

The Tribune

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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The Power to Surprise

The Tribune

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100 MN TO GET VACCINATED
IN 100 DAYS: BIDEN WORLD

ROUND-THE-CLOCK RTGS FACILITY
FROM DECEMBER 14 BUSINESS

LAVROV: WEST UNDERMINING
INDO-RUSSIAN TIES BACK PAGE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020



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IN BRIEF

3 militants killed in Pulwama encounter

SRINAGAR: Three militants were killed and a civilian injured in an encounter with security forces in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, the police said. A search operation turned into an encounter after militants opened fire on the security forces. They retaliated, killing three ultras. —TNS

ED files chargesheet in Embraer case

NEW DELHI: The ED has filed a prosecution complaint seeking confiscation of assets worth Rs 16.29 crore as proceeds of crime apart from awarding punishment to the accused in a deal involving middlemen in the sale of three planes by Brazil's Embraer to the DRDO. —TNS

Govt officials no better than Kumbhakarna: HC

CHANDIGARH: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Wednesday said government officials were no better than 'Kumbhakarna' when it came to filing replies and objections in pending cases. A delay of even a decade was not uncommon, the Bench asserted. —INSIDE

Farmers reject govt proposal, to intensify stir

Offer of written MSP assurance fails to cut ice | Unions firm on repeal of laws, but keep window for talks open

MUKESH TANDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SONEPAT, DECEMBER 9

Farmer leaders today rejected a Union Government proposal to amend the contentious agricultural laws and said they would intensify their agitation with a nationwide protest on December 14.

They also said they would "choke" the national Capital by December 12 by blocking the Jaipur-Delhi and the Delhi-Agra expressways and all other roads leading to Delhi if their demands were not met.

Terming the proposal an "insult" to the farmers of the country, they, however, said if the government sent a fresh proposal of talks, they may consider it.

In a draft proposal sent to the 13 farmer unions whose representatives Home Minister Amit Shah had met late on Tuesday, the government proposed to give a "written assurance" that the existing minimum support price (MSP) regime for procurement will continue. It proposed to make necessary amendments on at least seven issues (see box).

The proposal, sent by Agriculture Ministry Joint Secretary Vivek Aggarwal, the government said it was ready to consider with an open heart the objections raised on the farm laws.

EDIT: CLIMB DOWN ON FARM LAWS



Farmer leaders address the media after discussing the Centre's proposal, at Singhu border on Wednesday. —PTI

THREATEN TO BLOCK ALL HIGHWAYS TO CAPITAL

The farmers on Wednesday called for a district-level nationwide protest on December 14. The protesters also threatened to choke the national Capital by December 12 by blocking the Jaipur-Delhi and the Delhi-Agra expressways and all other roads leading to the Capital.



Oppn leaders meet Prez, want laws withdrawn

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

A high-level delegation of Opposition leaders today met President Ram Nath Kovind and backed the demand of farmers' unions to repeal the three agriculture laws terming them retrograde and anti-democratic.

The delegation comprised NCP chief Sharad Pawar; Congress leader Rahul Gandhi; CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury; CPI general secretary D Raja and DMK's TKS Elangovan.

Speaking after the meeting, Rahul said the farmers were not going to end their agitation until the government agreed to rescind the new laws.

"We raised a couple of issues, including the manner in which these laws were passed in Parliament without any discussion with the Opposition," he said. —TNS

CHANGES PROPOSED ONLY IN 2 LEGISLATIONS

The government has proposed seven amendments to the two new laws — The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020. It, however, has not touched The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

KEEN TO RESOLVE ISSUES

• The govt has held several rounds of talks with the farmers. It is keen to resolve their issues.



A COPY OF THE GOVT'S PROPOSAL

15 PROTESTERS LOSE LIVES IN TWO WEEKS

Chandigarh: Fifteen farmers have died since the protest started on the outskirts of Delhi about a fortnight ago. On an average, a farmer is dying daily at Singhu and Tikri borders. Four farmers died in accidents, 10 of heart attack and one due to cold. —INSIDE



PRakash Javadekar, UNION MINISTER

For LAC build-up, China gave 5 differing explanations: MEA



PACTS BREACHED

Multiple pacts were inked from 1993 to ensure both parties won't bring large forces to the border. Now for some reason, the Chinese have violated it.

S. Jaishankar, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

ARMS PROCUREMENT FROM US JUMPS TO \$3.4 BN BACK PAGE

Jaishankar reiterated his statements such as terming the relationship as at its "most difficult phase" and

the violation of bilateral pacts by China as having "significantly damaged" bilateral ties. He did not elaborate on the five "different" explanations from the Chinese side.

Asked about some perceptions of India moving in an illiberal direction, Jaishankar questioned their motives and understanding of the new political regime in Delhi, besides terming them elitist. Mentioning London-based *The Economist*, he said for the past few years their political bias was evident.

"Those in the West are not able to come to the terms with the 'deepening of democracy' in India. They are getting this type of analysis as they are not 'those' (the earlier) people. Their (the current regime) social habits are different. It is an elitist problem," he said. —PTN

Nair had also moved the SC against rejection of her papers on the same grounds for contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Wayanad seat against Rahul Gandhi. —PTN

Cannot contest poll if conviction not stayed: SC

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

A person stands disqualified from contesting polls under the election law if his conviction in a criminal case, in which a jail term of two or more years has been awarded, is not stayed, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday.

The top court's observation came in a judgment by which it dismissed an appeal of Saritha S Nair against the rejection of her nomination papers for contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Ernakulam, Kerala, by the returning officers in 2019 on account of her conviction and sentencing in two criminal cases related to the solar scam in the state. Hibi Eden of the Congress won the seat.

Nair had also moved the SC against rejection of her papers on the same grounds for contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Wayanad seat against Rahul Gandhi. —PTN

No nod yet, vax firms told to give add'l data

ADITI TANDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

The national drug regulatory authority today reviewed the emergency use applications of Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech for their Covid vaccines and asked them to furnish additional data.

Sources in the Central Drug Standards Control Organisation said both companies had been told to present vaccine efficacy data from phase-3 trials to enable the subject expert committee to take a comprehensive call on safety, effectiveness and immunogenicity of the vaccines.

Serum Institute's Covishield is being developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca. In recently published data from trials in the UK, South Africa and Brazil, Oxford University said the vaccine was more than 90 per cent effective when administered as half a dose followed by a standard



70 envoys visited Bharat Biotech in Hyderabad on Wednesday. —PTI

POSITIVE RATE HIGH IN HIMACHAL, HARYANA, J&K

Nineteen states and UTs, including Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, have a weekly positivity rate of more than the national average of 3.23 per cent.

AFTER UK, CANADA OKAYS PFIZER-BIONTECH VACCINE

Covishield's phase-2 and phase-3 trials are underway in India and the results are awaited. Even in the UK, the

regulators are yet to allow emergency use authorisation for the Oxford vaccine.

Bharat Biotech-ICMR's Covaxin is also in phase-3 trials in India. Pfizer India's application for emergency use was not taken up today. Its vaccine has already been approved for emergency use in the UK.

The Indian regulators have to be cautious while reviewing Covishield for granting nod for emergency use considering no other world regulator has so far approved it.

The sources said safety would be top consideration before any approvals were granted. Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan had yesterday said some vaccines would get licence for use in India in the next few weeks.

Meanwhile, a team of 70 ambassadors and high commissioners visited Bharat Biotech's Genome Valley facility in Hyderabad today. They were briefed about the vaccine development programme.

Air Force refuses to give details of PM's flights

Cancer patients missed hospital visits during lockdown, hit hard

SUBHASH RAJTA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 9

Covid has taken a toll on cancer patients getting treatment at the IGMC Cancer Hospital, Shimla.

"The disease has progressed among 10 to 15 per cent patients, who could not come to hospital because of the pandemic, especially during the lockdown," said Head of the Department of Oncology Dr Manish Gupta. "Many people are scared to come to hospital but do not realise that delay in investigations and treatment would result in the spread of the disease," he said.

Even as some people are reluctant to come to hospital, the workload has increased. "There's an increase of 20 to 25 per cent patients in the

Disease progressed among 10-15% of them



The Shimla Cancer Hospital is short of manpower. —TRIBUNE PHOTO

Shimla hospital as the hospitals in Tanda and Nercowk have been converted into Covid hospitals," said Dr Gupta. The hospital is finding it difficult to handle the increased workload due to the shortage of staff. "Many of our doctors, nurses and other staff have tested

After CLU grant, Adani Group setting up silos for FCI in Panipat

GEETANJALI GAYATRI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9

After securing permission for change of land use (CLU) from the BJP-led Haryana government, the Adani Group is constructing high-tech silos for storage of foodgrain procured by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in Panipat's Jondhan Kalan and Naultha villages.

"Construction began in our village a couple of months back. The group had approached me for purchasing another two acres of panchayat land which falls in the vicinity of the land that they have already purchased from the farmers. However, I refused to commit since I am not authorised to sell panchayat land. I told them to meet the

'SERVICE PROVIDER'

- Adani Group has clarified it neither buys foodgrain from farmers nor decides the pricing
- It only develops and operates grain silos for the FCI
- The firm has no role in deciding the volume of storage or pricing of grain as it is only a service provider for the FCI, it says

higher-ups in the state government," said Balraj Singh, sarpanch of Naultha.

The land purchased by the group lies next to a railway track and is 2 km from the national highway. "The land

purchased by the group was not cultivable. It does not have any supply for irrigation and the water in the area is brackish, making it unsuitable for cultivation. The group started purchasing land nearly three years back and paid Rs 30 lakh per acre to farmers to begin with.

Gradually, it kept revising the rates and the price went up to Rs 2 crore per acre, leaving landowners who sold their land initially a little sore," the sarpanch added.

In Jondhan Kalan, the group began construction a month ago, confirmed sarpanch Vijender Singh. The CLU was granted by the office of the Director of Town and Country Planning, Haryana, in May this year. CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Hry fulfils PDS norms, allowed to borrow ₹2K cr

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

The Centre has given permission to nine states to borrow Rs 23,523 crore from the market as these fulfilled the eligibility criteria. Haryana can borrow Rs 2,146 crore.

GST: Centre releases 6th instalment of ₹6,000 cr

The nine states — Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh — have completed reforms in the public distribution system. The states undertook three major initiatives in this regard — seeding of Aadhaar with ration cards, biometrically authenticated beneficiaries and automation of fair price shops. —TNS

15 farmers die during two-week stir

VISHAV BHARTI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9
The farmers' struggle is not a picnic with lavish langars or macho songs, it is a battle being waged at a high cost.

In the past two weeks, on an average, one dead body is coming back every day to Punjab from the Singh and Tikri borders of Delhi, but the government is lingering on the issue.

Four of these farmers have died due to accidents, 10 due to heart attack and one due to cold. The casualties started with the onset of the preparation for the Delhi march of November 26 and 27. The first such casualty took place on November 24 when a large group of farmers was covering tractor-trailers with waterproof sheets in Mehal-kalan town of Barnala district. Kahan Singh, an activist of the BKU (Dakaunda) from Dhaner village, was hit by a car and he died on the spot. "Kahan Singh was the first martyr of the Delhi morcha," says Manjit Dhaner, BKU leader.

He was followed by Dhanan Singh, who died in an accident near Hisar when after breaking barricades, they were speeding the tractor towards Delhi.

Since then, on an average, one name is being added to the list every day, which is getting longer by the day.



Farmers protest the Central laws at the Singhu border in Delhi on Wednesday. MUKESH AGGARWAL

PROTESTERS WHO PASSED AWAY DURING AGITATION

- November 24: Kahan Singh (Dhaner, Barnala)
- November 27: Dhanna Singh (Chehlanwali)
- November 28: Gajjan Singh (Bhangu Khatra)
- November 29: Janak Raj (Dhanaula, Barnala)
- November 30: Gurdev Singh (Attar Singhwala)
- December 2: Gurjant Singh (Bachhoana, Mansa)
- December 3: Gurbachan Singh Sibia (Bhinderkhurd, Moga), Baljinder Singh (Jhamat, Ludhiana)
- December 4: Lakhvir Singh (Laleana, Bathinda)



- December 7: Karnail Singh (Sherpur, Sangrur), Rajinder Kaur (Gangohar, Barnala)
- December 8: Gurmail Kaur (Gharachon, Bathinda), Mewa Singh (Khote, Faridkot), Ajay Kumar (Sonepat), and Lakhvir Singh (Jharon, Sangrur)

As per the list compiled from various sources, at least 15 farmers have lost

their lives ever since the Delhi stir began.

Not just men, even

women have lost their lives during the ongoing stir. Like Gurmail Kaur of

Chand Patti village near Talwandi Sabo in Bathinda district, who died due to a heart attack while sitting in a protest at a toll barrier in Sangrur's Kalajhar village. Similarly, Rajinder Kaur of Gangohar village died at the Mehal Kalan toll barrier due to a heart attack.

A large number of protesters have suffered serious injuries while marching to Delhi. BKU (Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokri fractured his arm. Similarly, a photo of Mahinder Kaur, a protester from Alorakh village in Sangrur district, had gone viral when her leg was fractured in an accident but she refused to return without winning the battle in Delhi.

"This shows how insensitive the Union Government is towards the demands of farmers. The Prime Minister did not utter a word about the harsh cold wave the farmers are bravely facing," says Dhaner.

Though farmers have suffered severe losses, they are determined to take the struggle to its logical conclusion. "Earlier, we lost 10 of our comrades. We may lose more, but won't return till the government bends," says Rajinder Singh of the Kirti Kisan Union. Till November 20, 15 farmers had died while protesting at various sites in Punjab.



Farmers protest at the Singhu border in New Delhi on Wednesday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

More US lawmakers extend support, write to Ambassador

AMRITSAR, DECEMBER 9

Backing the protesting Indian farmers, three US lawmakers — John Garrahy, Jim Costa, Sheila Jackson Lee — have expressed concern over the agrarian crisis erupted due to newly enacted farm laws.

In a joint letter addressed to Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Embassy of India to the United States, the US Congressmen wrote that they were distressed to see the actions of the Indian government that had restricted the rights for many Indians; not only for farmers, but also for religious minorities and the human rights organisations.

Dr Pritpal Singh and Jaswant Singh Hothi from the American Gurdwara

Parbandhak Committee showed gratitude towards the US lawmakers for raking up the ongoing farmers' agitation and told the Indian Ambassador that the country should demonstrate a model of democratic values while dealing with the farmers, who were peacefully demonstrating for their rights.

"The US Congressmen, who are also the members of the American Sikh Congressional Caucus, told Ambassador Sandhu that many of these farmers have children, relatives and friends, who are US

citizens and have reached out to them to share their concerns about these developments. They demanded from the Indian government to refrain from suppressing the farmers' rights," said Dr Pritpal Singh.

Harpreet Singh Sandhu, a member of the American Sikh Congressional Caucus Committee, said, "We are indebted to the US Congressmen for becoming the voice of the farmers from Punjab who are demonstrating peacefully and trying to save their land and lives from the clutches of corporate houses, who would become more powerful after the new-farm laws." Meanwhile, the Sikh Coordination Committee East Coast also thanked the Congressmen. —TNS

Farmer cremated with 'honours' in Bathinda

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR, DECEMBER 9

Lakhbir Singh, a farmer who had died during the ongoing agitation at the Tikri border, was cremated at his native Laleana village, Talwandi Sabo, today.

BKU (Ekta Ugrahan) members termed it as a "sacrifice" for the just demands of farmers and vowed that they would not let it go waste and continue to protest against the Central Government's

Takht: Bid to malign peaceful movement



Giani Harpreet Singh those should be repealed unconditionally.

"The farmers' agitation is being defamed as it was anti-national. A major portion of the media has become a puppet of the Centre and is tagging farmers as 'Khalistanis' to divert attention from the farmers' cause," he said.

He said that the government was for the people and laws were to be formulated for people's benefit.

If the people were not ready to accept those,

Plea seeks FIR against Kangana for posting 'defamatory' tweet

OUR CORRESPONDENT

FATEHGHAR SAHIB, DECEMBER 9 An application under Section 156(3) of the CrPC has been filed against actress Kangana Ranaut for posting a 'defamatory tweet' and mocking a woman protester on the Delhi border.

The application was filed in the court of Ilaqa Magistrate, Fatehgarh Sahib, by the former president of District Bar Association and advocate AS Dharni after the expiry of the legal notice that he served to the actress seeking an 'unconditional apology' for her remark.

In the application, he

take appropriate action in accordance with law after verifying the facts.

In the legal notice, Dharni has sought an apology from Kangana and has also mentioned that if she failed to do so, legal action will be initiated against her.

The actress had mistakenly called Mahinder Kaur, an elderly Sikh woman who participated in the farmers' protests, for Bilkis Bano, one of the prominent faces of the Shaheen Bagh protests. The Tanu Weds Manu star had alleged that the woman was available for Rs 100 to participate in protests.



