

SHORT TAKES

2 juveniles nabbed for revenge murder

New Delhi: A shopkeeper was killed allegedly by two juveniles to take revenge for harassing them in northeast Delhi's Jafraabad, following which the duo was apprehended, police said on Wednesday. Afzal, 26, was shot dead allegedly by the two juveniles at a lane in Chauhan Bangar in Jafraabad on Saturday night, they said. During the probe it surfaced that around six months ago, Afzal had a scuffle with two juveniles and both the families had amicably settled the matter at that time. After that, there had been incidents of heated arguments between Afzal and the two juveniles. So, the two juveniles along with an accomplice planned to eliminate Afzal. As per their plan, they fired at Afzal near his shop, police said. The two juveniles were apprehended at Jafraabad Metro Station. They told police that Afzal used to harass them whenever he saw them in the area. So, they hatched a conspiracy to get rid of him, he said. Police said a country-made pistol along with two cartridges was recovered from the duo. In another incident, a 50-year-old man was shot dead allegedly by two unidentified bike-borne on Wednesday afternoon in Jafraabad area, police said. The deceased has been identified as Raees Ansari, they said. The deceased was sitting outside his house when two unidentified persons came there. They had some talks, following which one of them shot Ansari in his head. Later, they fled from the spot, the officer said. The deceased was taken to hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Builder dupes people of ₹38 lakh, arrested

New Delhi: The chief managing director of a construction company has been arrested from Jaipur for allegedly duping people of ₹38 lakh on the pretext of giving them plots of land on the Ajmer-Jaipur road, the Delhi police said on Wednesday. Anil Kumar Sharma (40), who founded his construction company over 20 years ago with its office in West Delhi's Janakpuri, kept launching new projects to raise money and dupe investors, they said. A probe was initiated against Sharma in 2018 after the Economic Offences Wing of the Delhi Police received several complaints against the builder. It was alleged that they had purchased plots of land at Asiana Enclave on NH-8, Ajmer-Jaipur road between 2012 and 2014 from the builder. "Investigation from government land authorities revealed that no approval in the name of project 'Ashiana Enclave' was given by them. Bank records revealed that accused was beneficiary of cheated money," said joint commissioner of police (Economic Offences Wing) O.P. Mishra. "The accused had been avoiding to join investigation despite repeated notices. In order to apprehend him, a team was constituted and he was arrested from Jaipur on Tuesday.

Doctors save man from polytrauma

New Delhi: Doctors saved a 24 years old man who suffered from life-threatening polytrauma — serious injuries of brain, neck, heart and hip. Patient Vijay, 24, sustained multiple injuries of the brain, heart, spine, and hip in an accident and rushed to hospitals in a very serious condition. He underwent multiple surgeries for heart, neck, and hip-bone fractures. According to doctors, on admission, initial investigations revealed that conscious but disoriented Vijay had polytrauma with a visible brain, chest injury, some external facial injuries, and right lower limb injuries. The cervical spine was immediately immobilised. CT aortography confirmed surgeons' suspicion of traumatic aortic injury. Given his critical condition, he was planned for urgent endovascular stent grafting for the aortic tear. The patient was successfully shifted to ICU with stable hemodynamics and had subsequent spinal fixation by a neurosurgical team and right lower limb fracture fixation by an orthopedics team. Finally, the patient underwent surgery to repair his non-spinal injuries, said Dr. Lalit Kumar Lohia, consultant - orthopaedics, HCMCT Manipal Hospitals.

Covid vaccine free for all in Delhi: CM

If the Centre does not provide vaccine free of cost, AAP govt will arrange for it, says Kejriwal

New Delhi, Jan. 13: The AAP government will provide coronavirus vaccine free to the people of Delhi if the Centre fails to do so, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Wednesday.

He said he has already appealed to the Centre for ensuring free vaccination in the country since there are many people who may not afford the life-saving shot. "We will see what the Centre does. If need be and the Centre does not provide the vaccine free of cost, we will make it available free of cost for the people of Delhi," he told reporters here.

The chief minister also appealed for not spreading rumours about the vaccine. "I understand that the Centre and our scientists have brought the vaccine following all the protocols and safeguards. So, there should not be any doubt and people should come forward for vaccination," he said.

The chief minister said the coronavirus vaccine will be given first to healthcare and frontline workers, and he expressed hope it will provide relief to the people from the virus and the pain they suffered over the last one year. The vaccination drive will begin in Delhi from Saturday at 89 centres.

— PTI



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal visits a family member of late Dr Hitesh Gupta, who died of coronavirus while working at a dispensary, in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

₹1 cr for family of doctor who died due to Covid

New Delhi, Jan. 13: Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday met the family of doctor Hitesh Gupta who died due to Covid-19, and provided a financial assistance of ₹1 crore.

Kejriwal visited Gupta's residence in IP Extension and expressed gratitude for his sacrifice and service to the people of Delhi. The chief minister said Gupta's wife will be provided a government job. "We will try to help them in every possible way," he said.

Gupta succumbed to the coronavirus in November 2020. He was working in a Delhi government dispensary at Karkardooma. "Gupta...Got infected while serving corona patients and unfortunately lost his life after being hospitalised," Kejriwal said.

The Delhi government had announced a scheme to support the families of coronavirus warriors who lose their lives in the line of duty by providing them a financial assistance of ₹1 crore. — PTI

Noida techie ends life over 'failed' love affair

Noida, Jan. 13: A 26-year-old software engineer ended his life at his rented accommodation in Noida, apparently upset over his failed love affair, police said on Wednesday.

His body was found hanging in his room in Navada village, under Sector 58 police station limits, in the morning after which officials were alerted about the incident. "The body was hanging from a fan through a nylon-made rope. The police have taken the body in custody and sent it for post-mortem," a police spokesperson said.

According to a local police official, the man hailed from Pratapgarh district in Uttar Pradesh and worked as a software engineer in a private company in Sector 18 of

Noida. "He had been working from home. He has left a suicide note which hints at a failed love affair behind him taking the extreme step," the official told PTI, without further revealing the contents of the note.

Based on the content of the purported suicide note and other evidence collected from the incident spot, the police are further investigating the matter to confirm the suicide angle, the official added.

In a separate incident, a 24-year-old man allegedly hanged himself at his rented room in east Delhi's New Ashok Nagar area on Wednesday, police said. The deceased, Ganesh Naik, originally hailed from Odisha and worked as a tutor in Delhi, they said. — PTI

SC takes suo motu cognisance of rising pollution in Yamuna

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, JAN. 13

The Supreme Court on Wednesday took suo motu cognisance of the rising pollution level in river Yamuna in the national capital and appointed senior counsel Meenakshi Arora as amicus curiae to assist the court in the matter.

Chief Justice Sharas A. Bobde heading a bench also comprising Justice A.S.Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian took suo motu cognisance of the pollution level in the river Yamuna in the course of the hearing of a

plea of Delhi Jal Board complaining that Haryana was discharging untreated wastewater in the river which has resulted increase in the ammonia level in the river.

While taking suo motu cognisance of the pollution in river Yamuna, the top court also issued notice to Haryana on a plea by Delhi Jal Board.

Arora appearing for Delhi Jal Board told the court that the sewage treatment plants for treating waste water set up by Haryana government at different points on the river Yamuna were not working as a consequence

Cold wave grips Delhi, minimum temperature plummets to 3.2°C

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 13

A cold wave gripped Delhi on Wednesday as frosty winds from the snow-clad western Himalayas continued to sweep the plains and brought the minimum temperature down to 3.2 degrees Celsius, the IMD said. "Dense" fog blanketed parts of the city, lowering visibility to 50 metres and affecting traffic movement.

Cold wave conditions prevailed at the Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city. It recorded a minimum of 3.2 degrees Celsius, four notches below the normal, said Kuldeep Srivastava, the regional forecasting centre head of the India Meteorological

DELHI HAD been registering above-normal minimum temperatures till Monday, as a cloud cover persisted over the city under the influence of successive Western Disturbances (WDs).

However, the temperature started dropping with the commencement of cold northwesterly winds after the withdrawal of the latest WD.

Department (IMD). In the plains, the IMD declares a cold wave if the minimum temperature dips to 4 degrees Celsius. A severe cold wave is when the minimum is 2 degrees Celsius or less.

Cold and dry northerly/northwesterly winds from the western Himalayas have been barreling through the plains, bringing down the minimum temperature in north India, Srivastava said.

Similar conditions will prevail in the city over the next two days, he said. "Dense" fog lowered visibility to 50 metres at Palam and 200 metres at Safdarjung, the IMD said.

According to the IMD, a "very dense" fog is when the visibility is between 0 and 50 metres. In case of "dense" fog, the visibility is between 51 and 200 metres, "moderate" 201 and 500 metres, and "shallow" 501 and 1,000 metres.

Delhi schools can reopen for Class 10 & 12 from Monday

New Delhi, Jan. 13: The Delhi government has allowed all schools outside Covid-19 containment zones here to reopen for Classes 10 and 12 from January 18 in view of board exams, officials of the Directorate of Education said on Wednesday.

However, it made clear that physical attendance is not compulsory and students will attend schools only with consent of parents.

Schools are reopening in the national capital after 10 months, after being shut last year to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, and they have been instructed by the Directorate of Education (DoE) to follow all Covid-19 guidelines when classroom studies resume on Monday.

ONLY SCHOOLS outside containment zones will be allowed to reopen, a DoE official said, adding that students, teachers and staffers living in these zones will not be allowed to attend schools

"Keeping in view CBSE board exams, permission is being granted for schools to reopen for Classes 10 and 12 from January 18 for practicals, project work and counselling. Students will be called with parent's consent and will not be bound to come," Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio, tweeted.

The Union education ministry has already announced that board exams for Classes 10 and

12 will be conducted from May 4 to June 10, even though the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is yet to release an examination date-sheet.

Over 3 lakh students have registered from the Delhi region for the Class 10 CBSE board exam while over 2.5 lakh candidates have registered for the Class 12 exam.

The Delhi government had suggested that schools conducted pre-board exams for Class 12 from March 20 to April 15 and Class 10 pre-board exams from April 1 to April 15.

Only schools outside containment zones will be allowed to reopen, the DoE officials said, adding that students, teachers and staffers living in these zones will not be allowed to attend school. — PTI



Members of Army Service Corps' motorcycle display team 'Tornadoes' perform a stunt during full dress rehearsal for the Army Day parade at parade ground in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

NDMC budget: No new tax; smart roads, toilets among plans

New Delhi, Jan. 13: Smart roads, dedicated toilets for third gender, public e-charging stations, drinking water fountains, sewage treatment plants, setting up of an Integrated Command and Control Centre and not imposing any new tax for the next financial year, are among the plans listed by the New Delhi Municipal Council

(NDMC) in its annual budget announced on Wednesday. The civic body's chairman Dharmendra, presented a budget with a moderate surplus of ₹136.18 crore in the current financial year and ₹172.47 crore for financial year 2021-22 reflecting its commitment to a well governed and financially sustainable municipal body

focused on uninterrupted, tech-enabled, smart, reliable, strong, swasth, swachh, futuristic and caring public service delivery. New Delhi Municipal Council has prepared a budget which conveys our commitment to make NDMC a national pride and global benchmark as a resilient, inclusive, responsive, sustainable and future ready urban local body," he added.

Dharmendra said financial year 2020-21 commenced in an unprecedented manner with a complete national lockdown on account of global Covid-19 pandemic which, over the coming months, only intensified followed by phase-wise unlocking process.

"I can say with confidence that NDMC has been successful in ensuring all municipal services in an uninterrupted manner befitting its leading persona among national local bodies," he said. — PTI



Schoolchildren perform dance during a press preview at DRDO Bhawan in New Delhi on Wednesday for the Republic Day Parade. — G.N. JHA

SHORT TAKES

EC to visit Assam, Bengal next week

New Delhi: Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora, along with election commissioners Sushil Chandra and Rajiv Kumar, will visit Assam and West Bengal early next week to take stock of preparations for Assembly polls slated for later this year. Deputy election commissioner Sudip Jain is already in West Bengal to meet officials. This is Mr Jain's second visit to West Bengal.

