Alexis Canter 6-2,6-2. Dalwinder Singh end the winning streak of qualifier Vinayak Sharma Kaza 7-6(3), 6-3 to move into the round of 16. Meanwhile, in a keenly-contested match third seeded Aidan Mchugh of Great Britain toiled hard to down former Asian Junior Champion Nitin Kumar Sinha 6-3,2-6,6-2 in a 2 hour 24 minute long match.

In a match that saw as many as 16 ages, Luca Castelnovo of Sweden came back from the loss of the opening set to beat Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha 4-6,6-3,6-2.

RESULTS: (Singles 1st Round) Saketh Myneni bt Ishaque Eqbal 6-3,6-3, Sidharth Rawat bt Alexis Canter 6-2,6-2, Aidan Mchugh bt Nitin Kumar Sinha 6-3,2-6,6-2, Jonathan Mridha bt Paras Dahiya 6-3,6-3, Eric Vanshelboim bt Aryan Goveas 6-3,7-5, Oliver Crawford bt Lorenzo Bocchi 6-1,6-1, Luca Castelnovo bt Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha 4-6,6-3,6-2, Dalwinder Singh bt Vinayak Sharma Kaza 7-6(3), 6-3, Filip Bergevi bt Dhruv Sunish 6-3,6-4. (Doubles First Round) Sidharth Rawat /Manish Sureshkumar bt Zane Khan /Dominic Palan 2-6,6-3,6-4, Marco Brugnerotto/Davide Pozzi bt Jatin Dahiya/Dalwinder Singh 3-6,6-3,11-9, Anirudh Chandrasekar/Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha bt Kunal Anand/Rishi Reddy 6-2,6-2.

IND VS SA LIKELY SANS SPECTATORS

LUCKNOW: The cricket fans of Lucknow may not be lucky this time as the Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association and district administration have not been able to decide on allowing spectators for the ODI series between India and South African women's cricket teams. The first match is scheduled to be played on March 7. The UPCA had given the proposal to the district administration to allow some spectators while adhering to Covid-19 guidelines. However, the administration did not show any urgency, which means that for the first two ODIs (March 7 and 9), the matches will be played in an empty stadium.

FELICITATED

Office-bearers of various sports associations on Wednesday felicitated Indian Olympic Association treasurer Anandeshwar Pandey for being awarded with Asia Pacific Excellence Award by Commonwealth Vocational



Ashton Agar celebrates with Matthew Wade after he takes wicket @ICC/Twitter

Agar's 6/30 keeps Oz alive

AFF ■ WELLINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It was an all-round performance from them that was outstanding and it's important for us that we move on quickly," New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said.

Srikanth, Satwik-Ashwini start Swiss Open with win

PTI ■ BASEL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Man City equal unbeaten record

AFF ■ MANCHESTER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Juve stay in title race

AFF ■ TURIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PTI

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

'EVERYONE TRAINED'

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

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

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

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

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

Zim beat Afghans by 10 wickets

AFF ■ ABU DHABI

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

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

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

Afghanistan were bowled out for 131 in their first innings.

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

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