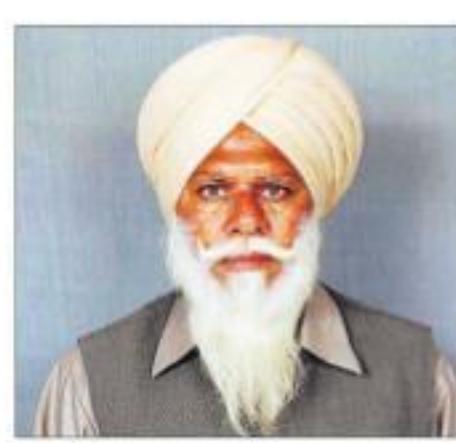
Charanjit Singh Channi

farm laws and the Union Government was not able to digest this.

He said Capt Amarinder had always stood behind people of Punjab and even resigned from the Lok Sabha for safeguarding rights of people.

Won't leave protest sites, more states backing us: BKU (Ekta)

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE



Sukhdev Singh Kokri determined to intensify their stir in the coming days across the country, he said.

He said farmers of West Bengal, Orissa and other eastern states had started agitations and many trade unions and students' unions of Bengal that were active in Delhi had

AAP gives 3,000 sanitary pads to protesters

BATHINDA, DECEMBER 9

AAP women volunteers have come up with the idea of distributing essential items, including sanitary pads, among the women protesters at the dharna sites.

They have distributed more than 3,000 sanitary pads among women protesters at the Delhi borders. The AAP women volunteers have also been taking care of the protesters by providing them with other essential items of daily use as well.

AAP MLA from Bathinda Rupinder Kaur Ruby said, "The party workers will continue to provide them the items of daily use as long as the agitation continues." —TNS

Farmers in Delhi, sanitation union irrigates their fields in Jalandhar

APARNA BANERJI

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JALANDHAR, DECEMBER 9

"Tusi dilli datte raho, asi Punjab vich tuhadi fasil da khyl rakhang," (you stay put in Delhi, we will take care of your fields) — says a slogan from the Water Supply and Sanitation Contract Workers' Union, Punjab.

In solidarity with the farm protests, members of the union are providing

"Pani Sewa" — watering

and tending to the fields of

farmers participating in

the agitation at Delhi borders.

Having declared to

extend help to farmers on

social media just a few

days ago, the union has

been flooded with calls

from across the state.

Some of the volunteers

put manure and watered

14 acres of farm land of

Darshan Singh at Dhaneth

village today. More vol-

unteers shall be heading to

Patran in Patiala.

Darshan Singh had gone

to the protests along with

his father, leaving their

14-acre land back home un-

tended. Worried about the

fields, Darshan was con-

sidering coming back to the

fields. Another elderly

couple from Patran partic-

ipating in the farmers' agita-

tion was clouded with

worries about watering

their fields back home.

Now, they no more have

to worry about their crops

as over 2,500 volunteers of

the union are at their ser-

vice to take care of the

fields. The union also pro-

vides medicines, fodder,

etc, to animals at farmers'

houses. It is also holding

'mashaal' marches in vil-

lages to raise awareness.

Varinder Singh Momi,

president of the Union,

said: "Sada suneha hai -

nischint hoke dilli jao. Je

utthe ho tan datte raho -

khet asi sambh lange. (Our

message is: You go to Deli-

hi without fear and if you

are already there, don't

worry about your fields be-

cause we will tend to them.)

The union has

2,500 members and mes-

sages have been sent to all

district heads to keep vol-

unteers ready whenever a

call comes. The union

members themselves will

also head to Delhi on

December 10 to partici-

pate in the protests.

Family refuses 'shagun', urges guests to donate for stir

ARCHIT WATTS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE



₹1 LAKH COLLECTED
We placed a donation box near the dance floor to collect money for the ongoing farmers' protest. We have collected around ₹1 lakh.

Jasdeep Singh, SARPANCH, SHEIKHU VILLAGE

MUKTSAR, DECEMBER 9
In a heart-warming gesture, a farmer's family at Sheikhu village of Muktsar district recently placed a donation box at a wedding reception, asking guests not to give shagun to them and instead donate for the ongoing farmers' protest at the Delhi borders.

Jasdeep Singh Jassi Brar, sarpanch, Sheikhu village,

said, "It was my nephew Abhijeet's wedding recep-

tion at our village on

December 7. We placed a</

It pains when farmers termed terrorists, says agri scientist

Dr Varinderpal refused to accept award from Union Minister

MANAV MANDER

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, DECEMBER 9
A day after refusing to accept the 'FAI Golden Jubilee Award for Excellence' from Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers DV Sadananda Gowda in Delhi, Dr Varinderpal Singh, principal (soil chemist), Punjab Agricultural University, said he was proud of what he had done.

Dr Varinderpal handed over a letter addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Union Minister. He wrote that he was heartbroken to see the plight of farmers and stated that he was neither a farmer nor a terrorist, but was writing in the capacity of an Indian who had been professionally dedicated for the welfare of farmers.

Talking to *The Tribune* Dr Varinderpal said he had not informed anyone about his decision as he wanted to raise farmers' issue from a prominent stage. It was after reaching Delhi that he took the decision of not accepting the

"I am son of a farmer. Nobody can understand the pain I go through when farmers are termed terrorists. I am proud of what I have done. I wish to work for the country and the Centre should listen to farmers. I will be guilty if I receive this award."

Dr Varinderpal Singh, PRINCIPAL (SOIL CHEMIST), PUNJAB AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

award. An interaction with auto-rickshaw driver who informed him that he was going on the protest site and moved by how Punjabis were fighting not only for their own rights, but for farmers of the entire country, changed his heart. "Our work and awards are for farmers only. Awards are meaningless if farmers are out on the streets," he said.

Dr Varinderpal said, "I am son of a farmer. Nobody can understand the pain I go through when farmers are termed terrorists. I am proud of what I have done."

"Farmers work in the soil while I experiment with the soil in my laboratory," he said. "The Centre tried to

break courage of farmers. It is the first agitation of its kind in independent India when protesters have not destroyed any public property and remained highly peaceful while serving food even to cops who lathicharged elderly farmers," he said.

"I wish to work for the country and the Centre should listen to farmers. The work I did is only for farmers. I will be guilty if I receive this award," he said on the stage.

Dr Varinderpal had led a team comprising Dr KS Subramanian, Dr Bijay Singh, Dr RK Gupta and OP Chaudhary from the PAU. He said he did not consult his team members before taking this step. "I am proud of what I

have done. I fully support the cause of farmers," he said.

Dr Varinderpal developed the "PAU-Leaf Colour Chart (PAU-LCC)" technology for optimising consumption of urea in crops. The PAU-LCC technology provides a potential solution of reducing urea consumption, which saves more than Rs 750 crore (Rs 250 crore of farmers and Rs 500 crore of the Government of India) in Punjab. Transfer of this technology would provide substantial economic benefits to farmers and the Centre. Improved quality foodgrains, reduced consumption of insecticides/pesticides, prevention of air and water pollution as after-effects of the adoption of PAU-LCC technology remain priceless, he said.

As per sources, Dr Varinderpal had earlier written to Dr BS Dhillon, Vice Chancellor; PAU, to return his Padma Shri award in support of farmers. The V-C could not be contacted and everyone in the university remained tight-lipped.

MP Deol's statement, which went viral on social media, has been termed "bamboozler" by Cabinet minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa. "During his campaign in the 2019 General Elections, the actor came up with many sidesplitting quotes while touring my segment (Dera Baba Nanak). People used to bring such gaffes to my notice, but I never believed them. I held a belief that Deol after all is a mature man. How can he stand by the government and be with farmers at the same time? Either he is with the government or he is with farmers. He cannot sail in

Deol faces flak over remarks on support to farmers, Centre

RAVI DHALIWAL

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

GURDASPUR, DECEMBER 9

Gurdaspur MP Sunny Deol's statement that he was "with the Centre and also with farmers" has evoked laughter not only among the Congressmen, but also among his own colleagues, many of whom advised him to "think before he leaps" to avoid embarrassment for his party in the future.

MP Deol's statement, which went viral on social media, has been termed "bamboozler" by Cabinet minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa. "During his campaign in the 2019 General Elections, the actor came up with many sidesplitting quotes while touring my segment (Dera Baba Nanak). People used to bring such gaffes to my notice, but I never believed them. I held a belief that Deol after all is a mature man. How can he stand by the government and be with farmers at the same time? Either he is with the government or he is with farmers. He cannot sail in



BJP leaders say the problem with Deol is that he does not even care to rectify his mistakes

two boats," said Randhawa

Qadian MLA Fateh Jung Bajwa was equally amused. "He should free his mind of all clutter before issuing statements. Else, he will continue to cut a sorry figure for himself. Actually, he has developed a knack of indulging in a comedy of errors," he averred.

A senior Pathankot-based BJP leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it would be better if MP Deol keeps a low profile ahead of the forthcoming Batala and Pathankot Municipal Corporations polls. "We are trying to win both the MCs. People have now started questioning us as to what our MP is talking about," he said.

A senior party leader said after the luncheon meeting between the Chief Minister and Sidhu and then, Sports Minister Rana Gurmeet Sodhi calling on Sidhu at his Amritsar residence few days ago, Sidhu's induction was just a matter of time.



Harish Rawat

117 vet officers recruited

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9

The Punjab Government has recruited 117 veterinary officers in the Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries Minister, handed over appointment letters to veterinary officers at Live Stock Bhawan on Wednesday. He said the government was committed to providing employment to youth.—TNS

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED

Regd. Office- PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001 Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB20108GC033813

(PUBLIC NOTICE)

As per the Tariff Order/Instructions issued by Hon'ble PSERC from time to time; Induction Furnace, Chloro-alkaline units, Billet heaters having total installed/connected kVA rating more than 100 kVA, Surface hardening machines, Electrolytes process industries, Electric Bell Furnaces for annealing, Arc furnaces (including Electro-Slag Refining/ Remelting) have been declared as Power Intensive Units (PIUs). Where rating of Billet heaters is not available in kVA, rated in kW shall be converted into kVA considering unity power factor.

It has been observed during checking that some consumers have installed Power Intensive Units in due course of time without intimation to PSPCL. If during checking, any general category LS consumer is found using PIU load in his premises, then it will be treated as a case of Unauthorized Use of Electricity (UUE) as per provisions of Regulation 36 of Supply Code 2014 and Section 126 of Electricity Act 2003, for which penalty on account of UUE is charged accordingly. In case your connection is sanctioned/released under general category and you have installed any PIU as per detail given above, you are requested to get your PIU loads regularized immediately without any further delay.

Sd/- SE/Regulation, For CE/Commercial, PSPCL, Patiala.

"REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST"

(CONSULTING SERVICES - FIRMS SELECTION)

"PUNJAB RURAL WATER & SANITATION SECTOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT"

Assignment: Empannelment for Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs) for Jal Jeevan Mission implementation in Punjab (NGOs/VOs/Women SHGs/CBOs/Trusts/Foundations in the following categories:

Cat 1: For NGOs/VOS/Women SHGs/CBOs/Trusts/Foundations (Having state-wide experience-Punjab).

Cat 2: For NGOs/VOS/Women SHGs/CBOs/Trusts/Foundations (Having National, International experience).

1. Government of India has restructured and subsumed the ongoing National Rural Drinking Water Program (NRDWP) into Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) with the aim of providing Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to rural households (Har Ghar Lal Se Jal) i.e., water supply on a regular basis in adequate quantity and of prescribed quality with project outlay of 3,60,000 crores. Part of above proceeds are intended to be applied for engaging ISAs for empanelment.

2. Objective of Assignment:

- Main objective of assignment is to achieve higher service delivery by accelerating social engagement through community mobilization activities at the village level including:
- Integrating water supply, sanitation, and hygiene awareness promotion interventions with enhanced community participation and ownership.
- Generating public awareness and demand for improved water supply, water quality and sanitation services in rural Punjab.
- Encouraging consumers for metering, billing and paying for O&M on an ongoing basis to ensure financial sustainability of JJM.

3. Shortlist Criteria of agencies:

- Minimum number of years in existence must be 5 years.
- ISA should have minimum average annual turnover of INR 50 lakh (for Category 1) and INR 5 crore (for Category 2) during each of the last 3 financial years.
- ISA should have an experience implementing of one (1) completed similar project with minimum contract amount of INR 10 lakh (for category 1) and INR 1 crore (for category 2) during last three (3) years.
- If any of the similar projects are ongoing, they should have completed at-least 3 years and should have been paid over INR 10 lakh (for category 1) and INR 1 crore (for category 2) by the client.
- ISA must have specific Experience of using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques and other Communication tools in Community mobilization.
- Minimum Qualifying Score for agency in Technical is 60 marks.

4. The Department of Water Supply and Sanitation now invites eligible Agencies to indicate their interest in providing services of above nature. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform services (brochures, description of similar assignments including specific experience of using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques and other communication tools in community mobilization).

5. The list of documents to be submitted are mentioned in the TORs placed at departmental website www.pbdwss.gov.in and <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.

6. Expressions of interest must be delivered in written form to the address below on or before 01.01.2021.

Note* Any corrigendum(s) to the "REoI" & Assignment shall be published on the departmental website: www.pbdwss.gov.in

OFFICE OF HEAD

DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION, PUNJAB

Water Works Complex, Phase-2,

Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar-160055.

Tele/Fax: 0172-2270101, 4330300, 4330317

E-mail: procurementdwsssp@gmail.com

Rawat to meet Capt today

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9

Ahead of the anticipated re-induction of Navjot Singh Sidhu into the Punjab Council of Ministers, AICC general secretary and Punjab affairs in charge Harish Rawat will be meeting the Chief Minister tomorrow.

Sources said Harish Rawat, who reached the city late in the evening, is expected to discuss the new panel of office-bearers of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. The announcement regarding the new office-bearers of the PPCC has been lingering on for the past one year.

A senior party leader said after the luncheon meeting between the Chief Minister and Sidhu and then, Sports Minister Rana Gurmeet Sodhi calling on Sidhu at his Amritsar residence few days ago, Sidhu's induction was just a matter of time.



Sukhbir surrenders, gets bail in defamation case

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9

Former Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal surrendered before Chandigarh district court in a criminal defamation case today. It was filed by Akhand Kirtan Jathachief Rajinder Pal Singh in 2017. Sukhbir was later granted bail.

Several bailable warrants had been issued against him earlier, but he had failed to appear before the court. During the resumed hearing of the case, Badal's advocate Munish Dewan informed the application and the court had



already issued the non-bailable warrants against him.

The complainant had filed the case in January 2017 over Sukhbir's alleged controversial statement in which he described the group as a terrorist organisation. Sukhbir had allegedly issued the statement after the complainant met with Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal three years ago at his house. The summons were issued after the Chandigarh Police submitted an inquiry report in the court on November 28, 2019. —TNS

DSP (D) and CIA in charge Rahul Kaushal.

A case under Sections 420, 465, 468, 471 of IPC, and Sections 61, 78(2), 1 and 14 of the Excise Act has been registered against accused Dipesh and Karaj Singh.

Sources said a tanker of the extra neutral alcohol (ENA) (20,000 litres), 43 cases of illegal country-made liquor (with labelling of Punjab Rasila Santra), labels, corks and sealing machine were recovered from the manufacturing-unit cum-godown.

The arrested accused Dipesh was out on bail two months back in a similar case registered against him in June in Ghanaur;" they said.

A senior police officer said Dipesh allegedly got in direct touch with truck drivers shifting ENA to and from distilleries and started producing Punjab medium liquor brands to make hefty profits. "The information that two government liquor contractors helped him sell his daily produce within no time is being verified," he said.

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION PUNJAB TENDER NOTICE INVITING ONLINE BIDS

THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION PUNJAB INVITES ONLINE BID FOR THE FOLLOWING WORK:

1. Providing & Installing One New Tubewell of Size 250x200mm i/d up to 248 mtr Depth with Reverse Rotary Rig in place of failed Tubewell for Water Supply Scheme Swara (1 No) at existing water works site Block Kharar Distt. SAS Nagar (Under Head 4215 (In Ratio of 60% as Under Head 4215-01-102-36-99-53 and 40% as Head 4215-01-789-13-99-53).

Closing Date and Time : 17.12.2020
For details logon to : <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

NOTE: Any Corrigendum to the Tender/RFP Notice shall be published on the website only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
W/S & Sanitation Division No. 3,
Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar.

DPR/Pb/114982

DSP (D) and CIA in charge Rahul Kaushal.

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Sd/- SE/Regulation, For CE/Commercial, PSPCL, Patiala.