Another EC official is in Assam to take stock of the situation there. "The two would brief the Commission on Friday and the Commission would visit Assam and West Bengal in that order early next week," a functionary said. It is usual for the Commission to visit poll-bound states before announcing the schedule of Assembly elections. But it had visited Bihar after announcing the dates for the last elections. — PTI

HC allows holding of Gangasagar mela

Kolkata: The Calcutta high court on Wednesday allowed the Gangasagar Mela to be held this year while laying emphasis on the need for 'e-san' (e-bathing) to avoid crowding for the holy dip at the confluence of the Ganga and the Bay of Bengal in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. A division bench comprising Chief Justice T.B.N. Radhakrishnan and Justice Arijit Banerjee asked the West Bengal government to provide 'e-san' kit — a small container with the holy water of Gangasagar — to pilgrims at the fair site in Sagar Island for free and for a nominal fee to people who order for it from other places. The state administration already announced that such an arrangement has been made. The state told the court that the number of pilgrims who have arrived this year is much less than that in other years. — PTI

Odisha: Man tied to tree, burnt to death

Angul, Odisha: A 25-year-old man was burnt to death in Odisha's Angul district allegedly by his relatives for regularly creating nuisance after getting drunk, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place on Tuesday evening at Kadalimunda village falling under Handapa police station limits, they said. According to locals, the man was tied to a tree and set on fire after sprinkling petrol on him, a senior officer said. He was taken to a state-run hospital where doctors declared him brought dead. "A preliminary probe suggests that the deceased, Raj Kishore Pradhan, often consumed alcohol and his relatives did not like him ill-treating and misbehaving with them," the officer said. — PTI

COVID MUSEUM ON CARDS IN KOLKATA

Kolkata: To commemorate the frontline workers who died in the battle against the coronavirus and document how lives have changed amid the pandemic, doctors are planning to set up a museum in Kolkata. The museum will showcase items like PPE kits, masks, gloves and sanitisers, besides several other materials that became essential in the fight against the virus, West Bengal Doctors' Forum (WBDF) office-bearer Dr Rajiv Pandey said on Wednesday. A proposal has been sent to the state government and a final nod is awaited, Dr Pandey said. "This pandemic has come after more than 100 years, even our grandparents have never seen something that we are witnessing," he said. "We have already lost around 90 doctors in our state to the pandemic. Like so many other things, this time and these people will be forgotten. Future generations should not be allowed to forget the sacrifices made. That's the reason we have planned this museum," he said. The museum will also tell stories of the people who lost their lives in the fight against the virus, he said. Even ambulances used to ferry patients will also be featured in the museum, Dr Pandey said. The museum will also have a memorial for the doctors who have succumbed to the disease. — PTI

Ex-TMC MP held in money laundering case

He is accused of running a Ponzi chit fund scheme and duping investors

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 13

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday arrested former Trinamul Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP K.D. Singh in a money laundering case linked to an alleged ₹1,900-crore Ponzi scheme fraud. Mr Singh was later produced before a Delhi court which sent him to ED's remand till January 16.

The agency charged the 59-year-old founder of Alchemist Ltd. with non-cooperation in the investigation and arrested him under the Prevention of

Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on Tuesday night.

Sources say that the arrest has taken place in an ongoing probe in Ponzi chit fund scheme. In 2016, the ED had filed a case against Mr Singh and a firm allegedly linked to him Alchemist Infra Realty Limited.

The ED had conducted searches at the premises of Mr Singh and those linked to him in September 2019 in connection with two PMLA cases.

"In June 2019, the ED had attached assets worth over ₹239 crore belonging to a firm linked to Mr



K.D. Singh

THE AGENCY charged the 59-year-old founder of Alchemist Ltd. with non-cooperation in the investigation and arrested him under PMLA

SOURCES SAY that the arrest has taken place in an ongoing probe in Ponzi chit fund scheme

Singh. It has been alleged that the Ponzi case in which Mr Singh's firm is being probed is pegged around ₹1900 crore," sources said. Mr Singh has been the chairman of the Alchemist group and while he resigned from the post in 2012, he is stated to be the chairman, emeritus and founder of

the business group.

While seeking Mr Singh's custodial interrogation on Wednesday, ED's special public prosecutor N.K. Matta told the court that Mr Singh's statements during the questioning were contradictory and he was also evasive in his replies. The instant case against

the former MP and a firm linked to him — Alchemist Infra Realty Limited — dates back to September, 2016 when the ED filed a criminal case under the PMLA taking cognisance of a chargesheet filed against the company, its directors and others by Sebi.

In this criminal case initiated in 2018, the Kolkata police had booked Singh, his son Karandeep Singh, Alchemist Township India Limited, Alchemist Holdings Limited and various other group companies and directors for cheating thousands of customers.

SC stays 2 FIRs against BJP leader over scuffle

New Delhi, Jan. 13: The Supreme Court Wednesday stayed proceedings on two FIRs lodged against West Bengal BJP leader Kabir Shankar Bose after perusing CISF's special incident report on the scuffle between his security staff and Trinamul Congress (TMC) workers.

The top court also sought response from the West Bengal government and the state police on the plea filed by Bose, seeking probe by an independent agency.

A bench of Justices S.K. Kaul, Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy issued notice to the state government.

During the hearing, senior advocates Mahesh Jethmalani, Anupam Lal Das and advocate Sameer Kumar, appearing for Bose, said that as directed by the top court in its last hearing,

the CISF has filed its report in a sealed cover describing the incident of December 6 last year.

Additional solicitor-general Vikramjit Banerjee, appearing for the Centre, also confirmed that the CISF report has been filed as directed by the top court.

On January 5, the top court had asked the Centre to place on record the special incident report filed by CISF on an alleged scuffle between the TMC workers and security staff of Bose.

The top court had also sought in sealed cover the movement logbook of the leader pertaining to the day of incident. A Special Incident Report, or SIR, is a formal report filed with the regional centre whenever a person served by the regional centre is involved in an unusual event, such as a crime or injury. — PTI

TMC advises Left, Cong to back Didi; Cong says merge with us

Kolkata, Jan. 13: The Trinamul Congress on Wednesday said the Congress and the Left Front should rally behind chief minister Mamata Banerjee in her fight against the 'communal and divisive' BJP, a suggestion the two parties rejected outright.

The Congress proposed that the TMC should merge with it instead to put up a united front against the BJP.

The BJP, which has emerged as a potent force in the state, said the TMC's suggestion amounted to admission that it was not in a position to take on the saffron party on its own in the assembly polls in West Bengal due in April-May.

"If the Left Front and the Congress are genuinely anti-BJP, they should rally behind Mamata Banerjee in her fight against the communal and divisive politics of the saffron party," senior TMC MP Sougata Roy



Pilgrims stand in a queue to offer puja at Kapil Muni temple at Sagar Island in South 24 Pargana district on Wednesday.

— PTI

told reporters. TMC supreme Mamata Banerjee is the "real face of secular politics against the BJP," he said.

Reacting to the TMC's proposal, state Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury blamed the West Bengal's ruling party for the growth of the BJP in the state.

"We are not interested in aligning with the TMC. Why is the TMC now interested in an alliance with us after poaching our MLAs over the last 10 years. If Mamata Banerjee is in

keen on fighting the BJP, then she should join the Congress as it is the only pan-India platform to fight against communalism," he said.

Ms Banerjee had floated the Trinamul Congress in 1998 after breaking away from the Congress.

Senior CPI-M leader Sujan Chakraborty wondered why the TMC was trying to woo the Left parties and the Congress after branding them as "negligible" political force in the state. He also said the BJP was trying to woo Left voters. — PTI

"This only reflects that we are still a force to reckon with. The Left and Congress will defeat both the TMC and the BJP in the assembly elections," he said.

Reacting to the development, state BJP president and Lok Sabha MP Dilip Ghosh said it reflected the TMC's "desperation".

"They (the TMC) can't fight us alone, and so they are seeking help of other parties. It also proves that the BJP is the only alternative to TMC," he said.

The Left and the Congress have come together to contest the assembly polls after the drubbing they got in the last Lok Sabha elections. The CPI-M-led Left Front had drawn a blank in the LS polls, while the Congress managed to win just two of the state's 42 seats. The BJP, on the other hand, clinched 18 seats, just four less than TMC's 22. — PTI

TMC clips wings of rebel MP

RAJIB CHOWDHURI

KOLKATA, JAN. 13

Within two days of removing its three-time Lok Sabha MP Sisir Adhikari from a state government post, the ruling Trinamul Congress on Wednesday removed as East Midnapore district president in continued isolation of the Adhikari family in ruling party.

The 79-year-old Contai parliamentarian was replaced by TMC MLA and state public health engineering minister Soumen Kumar Mahapatra. Mr Adhikari, who was discharged from a hospital during the day after undergoing cataract surgery in Kolkata, was however made the TMC district chairman which appears to be a powerless post since rest members under him are loyalists of party supremo and chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

Farmers must join panel talks: MoS

New Delhi, Jan. 13: The government on Wednesday asked protesting farmer unions to take part in the proceedings of the panel appointed by Supreme Court on the new agri laws, even as uncertainly prevails over the fate of the ninth-round of talks between the Centre and the farm bodies on January 15.

Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab and Haryana, are protesting at various Delhi borders since November last year against the laws and demanding that these be repealed.



A woman gets emotional while watching a play during the agitation against farm reform laws at Singhu border in New Delhi on Wednesday.

The meeting is on as of now and both parties will decide whether to hold talks or not, minister of state for agriculture Kailash Choudhary said. The last eight rounds of negotiations between the government and the unions have failed to resolve the crisis, with the Supreme Court on Tuesday staying the implementation of the

legislations till further orders and setting up a four-member committee to end the impasse.

When asked about copies of the laws being burnt at protest sites on the occasion of Lohri, he said, "I want to request farmer leaders that nothing is going to happen if the copies of the laws are burnt. They should keep their views before the impartial committee set up by the court."

"Don't you think burning copies of the laws is disrespecting Parliament which passed these legislations?" Mr Choudhary asked. — PTI



A boatman stands on the frozen Dal Lake in Srinagar on Wednesday. The Kashmir Valley reeled under severe cold, with Srinagar city recording its lowest minimum temperature in eight years, the meteorological department said. — PTI

7 ministers sworn-in, excise minister Nagesh dropped

Karnataka CM expands Cabinet

Bengaluru, Jan. 13: Ending a long wait, Karnataka chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa expanded his 17-month-old Cabinet on Wednesday, inducting seven ministers as he also dropped excise minister H. Nagesh from the ministry.

The exercise led to resentment within BJP, with some MLAs expressing serious reservations about MLAs not elected by the people being made ministers, lack of representation with most ministers still from Bengaluru and Belagavi districts, and also on their "seniority or sacri-



Newly-inducted Karnataka minister C.P. Yogeeshwara takes blessing chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa as governor Vajubhai Vala looks on during the oath-taking ceremony in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

— PTI

pura), and MLAs R. Shankar, M.T.B. Nagaraj and C.P. Yogeeshwar.

This was the third Cabinet expansion since Mr Yediyurappa assumed charge in July 2019 after the Congress-JDS government's collapse.

Keeping up his promise, Congress-JDS rebels-turned BJP MLAs Shankar and Nagaraj, who helped the saffron party come to power and also another ruling party MLC Yogeshwar, who is said to have played a key role by managing rebel MLAs during the 2019 political turmoil, were inducted by the CM. — PTI

SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON



General public is here by informed that one Person Name: Mohd. Imran, S/o Nisar Ahmad, R/o O-55, Near Hari Masjid, Nafeesh Road, Batla House, Jamiya Nagar, Okhla New Delhi. Age: About 25 Years, Height: 5'9", Complexion: Fair, Built: Medium, Face: Round, Wearing: Sky Blue Colour Shirt and Light Brown Colour Pant & Red and

Blue Sleeper in Feet has been missing from IHBASH Hospital since 25.09.2020 from the area of P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi in this regard a DD No. 60A dated 27.12.2020 has been registered at P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this Person but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this Person kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in **SHO**
Website: http://cbi.nic.in **P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi**
Fax: 011-24368639 **Ph. 011-22580947, 7065036031**
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 **DP/331/SHD/2021**

Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE (QC&PD) Division, HMT, Srinagar
Phone: - 0194- 2496307, **E-Mail:** - venumanj@gmail.com

Corrigendum-01

Subject: - Supply Of Water Testing Chemicals/Reagents For Establishment Of State Level Water Testing Laboratory Of Kashmir PHE Jal Shakti Department At HMT Zainakote Srinagar.

Ref:- This office e-NIT No: PHE/QC&PD/29 of 2020-21 dated: 21-12-2020.

Due to some technical clarifications, the above referred e-tender is hereby re-scheduled as follows:

1	Tender Notice No.	PHE/QC&PD/29 of 2020-21 dated: 21-12-2020.
2	Date of Inviting Tender	21-12-2020
4	Document Downloading End Date	18-01-2021.....04.00PM
5	On Line Document Submission End Date	19-01-2021.....06.00PM
6	Date of opening of Cover 1st.	20-01-2021.....2.00PM

Rest all the terms and conditions, dates etc shall remain unchanged.

No: PHE/QCPD/6367-70
Dated: 07-01-2021

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
QC&PD Jal Shakti
HMT Srinagar

Office of The Administrative Commandant Station Headquarter Awantipur, J&K, PIN-901199 C/o 56 APO

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Reference No.: 01/6083/GN/CONT/STN HQ/ FY 2021-22 **Dated:** 12 JAN 2021
Def Procurement Tender ID No.: 2021_ARMY_411745_1 **Dt.:** 12 Jan 2021

Sealed tenders are invited from eligible tenderers to provide service as per details given below:-

a)	Nature of Work	Contract for collection, removal and disposal of Garbage and Sullage water from the Military Garrisons of Awantipur, Khannabal, Wuzur (Quzikund) and Shopain (Balapur) and outsourcing of 52 Conservancy Staff for conservancy services for Military Garrisons of Awantipur, Khannabal, Wuzur (Quzikund) & Shopain (Balapur) for F.Y. 2021-22 for the period of one year (01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022).
b)	Estimated value of work/ service	₹ 2,81,56,463/- (Rupees two crore eighty one lakh fifty six thousand four hundred sixty three only) approximately.
c)	Cost of tender document	₹ 500/- (payable through SBI Demand Draft drawn in favour of "PCDA Northern Command" and payable at Jammu, J&K.
d)	Availability of tender forms	Office of the "Administrative Commandant, Station Headquarter, Awantipur, J&K". Tender form will be downloaded from www.defproc.gov.in/cppp only.
e)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Bidders are required to submit Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) at the rate of 5% of the total estimated value of contract along with their bids drawn in favour of Station Commander, Station Headquarter Awantipur and payable at Awantipur, J&K. EMD will be in the form of CDR/FDR/ Bank Guarantee, should be valid for period of 365 days.
f)	Eligibility Conditions	Details given in tender document (RFP).
g)	Last date for submission of tender documents	02 Feb 2021 (1800 hrs). Tender to be uploaded online only. Ref Part-I of RFP Para 17. Vendors are requested to submit the Current Deposit Receipt (CDR) and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in original at the time of opening of technical bid.
h)	Pre-Bid Meeting	25 Jan 2021 from 1000 hrs - 1200 hrs in office of Administrative Commandant, Station Headquarter, Awantipur, J&K. PAN Card, Aadhaar Card and round stamp to be brought along.