DPR/Pb/115182

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
PWD B&R BRANCH
SHORT NOTICE INVITING ONLINE BIDS

Tender Notice No. 10 DATED: 08.12.2020

CLASSIFIEDS**SITUATION VACANT**

UGC NET faculty required for all subjects of B.Ed. Law and Agriculture in Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura, Near Chandigarh. Mail your resumes to: careers@aryans.edu.in (CL20071380)

PROPERTY FOR SALE

Harmar 99150-01900/ 98722-55755 Chandigarh Sector 15, 16 10/12 marla independent kothies, confirmed/ vast choice. (CL20071435)

LAND FOR SALE

For sale 28 acre land, Village Mohanpur, Tehsil Shahbad, Distt. Karnal on Shahbad Mohanpur Road. Contact: 098140-55597. (CL20071448)

RENT/LEASE

Commercial cum residential building measuring 25 ft. x 90 ft. with sufficient parking space situated at old basis road, Morinda, (Ropar) available on rent for MNC/ Bank. Contact: 94176-25957. (CL20071023)

LOST & FOUND

Lost certificates No. 29074 containing 50 shares of M/s Kanpur Plastipacks Ltd. If anyone finds them, contact Pramod Batra, #5155, MHC, Chandigarh. (CL20071309)

For Circulation and Advertisement booking and other related queries please call at following numbers from Monday to Saturday between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.

Circulation:
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E-mail at:
circulation@tribunemail.com

Advertisement:
Classified: 0172-2670257, 2670338
E-mail at:
classified@tribunemail.com

Display: 0172-2670256, 2670342
E-mail at: advt@tribunemail.com

PUBLIC NOTICES

I, Sonia Rani W/o Moninder Singh R/o 10A/102 Sangrur Road Dhuri (Sangrur), have changed my name after marriage to Harjeet Kaur. (CL20071315)

I, Ravish Kumar s/o Charnjeet r/o Village Shergarh, Tehsil Abbohar, District Fazilka, have changed my name to Ravish Jasa. (CL20071348)

I, Jaibeer Singh s/o Kiran Pal r/o VPO Lalru, SAS Nagar (Mohali) declare that it belongs to Rajput Sikhs Religion vide Affidavit No. 7446 Dt. 09/12/2020 before Executive Magistrate, Derabassi. (CL20071333)

I, Pala Ram s/o Murli Ram r/o H. NO. 727/39, Bapudham Colony, Sector-26, Chandigarh declare that my son Rajesh and his wife Saroj are out of my control. I disown them from all my moveable/immovable property. I shall not be responsible for any of their acts and anybody dealing with them shall do so at their own risk. (CL20071326)

I, Tara Devi spouse of No. 260209Y late Sub Ganga Ram, Vill. Kalas, Tehsil Sarkaghat, Distt. Mandi, HP, declare that my son Amit Kumar, Date of birth wrongly mention in my husband Army record as 04.05.1988. Correct 08.05.1988. Please note. (CL20071334)

I, Sunita w/o Ex. No. 179600-H, Rank: Petty Officer (ELP) Anoop Kumar s/o Harmar Singh VPO Sanghrai, Tehsil - Ghani, Distt. Una (HP), in my husband's service record my name be corrected as Sunita instead of Sunita Kumar. (CL20071440)

I, No. 15399326F Hav. Gulam Mohammad S/o Sh. Roj Deen R/o Village & PO Salihar, Tehsil Khundian, (Sub Tehsil Lagru), Distt. Kangra (HP) declare that my wife's name in my Army record wrongly entered as Sameena instead of Sameena Bibi. Concerned note. (CL20071458)

I, Lal Chand s/o Sh. Puran Chand r/o 367, VPO Saketi, Distt. Panchkula (HR) declare that my son Baljeet Singh and his wife Jyoti are out of my control. I disown them from all my moveable/immovable property. I shall not be responsible for any of their acts and anybody dealing with them shall do so at their own risk. (CL20071459)

I, Service No. 15215606X, Rank L/Nk (Gir) Name Dharamveer Singh, Unit 193 Med. Regt, C/o 56APC, declare that my father date of birth 01.01.1963 & mother date of birth 01.01.1966 is wrongly mention in my Army service records as but my father correct date of birth is 15.04.1963 & mother correct date of birth is 01.01.1963 according his educational documents & Aadhar Card vide Affidavit date 07.12.2020. (CL20071364)

It is for general information that
I, Manjeet Singh Jhajj s/o Gajjan Singh r/o Village Gidri, PO - Bilaspur, District Ludhiana Punjab-141421 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Manjeet Singh Jhajj in my Pension Book No. & P.P.O. No. S/058224/2008 (Army) and Discharge Book No. - 01039442. The actual name of mine is Manjeet Singh Jhajj respectively which may be amended accordingly. (CL20071356)

I, Service No. 15215606X, Rank L/Nk (Gir) Name Dharamveer Singh, Unit 193 Med. Regt, C/o 56APC, declare that my father date of birth 01.01.1963 & mother date of birth 01.01.1966 is wrongly mention in my Army service records as but my father correct date of birth is 15.04.1963 & mother correct date of birth is 01.01.1963 according his educational documents & Aadhar Card vide Affidavit date 07.12.2020. (CL20071364)

The Tribune CLASSIFIED THE RIGHT CHOICE

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Police party attacked in Moga, 3 held

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MOGA, DECEMBER 9
The Moga police on Monday arrested three persons who attacked a police party. SSP Harmar Singh revealed that they recovered a .315 bore pistol, 5 live cartridges including an AK-47 assault rifle from them.

AK-47 rifle and .315 bore pistol recovered

He said on December 5 at around 11.30 pm, Sub-Inspector Major Singh along with Home Guard jawan Sukhwinder Singh had gone to attend an emergency call at Jalalabad (east) village. On their way back, they saw 4-5 unidentified persons and one of them was wearing an Army uniform.

On asking how he was entitled to wear the uniform, both got into an altercation, following which the latter attacked the SI with bricks. They were apparently under the influence of liquor/narcotic substance, the SSP claimed.

He said the attackers fled the scene by snatching an AK-47 rifle, but left its magazines. It didn't take long for the police to trace the culprits and recover the weapon, too.

"We are making efforts to arrest 3 more persons who were involved in the crime," the SSP added. He further said that those arrested include Inderjit Singh alias Vicky son of Balwinder Singh, Gurpreet Singh alias Gopi son of Jaspal Singh, Jaspreet Singh alias Jassa son of Kuldeep Singh all residents of Jalalabad (east) village. The SSP said that efforts were on to arrest the others involved in the crime.

Academy Cadet Adjutant Watandeep Singh Sidhu, who hails from Threkee near Ludhiana, received three medals for excellence in physical endurance, PT and tactical ability. He had joined the National Defence Academy, Kharakwasla, in November 2016 and after completing the

Govt polytechnics record 30% rise in enrolment this session

Of 5,056 sanctioned seats in 25 institutes, 4,451 filled to date

RAJMEET SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9
Acarrot-and-stick approach to boost admissions at government polytechnics in Punjab has yielded results.

Reversing the past five-year pattern of low admissions, nearly 30 per cent increase in admissions has been recorded in the new academic session in 25 government polytechnics. At least 11 of these have logged 100 per cent enrolment during the Covid pandemic. The last date of admissions was November 30, before being extended till December 5.

On the other hand, the 226 private polytechnics have registered near 60 per cent fall in enrolment figures in the past three years. This year, only 3,000 of the total 29,936 seats in private polytechnics have been filled till November 30.

He said the attackers fled the scene by snatching an AK-47 rifle, but left its magazines. It didn't take long for the police to trace the culprits and recover the weapon, too.

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**ADMISSIONS OVER YEARS**

Year	Percentage
2020-21	88
2019-20	60
2018-19	59
2017-18	60
2016-17	54
2015-16	54

« Government Polytechnic College in Bathinda. FILE PHOTO

SC scholarship scheme.

On the other hand, Dr Anshu Kataria, chief, Punjab Unaids Colleges' Association, said the fall in admissions was due to the pandemic and the ongoing farmers' agitation. "On the pattern of the AICTE notification to extend the last date of admission till December 31 due to Covid, we demand that Punjab should also extend the last date of admission."

Principals said a mechanism to evaluate academic and administrative performance of technical institutes in the state could go a long way in improving the quality of vocational education in the state.

Of the total 5,056 sanctioned seats, 4,451 have already been filled to date. Of these, 62 per cent are SC students enrolled under the state-run

SC scholarship scheme.

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Decision comes after students offer written apology

stand of holding a physical interaction with the students. He said, "I'll again call a meeting to interact with them. It is important to have physical interaction as it'll help have a better impact on the students."

He said in the wake of upcoming final exams in January, he had to communicate with the students to take Covid-19 precautions seriously so as not to miss the exam. "I don't want students to miss any exam due to the disease. What is wrong in having a physical interaction in an auditorium that has the capacity of around 600?" he added.

Meanwhile, some of the professors criticised the punishment and said it was too 'harsh'. — TNS

Cadet from Ludhiana among 3 to bag top honours at IMA

VIJAY MOHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9
A cadet from Punjab is among three soon-to-be Lieutenants, who bagged top honours in various fields during their pre-commission training at the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradoon.

Academy Cadet Adjutant Watandeep Singh Sidhu, who hails from Threkee near Ludhiana, received three medals for excellence in physical endurance, PT and tactical ability. He had joined the National Defence Academy, Kharakwasla, in November 2016 and after completing the

three-year course in 2019, proceeded to the IMA.

Two other cadets, Academy Under Officer Majji Giridhar and Battalion Under Officer Ashish Kumar also received three awards each. Of 18 individual medals and trophies awarded for top positions in various categories at the awards ceremony the 'Autumn Term – 2020' held today, the three bagged 50 per cent of the awards.

Cadets of this term, comprising the 147th Regular Course and 130th Technical Graduate Course, will formally pass out from the academy on December 12.

EXCELS IN ENDURANCE, PT & TACTICAL ABILITY

- Cadet Adjutant Watandeep Singh Sidhu, who hails from Threkee near Ludhiana, received three medals
- Sidhu got Parachute Regiment Medal for best endurance and physical toughness, Maratha Light Infantry Medal for PT and Rajputana Rifles Medal for tactical ability

The courses include 325 Indian and 70 foreign cadets.

Sidhu got Parachute Regiment Medal for being best in endurance and physical toughness, Maratha Light Infantry Medal for being best in PT and Rajputana Rifles Medal for being best in tactical ability.

Giridhar received Brigade of

The Guards Medal for being best in service subjects, Jat Regiment Silver Medal for being best in officer-like Qualities and Sikh Light Infantry Silver Medal for being best in turnout and drill.

Kumar received 9 Gorkha Rifles Medal for standing first in military studies, Corps of Signals for stand-

dignity and courage."

The Commandant said it was important for an officer to maintain a competitive streak within the parameters of sportsmanship and fair play at all times. He mentioned that the urge to win and excel as a team should always be there.

The training imparted at the IMA provides a comprehensive knowledge of military fundamentals and leadership, as well as proficiency in basic military skills. It aims to develop qualities of character, intellect, fitness and competence needed by future ready officers who at all times in their career must be prepared to lead.

Cut in water supply irks paddy growers**OUR CORRESPONDENT**

AHOAR/SRIGANGANAGAR, DEC 9

Reacting over a drastic cut in canal water supply in the past three days, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (KSS) has warned the Centre that such steps won't help in cowing down farmers bodies in continuing their stir against the "black" laws.

KSS spokesman Subhash Sehgal said in a tripartite meeting held in April, the BBMB had agreed to release 15,540 cusecs of water via the Hariske Barrage for the canals in Punjab and Rajasthan in December, but the receipt on Monday was reportedly reduced to 11,000 cusecs and 12,000

FIRST BARSI

In Loving Memory of
SMT. SANTOSH NIJHAWAN
On the 1st Anniversary of your leaving for the
Heavenly Abode. A Life full of Love.
Affection, Care, Self-reliance & Guidance for All.

Fondly Remembered :
J.C. Nijhawan & Family, Village Anji,
Solan (H.P.) M: +91-8219611294
(03.10.1941-10.12.2019)

**BHOG CEREMONY & ANTIM ARDAS**

With profound grief and sorrow we inform you the sad demise of our respected

S. MOHANJIT SINGH SIDHU

(Landlord)

(S/o Sardar Udhamp Singh Sidhu
Arayanwala Kalan, Far

A helping hand for hands that feed

RAVINDER SAINI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

ROHTAK, DECEMBER 9
A local plumber, water provider and private bank official have lent a helping hand to Punjab farmers by providing them free accommodation in Bahadurgarh. A private hospital has extended free medical aid.

"Laxman of Bahadurgarh, who works as plumber in Delhi, has offered his flat, located near the dharna spot, for use. He took us to his flat and handed over the key, saying we could use the flat for as many days as we need," said Jaspreet Singh of Sangrur. He said the flat owner remained in touch with them over other needs.

Karnail Singh of Fatehabad said his group wanted accommodation on rent in Bahadurgarh and they had met several persons in this respect. "We requested Sumit, an official with a private bank, to give us the first floor of his building on rent. He gave us a hall in his building for free."

GENEROUS HOST

"My group wanted accommodation on rent in Bahadurgarh and we met several persons in this respect. We requested Sumit, an official with a private bank, to give us the first floor of his building on rent. He gave us a hall in his building for free."

Karnail Singh, FATEHABAD RESIDENT

20 and 25 farmers are staying at my office, where food, water and toilets are available," he said.

Gurlal Singh Balia, another farmer from Punjab, said a local water provider not only provided them potable water daily, but also made rooms at his house available. "We go to his house to bathe," he said.

He stated that a private hospital had been extending them free medical aid. "The condition of a woman activist worsened some days ago. We took her to the hospital and doctors treated her free of cost. They said they stood with farmers and would provide us free medical aid during the duration of the protest. Several farmers are getting medicines and check-up for free," he added.



State Congress chief Kumari Selja and INLD leader Abhay Chautala (right) at the Tikri border on Wednesday. PHOTO: SUMIT THARAN



Selja, Abhay join farmers at Tikri; not invited to dais

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JHAJJAR, DECEMBER 9

State Congress president Kumari Selja and senior INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala joined the farmers' dharna at the Tikri-Bahadurgarh border on Wednesday. They were, however, not invited to the dais to address the protesters. They sat on the ground among farmers and went back as soon as the dharna concluded at 3.30 pm.

"No political leader is allowed to speak from the dais. So, neither Selja nor Abhay were invited to address the dharna. However, we are grateful to them for extending their support,"

WE STAND FIRM

"The BJP government is suppressing farmers' rights. Today, the entire nation stands with them against the three 'black laws'. It is unfortunate that the food provider of our country is compelled to agitate in the cold."

Kumari Selja, STATE CONGRESS CHIEF

said a farmer leader.

Later, Selja told the media the Centre must repeal the three "black laws". "It is unfortunate that the food provider of our country is compelled to agitate in chilly conditions."

"History bears testimony to

FARMER FIRST

"I have come to Tikri as a farmer and to express my solidarity with the protesters. The INLD has been opposing the farm laws from the beginning. The party even flagged the matter in the Vidhan Sabha."

Abhay Chautala, INLD LEADER

the fact that farmers have brought revolution with their unshakable determination. The BJP government is suppressing their rights. Today, the entire nation stands with them against the three 'black laws'. The Centre is making every effort to thwart the

protest, but the farmers are prudent enough to protest peacefully, she added.

Abhay told the media he came to Tikri as a farmer and to express his solidarity with the protesters, who "have been carrying out the agitation in peacefully".

"The INLD has been opposing the farm laws from the beginning by terming these as death warrants for farmers. The INLD is the only party which not only flagged the matter in the Vidhan Sabha, but also submitted memorandums in every district demanding a review of the ordinances," he said, adding party workers had been helping the protesting farmers.

Says citizens should approach right forum for raising pleas

POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

"Our Constitution has deliberately empowered the executive to manage day-to-day working of a district. By invoking Article 226, we cannot over-reach the functioning of district administration."



PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT

more later next year.

The High Court is expected to witness an unmanageable flood of litigation once it reopens for normal operations. Functioning in restricted mode since March-end following the Covid outbreak, the High Court has been hearing a limited number of cases through video-conferencing. The cases being taken up are primarily the ones involving an element of public interest or urgency.

The Bench noted that the inherent powers were to be exercised consciously and by exercising self-restraint.

Dismissing the petition as non-maintainable, the Bench asserted that inter se dispute as to who was to maintain the road was among two government entities and this factual aspect could not be decided in a writ petition.

Dismissing the petition as non-maintainable, the Bench asserted that inter se dispute as to who was to maintain the road was among two government entities and this factual aspect could not be decided in a writ petition.

Bhai Gurdas College of Law (Well Established and Reputed Institute)

Patiala Road, Sangrur

Applications are invited for the following posts
Principal, Assistant Professor in Law-2, Assistant Professor in English, Sociology (1 each)

Qualifications: As per UGC and Punjabi University Patiala norms. For Principal person having established academic reputation and Administrative experience to be preferred. Apply within 15 days. Send resume along with photograph at Email: bgc12k3@rediffmail.com. Copy of application must be sent to Dean Colleges Pbi. Uni. Patiala.

G.S. Jawandha Chairman

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR ANIMAL HEALTH/BREEDING MANDI DISTT. MANDI H.P.

AUTION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the unsafe building of Five old Poultry Shed at Zonal Veterinary Hospital Mandi Disstt. Mandi will be dismantled as is and where is basis. The interested parties are hereby invited to attend the auction and offer the bid(s) as per terms and conditions detailed below on dated 22.12.2020 at 11.30 a.m. The building can be seen at the site on any working day during working hours 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. with the permission of the O/o Deputy Director Animal Health/ Breeding Mandi District Mandi HP.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

- Entire cost of dismantling is to be borne by the successful Bidder/ Contractor and the serviceable material so received after dismantling will also be of the contractor. Site is to be made clear up to ground level with in a period of one month.
- All the bidders shall deposit Rs.10,000/- (Rs. Ten Thousand) only, in cash, as security before the auction starts. This amount will be returned to the un-successful bidders on the spot.
- The highest bidder(s) shall be required to deposit 25% amount of the bid at the fall of hammer including Rs. 10,000/- already deposited as security and the remaining amount shall have to be deposited before starting the work of dismantling .
- In addition to above, the successful bidder(s) shall have to deposit/ furnish an amount of Rs. 20,000/- (Rs. Twenty Thousand) only in the form of an Account Payee Demand Draft/Fixed deposit Receipt (FDR) duly pledged in the name of Undersigned Mandi or Bank Guarantee from a commercial bank, as the case may be, in an acceptable form, as Performance Security, which shall be forfeited in case of not clearing the site up to the satisfaction of the undersigned FDR or Bank Guarantee should be valid at least for six months from the date of start of dismantling work.
- The above said building are being offered for auction as is and where is basis. The transportation charges will be the responsibility of the bidders.
- In case of any dispute relating to the sale of building material, the decision of the auction committee at the spot, will be final.
- The successful bidder shall not be allowed to lift the material unless he has deposited full amount of the bid and taxes payable thereon as per rule.
- The committee reserve the right to accept/reject the bid without assigning any reason thereon.
- The successful bidder(s) shall be liable to lift the material within 30 days from the date of receipt of award letter. In case the successful bidder(s) failed to lift the material within this stipulated period, the undersigned reserves the right to forfeit the whole of the amount already deposited by the bidder(s) or charge ground charges at the rate of Rs. 2000/- per day. Performance Security may also be forfeited.
- The department shall not be responsible for any damage/ loss/theft of auctioned building material.
- The dumping site will be arranged by the Contractor/ successful bidder.
- The site must be clear and clean from all dismantled and salvage material up to ground level for the purpose of construction of new building.
- In case it happens to be a Public holiday on the day fixed for bid, the auction shall be held on subsequent working day.

**Deputy Director,
Animal Health/Breeding
Mandi, District Mandi (HP).**

Fake call centre targeting foreigners busted

GURUGRAM, DECEMBER 9

Another fake call centre was busted in Gurugram on Wednesday by the cyber crime unit. The accused duped the US nationals posing as Amazon security support staff.

Two owners of the call centre have been nabbed while 13 workers were detained from the call centre. Two

servers and as many mobile phones have been seized.

The cybercrime team, led by ACP (DLF) Karan Goel, conducted a raid after getting a tip-off that a fake call centre was being run from the basement of a plot at Sector 45.

When the team reached the spot, more than 13 employees were busy on computers and

laptops. They did not possess a valid OSP licence issued by the Department of Telecommunication or an MoU related to their work.

The arrested accused have been identified as Praveen Kumar (32) of Rewari district, and Manish Kumar (31) of Bihar.

"The masterminds had regis-

राजिंदरा हसपड़ाल, पटिआला नेटिस

नं. दोरिंग/20/15180

मित्री: 08.12.2020

फिर से दर्शक दर्शक मित्री 06.12.2020 के दौरान दूर्घात सहित अपने गोपनीय लोगों को बढ़ावा देते हुए दर्शक दर्शक मित्री 30.06.2020 के दौरान 31.12.2020 तक पैद़िया जावा। गाउस जाप दूर्घात दर्शक दर्शक मित्री जावा।

DPR/Pb/115056 मरी/- मैट्रिकल स्पूरडैट, राजिंदरा हसपड़ाल, पटिआला।

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, DERA BASSI NOTICE INVITING TENDER (CIVIL WORKS)

E-tender MC Dera Bassi 11/2020 Dated:

Department Inviting Work:- Municipal Council, Dera Bassi
Name of Work:- Work amounting to Rs. 173.65 Lacs
Cost of Work/Earnest Money:- Separate for each work

Date of Opening of Bid:- 15.12.2020

For detailed terms and conditions of the notice inviting tender please see <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> and Helpline No.: 0172-280028, 281028.

Corrigendum, if any, will be issued on website only.

Sd/- Executive Officer,
Municipal Council,
Dera Bassi.

DPR/Pb/115187

PARDHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)

Tender Notice No. 05

Dated: 09.12.2020

The Executive Engineer, Construction Division, PWD B&R BR, Mukerian on behalf of Governor of Punjab invites the item rates bids separately for each package in electronic tendering system for upgradation of Roads under PMGSY-III (Batch-1) in the District Hoshiarpur of below noted Block/ Packages including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors registered with Punjab PWD (B&R)/Punjab Mandi Board.*

1. Block Mukerian - PB-07-309
2. Block Mukerian - PB-07-310

Date of release of invitation for Bids through e-procurement:- 11.12.2020

For further details regarding availability of bids documents, Mode of Submission, Details of Works & PIUs, DNIT, Bill of Quantities, eligibility of Bidders, Submission of Bids and last date/time for receipt of Bids package logon to website:- www.pmgsty.tender.gov.in.

Tender notice will also be available on website www.prdbd.gov.in and www.pwdpunjab.gov.in w.e.f. 11.12.2020.

Sd/- Er. Pawan Kumar,
Executive Engineer,
Constr. Divn., PWD B&R Br; Mukerian.
Mob. No.: 97800-00084

*Non-registered bidders may submit bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

DPR/Pb/105026

Jail inmates caught using phone

GURUGRAM, DECEMBER 9

The Bhondsi jail authorities on Tuesday busted illegal use of mobile phone by five inmates, who pooled in Rs 85,000 and bought a phone from another inmate.

The mobile phone was

recovered from Rahul, who is facing trial in a vehicle robbery case, during routine checking.

Sources say the accused charge a hefty amount from other inmates for making calls. — OC

BABA FARID UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES SADIQ ROAD, FARIDKOT (PUNJAB) - 151203 Ph.: 01639 - 256232, 256236

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

E-tenders are invited by Baba Farid University of Health Sciences on behalf of Dept. of Medical Education & Research, Govt. of Punjab for rate contract for procurement of one step RT-PCR kits for COVID-19 testing labs (COVID-LAB) at various Institutes/ places situated in Punjab upto 17.12.2020.

Other terms & conditions can be downloaded from <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The tenders will be accepted in e-tender mode only. Bidder can also download tender notification and document from university website:- www.bfuhs.ac.in

REGISTRAR

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL NEAR MILITARY HOSPITAL JALANDHAR CANTT Ph : 0181-2630776,835 & Army: 2561 www.apsjalandhar.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER GROUP 'D' CASUAL/DAILY WAGER

Sealed quotations are invited for Govt approved/registered Agencies (DGR empanelled) by 19 Dec 2020 for Outsourcing Services of Group 'D' Casual / Daily Wager at Army Public School, Jalandhar Cantt for the period from 01 Apr 2021 to 31 Mar 2022.

Interested Agencies/Firms to forward Tenders including the following:- (a) ESIC No (b) EPF No.(c) Service Tax No (d) GST No (e) PAN No (f) License No (g) Permanent & postal address (h) Phone No, Mobile No along with a business profile in similar services.

For tender enquiry contact APS Jalandhar Cantt on Phone No : 0181-2630776/ 2630877 during school hours.

Sd/- Principal

MAHINDRA

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Climbdown on farm laws

Centre needs to do much more to end the impasse

A day after Bharat bandh, which was near total in Punjab and partial in several states across the country, the Centre has agreed to give a written assurance on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and fix a uniform tax for private market yards and Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis. However, the government has not accepted the farmers' key demand to repeal the contentious farm laws. Still, the climbdown is significant as Tuesday's bandh had made a major statement about the groundswell of support for the farmers.

The government's proposal for amending the Acts has cut no ice with the farm unions. After the inconclusive meeting between a select group of farmers' leaders and Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday night and the cancellation of official talks slated for Wednesday, the onus is now again on the government to break the deadlock. Led by the Prime Minister, the Centre has been harping on the benefits of the new laws, but has failed to address the farmers' concerns. The attempts by some leaders of the ruling party to vilify the agitators have only worsened the situation. It's natural for Punjab's farmers to fear the worst as the state has a robust government procurement system that has stood the test of time. Any law that presumably tinkers with this set-up is bound to be viewed with mistrust by them. The government needs to reach out to the farming community, which was in the vanguard of the Green Revolution but is now grappling with indebtedness, diminishing profits and shrinking landholdings.

The Centre's immediate objective is to end the prolonged siege laid at Delhi's borders, but at the same time, it has to come up with genuine proposals that would help farmers gain remunerative prices. Agriculture was the lone sector that registered growth during two successive quarters this year (April-June and July-September), even as the lockdown-hit Indian economy slipped into recession. The focus should be on strengthening the sector rather than causing disruptions that can adversely affect its performance and fanned resilience.

Breakdancing at Olympics

IOC's focus is more on profit than sports

BREAKDANCING—or breaking, as it's been abbreviated to by the impatient—is now an Olympic sport and will make its debut at the 2024 Paris Olympics. If this seems bizarre, consider this—in 2013, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) actually dropped wrestling from the 2020 Tokyo games. Not surprisingly, financial considerations were the reason behind dropping possibly the oldest sport known to man from the Olympics—it was felt wrestling did not appeal to the younger viewers watching TV. Mercifully, seven months after wrestling was removed, IOC reinstated it for Tokyo 2020, after sports administrators realised that a mistake had been made. After all, TRP ratings and money can't be the prime criteria to decide which disciplines should make it to the world's biggest festival of sport.

However, the near-death of Olympics wrestling showed that the broadcasters have such a hold over IOC that even cornerstone sports are not safe in the pursuit of TV ratings and ad revenue. IOC, whose officials have been involved in corruption scandals in the past, is not immune to the lure of money. It's not surprising—the revenue IOC earned from broadcasting deals for the 2018 Winter Olympics and 2020 Summer Olympics is in the range of \$4.5 billion. He who pays the piper calls the tune—the broadcaster, with the inclusion of dancing in the Olympics programme, at the cost of traditional, 'proper' sports, is calling the tune. It is mind-boggling that squash is not part of the Olympics but breakdancing is.

From IOC's point of view, including breakdancing in Paris 2024 makes sense—the Olympics viewership is ageing, and the TV ratings in the US for the 2016 edition were 15% lower than those for the 2012 games. The biggest share of IOC's Olympics revenue comes from the US. Then, breakdancing was very popular at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires—this confirmed to IOC that it and other youth-oriented 'sports', such as skateboarding and climbing, would lure younger viewers. IOC's ideals mutated beyond recognition over the last five decades—the inclusion of breakdancing in the Olympics programme shows that more than ever before, IOC's focus is on profit.

The Indo-Pacific challenge

China's efforts to dominate the region have met with resistance from US, allies



G PARTHASARTHY

CHANCELLOR, JAMMU CENTRAL UNIVERSITY & FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER TO PAKISTAN

EVEN as the coronavirus pandemic dominated national and international attention, there were two significant developments this year, reflecting changes in India's foreign and national security policies. The first was India's active participation in activities of the "Quad", a significantly security-oriented grouping. This was obviously, in response to the threats China poses on its borders with India, and indeed, across the Indian and Pacific oceans. China, meanwhile, moved troops into the Depsang region in Ladakh, commencing in early April. This would enable China's forces to threaten India's strategic air base in Daulat Beg Oldie, and thereafter, to go beyond the Karakoram Pass, crossing the LoC, in JK. Secondly, India, responded aggressively, in the Pangong Lake region of Ladakh, deploying its forces on strategic heights, which were hitherto unoccupied.

Indian troops backed by armoured personnel carriers, tanks and artillery, mounted pre-emptive operations, seizing control of strategic heights in Ladakh, overlooking deployments of China's PLA. These operations were across a large tract of land, astride the Pangong Lake. New Delhi would be ill-advised to withdraw from the strategic mountain tops, it now controls in Ladakh. Accompanying these was a visit by S Jaishankar to Tokyo on October 6. This visit, undertaken amidst a pandemic, was to attend an important meeting in Japan, of the foreign ministers of the Quad—comprising the US, India, Japan and Australia.

Jaishankar stressed that the Quad is committed to a rules-based international order, respecting principles like



REALPOLITIK: Chinese threat has made India reassess its security policies. REUTERS

The Quad meeting in Tokyo stressed on freedom of navigation in seas and peaceful resolution of disputes.

freedom of navigation in the seas, respect for territorial integrity, and the peaceful resolution of disputes, in the Indo-Pacific region. Amidst continuing tensions on India's borders, US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and Defence Secretary Mark Esper arrived, for meetings with their counterparts, and a call on PM Modi. India signed a significant military agreement with the US, for the sharing of "sensitive satellite data," as the two sides held top-level security dialogue, aimed at countering China's growing power in the region. India will now have "real-time access" to intelligence information on developments across its borders with China.

The US perceptions of China's policies and the threats it poses in the Indo-Pacific Region, have now been spelt out in a 48-page report, titled: "The elements of the China challenge", published by the office of the Secretary of State. The State Department report contains details of how China has ensured that developing countries across Asia and Africa are drawn into a "debt trap", because of the terms of Chinese "assistance".

These countries have been compelled to mortgage their lands, ports and development projects, to China. This methodology commenced with "aid" for the Hambantota port, built in a constituency of the Rajapaksa family.

Hardly any ship berthed in the port, which Sri Lanka was compelled to hand over to China. This port could, in course of time, berth vessels carrying Chinese supplies across Indian Ocean.

A similar effort is being made in Myanmar, through financing the construction of the Bay of Bengal port of Kyaukphyu. China is also pressurising Myanmar to permit the construction of infrastructure and industrial projects, in locations linking Kyaukphyu port, to its Yunnan province. Aung San Suu Kyi and Generals appear determined to see that the costs are affordable. In the meantime, India has built the Sittwe port in Myanmar, for transporting goods from its northeastern states through the Bay of Bengal, to Kolkata. Given the rapid growth of the electronics industry in India, New Delhi needs to be proactive in building its defence and consumer electronics industries, including start-ups, in collaboration with Taiwan.

India's present overdependence on China in this and other vital spheres has to end. Electronics giants like Huawei are really strategic instruments of the Chinese government.

China's \$60 billion investment in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, will inevitably lead to Pakistan mortgaging land and project space, most notably, in and around the Gwadar port. China adopted the same strategy in Maldives, by saddling it with con-

struction projects it could not afford. Beijing was stopped by actions jointly taken by India and the US, after the previous Maldivian government was voted out of office. The same pattern has been repeated across Africa, with Chinese "aid" creating "debt traps", followed by attempts to take over the projects and lands. There is, however, no transfer of knowhow or technology to the recipient countries in China's projects. "Debt trap diplomacy" has now become a Chinese specialty.

With major European powers like the UK, France and Germany now taking off their gloves in UN forums, on China's human rights violations, much will depend on whether the Biden Administration will work jointly with its European partners in dealing with China's efforts to dominate the Indo-Pacific region. China has territorial and maritime boundary disputes with Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei. Beijing regularly uses force, in violation of the International Law of the Seas, to take control of maritime space of its neighbours. India's recent naval exercises in the Arabian Sea with the US, and partners in the Quad, have displayed a readiness to work with those who share its concerns about China's hegemonic characteristics.

China's ambitions in promoting its 5G Huawei communication services are now facing opposition across Europe. With the commencement of the winter, it would be difficult for China to mount major operations on snow-clad mountains. One should, however, never forget that the Chinese are masters in 'salami slicing' of strategic spaces. One hopes that India and China can reach an agreement on the modalities for delineating and respecting the so-called 'Line of Actual Control', in Ladakh and elsewhere. The 'Line of Actual Control' is a term, which has never been clearly defined—much to India's disadvantage and sorrow. It is, in fact, a term misused regularly by China, to transgress into and take over, Indian territory—whether in Ladakh, Sikkim, or Arunachal Pradesh, and also lay claim to territory in Bhutan.

When Chandigarh had a Kisan Nagar

PRABHJOT SINGH

NOT many would know that Chandigarh once had a vibrant Kisan Nagar. Adjoining Punjab Raj Bhavan and spread along the Chandigarh Golf Club, it had *kothis* of eminent leaders, some of whom are now spearheading the farmers' agitation. Besides nameplates and wooden television antennas, each *kothi* was designed in compliance with green and environment-friendly architecture.