The procurement committee reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- x-x-x-x-x-x-x-x
Colonel Administrative
HQ Victor Force
PIN-934758, C/o 56 APO

IN BRIEFS

Mumbai civic body nod to offline tests

Mumbai: With the Covid-19 cases in Mumbai under control, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has allowed city schools to conduct board examinations physically for Classes 10 and 12. The decision includes all educational boards — state, national and international. Mahesh Palkar, BMC education officer, issued the circular allowing schools in the city to conduct board examinations. While allowing the examinations to hold, the BMC has appealed to the boards to follow all the necessary guidelines. The board should follow all the precautionary, health, cleanliness and security guidelines for the Covid-19 pandemic, said the circular. The order stated that the civic body has allowed the educational board to conduct the board exams in Mumbai from January 18 onwards. Members of the International Schools Association (Cambridge Board) can conduct preliminary or pre-planned examinations of Classes 9 to 12.

Major blaze in Kolkata Bagbazar

Kolkata: A major fire broke out at a slum in Kolkata's Bagbazar area on Wednesday evening. At least 24 fire tenders were pressed into service as the blaze engulfed several houses in the slum on Kshirode Vidyavinode Avenue beside the Bagbazar Women's College near the Chitpore Lock Gate Bridge. Blasts were heard in the slum which police suspect to be of gas cylinders at the houses on fire, officials said. There were no reports of any casualty as most of the people were evacuated on time, they said. The blaze also spread to the adjacent Sarada Mayer Bari as the firefighters escorted the saints out, an officer of the fire department said. "The reason for the fire is not yet known. The firemen are fighting it tooth and nail and hopefully, it will soon be under control," an officer of the Kolkata Police said.

BADAUN CASE: PRIEST REMANDED TO POLICE CUSTODY

Badaun (UP), Jan. 13: A temple priest and his accomplices accused of raping and killing a 50-year-old woman here have been remanded to one-day police custody by a local court. Circle officer of Bilsa, Anirudh Singh, said on Wednesday that, "The three accused persons in the Ughaiti incident have already been sent to jail. But there are some questions which need to be answered. For this, it is necessary to take the three accused on remand".

A request through video conferencing was made to the court of the chief judicial magistrate for police remand on Tuesday and the request was granted.

The family members of the woman had accused the temple priest and his accomplices of raping and killing the woman, an anganwadi worker.

A case was registered against the accused and two of them identified as Vedram and Jaspal were arrested on January 5. Later the priest was also arrested.

150-m cross-border tunnel found in J&K

This is the 3rd tunnel unearthed by alert BSF guards

Jammu, Jan. 13: A 150-metre tunnel constructed along the International Border (IB) to facilitate infiltration of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan was detected by Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in Hiranagar sector of Kathua district on Wednesday, officials said.

This is the third tunnel unearthed by alert border guards along the IB in the twin districts of Samba and Kathua in Jammu region over the past six months and ninth in the past decade.

"A nearly 150-metre-long tunnel was detected by a BSF patrol party during an anti-tunnelling operation in Bobiyaan village of Hiranagar sector on Wednesday morning," Inspector General of BSF, Jammu frontier, N.S. Jamwal told reporters at the scene. He along with other senior officers rushed to Bobiyaan soon after the detection of the tunnel.

"The opposite of this side is Pakistan's Shakergarh which is notorious for having launch pads and bases of terrorists. We have inputs available with us as a result of that we are sensitive to whatever is happening here," the BSF officer said, assuring that all necessary measures are in place to counter Pakistani designs.

He said sand bags with Pakistani markings are evidence of the hand of Pakistani establishment in the construction of this tunnel, which is identical to the previously detected tunnels hav-



Security officers investigate near the mouth of a 150-metre underground tunnel, constructed allegedly by Pakistan beneath IB, at Hiranagar sector of Kathua district on Wednesday.

— PTI

ing a depth of 25 to 30 metre with two to three feet diameter.

Asked whether this tunnel was recently dug or it's an old one, the BSF officer said it is a matter of investigation.

However, he said some of the sand bags recovered from the tunnel have 2016-17 year of manufacture which suggest that it is an old tunnel.

"We were searching for this tunnel for a long time and its detection was the effort of the anti-tunnelling operation which is underway all along the IB. Whether any infiltration had taken place through this tunnel in the past can be said after completion of

our investigation," he said.

Jamwal, however, said the BSF is sure that no infiltration had taken place through this tunnel in the recent past.

"We are undertaking some development works here and have strengthened the security in view of the anti-tunnelling drive, he said.

Referring to the killing of two Pakistani infiltrators in Surankote area of Poonch district and an encounter in Srinagar last month, the IG said Pakistan is always looking for an opportunity to push terrorists into Jammu, Kashmir,

whether it is through Line of Control (LoC) or

Airline official's murder in Patna raises political heat

NAYEAR AZAD

PATNA, JAN. 13

Nitish Kumar led NDA government facing attack over rising crime graph in Bihar was in for another setback when a private airline official Rupesh Kumar Singh was gunned down in Patna Tuesday evening.

The incident occurred outside his residential complex in Patna's crowded Punaichak area under Shastri Nagar police station.

According to the police, he had returned from the airport after duty and was entering into his residential building when criminals started firing indiscriminately and pumped at least six bullets from the window of the car. He was rushed to a hospital for treatment where doctors declared him brought dead.

While investigating the case police found that CCTV of the building was not working and the security guard was not



Nitish Kumar

present when the incident occurred.

According to police officials, "A special investigation team has been formed to probe the case. We are also trying to find a motive behind the killing".

However, according to reports, the police on Wednesday found some vital clues in the murder of Rupesh Kumar Singh. Sources said that CCTV from the nearby building suggests that there were two motorcycle-borne assailants and they appeared to be following him from the airport.

The incident has triggered sharp reactions from across the political spectrum in Bihar. BJP leader and Rajya Sabha

IB. "They are continuing with the attempts but we are fully alert to the situation. Our alertness resulted in detection of underground tunnels and shooting down of a Hexa-copter loaded with a huge cache of arms and ammunition," he said, adding the border protection grid comprising army, BSF and police are working jointly to scuttle Pakistan's attempts to push terrorists and weapons into this side.

Last year, the BSF detected two such tunnels in Samba district on August 28 and November 22 following successful infiltration by two groups of terrorists who were subsequently neutralised in separate encounters along Jammu-Srinagar national highway while they were enroute to Kashmir in trucks.

While three Pakistani terrorists affiliated with Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) were eliminated in a gunfight in Nagrota area near Jammu after they were intercepted aboard a Kashmir-bound truck in January last year, another group of Pakistani terrorists armed with weapons and a large quantity of grenades were killed at the same spot on November 19.

Investigations suggested both the groups infiltrated into this side through underground tunnels.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Rangers violated ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing on forward posts and villages in the Border Outpost area of Gurnam in Hiranagar sector, the officials said.

— PTI

Vaccine truck gets stuck in TMC mantri's rally against 3 farm laws

RAJIB CHOWDHURI

KOLKATA, JAN. 13

A vehicle carrying Covid-19 vaccine was stuck in a traffic jam in Burdwan East of West Bengal on Wednesday for a long time due to a massive demonstration led by Trinamul Congress minister and Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind state chief Siddiquah Chowdhury against the three farm laws. The incident took place a day after the first consignment of Covid vaccine reached state.

On Wednesday morning, the vehicle, escorted by the police, was on its way to reach the vaccine in separate lots to a Jangalmahal districts: Bankura after its

delivery to the district block health officials in Burdwan East. It however came to a halt on national highway 2 at Galigram in Galsi where Mr Chowdhury's followers were demonstrating over two hours in the middle of the road against the three farm laws.

Coming to know of the vehicle with vaccine remaining stuck in the jam, Mr Chowdhury, who is the minister of state with independent charge for mass education extension and library services, tried to control his followers at the spot. Carrying a wood log, he was seen chasing them to make a passage for the vehicle. But his efforts went in

vain. The minister then rode the bonnet of a vehicle to pacify the demonstrators.

Mr Chowdhury, however, said, "It was not intentional. We repeatedly announced on mike to allow ambulances and students on the route to pass smoothly. That was done. The truck with the vaccine was stuck at the end of a long queue of vehicles. The police, soon after coming to know about it, helped it pass by through a different route."

Taking a dig at him, BJP general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya tweeted, "Minister Siddiquah Chowdhury blocked the path of #CoronaVaccine today due to his political hypocrisy."

Mother of murdered 5-year-old moves SC

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO

BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 13

In a development in the case involving the brutal murder of a five-year-old girl from Jadupur village in Odisha's Nayagarh district, the mother of the victim on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court seeking Central Bureau of Investigation CBI investigation.

Admitting the petition, the apex Court sent notices to the Odisha government and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to put forth their views.

Soudamini Sahoo, the mother of the victim filed a writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India in exercise of her right to Constitutional remedies.

Soudamini has been opposing the investigation into the case launched by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Odisha Crime Branch apprehending a shoddy probe on account of the alleged involvement of influential politicians belonging to the ruling party in the crime.

She had earlier raised doubts over the veracity of the probe, especially when the sleuths overlooked her complaint in bringing the "main accused" under the ambit of the investigation. She had identified Babuli Nayak, a close associate of

● **ADMITTING THE petition,** the apex Court sent notices to the Odisha government and the CBI to put forth their views.

● **SAUDAMINI SAHOO,** the mother of the victim, has been opposing the investigation into the case launched by a SIT of the Odisha Crime Branch apprehending a shoddy probe on account of the alleged involvement of influential politicians.

Minister Arun Sahoo as the "main accused" behind the crime who, she said, was not properly investigated by the SIT.

She had repeatedly punched holes in the findings of the SIT and alleged that the probe team had falsely implicated a juvenile in the case while the real culprits were moving scot-free.

The little girl, daughter of Ashok Sahoo and Soudamini Sahoo, was allegedly kidnapped on July 14 while playing in front of her house in the afternoon.

Her skeletal remains were recovered from the backyard of her house on July 23.

The parents of the girl alleged the girl was kidnapped and killed by one Babuli Nayak, a close aide of minister Arun Nayak.

Ashok alleged that Babuli ran an organ trade racket in the area.

NCB SUMMONS MAHA MIN'S SON-IN-LAW

BHAGWAN PARAB

MUMBAI, JAN. 13

In a major embarrassment for the senior NCP minister Nawab Malik, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) summoned his son-in-law Samir Khan on Wednesday in connection with an alleged drugs case. The NCB's action came after its arrest of one of the co-owners of the Mucchad Panwala shop in Mumbai.

Samir Khan is the husband of Nilofer, the daughter of Malik, who is a minister of minority affairs and skill development in the MVA government in Maharashtra. He is also the chief spokesperson of the NCP.

According to the NCB sources, the agency summoned Khan for questioning in an alleged drug procurement case and recorded his statement. Khan's name came up during the interrogation of British national and drug peddler Karan Sajmani.

There is an online transaction of ₹20,000 between Sajmani and Khan. "Samir Khan has been called to verify the same. We want to verify credentials of this transaction and, hence, summoned him," an official said.



Cinema goers gather outside a theatre to watch Tamil movie *Master*, starring Vijay, in Madurai on Wednesday.

— PTI

Air Force will get 83 Tejas jets

■ **Continued from Page 1** sanctions worth ₹1,202 crores. The IAF has already bought 40 LCA-Tejas Mk-1 aircraft. The Tejas Mk-1A cleared by the committee on Wednesday is more advanced than the Mk-1, with around 40 improvements.

The LCA Mk-1A variant is an indigenously designed, developed and manufactured state-of-the-art modern four-plus generation fighter aircraft. It is equipped with critical operational capabilities of Active

Electronically Scanned Array Radar; Beyond Visual Range Missile; Electronic Warfare (EW) Suite and Air to Air Refuelling (AAR), that will be a potent platform to meet the IAF operational requirements.

The LCA's manufacture by HAL will give a push to its Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative and boost the indigenisation of defence production and the country's defence industry. About 500 Indian companies, including MSMEs in the design

and manufacturing sectors, will work with HAL in this procurement.

The programme will act as a catalyst for transforming India's aerospace manufacturing ecosystem into a vibrant self-sustaining ecosystem. "HAL has already set up second line manufacturing facilities at its Nashik and Bengaluru divisions. Equipped with augmented infrastructure, HAL will steer LCA-Mk-1A production for timely deliveries to the IAF," Mr Singh said.