Interestingly, Kisan Nagar had come up yards away from the then centre of power, Punjab Raj Bhavan. Though militancy was at its peak, it was the writ of farmers that ran over Kisan Nagar and its adjoining

areas. Punjab was under President's rule and the administration was under the control of the then Governor, BD Pande. He had a team of advisers to assist him.

At that time, the Chandigarh Administration was headed by K Banerjee, Chief Commissioner. Ragbir Singh, RK Niyogi and TC Gupta were the DC, SSP and SDM, respectively. The BKU was then headed by Bhupinder Singh Mann and had, among others, Ajmer Singh Lakhawal, Balbir Singh Rajewal and Ajaib Singh Khaira.

A few months before Operation Blue Star, thousands of farmers made Chandigarh their temporary abode and raised Kisan Nagar. So strong was the week-long siege that the Gov-

ernor could manage to sneak out once, that too in disguise. Starting on March 12, 1984, Punjab farmers, under the banner of Bhartiya Kisan Union—at that time, it was the only unified body of farmers—laid siege to Raj Bhavan to demand the withdrawal of a hike in power tariff. It was the culmination of a 14-month-long peaceful agitation in various parts of the state. The siege ended on March 18, when most demands of the 'special guests' of the city were conceded.

Barring the numbers, venue and dates, there were numerous similarities between the 1984 and the 2020 agitations by the farmers. It was a new experience for the City Beautiful and its residents. The farm-

ers had set up their kitchens and also set aside places for morning and evening prayers, besides enjoying performances by folk singers and theatre artistes during their free time. At the end, when the farmers decided to lift the siege, they left behind huge stocks of foodgrains, vegetables, fruits, fuel and other items for use by residents in general, and the weaker sections in particular.

Interestingly, after the initial hostilities, especially from the residents of posh sectors, the farmers had managed to win the hearts and support of their new, though temporary, city mates. Thirty-six years later, this change of heart is reflected by the all-out support to the farmers during the current agitation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not ready for reforms

Apropos of 'Scrap laws', Badal writes to Centre, the advice of the nonagenarian leader from Punjab is not only well-meaning, but also timely. Undue obstinacy may only lead to further alienation of the agitating farming community, and hence needs to be avoided in the larger national interest. The farm legislations only triggered a spontaneous outburst of the frustrations of the farming community facing an unjust system for quite some time now, leading to their chronic indebtedness and pecuniary ruin.

Diversionary tactics aimed at polarisation, dividing the people and painting the mass movement as anti-national, will only prove counterproductive. The government is in a tearing hurry to tick its wish list without taking the intended beneficiary into confidence. It is now clear that the farming community is not yet ready and must be given more time to make it a willing partner in the reforms process.

GP CAPT JS BOPARI, UNA

Let MSP stay

Prime Minister Modi says reforms are very much required. With a similar argument, he introduced GST in place of the outdated VAT, but gave exemption to petroleum products on

the demand of the state governments. Similarly, in the new farms laws, MSP should remain in force wherever the state governments demand.

NARESH JOHAR, AMRITSAR

Shun arrogance

The basic concept of democracy seems to have been violated by passing the farm laws that are not in favour of a majority of the farmers. The government must consider their demands and not be adamant. Corporates have benefited earlier also and these laws point in the same direction. Let good sense prevail.

MS TANDAN, AMBALA CANTT

Bandh affects economy

Most of our farmers have no knowledge of the farm laws. Some representatives of the kisan unions are leading the movement. Many parties have supported the bandh. Farmers have already declared that they would not politicise their movement.

The government should call for an all-party meeting to resolve the issue.

RAJIV BOOLCHAND JAIN, ZIRAKPUR

For the sake of justice

Refer to the article 'Of sippers and straws'; in a large democratic country like ours, free, fair and an impartial judiciary is the only hope for millions. Unscrupulous politicians have an eye only on their vote bank. A corrupt bureaucracy has lost its credibility as it listens only to the diktats of its political masters for fringe benefits. It is the judicial obligation of the courts to undo a wrong in the course of administration of

justice or to prevent the continuation of undue judicial process. The whole idea is to do real, complete and substantial justice for which they exist. Failure of the judicial system means collapse of society.

ANIL BHATIA, HISAR

Govt interference

Reference to 'IIM autonomy'; devaluing institutions by taking away their autonomy is completely wrong if we wish to attain global standards in education. Institutes won't be able to practise independently in the wake of political interference. The government needs to rethink before acting against its own rules and visions.

SHIVANI BANSAL, RAMPURA PHUL

Central Vista

Apropos of the editorial, 'Central Vista project', while the world is focused on the pandemic and has put on hold all non-essential projects, the Centre presses ahead with the controversial project. Though the Supreme Court expressed displeasure, importantly, it refused to stay the foundation stone-laying of the new parliament building. The government must use the money intended for the project on those whose lives need to be stabilised.

SS PAUL, NADIA



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Our national security lies not just in protecting our borders, but in bridging divides. — Joe Lieberman

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1920

Mr. Gandhi on Coercion

ONCE again has Mr. Gandhi condemned the practice of coercion by non-co-operatives. "It would be a dangerous thing," he says in his latest article on the subject in *Young India*, "if for difference of opinion, we were to proclaim social boycott." This is precisely what we have said ourselves. Referring to what appears to have been done in some cases, Mr. Gandhi writes: "It would be totally opposed to the doctrine of non-violence to stop the supply of water and food. Non-co-operation does not compel others to yield obedience by violence, direct or indirect. We must try patiently to convert our opponents if we wish to evolve democracy out of slavery. We must be scrupulously exact in our dealings with opponents. We must not replace the slavery of non-co-operationists. We must concede to our opponents the freedom we claim for ourselves." Nothing could be more emphatic or more unmistakable than this condemnation of coercion, and this is not the first time that Mr. Gandhi has used this or similar language. How come, then, that persons who are never tired of shouting "Gandhi ki jai" and who imagine that they are the only persons who respect and revere the great leader, are in actual practice violating his solemn injunction? We cannot say in this case, what the philosophic biographer of Burke has said of so many of the professed admirers of that great man's writings on the French Revolution, that "it was the feet of clay that they adore in their image and not the head of fine gold and the breasts and the arms of silver," for the feet of clay in this case is purely imaginary. Is it, then, a case of the multitude laying to heart only that much of the teaching of the leader which is in harmony with their own preconceived ideas and their taste, and rejecting the rest?

Export thrust needed for all farm goods



SUSHMA RAMACHANDRAN

SENIOR FINANCIAL JOURNALIST

In the midst of the headline-grabbing farmers' agitation, a small news item surfaced recently about China buying rice from India. The development came in the backdrop of continuing border tensions and prolonged negotiations to resolve them. The purchase was unavoidable for China owing to global shortages and competitive prices being offered by Indian suppliers. The relatively small shipment of rice to the northern neighbour may be a one-time affair but reflects the buoyancy of agricultural exports that have become a shining light on the export front.

The pandemic led to a dip in export growth since March with an overall decline of about 18 per cent from April to November. Export of agricultural products alone, however, has grown by 4.3 per cent in dollar terms in the first half of the current fiscal. The remarkable aspect of this growth is that it continued even during the disastrous first quarter of the year which recorded a contraction of 23.9 per cent.

The positive trend of agro-exports has been in line with the overall performance of agriculture which grew by

3.4 per cent even during the first quarter. The potential for a big leap in agricultural exports has been recognised over the years but much more financial and infrastructural support is needed for consistent and sustained growth.

The case of sugar is illustrative. The second biggest foreign exchange earner after rice, it badly needs a consistent long-term policy to ensure that India can remain a significant player in world markets. Successive governments have failed to resolve the persistent problem of cane arrears plaguing this commodity. Decisions on subsidies to help sugar exporters compete effectively are also delayed inordinately. The sugar year begins in October, but last year's subsidy payments are still awaited. At the same time, the entire question of subsidy is under threat as the Cairns group of countries has raised a dispute on the issue at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

In this context, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's comments supporting the Indian farmers' agitation for an assured minimum support price seem ironic, at the very least. Canada has been one of the leading lights of the Cairns group of countries which has opposed the concept of public stockholding through minimum procurement prices. In fact, India has been battling this group for years at the WTO during negotiations on the Agreement on Agriculture. The latest dispute on India's sugar subsidy is in line with the Cairns group's opposition to such support for farm goods in this country. The Canadian leader's com-



WTO PLATFORM: Canada has been critical of India's farm policies. REUTERS

ments may have been meant for the Indian diaspora that is a key domestic constituency for him, but Canada would be advised to alter its external trade strategies to endorse this country's stance at the WTO in support of farmers' livelihoods.

As far as most agricultural exports are concerned, however, India remains a minnow in global markets despite being one of the biggest food-grain and horticulture producers. It is only in rice that India is the top exporter in the world and looks set to retain that position even during the pandemic. It is also the fourth largest cotton exporter and here too prospects remain bright this year. As for the other commodities, it may be the second largest wheat producer but is only

34th in terms of exports. Similarly, it is the second largest fruits producer but only 23rd in terms of exports. In vegetables, it is the third largest producer but ranks only 14th in exports.

An allied sector of agriculture, marine exports, on the other hand, presents a much better picture. India is already the fourth largest seafood exporter and is currently the biggest shrimp supplier to the US. Recently, efforts have been made to promote inland fisheries development to capitalise on the success story of marine exports, but there is still a huge gap to be filled in terms of value addition for fisheries and seafood. Besides, stringent testing and checking requirements of developed countries have remained a hurdle and these have become non-

tariff barriers for such exports.

The buoyancy witnessed in agriculture and allied goods exports is critical for India at this stage as trade looks to be a catalyst for global economic revival. The initial fear that supply chains will collapse during the pandemic has not actually happened and, instead, there is greater resilience.

Several China-based companies have swiftly moved to other countries, notably South-East Asia and some even to India, to ensure that the US-China trade war does not engulf them.

It was originally expected that the pandemic would lead to countries putting up protectionist trade barriers, just as the movement of persons was curtailed in most parts of the world for a while. International trade did fall in

the initial months of the virus spread, but this was followed by a sharp rebound. The result is that the WTO has revised its projections for the fall of merchandise trade flows from 32 per cent to 9.2 per cent during 2020. While India's exports are still in the contraction mode, countries like South Korea have rebounded and manufacturing output is rising in China, Japan and Taiwan.

It is thus time for India also to make a bigger push to exports in terms of policy and incentives. One area that was always a big part of the country's export basket has been pharmaceuticals and this has emerged in an even greater way due to the pandemic. In the initial months, enterprises shifted focus to producing safety equipment like PPE kits which were then exported all over the world. Similarly, it may have been a hub of vaccine production earlier but is now becoming the world's pharmacy with Covid vaccines being rolled out rapidly.

The same kind of flexibility and adaptability are needed to drive exports of agricultural goods. The biggest potential lies in the horticulture arena where processing of fruits and vegetables can lead to this sector becoming a game-changer on the export front. The farmers' agitation has certainly put the focus on agriculture but to make a mark in world trade, infrastructure and policies need to be revised not just for crops covered by the minimum support price system but also for the whole gamut of agricultural commodities.

Contain, if not reverse, drift in federal governance



SURESH KUMAR

CHIEF PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO PUNJAB CM

The recent tweaking of the policies on taxation, agriculture and trade indicates an inadequate appreciation of the country's diverse socio-economic milieu, which is our strength. Else, we will be no different from a theological country. Our policies need to avoid the possible social and economic upheavals that aggravate the miseries of the people. In the haste and anxiety to grow faster, the established process of consultation, analysis and review of stakeholders' claims can't be ignored.

THE Constitution of India provides for a three-branch government—legislative, executive and judiciary. The functions of the government are performed at the levels of Central, state and local self-governments. All these have distinct powers and responsibilities with a defined system of checks and balances to maintain accountability. The country, however, has an asymmetrical federal structure. The Centre has a greater role in ensuring the equitable growth of all regions and holds the key to maintaining territorial unity and integrity of the country.

Jawaharlal Nehru, during the Constituent Assembly debates, had cautioned that "it would be injurious to the interests of the country to provide for a weak Central authority, which would be incapable of ensuring peace, of coordinating vital matters of common concern and of speaking effectively for the whole country in the international sphere."

But there are some significant federal features in the Constitution. Dr BR Ambedkar assured the Constituent Assembly: "The Constitution is a Federal Constitution. The Union is not a league of states... nor are the states the agencies of the Union, deriving powers from it. Both the Union and the states are created by the Constitution; both derive their respective authority from the Constitution."

The governments perform their role by defining appropriate public policies within the overall framework of the Constitution. But policymaking is an arduous task, more so in our country due to its plurality and diversity. The governments emphasised reaching out to the poor to ameliorate their economic miseries as the trickle-down theory had not worked. But, the growth of the private sector and



COHESIVE: Policymaking is an arduous task due to our country's plurality and diversity. PTI

expected to address people's concerns in a manner that is accepted by most, if not all, segments of the population. In pragmatic federalism, evidence-based policies are expected to achieve a more cohesive and prosperous society.

A look back at some policies reflects that, as a successful nation and an emerging economy, our national policies had invariably responded to the ground situation and people's aspirations. Post-independence, the public sector was developed to lay strong foundations to prevent any major social or economic disruption. Pursuing the mixed economy, core industries were developed by the government to stimulate growth.

The nationalisation of banks further gave a fillip to the pro-poor economic agenda of the governments. The governments emphasised reaching out to the poor to ameliorate their economic miseries as the trickle-down theory had not worked. But, the growth of the private sector and

inflow of FDI was stunted, and as a result, the country experienced higher inflation and lower economic growth. The rising stagflation compelled policymakers to go for economic reforms that unfolded in 1992.

All these years, there was near unanimity and synergy in the public policy arena, with no visible drift away from the national goals. Surely, there were differences among the mainstream political parties, and these became more pronounced in 1969 when a dominant national political party was bifurcated for the first time. Political divisions became more visible in 1989 when the era of coalition politics started. The nation was always in focus, but with the rising ambitions of some unrelenting socio-political groups, the country witnessed instability in governance. However, the national agenda was reassured with the evolution of rules of coalition governments.

The most successful governments of

these times were the coalitions headed by PV Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh. Despite ideological differences and varying political agenda, national interest remained the key factor in policymaking. And the policies of the Central and state governments were mostly synergised. These were contextualised to meet the requirements of the states and focussed to create employment through better education, skill development, infusion of capital, and creation of wealth across all sectors of the economy.

The greater need for policy synergy that strengthened federalism in the country is realised now. It may be an illusion that only a strong government can strengthen the foundations built over the years. In a country with diverse cultures and thoughts, the governments can reach every nook and corner through policies that fully reflect upon the expectations of our population.

The recent policy drift, though being attributed to varying political ideologies, seems to be rising owing to an inadequate reflection of the governments on the ground situation and the needs of the affected population. Some key players appear to be disinclined to adjust policies to the changing realities, thereby changing their impact. They seem to be using globalisation as a recuse. However, decentralisation is a virtue and an imperative even in an increasingly competitive and market-driven world.

In India, alongside the economic premise of policy decisions, the contextual social logic is difficult to ignore. The polarisation of society on any lines is retrograde. It may delay the national goal of an equitable and forward-look-

ing society that has a better quality of life for all with some universal basic income and living standards.

The recent tweaking of the policies on taxation, agriculture and trade indicates an inadequate appreciation of the country's diverse socio-economic milieu, which is our strength. Else, we will be no different from a theological country. Our policies need to avoid the possible social and economic upheavals that aggravate the miseries of the people.