Mr Chautala, whose Jananayak Janata Party (JJP) lends support to the BJP government in Haryana, is learnt to have said after the meeting that there is no threat to the state government.

Farmers burn copies of agri laws

■ **Continued from Page 1** former Rajya Sabha MP and senior CPI(M) leader K.N. Balagopal.

"It is the government's propaganda that only Punjab farmers are impacted by the three laws. The truth is these laws will affect each and every farmer of the country," Mr Balagopal said.

In a related development, Haryana's deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala — who is under pressure from the agitating farmers — met the Prime Minister to discuss the protests in the state.

The meeting came a day after Mr Chautala and chief minister Manoharlal Khattar had met home min-

ister Amit Shah and later reiterated that the state government was under no threat.

Mr Chautala, whose Jananayak Janata Party (JJP) lends support to the BJP government in Haryana, is learnt to have said after the meeting that there is no threat to the state government.

COVID | FIGHT**Maha says it has got fewer doses of the vaccine than it requires**

States all set to start vaccination

AGE CORRESPONDENTS

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

Ahead of the January 16 vaccination deadline, states have started receiving the vaccines from the Central government to be administered to the front-line health workers on priority basis among others.

MAHARASHTRA

Even before the inoculation of Covid Vaccine began, Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope on Wednesday alleged that the state has received less doses of the vaccine than its requirement. Mr Tope said that the state has received only 9.63 lakh vials of Covishield vaccine from the SII (Serum Institute of India) and only 20,000 vials from the Bharat Biotech, while the require-

ment of the vaccines in Maharashtra is 17.5 lakh in first phase.

KERALA

With the first consignment of Covishield vaccine from Serum institute of India arriving in Kochi on Wednesday, the state is all set to launch its vaccine drive. Kerala will receive a total of 4,33,500 doses of Covishield.

ASSAM

Assam government has completed the preparation for rolling out the vaccine on January 16 as it received the first consignment of the vaccine at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport. A SpiceJet freighter ferried over 730 kg of cargo in 20 boxes having doses to be

distributed for Assam and Meghalaya. A senior health official said that in the first lot the state got 2,01,500 doses.

ODISHA

A day after receiving 4.08 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine Covishield from Serum Institute of India, Odisha on Wednesday got the first consignment of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin dispatched from Hyderabad. The consignment of 20,000 doses of Covaxin landed at Biju Patnaik International Airport.

MADHYA PRADESH

The first consignment of 94,000 doses of Covishield vaccine reached Bhopal airport from Mumbai on Wednesday. The vaccine vials were transported to

the state vaccine Centre in Bhopal from Raja Bhoj airport in an insulated van of state health department, an official of state public relations department said.

CHHATTISGARH

As many as 3.23 doses of Covishield reached Raipur in Chhattisgarh from Pune on Wednesday afternoon to kick off the first phase of vaccination in the state. "The vaccine vials were shifted in refrigerated vans to the state vaccine Centre in Raipur", Chhattisgarh's Mission Director for National Health Mission Priyanka Shukla said.

WEST BENGAL

A vehicle carrying Covid-19 vaccine was stuck in a traffic jam in Burdwan

East of West Bengal on Wednesday for a long time due to a massive demonstration led by Trinamul Congress minister and Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind state chief Siddiquah Chowdhury against the three farm laws. The incident took place a day after the first consignment of Covid-19 vaccine reached the state.

Mr Chowdhury however said, "It was not intentional. The truck with the vaccine was stuck at the end of a long queue of vehicles. The police, soon after coming to know about it, helped it pass by through a different route."

— *With inputs from* Sonu Shrivastava, Gilvester Assary, Manoj Anand, Akshay Kumar Sahoo, Rabindra Nath Choudhary & Rajib Chowdhuri

THE ASIAN AGE

14 JANUARY 2021

Election fever grips TN as early hustings begin

It is a bit early for Tamil Nadu to go into election mode with at least four more months left for the AIADMK to relinquish power. But it has happened as the principal contender to the throne, the DMK, launched an all-out war to storm Fort St George quite early, forcing the ruling dispensation to quickly respond. Thus, the battle lines have been drawn between the two traditional rivals, who have been ruling the state alternately since 1967, after that indistinct threat that loomed for about a year in the form of actor Rajinikanth dissipated and the other actor, Kamal Haasan, is not expected to play a big role.

Of course, Mr Haasan is around and has already started going around spouting rhetoric and another actor, Seeman, with his Naam Tamilar Katchi is, as usual, spewing chauvinistic vitriol. But there is no scope for a third front to take on the might of the DMK and AIADMK as a plethora of smaller parties in the state, which include the BJP and Congress that are otherwise political giants at the national level, have started rallying around the Dravidian majors, in the run-up to the state Assembly elections. But the same small parties are now promising to provide scope for some political drama.

Another thorn in the flesh of the AIADMK is the PMK bargaining for an assurance to provide 20 per cent exclusive reservation for the Vanniyar community that it represents to remain in the alliance

The rumblings of discontent in the two coalitions, forged during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, are signs of potential wrangling, triggered by the overt ambitions of the two lead parties that want to rule the state. Both DMK and AIADMK are keen on contesting in an extremely high number of seats, as both are averse to sharing power with allies. For them, alliances are for winning elections and not ruling the state and hence they expect at least a simple majority to form the government on their own. And the fallout is allies not getting the desired number of seats.

In the past, as it happened in 2016, disillusionment over seat allocation had united small parties to form alternative alliances. But this time there is no sign of such rebellions as the small parties seem to be prepared to accept whatever is given, though they have started asserting themselves in a different way. Almost all the parties want to retain their individual identity by contesting in their own symbols and names. Since that goes against the wishes of both the alliance leaders, who want smaller allies to opt for their popular election symbols, thus marking ally candidates, at least in Election Commission records, as their representative, there is bound to be friction and action.

Another thorn in the flesh of the AIADMK is the PMK bargaining for an assurance to provide 20 per cent exclusive reservation for the Vanniyar community that it represents to remain in the alliance. How the AIADMK deals with the belligerent PMK and how both the lead partners coax allies to settle for low numbers of seats would form the next act of the long drawn electoral drama, whose climax is, as said earlier, four months away.

Policy not court's domain

The value of the committee of four experts appointed by the Supreme Court in arbitrary fashion in an effort to defuse the national political crisis caused by the prolonged agitation by tens of thousands farmers is questionable.

The farmers are knocking on Delhi's gates to protest three farm laws recently passed by the Narendra Modi government. In such haste was the regime that it first brought the legislations in the form of ordinance — or executive fiat — in mid-June and then rushed these through Parliament in three days flat by the end of September, short-circuiting and bypassing norms and procedures.

The top court waded into the delicate situation caused by the agitation, which has attracted world attention, when neither the government nor the farmers called for its help, although during negotiations the government's ministers did tell the farmers' representatives to try their luck in the Supreme Court if they weren't satisfied with what the government was offering. The farmers didn't take the bait. But the court stepped in anyway.

It has held the three laws in abeyance. Maybe, this is in order to appear even-handed. But this is not cutting ice outside government circles. The farmers' demand is the repeal of the laws, which they see as bad policy, adversely impacting their lives. Evidently, the top court does not understand this. Nor does the SC see that it has no role in determining policy, which is the exclusive domain of the executive.

As per the court, the committee it has brought into being will hear all sides and help the apex court understand whether the farm laws are in the "public interest". This self-given assignment is outside the top court's remit. The SC's job is to determine the constitutionality or otherwise of a legislation, not whether it is in the public interest. That is for the people to decide. When court-appointed experts seek to do so, it is the ayatollah syndrome that looms.

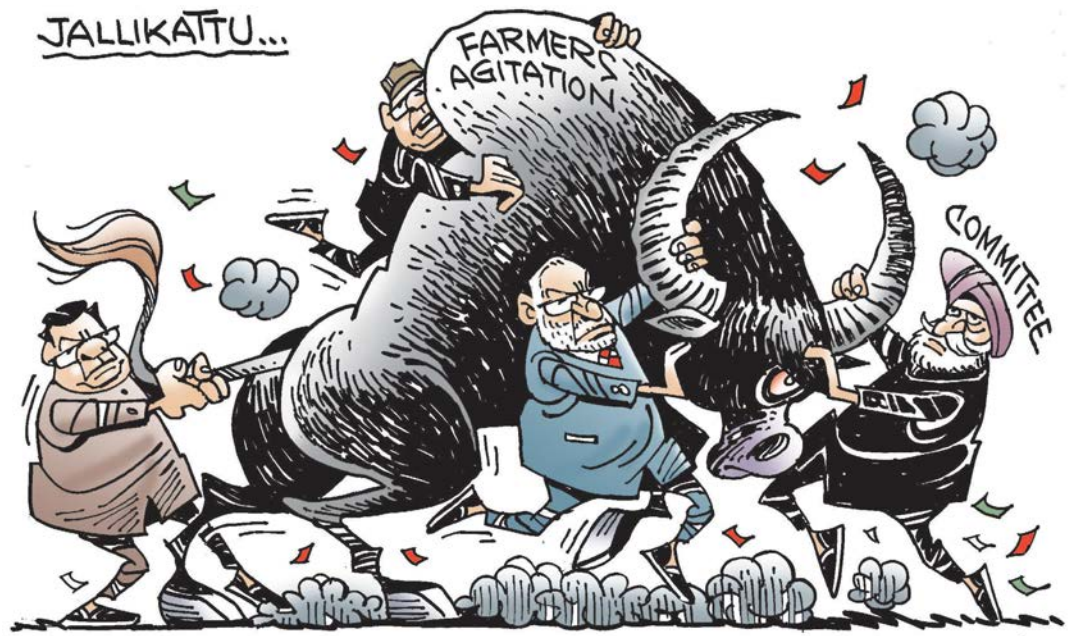
For the sake of record, all the four experts in the committee are strongly pro-government on the agri-laws, and yet the Chief Justice of India expects farmers' representatives to appear before this committee. Instead of seeming the honest broker, the CJI may be courting disdain. What a pity!

THE ASIAN AGE

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Subhani



Is 'new normal' really a return to the old ways?



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

Poverty. Inequality. Precarity. Vulnerability. These are mere words, until they hit us directly or confront us in a way which makes it difficult to look away.

A flood of images of migrant workers walking down national highways burst into middle class India's living rooms following the nationwide lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March last year. The lockdown came into effect with barely four hours' notice. All economic activity came to a grinding halt; and there was no transport.

Those searing images of migrant workers — men and women reduced to collateral damage for the State in its battle against the coronavirus — jolted many people.

Suddenly, everyone was talking about the heart-breaking conditions in which all daily wage earners — the face of the country's vast informal sector — lived and worked.

For a fleeting while, optimists wondered if the Covid-19 pandemic had sledgehammered some fundamental lessons about the need for solidarity between the "formal" and "informal" sectors, if not for anything else but enlightened self-interest.

Almost a year down the line, as we get ready for the vaccine rollout and for the economy to recover fully, what really has changed?

Are we trying to do science and fix the economy in a way that factors in the needs and rights of our most vulnerable? Or is our "new normal" really going back to the old ways?

Last week, once again, images of precarity and poverty came together through the testimonies of desperately poor people who had volunteered to participate in the ongoing clinical trial of Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine candidate, Covaxin, in Bhopal.

Covaxin, as everyone knows by now, has been cleared by India's drugs controller for restricted emergency use. This means, along with Covishield, the Serum Institute of India's coronavirus vaccine, it is part of the vaccine rollout.

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech has given safety and immunogenicity data. But there is no efficacy data yet. This data is expected in a couple of months.

Meanwhile, the ongoing trial has attracted a lot of public attention after the allegations of irregularities and violations of ethics. Many questions are being asked about the manner in which People's Hospital in Bhopal, one of the trial sites, enrolled participants for the Covaxin trial.

Once again, we are face to face with stark images of vulnerability.

The video testimonies arranged by a Bhopal-based human rights group in the wake of the death of a participant in the trial made it clear that those who had signed up to participate in the trial had little idea of what it entailed. Bharat Biotech says the post-mortem analysis has revealed that the death was not related to the vaccine. The family of the deceased feel differently.

Most of those who offered their testimonies on camera are victims of the horrific Bhopal gas tragedy, the world's largest industrial disaster in December 1984; and many said that they could not read or write.

What leaps out from among the many statements they made is the stark reality of "informed consent" when it comes to poor people with no education and little bargaining power.

As is widely known, there are four key parts of informed consent in a clinical trial — information, comprehension, voluntariness and documentation. "Giving information does not mean it

has been comprehended. According to the new clinical trial rules in India, there should be an 'impartial witness' while informed consent is being taken from an illiterate participant," says Dr Anant Bhan, a well-known researcher in global health and bioethics.

Additionally, for vulnerable participants, there is a requirement for audio-visual documentation of the process, Dr Bhan points out.

"The recent testimonies of volunteers, many of whom are illiterate and poor, for a Covaxin trial site in Bhopal, show big gaps in oversight in the regulatory process," he adds.

Doing science must not mean playing with the basic human rights of vulnerable people, says Dr Bhan emphatically. Clearly, this is in no one's interest and will also raise questions on the quality of data coming out of such trials.

"The seriousness of the allegations made by some volunteers in public in full view of the national media raises a question about whether audio-visual recordings of the informed consent process were done in line with the protocol laid down by the Central Drugs Standard Organisation (CDSCO)," says Amar Jesani, another leading expert on ethics, rights and health systems and editor, *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*.

"This is not filming a wedding party," says Jesani acerbically. "There is a specific protocol on how these situations need to be filmed. Many of the volunteers are from highly vulnerable groups who did not know their rights. But just because someone does not know his/her rights does not mean rights don't exist."

There are many legitimate questions. Do audio-

What leaps out from among the many statements in the Bhopal Covaxin trial is the stark reality of 'informed consent' when it comes to poor people with no education and little bargaining power

visual recordings of the informed consent process exist for all trial participants from vulnerable groups? Or was it done for only a few? Why?

"This also raises questions about the role of the local ethics committees. Have they investigated whether the audio-visual recordings were done and according to protocol? If such video recordings exist, they can be made public by blanking the face and identity of participants who have not on their own publicly identified as participants," Jesani adds.

The face of vulnerability is equally stark when it comes to the green shoots of economic recovery.

"There are reasons to fear that economic recovery from the pandemic, like the 'growth story', will be shouldered by precarious labour. An already deep employment crisis is worsening further," wrote SOAS academic Dr Subir Sinha in a recent essay in *Open Democracy*, a website covering international affairs.

So, is there any reason for hope?

Mukta Naik, an architect and urban planner working with the Centre for Policy Research, acknowledges that many informal workers face "worse terms" as the Indian economy seeks to recover. The images of the long march of migrant workers, she says, sensitised many among India's middle class, but sadly, the lockdown months made them retreat into their individual bubbles.

However, she points out, many states are now talking about social protection for the vulnerable. There is an appetite for discussion on the subject.

But pathways and mechanisms to operationalise this vision are still not clear, Ms Naik says.

That much-needed clarity could make all the difference.

India doesn't have to let millions lead a precarious existence. It could use its resources to build back better.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.

LETTERS

NO SCREENING KIDS

Apropos the article, "Educational activism of a different kind is needed" (Jan. 13), more than tiny tots, testing for school admissions certainly puts parents through an undue ordeal. The writer's question to authorities as to whether they really identify bright children on the basis of naming a few colours, fruits and vegetables, is pertinent. It's time the practice of testing pre-primary children for admission to school is banned. Let it be on a first come first serve basis.

M.C. Joshi
Lucknow

'SANDALWOOD' SCANDAL

THE LAW'S LONG ARM caught up with Aditya Alva, son of former Karnataka minister late Jeevaraj Alva and brother-in-law of Bollywood actor Vivek Oberoi with the Central Crime Branch (CCB) police arresting him in Chennai. Mr Alva was absconding for over four months after an FIR was registered against him in connection with the 'Sandalwood' drugs case. 'Sandalwood' is the nickname of the Karnataka film industry. Mr Alva and event manager Viren Khanna were the nucleus of Bengaluru's high-end drug parties, and the arrest is an important development.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

BAD BEHAVIOUR

YOUR EDITORIAL, "Test of character" (Jan. 13) is bang on target. After our team's rare debacle in Adelaide and their strong comeback Test at Melbourne to level the series one all, Rahane and his boys have shown real character during the Sydney test as well. This draw at Sydney was a hard-fought one and it exemplified our players' spirit. Hats off to Vihari and Ashwin, who denied each and every attempt of the ever-unsporting Oz players, who tried every trick in the book to unsettle our batsmen. Hope the ICC and the match referee take suitable action against the Aussies for their ungentlemanly behaviour.

N. Mahadevan
Chennai

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



K'taka home secy shunted out for calling Safe City 'scam'

IPS officer D. Roopa, who was the first woman home secretary of Karnataka has been transferred as the managing director of Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation amid her public spat with another IPS officer Hemant Nimbalkar, who, too, was transferred. Mr Nimbalkar was the additional commissioner (administration) in Bengaluru before being transferred to the internal security department.

Public spats are rarely pretty and the one between these two senior IPS officers of Karnataka over the tender process to procure CCTVs has brought out in the open the intense rivalries in the service. The two IPS officers locked horns after Ms Roopa accused Mr Nimbalkar of irregularities in the tender process of the ₹619 crore Bengaluru Safe City project under the Nirbhaya scheme. Mr Nimbalkar, on the other hand, accused Ms Roopa of interfering with the tender process without jurisdiction.

Ms Roopa had written to state chief secretary T.M. Vijaya Bhaskar alleging that Mr Nimbalkar was trying to favour a private company in the Bengaluru Safe City Project and demanded a probe against Mr Nimbalkar, alleging, in turn, that while the Home Department has started an enquiry against her, it has hesitated to do the same against Mr Nimbalkar, even after months since the CBI sought sanction for his prosecution.

According to sources, Ms Roopa wrote to the chief secretary after media reports that suggested she was under investigation by the chief secretary for allegedly "impersonating" the home secretary and interfering with the tendering process for the multi-crore project. It is unclear where the question of impersonation arises, as Ms Roopa was the home secretary of Karnataka! The content of the report is on the lines of a complaint written by Mr Nimbalkar to

the Karnataka chief secretary.

As the two trade charges, sources say that the government has started an inquiry in the matter. Expect more salvos in the days ahead!

KHEMKA DIGS IN HIS HEELS

Haryana IAS officer and whistleblower Ashok Khemka never gives up on his first principles.

Now principal secretary in the state's archaeological department, the indefatigable Mr Khemka continues to pursue the case which brought him into the national limelight. Last year, Mr Khemka had appealed to the Haryana State Information Commission under the Right to Information Act.

He had sought information relating to the inquiry commission that probed the grant of change of land use licences in Gurugram during the Congress government's tenure, including the alleged role of Robert Vadra, son-in-law of Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi. He informed the information com-

mission that the complete information sought had not been provided to him.

The commission has now issued notice to the office of chief secretary (political department) and the town and country planning department to give their response to the rejoinders filed by Mr Khemka. Sources say that the IAS officer has sought "penal action" under Section 20 of the RTI Act against those who failed to provide the information he had sought, claiming there is a "cover-up attempt". This, too, is the letter of the law.

J&K BABUS DEFY INSTRUCTIONS

The government has taken serious note of several IAS officers of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre openly flouting instructions on the online filing of immovable property returns (IPRs). Non-compliance can lead to disciplinary proceedings and denial of vigilance clearance.

According to sources, online fil-

ing of IPRs was introduced in 2017. In terms of the extant rules, the babus have to necessarily file IPRs electronically as there is no provision for manual submission.

But much to the disappointment of the department of personnel and training (DoPT) and the general administration department (GAD), several IAS officers have not acted on the instructions issued repeatedly since 2017. Now, sources say, the commissioner secretary of GAD, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, has issued a circular stating that failure to comply would "constitute good and sufficient reason for the institution of disciplinary proceedings". The IAS officers have been advised to follow the instructions in letter and spirit or face the consequences. The government has clearly decided that it will not give further leeway to the defaulters.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

SHORT TAKES

FLOYD CASE:
EX-COP'S TRIAL
IN MARCH

Washington, Jan. 13: The trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin — charged with murdering African American man George Floyd — will begin as scheduled March 8, but his co-defendants will appear separately in late August, a judge ordered in a decision made public Tuesday. Both the prosecution and defence had requested to postpone the start of the trial in Minnesota due to the Covid-19.

Even in the largest courtroom in the county, it would be “impossible to comply with Covid-19 physical restrictions in a joint trial involving all four defendants,” judge Peter Cahill said in his decision.

He ordered the court maintain the original trial date for Chauvin, the 44-year-old white former officer who on May 25, 2020 knelt on Floyd's neck for eight minutes while Floyd protested that he couldn't breathe.

SIX NIGERIAN
TROOPS KILLED
BY JIHADIST

Kano, Jan. 13: Six Nigerian soldiers were killed when a jihadist rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into them during a clash in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, two military sources said Tuesday.

The suicide bombing by a member of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group occurred Monday as the soldiers were conducting a raid of the group's stronghold in the village of Talala.

They said scores of jihadists have been killed in the operation launched last week on ISWAP's second largest camp.

“Our men dominated the terrorists, killing dozens, and out of frustration they sent a suicide bomber who killed six soldiers,” one of the officers said.

They said the troops overran the Talala camp despite the bombing. On Saturday 13 soldiers were killed in an ISWAP ambush near the town of Gujba in the neighbouring state of Yobe.

ISRAELI RAIDS
IN SYRIA KILL
16: MONITOR

Beirut, Jan. 13: Israeli night raids targeting arms depots and military positions in eastern Syria killed at least five soldiers and 11 allied fighters, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Wednesday. The Israeli air force carried out more than 18 strikes against multiple targets in an area stretching from the eastern town of Deir Ezzor to the Boukamal desert at the Syrian-Iraqi border, according to the Britain-based war monitor.

The raids killed five Syrian soldiers and 11 allied fighters belonging to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, Lebanese Hezbollah and the Fatimid Brigade, which includes pro-Iranian Afghan fighters, the Observatory said, although their nationalities and a precise breakdown were not immediately known.

The Syrian state news agency SANA reported the strikes but without giving details. “At 1:10 am, the Israeli enemy carried out an aerial assault on the town of Deir Ezzor and the Boukamal region,” it said.

POMPEO, U.S.' UN
AMBASSADOR
SCRAP TRIPS

Washington, Jan. 13: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo cancelled his final official visit to Europe, while Washington's UN envoy scrapped a trip to Taiwan, officials said Tuesday, as President Donald Trump faces an impeachment vote in Congress.

The two-day stay in Europe would have been Pompeo's last foreign trip as Washington's top diplomat before Democrat Joe Biden takes the oath of office on January 20.

The State Department said Pompeo was staying in Washington ensure a “smooth and orderly” transition to the new administration.

The United States' UN ambassador Kelly Craft cancelled her planned trip to Taiwan, due to start Wednesday, in line with the State Department cancelling trips abroad ahead of Biden's inauguration, a US official said.

Last week Chinese officials expressed strong opposition to Craft's trip, as Beijing claims Taiwan as an inviolable part of its territory to be reclaimed, by force if necessary, and opposes any diplomatic recognition of the democratic island.

Pence refuses to invoke 25th
Amendment to oust Trump

House of Representatives passes resolution urging VP to remove Don

Washington, Jan. 13: US Vice President Mike Pence told House leaders Tuesday he does not support invoking the 25th Amendment process to remove Donald Trump, all but guaranteeing an impeachment vote against the besieged president. “With just eight days left in the President's term, you and the Democratic Caucus are demanding that the Cabinet and I invoke the 25th Amendment,” Pence wrote to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, referring to the process that would declare Trump unable to fulfill his duties and install Pence as acting president for the remainder of the term. “I do not believe that such a course of action is in the best interest of our nation or consistent with our Constitution,” he said.

Democrats mobilised rapidly to begin the process to have Trump removed after he encouraged his supporters last Wednesday to “march” to the US Capitol and “fight.” In a violent insurrection, the rioters stormed past outnumbered police, rampaged through and ransacked the building, and interrupted Congress as it was certifying Joe Biden's election victory.

The Democratic-controlled US House of Representatives, which is rushing ahead towards impeaching Trump over the unprecedented Capitol Hill attack, has passed a resolution urging Vice President Mike Pence to invoke 25th Amendment to remove him from office. The resolution was voted by 223 to 205 votes on Tuesday night. The voting was mostly on party lines, with one Republican voting in favour of the resolution and five abstaining.

Earlier in the day Trump said the 25th Amendment was of “zero risk” to him.

— Agencies



Members of the US National Guard deployed around the US Capitol in Washington, DC. The Pentagon is deploying 15,000 National Guard troops to protect Biden's inauguration on January 20, amid fears of new violence. — AFP

160 FBI investigations
against Capitol rioters

Washington, Jan. 13: The FBI has opened more than 160 investigations against the January 6 Capitol Hill rioters, officials said here, and asserted this is just the tip of the iceberg. The agency has worked hand-in-hand with the United States Attorney's Office and law enforcement partners in DC and across the country to arrest and charge multiple individuals who took part in last week's breach of the US Capitol, FBI Washington Field Office Assistant Director In-Charge Steven M D'Antuono said.

“In six days, we have

opened over 160 case files, and that's just the tip of the iceberg,” he said, adding the FBI has received more than 100,000 pieces of digital media. D'Antuono said the FBI will be knocking on the doors of the people who participated in the attack on the Capitol. “But before we do this, this is your opportunity to come forward as several individuals involved in Wednesday's riots have done,” he added.

In the weeks leading up to the January 6 rally, the FBI, D'Antuono said, developed some intelligence that a number of individ-

uals were planning to travel to the DC area with intentions to cause violence.

This was immediately shared and action was taken as demonstrated by the arrest of Enrique Tarrio by the Metropolitan Police Department the night before the rally. Other individuals were identified in other parts of the country and their travel subsequently disrupted, D'Antuono noted. Acting US Attorney for the District of Columbia, Michael Sherwin, said the scope and scale of the investigation in these cases are really unprecedented. — PTI

IMPEACHMENT
MANAGERS FOR
TRIAL NAMED

Washington, Jan. 13: Speaker Nancy Pelosi has named a Maryland Democrat grieving his son's recent death as leader of the nine House Democrats who would prosecute US President Donald Trump during his expected Senate impeachment trial.