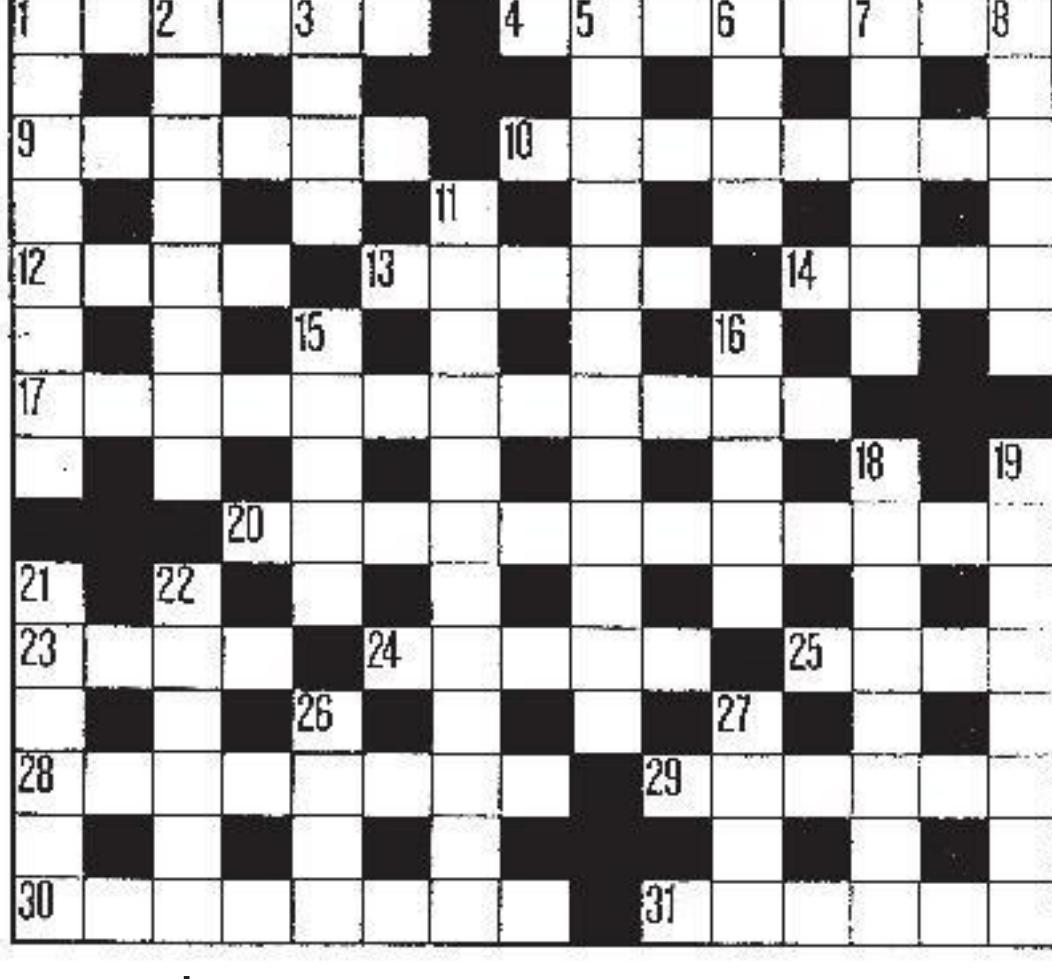
In the haste and anxiety to grow faster, the established process of consultations, analysis and review of stakeholders' claims cannot be ignored for a wider appreciation of the policies. The states and local authorities should be allowed their legitimate space in policy planning and implementation to build a mentality of federal governance. Else, some alternative — administrative, legislative or judicial solutions — will be evolved to fix the problems that are raised by the common man. Such gamification may prolong the process of achieving a mature federal democracy. If allowed to persist, such a governance drift and lack of synergy in policies will become politically risky.

The key players in policymaking may use distraction and blame avoidance strategies to gain support and soften opposition, but for a more sustainable policy arrangement, the drift should be contained, if not reversed, through consensus and a common understanding of the requirements of the growth of a plural and more cohesive society based on human values.

We should let hundreds of flowers bloom for this long-cherished goal.

Views are personal

QUICK CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

Across: 1 Fetch, 4 Baleful, 8 Rye, 9 Vice versa, 10 Absolve, 11 Budge, 13 Direct, 15 Debris, 18 Scrub, 19 Typical, 21 Overreact, 23 End, 24 Limited, 25 Happy.

Down: 1 Forward, 2 Treasurer, 3 Hotel, 4 Bicker, 5 Lovable, 6 For, 7 Leave, 12 Dirt cheap, 14 Cabaret, 16 Solidly, 17 At hand, 18 Scowl, 20 Pitch, 22 Elm.

ACROSS

- 1 An ornamental clasp (6)
- 4 Very offensive (8)
- 9 Stay in hiding (3,3)
- 10 One-sided (8)
- 12 Obtain as due reward (4)
- 13 Consciously haughty (5)
- 14 Sad (4)
- 17 Self-government (12)
- 20 Be closely associated (2,4,2,4)
- 23 To utter (4)
- 24 Region's animal life (5)
- 25 Genuine (4)
- 28 Interested spectator (8)
- 29 Actually (2,4)
- 30 Voluntary choice (4,4)
- 31 Quick (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 Short official statement (8)
- 2 Supersede arrogantly (8)
- 3 Lump of earth (4)
- 5 Very distressing (5-7)
- 6 Quote (4)
- 7 Affront (6)
- 8 Male goose (6)
- 11 In perfect condition (5,2,1,4)
- 15 Frighten (5)
- 16 Barely sufficient (5)
- 18 Avoid humiliation (4,4)
- 19 Great adulation (8)
- 21 Begin a journey (3,3)
- 22 A fine gauzy fabric (6)
- 26 Forehead (4)
- 27 Speak irritably (4)

SU DO KU

	7			2	5	3
		4			6	
3						
5		7				
8	9				7	5
		3		6		
2					8	
1			9			
3	8	9			6	

HARD

CALENDAR

DECEMBER 10, 2020, THURSDAY

■ Vikrami Samvat	2077
■ Shaka Samvat	1942
■ Marghshir Shaka	19
■ Marghshir Parvishtha	26
■ Hijri	1442
■ Krishna Paksha Tithi 10, up to 12.52 pm	
■ Saubhagya Yoga up to 7.25 pm	
■ Hast Nakshatra up to 10.51 am	
■ Moon enters Libra sign 9:52 pm	

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

8	7	1	6	9	3	2	5	4
2	5	4	7	8	1	9	3	6
6	3	9	5	4	2	7	1	8
9	2	6	3	7	8	1	4	5
4	8	7	1	2	5	6	9	3
5	1	3	9	6	4	8	2	7
1	9	8	4	5	6	3	7	2
3	6	5	2	1	7	4	8	9
7	4	2	8	3	9	5	6	1

FORECAST

SUNSET: THURSDAY 17:22 HRS
SUNRISE: FRIDAY 07:10 HRS

CITY	MAX	MIN
Chandigarh		

Two bodies fished out of Gobind Sagar reservoir

OUR CORRESPONDENT

UNA, DECEMBER 9
Divers of the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) today fished out two bodies from the Gobind Sagar reservoir near Kolka village in Bangana subdivision.

Three persons had drowned, while the fourth one had managed to swim to the shore after their boat capsized on Tuesday. Bangana SDM Vishal Sharma confirmed that the bodies of Aman Kumar (23), a resident of Chulahdi village, and Karnail Singh alias Kala (38), a resident of Thana Kalan village, were fished out this afternoon.

The body of the third deceased, Deepak (24), a resident of Thada panchayat, was fished out by the locals a few hours after the incident, while Jeevan Kumar (40), a resident of Nurgadhi, the fourth occupant of the boat, had reached the shore safely.

All four were acquaintances and belonged to Bangana subdivision.

Tourists in Lahaul to be registered

ABHINAV VASHISHT

KULLU, DECEMBER 9
The Lahaul administration will set up an IT cell to register the details of visitors and provide them with garbage bags so that the valley can be kept clean. Lahaul-Spiti DC Pankaj Rai said an online application form would be developed

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate tenders on the form 6 & 8 are invited by the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division, Dehra on behalf of the Governor of HP for the following works from the approved and eligible contractors enlisted in IPH Department.

TENDER SCHEDULE:

1. Date and time of receipt of application for tender form	14.12.2020 up to 05.00 p.m.
2. Date and time of issue of tender form	14.12.2020 up to 05.00 p.m.
3. Date and time of receipt of tenders	15.12.2020 up to 03.00 p.m.
4. Date and time of opening of tenders	15.12.2020 at 03.30 p.m.

The earnest money (unless exempted) in the shape of NSC/FDR/Time Deposit and saving account of the Post Office/Bank in HP duly pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division, Dehra should be attached with each tender case. Tender without earnest money shall summarily be rejected. These tenders have been uploaded in the departmental website www.hiphj.org. The firms/contractors who download the tender form the departmental web site shall have to deposit the cost of the tender form in the shape of demand draft drawn in favour of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division, Dehra payable at Dehra along with the eligibility criteria and earnest money in separate sealed cover up to 03.00 p.m. on dated 15.12.2020 and can collect the requisite form from the office after scrutiny of their application. If the office happens to be closed on the date of receipt of the tender as specified above the tenders will be received and opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

Job No. 1	Name of work	A/R & M/O water supply scheme Lahroo Barhwai under Tehsil Khundian Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH:- Laying, Relaying, Dismantling jointing & testing of GI pipe various dia) (Job No. II).
Estimated cost: Rs. 12573/-	Earliest money: Rs. 2515/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 2	Name of work	A/R & M/O LWSS Kamiota Kohala in Tehsil Jawalamukhi Distt. Kangra (HP)(SH:- Laying joining and testing of GI pipe RD 0/0 to 940 Rmt. (from tank behind Jal Shakti Sub-Division, Jawalamukhi to Newly constructed tank at Drang SC Basti tank).
Estimated cost: Rs. 13883/-	Earliest money: Rs. 2780/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 3	Name of work	A/R & M/O water supply scheme Lahroo Bachwai under Tehsil Khundian Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH:- C/o sector tank 15000 ltr. Cap) (Job-1).
Estimated cost: Rs. 21503/-	Earliest money: Rs. 4300/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 4	Name of work	A/R & M/O LWSS Bah Gilkhari in Tehsil Jawalamukhi Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH:- Laying jointing & testing of GI pipe 40 mm dia from main storage tank Baroa to Vill. Salao).
Estimated cost: Rs. 118645/-	Earliest money: Rs. 2375/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 5	Name of work	R/M of LWSS Bif. Haripur Kharian in Tehsil Dehra Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH:- Dismantelling re-laying and testing of GI pipe various dia in Village Chatra Pansal (CRF).
Estimated cost: Rs. 22720/-	Earliest money: Rs. 4545/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 6	Name of work	Providing water facility to SC habitation of Vill. Khadhwara, Barwara, Shivnath and its adjoining area under GP. Shivnath in Tehsil Dehra Distt. Kangra (HP) (under SCSP)(SH:- C/o RCC storage tank 20000 ltrs. capacity Node No. 2).
Estimated cost: Rs. 247270/-	Earliest money: Rs. 4945/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 7	Name of work	Providing water facility to SC habitation of Vill. Thathar & its adjoining area under G.P. Tripal through existing 8" T/Well in Tehsil Dehra Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH:- C/o Pump house 12.25 Sqm area for bore well).
Estimated cost: Rs. 338487/-	Earliest money: Rs. 6770/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 8	Name of work	Providing water facility to SC habitation of Vill. Thathar & its adjoining area under G.P. Tripal through existing 8" T/Well in Tehsil Dehra Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH:- C/o sector tank 30000 ltr. Cap at Node No. 3).
Estimated cost: Rs. 358821/-	Earliest money: Rs. 7180/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 9	Name of work	A/R & M/O LWSS Rainha Dhawala in Tehsil Dehra Distt. Kangra (HP)(SH:- Supply and erection of submersible pump set with its allied accessories 20 HP).
Estimated cost: Rs. 219500/-	Earliest money: Rs. 4390/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 10	Name of work	A/R & M/O LWSS Gilkhari in Tehsil Jawalamukhi Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH:- C/o Boundary wall around the head works (Stage 1st).
Estimated cost: Rs. 253535/-	Earliest money: Rs. 5070/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-
Job No. 11	Name of work	Improvement of LIS Bharoli Phase 1st in Tehsil Jawalamukhi Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH:- Supply & erection of 5 HP submersible pumping set with allied accessories complete).
Estimated cost: Rs. 190413/-	Earliest money: Rs. 3810/-	Time limit: 03 month, Cost of form: Rs. 250/-

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

- The contractors/firms should possess the following documents (Photo copy to be attached):
 - (i) Latest renewal of enlistment
 - (ii) PAN (Permanent Account No)
 - (iii) Registration under HP GST and Income tax clearance certificate.
 - (iv) The tender of pumping machinery without curve chart will be summarily rejected.
- Ambiguous/telegraphic/conditional tenders or tender by Fax/E-mail shall not be entertained/considered in any case.
- The Executive Engineer, reserves the right to reject/cancel any or all the tenders without assigning any reason(s).
- The offer of the tender shall remain valid up to 120 days after the opening.
- The contractor must quote their rates both in words as well as in figures.

Students in Pangi, Bharmour take online exams atop hills

BSNL tower develops snag, Net services poor in tribal areas of Chamba

LALIT MOHAN

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

'DIVERS ROPE IN'
Since the reservoir was deep, the services of divers from the BBMB, Nangal, were requisitioned. The bodies were lying around 50 ft below the water surface.

Vishal Sharma, BANGANA SDM

The SDM said since the water was very deep, the services of the divers of the BBMB, Nangal, were requisitioned. The bodies were lying about 50 feet below the water surface.

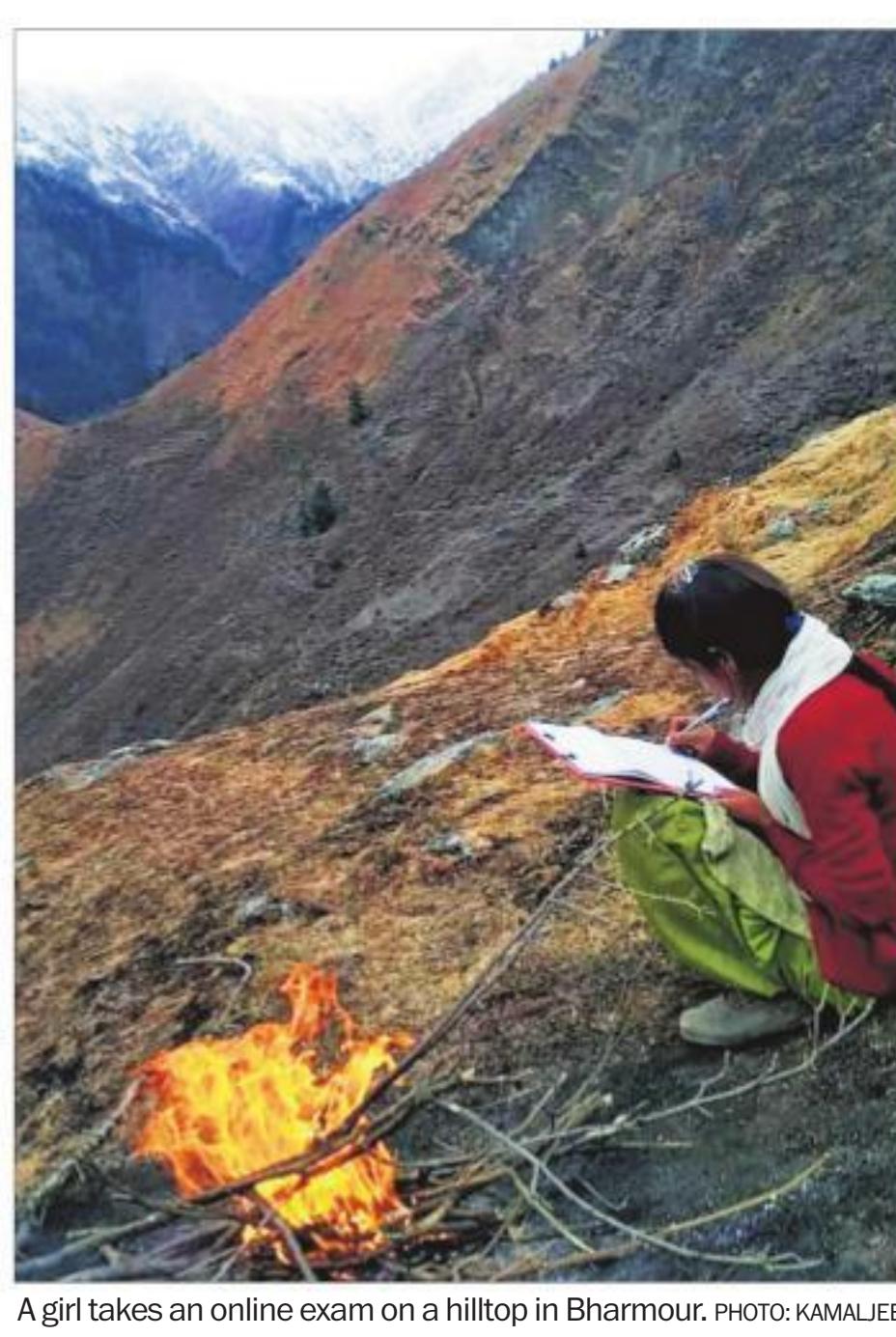
According to the lone survivor, they spotted an unattended oar-driven small boat near the shore and decided to take it into the water. However, some distance away, the boat lost balance and capsized.

Sharma said that an immediate relief of Rs 10,000 had been released to the relatives of each of the three deceased persons, while the total amount, as per the compensation manual, would be released shortly.

Students living in far-flung areas, such as Bharmour and Pangi, have to climb hills and sit in the open to get a better signal on their mobile phones to appear in the online examinations.