The team includes three women, four people of colour and lawmakers from states stretching from Rhode Island to California. Rep. Jamie Raskin will be lead manager. The 58-year-old has often been an energetic presence during floor debates. — AP

YouTube suspends Trump channel

Washington, Jan. 13: Google-owned YouTube on Tuesday temporarily suspended President Donald Trump's channel and removed a video for violating its policy against inciting violence, joining other social media platforms in banning his accounts after last week's Capitol riot.

Trump's access to the social media platforms he

has used as a megaphone during his presidency has been largely cut off since a violent mob of his supporters stormed the Capitol in Washington DC last week. Operators say the embittered leader could use his accounts to foment more unrest in the run-up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration.

“In light of concerns ab-

out the ongoing potential for violence, we removed new content uploaded to Donald J. Trump's channel for violating our policies,” YouTube said in a statement. The channel is now “temporarily prevented from uploading new content for a ‘minimum’ of 7 days,” the statement read.

The video-sharing platform also said it will be

“indefinitely disabling comments” on Trump's channel because of safety concerns. Facebook last week suspended Trump's Facebook and Instagram accounts following the violent invasion of the US Capitol, which temporarily disrupted the certification of Biden's election victory.

In announcing the suspension last week, Facebook

chief Mark Zuckerberg said Trump used the platform to incite violent and was concerned he would continue to do so.

Twitter went a step further by deleting Trump's account, depriving him of his favorite platform. It was already marking his tweets disputing the election outcome with warnings. — AFP

In spite of threats,
Navalny to fly home

Moscow, Jan. 13: Top Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said Wednesday he would go home to Russia over the weekend despite the Russian prison service's latest motion to put him behind bars for allegedly breaching the terms of his suspended sentence and probation.

Navalny, who has been convalescing in Germany from an August poisoning with a nerve agent that he has blamed on the Kremlin, charged that Russian President Vladimir Putin was now trying to deter him from coming home

with new legal motions.

The Kremlin has repeatedly denied a role in the opposition leader's poisoning. Putin is stamping his feet demanding to do everything so that that I don't return home,” Navalny said on Instagram, pointing at the Federal Penitentiary Service's appeal to court to replace his suspended sentence with a real one. He said he will fly home from Germany on Sunday. Navalny fell into a coma while aboard a domestic flight from Siberia to Moscow on August 20. — AP

After door attack, NZ
to review Parl security

Wellington, Jan. 13: Officials plan to review security at New Zealand's Parliament after a man armed with an axe smashed the main glass entrance doors early Wednesday.

Police said they were called to the Parliament complex in Wellington just before 5:30 a.m. after getting reports that a man with an axe was on the grounds. Police said that after smashing the doors, the 31-year-old man didn't try to enter the building and was arrested within min-

utes without further incident. New Zealand's 120 lawmakers are currently on a summer break, and there were few people in the building at the time of the attack.

The man has been charged with intentional damage and possession of an offensive weapon. If found guilty, he could face up to seven years in prison. A judge temporarily suppressed the man's name, a common practice in New Zealand's justice system. It was not immediately

clear whether the recent attacks at the US Capitol in Washington played any role in inspiring the New Zealand attack. Rafael Gonzalez-Montero, the chief executive of Parliamentary Service, said it was important to maintain a balance between security and accessibility. “I am proud that the New Zealand Parliament is one of the most open, accessible parliaments in the world and I very much hope that this continues,” he said. — AP

US Covid-19 toll
hits new daily
record of 4.5K

Washington, Jan. 13: The US death toll from Covid-19 hit a new daily record of nearly 4,500, Johns Hopkins University said Tuesday evening.

As the health crisis rages out of control in the US, this was the first time the toll in the country hardest hit by the pandemic surpassed 4,000 in 24 hours. The US recorded more than 235,000 new cases of Coronavirus infection and 4,470 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins tally as of 8:30 pm (0130 GMT).

Around 131,000 people are now hospitalised in the US with Covid-19, said the Covid Tracking Project. The weekly average of fatalities is at its highest level since the pandemic started, it said.

Faced with these grim numbers and the presence of the new, more contagious Covid variant, authorities announced Tuesday that people wishing to fly to the US must show proof of a negative Covid test prior to departure.

The country, where health restrictions vary drastically between states and compliance can be spotty, is ultimately counting on a massive vaccination campaign begun in mid-December to bring the health crisis to an end.

But the effort is running behind, with just 9.3 million people having received the first of two injections of the two vaccines authorized in America. That is less than 10 per cent of the population.

The nation with the world's largest economy has now recorded 22.8 million Coronavirus cases and more than 380,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic. — AFP

VIRUS TEST FOR
PASSENGERS
ARRIVING IN U.S.

New York, Jan. 13: Anyone flying to the US will soon need to show proof of a negative test for Covid-19, health officials have announced. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention requirement expands on a similar one announced late last month for passengers coming from the United Kingdom.

Covid is already widespread in the US, with more than 22 million cases reported to date, including more than 375,000 deaths. The new measures are designed to try to prevent travellers from bringing in newer forms of the virus that scientists say can spread more easily.

The CDC order is to take effect in about two weeks, on January 26. It requires air passengers to get a Covid-19 test within three days before their flight departs to the US, and to provide written proof of the test result to the airline. Travellers can also provide documentation that they had the infection in the past and recovered.

Airlines are ordered to stop passengers from boarding if they don't have proof of a negative test or a prior infection. “Testing does not eliminate all risk,” CDC Director Robert R. Redfield said. “But when combined with a period of staying at home and everyday precautions like wearing masks and social distancing, it can make travel safer,” he added. — AFP

Voice recorder:
Search still on

Jakarta, Jan. 13: Divers searching for a crashed jet's cockpit voice recorder were sifting through mud and plane debris on the seabed between Indonesian islands on Wednesday to retrieve information key to learning why the Sriwijaya Air jet nosedived into the Java Sea over the weekend.

Indonesian navy divers on Tuesday recovered the flight data recorder from the jet that disappeared on Saturday, minutes after taking off from Jakarta with 62 people aboard. The information on both black boxes will be key to the crash investigation.

The 26-year-old Boeing 737-500 had resumed commercial flights last month after almost nine months out of service because of flight cutbacks caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. The US Federal Aviation Administration sent an airworthiness directive requiring operators of various Boeing 737 aircraft models, including the 737-500, to carry out engine checks before they can be flown again after being out of service.

The order followed reports of engines shutting down in mid-flight because of corrosion in a key valve. Director General of Air Transportation Novie Riyanto said the plane was inspected on December 2, including checks for engine corrosion, and

was declared airworthy by Indonesia's Transportation Ministry on December 14. It resumed commercial flights on December 22, according to ministry data.

After returning to service, the plane made 132 flights, including the last one, according to aviation-data firm Flight radar24. Aviation experts said planes that are parked for long stretches can be returned to flight safely. “It depends on how the airline maintains the aircraft while it is grounded,” said William Waldo, an aviation-safety expert at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona. He said airlines should run engines periodically and perform other maintenance.

“It tends to keep everything lubricated, and it reduces the likelihood of corrosion building up in places you don't want it to be,” he said. John Goglia, a former member of the US National Transportation Safety Board, said preparing a long-grounded jet can be an intensive and expensive chore, taking a team of mechanics up to two weeks to check engines and make sure that electronic, hydraulic and fuel systems are operating and free of contamination. Navy officials have said the two black boxes were buried in seabed mud. — AP

TERROR | FINANCING

Action amidst global pressure on Pak to bring to justice ultras roaming free in the country

Hafiz Saeed's 2 aides sentenced to 15-plus yrs in jail

Lahore, Jan. 13: An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan has handed down more than 15 years jail term each to two close aides of Mumbai terror attack mastermind and banned Jamat-ud Dawah (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed, including the outfit's media face Yahya Mujahid, in a terror financing case.

The anti-terrorism court in Lahore on Tuesday also sentenced Saeed's brother-in-law Abdul Rehman Makki to six-month in jail. Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta awarded 15-and-

half-year imprisonment each to Yahya Mujahid and Zafar Iqbal, and six-month term to Prof Abdul Rehman Makki in a case registered by the Counter Terrorism Department of Punjab Police, a court official said on Wednesday.

Earlier, the court had handed down a 47-year jail term to Mujahid in three terror financing cases. Similarly, Iqbal was sentenced 26 years' imprisonment in three such cases. Both Mujahid and Iqbal will be kept in jail for about 15 years as their sentences will

● **JUDGE ARSHAD** Hussain Bhutta awarded 15-and-half-year imprisonment each to Yahya Mujahid and Zafar Iqbal, and six-month term to Prof Abdul Rehman Makki in a case registered by the Counter Terrorism Department of Punjab Police

● **EARLIER, THE** court had handed down a 47-year jail term to Mujahid in three terror financing cases. Similarly, Iqbal was sentenced 26 years' imprisonment in three such cases.

run concurrently.

The official said the three convicts were present in the court when the judge announced the verdict. Strict security meas-

ures were taken during the appearance of the JuD leaders in the court.

Last week, Mumbai attack mastermind and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operation

commander Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi was sentenced to 5 years in jail in a terror financing case, amidst mounting international pressure on Islamabad to bring to justice terrorists roaming free in the country.

Lakhvi was sentenced to five years of rigorous imprisonment each on three counts with a fine of PKR 100,000 (approximately \$620) each on three counts. His punishment will run concurrently. The CTD had registered as many as 41 FIRs against the leaders, including Hafiz Saeed,

in different cities.

The anti-terrorism court has sentenced Saeed for a collective imprisonment of 36 years on terror finance charges in five cases so far. The 70-year-old radical cleric's punishment will run concurrently in these cases. There are reports that he is given “VIP protocol” in the Kot Lakhvi Jail in Lahore. Saeed, a UN-designated terrorist on whom the US has placed a \$10 million bounty, was arrested on July 17 last year in the terror financing cases. Saeed-led JuD is the fro-

nt organisation for the Lashkar-e-Taiba which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans. The US Department of the Treasury has designated Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

The global terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force is instrumental in pushing Pakistan to take measures against terrorists roaming freely in Pakistan and using its territory to carry out attacks in India. — PTI

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,492.32	-0.05
Nifty 50	14,564.90	0.01
S&P 500*	3,809.67	0.22
Dollar (₹)	73.14	0.15
Pound Sterling (₹)	100.13	-0.49
Euro (₹)	89.16	-0.10
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,877*108	0.22
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	56.24	-0.60
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.947	0.27
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.107	-2.72

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Foxconn sets up auto arm as Apple car looms

Apple Inc's Taiwanese partner Foxconn Technology Group is setting up a car venture, strengthening its automotive capabilities amid reports that Apple is considering making its own electric vehicles. Many technology companies are looking to expand in vehicles. Foxconn is joining forces with Chinese car-maker Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co to provide production and consulting services to global automotive enterprises.

Adani Green's promoter sells ₹1,840-cr shares



Adani Trading Services LLP, a promoter entity of Adani Green, sold 2 crore shares of Adani Green Energy Ltd worth over Rs 1,840 through open market transactions. Block deal data with the BSE shows Adani Trading Services had divested 2,00,96,000 scrips in the price range of Rs 906 to 916.15, amounting to Rs 1,840.20 crore. The shares were purchased by Acme Trade and Investment Ltd.

Registration fee for investment advisors reduced

The Sebi has cut down application and registration fees for individuals and corporates seeking a registered investment advisor status. Now, individuals and firms (partnership) will have to pay Rs 2,000 while applying for an investment advisor certificate instead of Rs 5,000 so far. The application fee for corporates, including LLPs, has been brought down to Rs 10,000 from Rs 25,000.

CESC net profit increases 25% to ₹328 crore in Q3

CESC Ltd posted a 25 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 328 crore for December quarter against Rs 263 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total income rose to Rs 2,581 crore from Rs 2,377 crore. The board declared an interim dividend of Rs 45 per equity share, or 450 per cent. The board has also decided to reorient and reorganise the distribution business under Eminent Electricity Distribution Ltd, a subsidiary.

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■ Q3 net profit rises 17% to ₹5,200 cr Infy raises FY21 revenue outlook

New Delhi, Jan. 13: Infosys on Wednesday posted a 16.6 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,197 crore for the December 2020 quarter, and increased its revenue growth guidance for FY21 to 4.5-5 per cent on the back of large project wins and strong deal pipeline.

The Bengaluru-based company, whose large deal total contract value rose to an all-time high of \$7.13 billion in the quarter under review, had registered a net profit (after minority interest) of Rs 4,457 crore in the year-ago period. Infosys's revenue grew 12.3 per cent to Rs 25,927 crore in the quarter ended December 2020 from Rs 23,092 crore in the year-ago period. Buoyed by the strong performance, Infosys increased its FY21 revenue growth forecast to 4.5-5 per cent in constant currency terms from its previous guidance of 2-3 per cent growth. "We have had an exceptionally strong quarter across multiple dimensions...We achieved the highest large deals win in our history with the deal value of \$7.1 billion. This includes the largest deal in our history and what we believe is the largest deal in the history of the Indian IT services industry," Infosys CEO and MD Salil Parekh told reporters in a virtual conference. He added that overall large deal value for the nine-month period of this financial year was at more



WIPRO Q3 NET PROFIT UP 20.8%

New Delhi, Jan. 13: IT services major Wipro on Wednesday posted an about 21 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,968 crore for the December 2020 quarter. The net profit attributable to shareholders in the year-ago period was at Rs 2,455.9 crore.