Surjit Kumar, a resident of the Pangi valley, says that there is no telecom signal in many areas of the valley. The BSNL tower in the area has developed a snag while the towers of private telecom companies are yet to become operational. Generally, students often face signal issue, so they move to hilltop to take the online examinations.

Inquiries by *The Tribune* have revealed that the Education Department is conducting the interim examinations these days for the students of government schools to prepare them for



A girl takes an online exam on a hilltop in Bharmour. PHOTO: KAMALJEET

the final examinations.

Sources say that the education board has suggested to

the Education Department that the students of tribal areas be delivered the ques-

tion papers on their doorstep.

However, the suggestion did not elicit any response.

In Chamba, students living in Balod, Khundel, Kaned, Ghal, Tundah, Kugti and Bargram panchayats in the Bharmour and Pangi areas are taking examinations by climbing hilltops while sitting in the open. Area residents have also given a representation to Chamba Deputy Commissioner DC Rana in this regard.

Rana says that he will ask the Education Department to help the students of the tribal areas so that they are not forced to move to hilltops to take the online examinations. The restrictions on schools due to Covid have acted to the disadvantage of the students living in far-flung areas, who have not been able to attend online classes due to poor Internet connectivity in their region.

The leaders of the Opposition have also demanded that the government makes special efforts for the students of the tribal areas so that they do not lose their academic year.

Panchayat elections won't be deferred amid surge: Khanna

BHANU P LOHUMI

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 9

There could be "matbhedi (difference of opinion) but not "manbhedi (friction in mindset)" in the state BJP and all workers and leaders have just one target — winning elections from panchayat to parliamentary, said Avinash Rai Khanna, in-charge of party affairs in Himachal, while playing down infighting in the party.

In an interview with *The Tribune*, Khanna ruled out the possibility that the upcoming panchayat elections would be deferred in view of the spurt in Covid-19 cases in the state. He said that when the Assembly elections could be held in Bihar, why could the panchayat poll not be held in Himachal.

"We have already won the parliamentary and state Assembly elections and now our focus has shifted to the urban local bodies and panchayat elections," said Khanna. He gave the mantra of 'Mera Booth', 'Congress free booth' and asked the party workers to connect with the maximum number

of people and target the beneficiaries of the welfare schemes of the state and Union governments to further strengthen the party.

Khanna said that there were around 100 to 150 farmers in every booth, who are the beneficiaries of government schemes and a major support base of the party. He added that to further consolidate the people's support, 'Panna pramukhs' would be instrumental in persuading 100 per cent voters to cast their votes.

Asked why the government is adamant on the three farm laws, he accused the Opposition of spreading misinformation and misleading the farmers. He said that in fact these laws would make farmers entrepreneurs and prosperous by doubling their income.

Khanna said that the BJP is not "anti-farmer" and reminded people that Kisan Credit Cards were introduced when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister and Soil Health Cards were introduced by the NDA government led by Narendra Modi.

Snow blocks traffic on Manali highway

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MANDI, DECEMBER 9

Several parts of Lahaul and Spiti district received heavy snowfall on Wednesday, hampering traffic movement towards the Lahaul valley from the Atal Tunnel on the Manali-Leh National Highway. The Lahaul valley received considerable snowfall, throwing normal life out of gear and renewing cold wave conditions.

In the orders issued here, the SDM said 11 persons from the area had tested positive for Covid. The decision had been taken to prevent the community spread. Section 144 of the CrPC had also been imposed, the SDM added.

Heavy snowfall was also reported near the north portal of the Atal Tunnel, a tourist hotspot. In view of

public safety, the district administration has restricted the movement



A snow-covered vehicle plies on the Manali-Leh highway.

of vehicles towards the Lahaul valley from the Atal Tunnel.

Lahaul and Spiti SP Manav Verma said that people had been advised to avoid journey on the

road till it was cleared for traffic. "Due to fresh snowfall, the Manali-Leh National Highway has become risky for the movement of vehicles," he added.

Rain lashes Keylong

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 9

A cold wave continued unabated in the state as the tribal areas and higher hills received fresh snowfall while scattered rain lashed mid and lower hills today.

Udaipur, Keylong and Gondla recorded 7 cm, 6 cm and 5 cm of fresh snow while Tissa was the wettest in the state with 20 mm of rainfall.

The Met office has predicted heavy rain and snow at many places in mid and higher hills and rain and thunderstorms in lower hills on December 11. —TNS

Norms violated at 3 weddings in Baddi, organisers booked

SOLAN, DECEMBER 9

A team of police officials inspected various marriage functions in the Baddi Barotiwala Nalagar (BBN) industrial belt last evening and booked organisers at Suraj Majra, Karuana and Manpura villages where hundreds of people had assembled in violation of the norms.

Baddi SP Rohit Malpani said he visited a wedding venue at Suraj Majra village where about 325 people had assembled and none was wearing a mask.

Officials witnessed similar violations at other weddings at Karuana

GATHERING OF 325

"I visited a wedding venue at Suraj Majra village where about 325 persons had assembled and none was wearing a mask."

Rohit Malpani, BADDI SP

and Manpura villages.

"Three cases have been registered against the organisers of marriages at Swaraj Majra, Karuana and Manpura villages," the SP said.

Action was also being taken against the organisers of a sit-in protest at Chowkiwala

Chowk on the Dherowal and Dabhotia road where about 1,200 people had pitched a tent on the road and disrupted traffic movement from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm yesterday. The common man was inconvenienced due to this act by the agitators.

They raised slogans against the government. Nalagar MLA Lakhwinder Rana also participated in the protest.

He said 21 persons, including the kin of Ramkumar, former Congress MLA from Doon, were also booked for creating disturbance on the Sai Road in Baddi while protesting yesterday. —TNS

729 more test Covid positive, 12 succumb

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 9

As many as 729 persons tested positive for Covid today while 12 succumbed to the virus in the last 24 hours. The tally of the infected persons has mounted to 46,930.

Six deaths were reported in Shimla, Chamba (2) and one each in Mandi, Kangra, Hamirpur and Kullu districts.

The death toll due to the virus stands at 755.

Road-clearing ops



Border Roads Organisation workers clear the Leh-Srinagar highway in Leh on Wednesday.

Cancer patients missed hospital...

FROM PAGE 1
While patients expressed satisfaction with the treatment, they had concerns about accommodation. As against 130-140 patients receiving chemo and radiotherapy on a daily basis, the hospital has just 45 beds. There are some who can afford to make their own arrangements, but those who can't are put up in a small hall.

"There are normally 30-35 persons in the hall, sometimes even more," said a patient. In the times of pandemic, 30-40 people huddled in a hall with uncertain Covid status is an open invitation for disaster. "This is the only place we have as staying outside is expensive. We need to stay here for weeks on end," said another patient.

Army reaches out to 350 families with ration

JAMMU, DECEMBER 9

The Army on Wednesday distributed ration and medical kits among 350 families living in remote and snow-hit mountainous areas of Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district.

It also conducted a medical and veterinary camp in the Sumer panchayat, benefiting hundreds of members of the nomadic Gujjar and Bakarwali community, a defence spokesperson said.

Amid the Covid pandemic, he said the Army carried out distribution of ration and medical kits to 350 families residing in the areas of Sumbal, Dagnari, Banj, Bajon and Malpatti in consonance with its pro-

Conducts medical, veterinary camp at Sumer

gramme 'Corona Mukt Awam'. "The kit contains basic goods for people residing in remote and higher reaches of Ramban," the spokesman said, maintaining till now, people residing in these areas were deprived of basic facilities due to the remoteness of location and rugged terrain.

"The ration kit comprised of dal, rice, atta and cooking oil and the medical kits included soap, reusable face mask and sanitiser," he said. — PTI

4 civilians hurt in grenade attack

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 9

Four civilians were injured after militants lobbed a grenade at a vehicle carrying security personnel at Singhpura in the Pattan area of Baramulla on Wednesday. The militants threw the grenade towards a vehicle of the Sashastra Seema Bal but it missed the target and exploded on the roadside. — PTI

Govt officials no better than Kumbhkarna: HC

SAURABH MALIK
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court (HC) today said government officials were no better than Kumbhkarna when it came to filing replies and objections in pending cases. A delay of even a decade was not uncommon, the Bench asserted.

The admonition came in a case where a government department "kept sleeping", even though a project for the creation of infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir was put on hold following grant of interim stay in April 2018.

Chief Justice (Acting) Rajesh Bindal asserted the Supreme Court had compared a litigant approaching the court after huge delay with Kumbhkarna. "I think if considered in that light, for filing of replies/objections in the cases pending in this court, the government officials are no better. As has been mentioned in the Ramayana, Ravana had to use lot of noise and different means to wake



DELAY IN FILING APPEALS

■ Justice Bindal said government officials acted like Kumbhkarna when it came to filing replies and objections in pending cases

■ The admonition came in a case where a department "kept sleeping" even though a project was put on hold following grant of interim stay in April 2018

up Kumbhkarna when his kingdom was in trouble. Here also the government officials are to be woken up from slumber using different means," Justice Bindal said.

In his detailed order, Justice Bindal asserted the court was once again constrained to comment on the working of offices in Jammu and Kash-

mir as to how lightly litigation was taken. The result of casualness was causing huge loss to the public exchequer. The casualness was not limited to a certain department in question. There was hardly any difference in working of all departments. "Less said, the better," he said.

Justice Bindal said a fact evident from the cases filed against the government in the High Court was that replies/objections were not filed in some cases even for a decade. It was not limited to the main petitions. Even in contempt petitions, compliance report was not filed for a long time. This not only resulted in denying the fruit of litigation to the succeeding party, but even lowered public trust in the judicial institution.

"Apparently, sleeping over a matter might be more suitable for the reasons best known to officials. But the result is that the people of Jammu and Kashmir remain deprived of better infrastructure facilities," he added.

HC directs Chief Secy to assess quality of construction works

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 9

For the creation of better infrastructure and bringing about transparency in the system, Chief Justice (Acting) Rajesh Bindal today directed the Chief Secretary, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, to refer some cases for test audit to the Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi, for assessing the quality of construction works being executed.

"The estimated cost of project calculated by the department should also be gone into by the institute. Besides, any other related matter can also be referred by the Chief Secretary to the institute," Justice Bindal asserted.

"The fact cannot be disputed that there is always an increase in various cost, including the labour cost during all this period besides this material cost also increases. May be it is more lucrative to work in Jammu and Kashmir as one of the company registered in Assam was also in litigation with the department here, with reference to some contract. There can be issue of quality of construction also," Justice Bindal asserted.

Before parting with the judgment, Justice Bindal directed the forwarding of the order's copy for appropriate action to administrative officials.

Wants some cases referred to Delhi institute for test audit

asserted that an apparent reason could be the allocation of works at such high rates that a contractor was able to execute it even after five to 10 years of allotment, even if the completion time was one to two years.

"The fact cannot be disputed that there is always an increase in various cost, including the labour cost during all this period besides this material cost also increases. May be it is more lucrative to work in Jammu and Kashmir as one of the company registered in Assam was also in litigation with the department here, with reference to some contract. There can be issue of quality of construction also," Justice Bindal asserted.

Before parting with the judgment, Justice Bindal directed the forwarding of the order's copy for appropriate action to administrative officials.

J&K launches Kashmiri saffron in UAE market

DUBAI, DECEMBER 9

With an aim to promote Kashmiri saffron in West Asia, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has launched the spice in the UAE market for the first time. The Kashmiri saffron recently received the geographical indication (GI) tag.

The GI is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin. Saffron produced in Kashmir was given the GI tag in July with an aim to put the Valley's brand on the global map.

Navin K Choudhary, Jammu and Kashmir's Principal Secretary (Agriculture), launched the Kashmiri saffron on Tuesday at the UAE-India Food Security Summit, 2020.

Choudhary said the Kashmiri saffron was exported for the first time after it received the GI certification.

"I am sure its export will grow further in Dubai and other cities of the UAE," he said. Dr Aman Puri, Consul General of India to Dubai and Northern Emirates, and Kamal Vachani, Group Director of Al Maya



WAS GIVEN GI TAG IN JULY

- The Kashmiri saffron received the geographical indication tag in July
- Also known as 'Zafran' in Urdu, the Kashmiri saffron is renowned around the world as a spice with many medicinal benefits

H.P. STATE FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED

(A Govt. of Himachal Pradesh Undertaking)

Regd Office: Van Nigam Bhawan SDA Commercial Complex, Block No. 1, Kasumpti, Shimla-171009
Phone Exchange No. : 0177-2622452, 53, 54, Fax : 0177-2621183
CIN: U02001HP1974SGC003413. Website : hforestco.in

CORRIGENDUM

Dates of e-tenders as well as off line tenders invited for felling of trees, conversion into timber pulpwood, fuel wood etc. its carriage/transportation up to Road Side Depots/Himakshth Sale Depot etc as fixed for the month of December, 2020 are hereby deferred due to Covid-19 as per detail given below:

Sr. No.	Name of FWD	December, 2020
1.	Mandi	09.12.2020
2.	Kullu	10.12.2020
3.	Sundernagar	11.12.2020
4.	Shimla	08.12.2020
5.	Nahan	09.12.2020
6.	Rampur	10.12.2020
7.	Chopal	11.12.2020
8.	Hamirpur	14.12.2020

Executive Director

PUNJAB ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY SOLAR PASSIVE COMPLEX PLOT NO. 1 & 2, SECTOR 33-D, CHANDIGARH

Notice Inviting E-Tender

E-tender notice no. PEDA/2020-21/28

Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA), invites e-tender for Design, Manufacture, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning including warranty for 5 years of 2334 nos. (5 KW capacity each) of aggregate capacity 11670 KW Grid Interactive SPV Power Plants at various Govt. Schools in Punjab.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	EMD (Rs.)	Date of start of downloading e-tender document	Last Date & time for submission of e-bids	Date & time of opening of Techno-commercial e-bids
1.	Design, Manufacture, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning including Warranty and Maintenance for 5 years of 2334 Nos. of 5 KW each Grid Interactive SPV Power Plants at Various Govt. Schools in Punjab	25,00,000	10.12.2020 upto 3:30 PM	28.12.2020 at 12.00 Noon	29.12.2020 at 12.00 Noon

Cost of Tender Document Non-refundable Tender Document fee Rs. 5,000/- through online Mode only

E-Processing Fee Non-refundable e-processing fee as applicable through online mode only

Earnest Money Deposit Earnest money as mentioned above shall be deposited through online mode or in the form of Bank Guarantee. The Original Bank Guarantee must reach PEDDA on or before the day of opening of the technical bids.

- Eligibility criteria and other terms & conditions for the works are given in the Tender Document which can be downloaded from www.eproc.punjab.gov.in.
- Bidders shall have to get themselves registered with [eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in) and get user ID and Password. Class- 2/3 Digital Signature, mandatory to participate in the e-tendering process. For any clarification/difficulty regarding e-tendering process flow, please contact at 0172-2663328, 0172-2663382. For any clarification/difficulty regarding e-tendering process flow, please contact at 0172-279126, 2791226.
- Corrigendum / Addendum / Corrections, if any will be published on the e-tender website and no separate notices shall be issued.
- PEDA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Director

E.S.I. CORPORATION MODEL HOSPITAL
इंडिस्ट्रील एरिया, फेज-II, रामदरबर, चमोलीगढ़ — 160002
INDUSTRIAL AREA, PHASE-II, RAMDARBARI, CHANDIGARH — 160002

E-Tender Notice
Date: 09.12.2020
Medical Superintendent, ESIC Model Hospital, Chandigarh, invites E-Tender under two bid system through e-procurement (CPPR Portal) for "Rate Contract for testing of Allopathic Drugs" Tender documents are available online from 10.12.2020.
Please visit the websites www.esic.nic.in & <https://eproc.gov.in/eproc/app> for details and all further information.

HIMACHAL PRADESH POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(A State Government Undertaking)
SAINJ HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT (100 MW)
HPCL SAMBHA - 175134 Dist. KULLU (HP).
CIN : U40101HP2006SGC030591

CORRIGENDUM
The tender submission and opening date of E-Tender floated vide this office letter No. HPPCL/SHEP/SM (B/HM)/NIT/NIQ/2019-20 dated 28.11.2020 for the work "Providing and Fixing of aquatic debris control Barrier/Log boom for Sainj HEP-100MW" is hereby EXTENDED as per detail given below:-

Name of work	Tender submission date and time	Tender opening date and time
"Providing and Fixing of aquatic debris control Barrier/Log boom for Sainj HEP-100MW".	30.12.2020 up to 11:00 AM	30.12.2020 at 11:30 AM

Other terms and conditions shall remain same.
Sr. Manager (Barrage/HM),
Sainj Hydro Electric Project, HPPCL, Sambha.