Its revenue from operations grew nearly 1.3 per cent to Rs 15,670 crore from Rs 15,470.5 crore. Wipro, which gets a bulk of its topline from IT services, said it expects revenues from that business to be in the range of \$2,102 million to \$2,143 million in the March 2021 quarter. This translates into a sequen-

than \$12 billion, and the net new large deal value for the same period was over \$8 billion which positioned the company "very strongly" for the quarters ahead.

"Looking ahead, we continue to see momentum in our business, strong mar-

ket share gain and increased speed of digital transformation for our clients...for next year, we remain extremely confident, we clearly see that we will have double-digit growth in the next financial year," he added.

Wipro has delivered a second consecutive quarter of strong performance on order booking, revenue and margins. Five of our sectors grew over 4 per cent sequentially. We closed our largest ever deal win in Continental Europe," Wipro CEO & MD Thierry Delaporte said in a statement. —PTI

—PTI

TEXTILE SALES RECOVERING EVEN AFTER FESTIVE SEASON

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 13

The domestic textile sector, which started recovering during the festive season, is keeping up the momentum even in Q4. "People are buying on e-commerce platforms and they have started going out also. Vaccine is acting as a feel-good factor. The recovery momentum would continue till the end of the fiscal," said Sidharth Rajagopal, executive director of Texprocil.

Rating firm Icria too finds that the recovery will be supported by the opening up of economies and markets, improved consumer confidence levels and continued pick up in discretionary spending. This builds on the growth seen in the recent months due to pent-up demand and festive buying.

However, the growth in some segments involving discretionary spends or aspirational buying such as formal, party wear and mid to high-value casual wear, is likely to remain lower compared to other essential product categories such as active/lounge wear and affordable-to-medium value casual apparels, given the shift witnessed in consumer usage and preferences. Within fabrics, the cotton knitted fabric segment as well as blended fabrics are likely to perform better, given their higher usage in casual or lounge wear.

PAYTM MONEY TO OFFER F&O TRADING

New Delhi, Jan. 13: Paytm Money, a subsidiary of fintech major Paytm, on Wednesday said it will provide futures & options (F&O) trading on its platform, as it eyes facilitating daily turnover of Rs 1.5 lakh crore in next 18-24 months.

The platform—which also offers services around stocks, direct mutual funds, ETF, IPO, NPS, and digital gold—is focussed on bringing "wealth services to 100 million Indians," Paytm founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said during the online launch of the F&O trading service. "We are on a mission to bring wealth services to 100 million Indians and this launch will provide further acceleration. This product has been made keeping in mind the mobile-first experience," he said.

Paytm Money will charge brokerage at Rs 10 for all F&O trades, which is in line with its intraday charges of Rs 10 and free for delivery.

—PTI

Sebi bans CNBC Awaaz show host from market

New Delhi, Jan. 13: Regulator Sebi on Wednesday barred CNBC Awaaz show host Hemant Ghai, his wife and mother from the capital markets for indulging in fraudulent trading practices.

Hemant Ghai had the advance information about the recommendation to be made on the "stock 20-20" show, co-hosted by him, and that he directly or indirectly used it to his advantage, Sebi said in an interim order.

The show features recommendations on certain stocks to be bought and sold during the day.

In addition, he has been directed to cease and desist from undertaking any activity related to giving investment advice, publishing of research reports related to the securities market, till further directions.

Further, the Sebi has also directed to impound the proceeds of Rs 2.95 crore generated by fraudulent trades.

Sebi, prima facie, found that Hemant along with his wife Jaya Hemant Ghai and mother Shyam Mohini Ghai employed a scheme to conduct fraudulent or unfair trading based on the advance information pertaining to recommendations to be



Hemant Ghai

made in the show "stock-20-20". On analysis of the trading pattern in the trading account of Jaya Hemant Ghai and Shyam Mohini Ghai for the period between January 1, 2019, and May 31, 2020, high correlation of their trades was observed with the stocks recommended in the show. It thereby generated the proceeds of Rs 2.95 crore by carrying out fraudulent trading in respect of recommended stocks.

The regulator found that shares were consistently purchased in the trading accounts of Hemant Ghai's wife and mother, one day prior to the day of recommendation on the show.

Hemant was prima facie using the trading accounts of his wife and mother. —PTI

Global export growth seen at -5.6%

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 13

The United Nation's trade body has upwardly revised its projection of global merchandise trade for 2020 from a double-digit decline to a single-digit drop. However, it would still be the lowest growth for merchandise export volumes since the 2008 financial crisis.

In June, Unctad had predicted that merchandise trade would see an annual decline of 20 per cent in 2020. In the second quarter, trade had dropped by 27

per cent. However, there has been a recovery in the third quarter and the fourth quarter over the previous quarters. Taking this recovery into account, Unctad now predicts that global merchandise export values and volumes for 2020 are expected to be -5.6 and -8.7 per cent lower than levels seen in 2019.

The third quarter saw a robust recovery in values, which grew by 20.1 per cent from the bleak second quarter. Third quarter official statistics have not yet been released for merchandise export volumes, for

which growth is nowcast by Unctad at 8.1 per cent quarter-over-quarter.

The recovery in merchandise export values and volumes is likely to continue in the fourth quarter, though not at quite the same pace. Values and volumes are nowcast to grow in the fourth quarter by 11.6 and 3.3 per cent quarter-over-quarter, respectively. This growth comes despite the continuing spread of Covid-19, especially in the US and Europe, which has necessitated the reinstatement of lockdown measures.

Amazon starts ₹89/month mobile video plan with Airtel

SARITHA RAI JAN. 13

Amazon.com Inc. is starting its first mobile-only Prime Video plan, targeting the hundreds of millions of entertainment-hungry smartphone users in India as the country's streaming market surges. The single-user plan is available to wireless carrier Bharti Airtel's prepaid customers for as low as Rs 89 (\$1.20) a month after a 30-day free trial. The streaming plan comes with 6 gigabytes of data, which can also be used on other services.

Amazon and rivals Netflix Inc, Google's YouTube and Walt Disney Co are ramping up streaming services in the world's second-biggest smartphone market, where mobile internet prices are among the lowest on the planet. The companies are plowing hundreds of millions of dollars into creating original shows in multiple lan-

AMAZON ACADEMY TO COACH FOR JEE

Chennai, Jan. 13: Amazon has entered into edu-tech space with the launch of Amazon Academy to help students preparing for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for entrance to engineering colleges. In addition to the JEE, those preparing for BITSAT, VITEEE, SRMJEE, and MET exams will also benefit from the free content resources. —FC Bureau

guages and buying rights to Bollywood film premieres and cricket games. "We want to democratise the access to content and through this unique offering reach hundreds of millions of users," Gaurav Gandhi, director and India head for Amazon

Prime Video, said in a phone interview. About 85 per cent of internet access in India is via mobile devices and nearly 90 per cent of all mobile users that access data are on prepaid plans, he said.

Prime Video already has customers in more than 4,300 cities and towns in India and the new plans will help Amazon push deeper into the hinterland. In the next few years, India will have as many streaming-service users as TV viewers and that calls for innovation on the product and distribution fronts, Gandhi said. The Seattle-based e-commerce giant's streaming service is available in about 240 countries and territories while its Prime membership is available in 19 countries including India. The nation of 1.3 billion is the first where a Prime Video standalone plan is available aside from the Prime membership. —Bloomberg

DOOMSDAY | GOSPEL

Book that forecast US's decline due to domestic conflicts 30 years ago now sells for \$2,500

America against America is most sought after book in China

Jan. 13: After chaos engulfed the US Capitol last week, some Chinese intellectuals found themselves searching for copies of an out-of-print book to make sense of events. "America Against America" forecast the US's decline due to domestic conflicts more than 30 years ago.

Among the things driving demand was the author: Wang Huning, the Communist Party's No. 5 leader and top political theorist to three Chinese presidents. Some copies have surged to more than 16,600 yuan (\$2,500) on Kungfuzi, an online marketplace for antiques. That's more than 3,000 times its original asking price in 1991, when Japan was more widely seen as America's big economic rival.

"The interest in the book is the result of a renewed desire to understand a US that is in the midst of a civil cold war," said Wang Wen, executive dean

of Renmin University's Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies. "China's doubts about the US will certainly increase in light of recent events."

The Capitol Hill turmoil is being read in Beijing as the most powerful sign yet that societal fissures in the US are behind increasingly erratic foreign policy shifts. That's feeding Chinese apprehension about reaching agreements on trade or other politically charged disputes with president-elect Joe Biden.

"The instability of a negotiation partner means that its public credibility is on the decline and the risk of breaking contracts or promises is greater," Wang Wen said on Tuesday.

Such skepticism illustrates how Washington's political strife is compounding Biden's challenge of stabilising US relationships around the world after four years of shocks and



surprises under President Donald Trump. Among his most difficult tasks will be convincing China's Xi Jinping to make concessions that go beyond the "phase one" trade deal announced by Trump a year ago.

Not only did that agreement fail to address most of the Trump administration's biggest trade grievances, including government support for strategic industries and stronger action on state-run enterprises, but China has purchased little more than half of

the \$172 billion worth of US goods it agreed to buy last year under the deal. Disputes between the two countries have since spiralled into everything from microchips to Taiwan, as Trump increasingly sought to blame China for his election year difficulties.

Meanwhile, Xi appears to have moved on, buoyed by early success against the coronavirus and a resilient economy. Xi has lately emphasised "self-sufficiency" and girded for a prolonged struggle, urging local officials earlier this week to "not only dare to fight, but also be good at fighting," according to the official Xinhua News Agency. State media accuses the US of abandoning four decades of engagement in favour of containment.

As Washington was gripped by one of the most divisive presidential transitions ever, Xi finalised a long-sought investment deal with the European

Union that touches on many of the issues left out of the US pact. The agreement had been championed by German chancellor Angela Merkel, a key American ally who early in the Trump presidency declared that Europe could no longer rely on others.

"While both sides have paid a price for the trade war, the US will suffer more in the long run because it damaged its position and reputation as the central pillar of global trade and commerce," said Mei Xinyu, who is with a research group under the Ministry of Commerce in Beijing.

Wang Huning's book, which was written during an academic visit to the US in 1988, predicted that America's emphasis on "individualism, hedonism and democracy" would eventually cause rifts that sapped its competitive drive. Countries like Japan—built on "collectivism, selflessness and author-

itarianism"—had the upper hand, said Wang Huning, who's now one of seven people on the politburo's supreme Standing Committee.

That thesis hasn't stood up so well over the past three decades: of the US's two main rivals of that era—Japan and the Soviet Union—one collapsed and the other saw its economy stagnate. That left the US as the world's undisputed superpower, and today it still boasts the world's most powerful military and biggest economy, powered by waves of successive innovation-driven technology booms.

But confidence is growing in China that the balance may be shifting. Besides the transition chaos, the US's struggles against the coronavirus, racial justice protests and gun violence—subjects featured prominently in China's state-run media—have fed the narrative of American decline.

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Ankita out of Oz Open qualifiers

Melbourne: Ankita Raina's bid to qualify for a Grand Slam singles main draw failed yet again when she lost the final round of the Australian Open qualifying event to Serbian Olga Danilovic on Wednesday.

In the women's singles qualifiers being held in Dubai, Ankita lost the third and final round 2-6, 6-3, 1-6 to her Serbian opponent in almost two hours. Not being able to win points on her first serve hurt Ankita. It was the Indian's sixth attempt to qualify for a competition at the grand stage.

Her defeat means that Sumit Nagal will be the only Indian to compete in the singles event of the first Grand Slam of the season. Nagal has been awarded a wild card entry into the men's singles. Ramkumar Ramanathan had lost in the first round of the men's singles event while Prajesh Gunneswaran lost in the second round. — PTI

Boxers ready for European tour

New Delhi: Their Olympic preparations back on track after the disruption caused by Covid-19, Indian boxers will be travelling extensively to compete in various European tournaments in the next couple of months starting with the prestigious Strandja Memorial in Bulgaria. Indian boxing's High Performance Director Santiago Nievea revealed that apart from an international schedule, he would also like to see the national championships take place some time before the Olympic Games. "This year, we are starting with the Strandja Memorial in Bulgaria, then hopefully a tournament in Hungary and one more after that. Apart from this, we will be staying put at Bengaluru for the national camp," Nievea said giving a low-down of the plans for the next six months. — PTI

Leverkusen keep Frankfurt at bay

Leverkusen, Germany: Bayer Leverkusen shrugged off Jonathan Tah's sending off to beat Eintracht Frankfurt 4-1 in their rescheduled German Cup game. Leverkusen was leading 3-1 when Tah was sent off in the 73rd minute. The Germany defender hauled down Andr Silva, who would have been through on goal with a chance to pull one back for Frankfurt. Leverkusen's 10 men managed to keep the visitors at bay and Moussa Diaby sealed the home side's win with his second goal in the 87th. Amin Younes had put Frankfurt ahead in the sixth, but Lucas Alario equalized with a penalty in the 27th and Edmond Tapsoba scored Leverkusen's second in 40th with a goal that looked offside. — AP

Durant propels Nets past Nuggets

Los Angeles: Kevin Durant poured in 34 points and handed out 13 assists as the Brooklyn Nets rallied from an 18-point deficit to beat the Denver Nuggets 122-116 in the NBA on Tuesday. Durant added nine rebounds and Bruce Brown chipped in 16 points in a clutch performance in place of absent Nets star Kyrie Irving. Brown's jump shot, off a feed from Durant, knotted the score at 113-113 with 2:16 to play. He followed with a floater that put the Nets ahead for good. Durant scored the Nets' next six points as Brooklyn put it away, denying the Nuggets a sweep on their three-game road trip. Nikola Jokic had 23 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds for Denver, but they were outscored by the Nets 68-46 in the second half. — AFP

Live on TV

BADMINTON

Thailand Open: Pre-quarterfinal matches from 7.30 am on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

CRICKET

Sri Lanka vs England: First Test, Day 1 from 10 am on Sony Ten 2

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 Tournament: Odisha vs Tamil Nadu from 11.55 am; Hyderabad vs Bengal from 6.55 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

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BLAME IT ON IPL

Oz coach says 2020 edition cause for growing injury list

Brisbane, Jan. 13: He loves the IPL, but Australia coach Justin Langer on Wednesday questioned the timing of the last year's edition, which he believes could have been a contributing factor in the injury setbacks that both his and the Indian team have endured in the ongoing series.

The IPL was held in the September-November window in 2020 in the United Arab Emirates due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The lucrative tournament is usually held in India during the April-May window. India have had a spate of injuries since the IPL and also in the current Australia series. Australia too had its share of injuries.

"It is really interesting how many injuries (it) has been throughout this summer. I can't help and think that the IPL this year (2020) was in really, probably wasn't ideal timing for anyone, certainly for such a big series like this," Langer said.

The latest addition to the Indian injury list is Ravindra Jadeja and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah. For Australia, David Warner was a big blow but he recovered in time for the last two Tests.

Langer was all praise for the IPL saying it helps in development of young players but was critical of the previous edition's timing. "I love the IPL, I look at IPL now like I used to look at county cricket for our young players. They go and play county cricket and it helps them (in) their cricket development enormously, I think it is the same with the IPL, helps their white-ball develop-

SMITH GETS BACKING OF HIS COACH

Brisbane, Jan 13: Australia coach Justin Langer cannot believe the "absolute load of rubbish" that Steve Smith was trying to scuff up Rishabh Pant's guard in the drawn Sydney Test, and has called the criticism of his "quirks" way out of line and ludicrous.

Smith was accused of scuffing up the batsman's guard during the drinks break in the first session on Monday in the drawn Test. But Langer backed Smith to the hilt, coming down heavily on the criticism, mostly driven by fans online and some former players like Michael Vaughan.

"...I literally cannot believe some of the rubbish I read about Steve Smith. Absolute load of rubbish. I mean, if anyone knows Steve Smith, he is a bit quirky and he does some weird (stuff) and we have laughed about it for the last couple of years," Langer said. — PTI

ment. But the timing of it... because of what happened with Covid... probably wasn't ideal, and I just wonder whether that is having an impact on the injuries that we are seeing for both teams throughout the summer, so I'm sure they'll review that." — PTI



Australia's David Warner (left) and coach Justin Langer attend a training session at the Sydney Cricket Ground in this file photo. — AFP

Limping India train at Gabba

Brisbane, Jan. 13: The injury-ravaged Indian team on Wednesday underwent their first training session at the Gabba here, hoping to field 11 fit players in the series-deciding fourth Test against Australia.

Ruled out of the last Test with an abdominal strain, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah still accompanied the visiting team for their training session.

The likes of Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, skipper Ajinkya Rahane

and others were seen in their training kits. Bumrah, though, was not in his training outfit as he got involved in a discussion with bowling coach Bharat Arun.

"After an epic fightback in Sydney, it is time to regroup. We have begun our preparations for the final Test at the Gabba!" the BCCI posted on its twitter handle.

Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav was seen bowling at the nets and there is a chance that he could be picked for the

match with influential all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja ruled out due to a fractured thumb.

Also part of the session were seamer Shardul Thakur and all-rounder Washington Sundar. Either T. Natarajan or Shardul is likely to replace Bumrah in the playing XI at Gabba, forming a new-look pace attack alongside Mohammed Siraj and Navdeep Saini.

Bumrah picked up the abdominal strain during the third Test in Sydney.

Head coach Ravi Shastri, who was keeping a tab on the proceedings, addressed the team huddle. He was also seen having a discussion with the rest of the support staff, which includes batting coach Vikram Rahtour and fielding coach R. Sridhar, apart from Arun. India have been plagued by a series of injuries on their tour of Australia with Ishant Sharma and Bhuvneshwar Kumar ruled out even before the start of the Test series. — PTI



Members of the Indian team are all ears as coach Ravi Shastri speaks during a practice session at the Gabba Stadium in Brisbane on Wednesday. — BCCI

Manchester United on English table top

London, Jan. 13: Paul Pogba took Manchester United top of the Premier League for the first time in three years as his deflected winner saw off a dogged Burnley 1-0 at Turf Moor on Tuesday.

United now lead defending champions Liverpool by three points ahead of a top-of-the-table clash between the two most successful sides in English football history at Anfield on Sunday. Despite continued speculation over his future, Pogba has played an increasingly important role in United's first serious title challenge since legendary former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's

men have now taken 29 from the last possible 33 points to recover from just two wins in their opening six games of the season.

EVERTON WIN AT WOLVERHAMPTON

Everton moved back into the top four and within four points of United as they overcame an injury crisis to beat Wolves 2-1 at Molineux.

The Toffees took an early lead when Alex Iwobi converted Lucas Digne's cross but were pegged back when Ruben Neves levelled for Wolves.

Michael Keane's towering header won the game 13 minutes from time to bolster the Blues' European ambitions.

THE RESULTS			
PREMIER LEAGUE		ITALIAN CUP LAST 16	
Burnley	0	AC Milan	0
Manchester United (Pogba 77)	1	Torino	0
		(Milan win 5-4 on penalties)	
Sheffield United	1	SPANISH LEAGUE	
(Sharp 73-pen)		Granada	2
Newcastle	0	(Suarez 22, Herrera 46-og)	
		Osasuna	0
Wolverhampton	1	Atletico Madrid	2
(Neves 14)		(Correa 17, Saul Niguez 76)	
Everton	2	Sevilla	0
(Iwobi 6, Keane 77)			

Later, Sheffield United ended a 20-game winless league run as Billy Sharp's penalty earned a 1-0 win over Newcastle.

AC MILAN REACH ITALIAN CUP LAST 8
In Milan, Zlatan

Ibrahimovic got his first start in over seven weeks but AC Milan had to battle into the Italian Cup quarter-finals with a 5-4 win on penalties over Torino after Tuesday's match ended 0-0 after extra time. Hakan Calhanoglu slot-

DELHI POST 2ND SUCCESSIVE WIN IN MUSHTAQ ALI

Mumbai, Jan. 13: Delhi recorded their second straight win in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy after beating Andhra Pradesh by six wickets in an Elite Group E game, here on Wednesday.

Put into bat at the Wankhede Stadium, Andhra were restricted to 124/9 in their 20 overs, as Delhi bowlers led by left-arm pacer Pradeep Sangwan (3/33), put up an impressive show.

Delhi chased the target with three overs to spare even as skipper and India opener Shikhar Dhawan (5) fell cheaply.

For Andhra, Ashwin Hebber, who walked in at number five (32) was the top scorer as their entire top-order including skipper Ambati Rayudu (1), stumper K.S. Bharat (8) and Ricky Bhui (0) struggled. Andhra were reeling at 36/4 at one stage. Their innings never got going as Delhi made regular inroads. India speedster Ishant Sharma (2/17), pacer Simarjeet Singh (2/21) and off-spinner Lalit Yadav (2/22) played their roles to perfection.

Delhi had defeated Mumbai in their opening game. — PTI

Scores: Andhra Pradesh 124/9 (Ashwin Hebbar 32; Pradeep Sangwan 3/33, Ishant Sharma 2/17, Simarjeet Singh 2/21) lost to **Delhi 128/4** (Anuj Rawat 33; M. Harishankar Reddy 2/40).

THAILAND | OPEN

Saina, Srikanth off to fine starts

Bangkok, Jan. 13: Star shuttler Saina Nehwal and former world number one Kidambi Srikanth entered the second rounds of their respective events but Parupalli Kashyap made an early exit from the Thailand Open Super 1000 tournament, here on Wednesday.

Saina got the better of Selvadurai Kisona of Malaysia 21-15, 21-15 in the women's singles opening round to set up a clash with Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan.

Saina, who was first forced to withdraw from the event for positive Covid-19 results on Tuesday but later returned a negative test, thanked the Badminton World Federation officials and doctors for allowing her to participate.

"Yesterday, I was given a positive Covid-19 result after my PCR test but I already told them that I had Covid last November, so I have antibodies. I tried to explain this to the doctor and after my blood tests and chest X-rays the doctor said I was OK and I don't have Covid-19," Saina said after her win.

"I am thankful to the doctors, the BWF and everyone who made the decision for me to play. It was a tiring day but I am happy I could comeback and play my match."

Earlier in the day, Srikanth took just 31 minutes to prevail over compatriot Sourabh Verma 21-12, 21-11 in the men's singles, but Kashyap was forced to retire midway in his opening-round match against Jason Anthony Ho-Shue of Canada.

Kashyap was trailing 8-14 in the third game when he chose to retire after pulling his calf muscle.

● **Parupalli Kashyap was trailing 8-14 in the third game when he chose to retire after pulling his calf muscle.**

He had lost the first game 9-21 before making a comeback to take the second 21-13. Srikanth will next play eight seed Zii Jia Lee of Malaysia, who defeated another Indian H.S. Prannoy 13-21, 21-14, 21-8.

Sameer Verma too made a first round exit after losing 15-21, 17-21 to Shesar Hiren Rhustavito of Indonesia.

BWF ADDRESSES SRIKANTH COMPLAINT

World Federation on Wednesday said it is working with Thailand Open organisers to ensure "comfortable" Covid-19 testing conditions during the tournament after Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth was left with a bloodied nose following a test.

The BWF said the Badminton Association of Thailand explained the reasons behind the bleeding.

"Kidambi Srikanth got a bloodied nose after undergoing multiple Covid-19 tests. The athlete had been swabbed three times earlier with the most recent one possibly causing irritation and fragility of the capillaries," the BWF said in a statement.

"Therefore, when the swab was repeated on Tuesday, and factoring in the athlete's tense nature, the position of the stick in the nasal passage was misaligned, which caused the slight bleeding noticed from the tip of the swab." — PTI

SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run following Special Trains as per the schedule given below :-

05057/05058 Gorakhpur Jn.-Anand Vihar T.-Gorakhpur Jn. Special Express (Weekly)						
Train No. 05057		↓	STATIONS	↑	Train No. 05058	
ARR.	DEP.				ARR.	DEP.
----	20:55		GORAKHPUR JN.		07:20	----
02:25	02:35		LUCKNOW (NR)		01:55	02:05
10:40	----		ANAND VIHAR T.		----	17:10

DAYS OF RUN: 05057 Ex Gorakhpur Jn. from 28.01.2021 to till further advice on every Thursday and 05058 Ex Anand Vihar T. from 27.01.2021 to till further advice on every Wednesday.
STOPPAGES: Khailabad, Basti, Gonda Jn., Lucknow (NR), Moradabad & Ghaziabad stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

05025/05026 Mau Jn.-Anand Vihar T.-Mau Jn. Special Express (Bi-Weekly)						
Train No. 05025		↓	STATIONS	↑	Train No. 05026	
ARR.	DEP.				ARR.	DEP.
----	10:50		MAU JN.		05:40	----
18:40	19:00		LUCKNOW (NR)		20:50	21:10
03:00	----		ANAND VIHAR T.		----	13:25

DAYS OF RUN: 05025 Ex Mau Jn. from 24.01.2021 to till further advice on every Sunday & Tuesday and 05026 Ex Anand Vihar T. from 25.01.2021 to till further advice on every Monday & Friday.
STOPPAGES: Muhammadabad, Azamgarh, Shahganj Jn., Akbarpur, Faizabad Jn., Lucknow (NR), Kanpur Central, Aligarh Jn. & Ghaziabad stations.
ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

09033/09034 Bandra Terminus-Gorakhpur-Bandra Terminus Superfast Antyodaya (Weekly)						
Train No. 09033		↓	STATIONS	↑	Train No. 09034	
ARR.	DEP.				ARR.	DEP.
----	05:10		BANDRA TERMINUS		14:25	----
09:10	09:20		LUCKNOW (NR)		10:00	10:15
15:45	----		GORAKHPUR JN.		----	03:25

DAYS OF RUN: 09033 Ex Bandra Terminus from 17.01.2021 to till further advice on every Sunday and 09034 Ex Gorakhpur Jn. from 19.01.2021 to till further advice on every Tuesday.
STOPPAGES: Borivali, Vapi, Surat, Vadodra Jn., Ratlam Jn., Kota Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Achhnera Jn., Mathura Jn., Kasganj, Farrukhabad, Kanpur Central, Lucknow (NR), Gonda Jn., Balrampur, Siddharth Nagar & Anand Nagar stations.
ACCOMMODATION: Reserved Second Seating.

Note :- The above Special Trains will run with full reserved Accommodation.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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