Tender/RFP for Services like AMC, housekeeping etc. Government of Punjab
Tender/RFP Reference No. 23 of 2020 Dt.: 09.12.2020
The Department of PUNJAB WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD invites online bids for:-

Sr. No.	Name of the Work
1.	DNT for Providing & Installing a new tubewell of size 350mm x 200mm id/ against failed tubewell, const. of pump chamber, providing and installing pumping machinery, rising main D.I. K-7 pipe and all other works contingent thereto in Ward No. 2, Mohalla Chahal Nagar at Phagwara Town, Distt. Kapurthala.
2.	DNT for detailed Topographic Survey of Nagar Panchayat, Nadala for Water Supply & Sewerage Scheme.

Closing Date & Time : 31.12.2020 up to 04.30 P.M.
For details logon to : <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
Note:- Any Corrigendum(s) to the tender/RFP Notice shall be published on the website only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Pb. W/S & Sew. Div. No. 2,
Jalandhar.

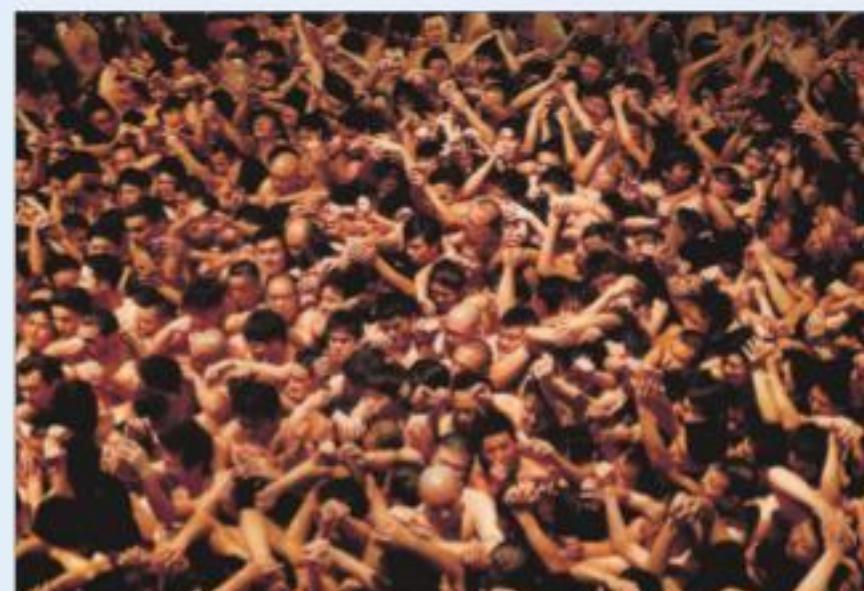
The above dates are in addition to the dates already fixed vide this office Endst. No. HPSFDC/Wks/Timber/3569-86 dated 23.06.2020
LSMs may also offer tenders up to the value of Rs. 5.00 Lakh contract value as per tender list through off line or on lines as per their convenience. E-Tenders/ offline should reach in the office of DM FWD concerned on or before the stipulated date up to 2.00 PM which will be opened on the same day at 2.30 PM in presence of the tenderers who may wish to be present. The tender should be accompanied by required amount of EMD, cost of Tender Form (12% GST will be extra). Terms and conditions, EMD, Cost of tender Forms etc. can be had from the office of DM, FWD concerned on any working day

Note: If a holiday falls on any of the above date(s), tender will be held on the next working day

Executive Director



GLOBE TROT



WHO'S THE LUCKY ONE: Men dressed in loincloths about to snatch a wooden stick called 'shingi' tossed by a priest in Japan's Okayama. One who grabs it is considered the luckiest. REUTERS

Johnson confuses farmers' stir with India-Pak dispute

LONDON: UK PM Boris Johnson on Wednesday seemed to confuse two separate issues when he reiterated the UK government's stance that any dispute between India and Pakistan was for the two countries to settle bilaterally. As UK Labour MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi said Johnson should convey to Narendra Modi "our anxieties", Johnson responded, "We have serious concerns about what is happening between India and Pakistan." PTI

Pak determines price of Dilip Kumar's ancestral house

PESHAWAR: Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has determined the price of the ancestral houses of legendary Bollywood actors Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor in the heart of this city as Rs 80,56,000 and Rs 1,00,50,000 respectively. The provincial government in September decided to purchase their ancestral houses to conserve the historic buildings which are in a dilapidated state. PTI

Pak lawmakers to resign en masse

ISLAMABAD, DECEMBER 9 The political crisis in Pakistan has deepened after an 11-party Opposition alliance announced that their lawmakers would resign en masse by the end of this month from parliament to paralyse the government and force Prime Minister Imran Khan to call early snap polls.

The decision was taken after the Pakistan Democratic Movement, a group of 11 opposition parties, held a marathon meeting in Islamabad. —PTI

Back down on demands or it's no-deal Brexit, UK warns EU

LONDON, DECEMBER 9 British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned the European Union (EU) on Wednesday it must scrap demands which he says are unacceptable if there is to be a Brexit trade deal to avoid a turbulent breakup in three weeks. With fears growing of a chaotic no-deal finale to the five-year Brexit crisis, Johnson was heading to Brussels later on Wednesday for talks with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen over dinner. Johnson said Brussels wanted the UK to comply with new EU laws in the future or be automatically punished, and was insisting it give up sovereign control over British fishing waters.

A British government source said a deal may not be possible. —Reuters



A Brexit supporter shows a placard in London. REUTERS



A Brexit supporter shows a placard in London. REUTERS



President-elect Joe Biden listens as Kamala Harris speaks during an event at The Queen theatre in Wilmington. AP/PTI

PRESIDENT-ELECT, HARRIS PLEDGE ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

Washington: Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris have reaffirmed advancing racial equity and assembling a diverse White House and Cabinet that represents America as they met with a group of eminent civil rights leaders, including Indian-

American Vanita Gupta. In presence of Congressman Cedric Richmond in the meeting, Biden thanked civil rights leaders for their support and counsel over the years and expressed desire that this was the first of an ongoing relationship with his administration. PTI

into school and keep them in school," he said on Tuesday. If Congress provides the funding we need to protect students, educators, and staff, and if states and cities put strong public health

measures in place that we all follow, then my team will work to see that the majority of our schools can be opened by the end of my first 100 days," he added.

Meanwhile, Britain has

advised that people with a history of significant allergies do not get Pfizer-BioNTech's covid vaccine after two people reported severe adverse reactions on the first day of the rollout. — Agencies

NATIONS	DEATHS
US	2,93,898
BRAZIL	1,78,295
MEXICO	1,10,874
UK	62,566
ITALY	61,739

WORLDOMETER
TILL DEC 9, 10 PM

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Pak escapes sanctions over religious freedom

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's intervention led to Pakistan escaping sanctions for lack of religious freedom and India stopped from being listed on a Special Watch List, said US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Samuel Brownback.

"There were several recommendations that the Secretary (Pompeo) did not follow, and this was one of them," he said about keeping India away from the Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) list.

The US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) had recommended that India be put in the CPC list because of the Citizen Amendment Act (CAA).

Brownback said the US had privately discussed these issues with the Indian government at a high level, and will continue to get raised.

Pompeo is well aware of the statute (CAA) and the issues associated with the USCIRF had recommended that India be put in the CPC list because of the Citizen Amendment Act (CAA).

Brownback conceded that in India, some of the violence was carried out by the government but a lot of the actions are by the government in Pakistan.

Also, Pakistan has half of the world's people that are locked up for apostasy or blasphemy. "Christians and Hindu women from Pakistan are being marketed as concubines or forced brides into China," he said.

The CPC list includes China, Myanmar, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria among others.

India not on watch list

- Mike Pompeo's intervention stops India from being listed on a Special Watch List of USCIRF
- USCIRF notes that half of those jailed for apostasy or blasphemy are in Pakistan
- Also Christians and Hindu women from Pakistan are being marketed as forced brides into China

Though Brownback was critical of India, he did not get baited by a question posed by a Pakistani-origin journalist who wanted to know why Pakistan was not on CPC and India was not.

Brownback conceded that in India, some of the violence was carried out by the government but a lot of the actions are by the government in Pakistan.

Also, Pakistan has half of the world's people that are locked up for apostasy or blasphemy. "Christians and Hindu women from Pakistan are being marketed as concubines or forced brides into China," he said.

The CPC list includes China, Myanmar, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria among others.

BUSINESS

USD \$ EUR € POUND £ JPY ¥ YUAN CNY CAD \$ AUD AU HKD HK\$ ₹ 73.57 ₹ 89.07 ₹ 98.97 ₹ 0.70 ₹ 11.27 ₹ 57.62 ₹ 55.0 ₹ 55.08 ₹ 9.50

BSE 494.99 NSE 136.15 GOLD ₹ 49,300 SILVER ₹ 64,400

46,103.50 13,529.10 Mumbai (MCX) Mumbai (MCX)

**IndiGo to reach 80% of normal domestic capacity by mth-end**

SYDNEY, DECEMBER 10

India's biggest airline, IndiGo, expects to reach 80% of usual domestic capacity by the end of the month but international capacity is running at just a fifth of normal levels because of the pandemic, its chief executive said on Wednesday.

The airline hopes to reach 100% of normal domestic capacity by early next year and 100% of its usual international capacity by the end of 2021, chief executive Ronjoy Dutta said at a CAPA Centre for Aviation event.

The low-cost airline, owned by Interglobe Aviation Ltd, reported last month a loss of 11.95 billion rupees (\$162.45 million) in the second quarter ended September 30 as pandemic curbs dented its operations.

IndiGo said at the time it expected third-quarter capacity to be around 60% of period a year earlier. But the Indian government soon after lifted its domestic capacity cap to 70% and again last week to 80%. International flights are restricted and being run as

ACQUISITION OF PLANES TO CONTINUE

- The airline hopes to reach 100% of normal domestic capacity by early next year and 100% of its usual international capacity by the end of 2021
- The airline said it would continue to take delivery of newer, cost-efficient Airbus SE A320neo planes at a time when many carriers have halted deliveries to cut costs

charter operations. In June, IndiGo said it would cut costs of up to 40 billion rupees and speed the return of older planes to leasing firms in a bid to cushion the pandemic's hit to business.

The airline said it would continue to take delivery of newer, Airbus SE A320neo planes at a time when many carriers have halted deliveries to cut costs. "We haven't slowed down our deliveries at all and don't intend to," chief commercial officer Willy Boulter said on Wednesday. — Reuters

Sensex breaches 46,000-mark

Unabated foreign fund inflows, positive factors propel markets

MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9 The Sensex and Nifty zoomed to fresh peaks for yet another session on Wednesday, propelled by unabated foreign fund inflows and positive cues from global markets. Progress on the Covid vaccine front has bolstered hopes of economic recovery globally as well as in India, traders said.

Maintaining its winning run for the fifth session on the trot, the BSE Sensex crossed the 46,000-mark for first time. After touching a record intra-day high of 46,164.10, the 30-share benchmark ended 494.99 points higher at 46,103.50.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty rallied 136.15 points to its new record high of 13,529.10, extending its record setting run to the seventh straight day.

Asian Paints was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, spurring 3.37%, followed by Kotak Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Reliance Industries and ITC.

**HDFC BANK, RELIANCE LEAD CHARGE**

- After touching a record intra-day high of 46,164, the Sensex ended 494.99 points higher at 46,103.50
- Similarly, the Nifty rallied 136 points to its new record high of 13,529, extending its record setting run to the seventh straight day
- Asian Paints was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, spurring 3.37%, followed by Kotak Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Reliance Industries and ITC.

On the other hand, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel, Maruti, SBI and Bajaj Auto were among the laggards,

tumbling up to 1.29%.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) remained net buyers in the domestic capital markets, snapping up shares worth Rs 2,909.60 crore on Tuesday, according to provisional exchange data.

"Market is effortlessly rallying to a new high on a daily basis, with all the sectors contributing in the bull run. The Indian rupee is strongly moving ahead against the US dollar, as the dollar is attracted to the domestic developments, providing an edge compared to other Asian peers."

"Small and microcaps are hugely outperforming the market, and the euphoria is expected to stay in the short to medium-term. Hopes of vaccine and stimulus packages in India and developed nations are raising the spirit of equity market," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. — PTI

"On the other hand, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel, Maruti, SBI and Bajaj Auto were among the laggards,

Round-the-clock RTGS from Dec 14

MUMBAI, DECEMBER 9

The Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) for high-value transactions will be available round-the-clock on all days from 00:30 hours of December 14, making India one of the few countries to operate the system 24x7.

In October, the RBI had announced that RTGS will be available round-the-clock on all days of the year. "Accordingly, RTGS 24x7x365 will be launched with effect from 00:30 hours on December 14, 2020," the RBI said.

The RBI said India will become one of the few countries in the world to operate its RTGS system round-the-clock throughout the year.

This comes within a year of the RBI operationalising NEFT 24x7. NEFT is the popular mode for small-value transactions.

RTGS, which started on March 26, 2004 with a soft launch involving four banks,

LARGE-VALUE PAYMENT SYSTEM

- Currently, the RTGS handles 6.35 lakh transactions daily for a value of ₹ 41.7 lakh crore across 237 participant banks

■ The average ticket size for RTGS in November 2020 was ₹ 57.96 lakh, making it a truly large-value payment system

currently handles 6.35 lakh transactions daily for a value of ₹ 41.7 lakh crore across 237 participant banks.

The average ticket size for RTGS in November 2020 was ₹ 57.96 lakh, making it a truly large-value payment system. RTGS uses ISO 20022 format which is the best-in-class messaging standard for financial transactions.

This comes within a year of the RBI operationalising NEFT 24x7. NEFT is the popular mode for small-value transactions.

RTGS, which started on March 26, 2004 with a soft launch involving four banks,

Honda halts UK output amid shipping delays

LONDON, DECEMBER 9 Car maker Honda has temporarily halted production at its plant in England after shipping delays linked to the Covid pandemic and preparations for Brexit left it with a shortage of parts.

The company said it was forced to make the decision because "transport-related" delays left it short of parts. The factory relies on a

"just in time" delivery system, in which parts arrive as they are needed for assembly and not stored locally, increasing efficiency. "The situation is currently being monitored with a view to restart production as soon as possible," Honda said.

The disruption of international trade caused by the pandemic is triggering delays as empty containers clog UK ports. — AP

Centre releases ₹ 6,000 cr to states in GST relief

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

The Centre on Wednesday said it has released the sixth instalment of Rs 6,000 crore to the states to meet the GST compensation shortfall. With this instalment, a total amount of Rs 36,000 crore has been released so far.

Out of Rs 6,000 crore released this week, an amount of Rs 5,516.60 crore has been given to 23 states and Rs 483.40 crore has been released to the 3 Union Territories (UTs)

With this instalment, ₹ 36,000 crore has been released so far

far, an amount of Rs 36,000 crore has been borrowed by the central government through the special borrowing window to meet the estimated shortfall of Rs 1.10 lakh crore in revenue arising on account of GST implementation, it said.

The remaining five states, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim, do not have a gap in revenue on account of GST implementation.

The Government of India is borrowing this amount on behalf of the states to meet GST compensation shortfall to help them in mobilising additional financial resources. — PTI

Ronaldo scores twice as Juventus beat Messi-led Barcelona 3-0, climb to top; Man U knocked out

Two steps ahead



Lionel Messi chases Cristiano Ronaldo during the match. REUTERS

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS (GROUP STAGE)

- Juventus bt Barcelona 3-0
- Leipzig bt Man United 3-2
- Chelsea dr Krasnodar 1-1
- Lazio dr Brugge 2-2
- Dortmund bt Zenit 2-1
- Sevilla bt Rennes 3-1
- Kyiv bt Ferencvaros 1-0

ified for the knockout round prior to the match. Ronaldo was unable to take the field for Juventus when they lost 0-2 to Barcelona in Turin in October after the Portugal forward had tested positive for Covid-19. Barcelona's record of 38 home games without a loss in Europe's top-tier tournament began in

September 2013.

Leipzig beat United

Leipzig: RB Leipzig scored twice in the opening 13 minutes but had to survive a late comeback from Manchester United to cling on to a 3-2 win that sent them into the knockout stage and eliminated United. — Agencies

Parthiv hangs his gloves



Parthiv Patel made six fifties in his Test career. PTI FILE

Parthiv Patel for India

Mat	Runs	Avg	Ct/St
Tests 25	934	31.13	62/10
ODIs 38	736	23.74	30/9
T20Is 2	36	18	1/0

*Read under Matches, Runs, Average, Catches/Stumpings

“Today, I announce retirement from all forms of cricket and as I bring down curtains on this 18 year-old cricketing journey, I feel heavier with gratitude for many.”

Parthiv Patel

Tests before Ranji

Incredibly, Parthiv Patel made his Test debut before he had played for Gujarat in the Ranji Trophy. He was sent to England with the Indian team after having played for India A in South Africa and Sri Lanka. Patel made his Ranji Trophy debut in November 2004, over two years after his Test debut. He had played 10 First-Class matches before his Test debut, all abroad. His first First-Class match in India was for Board President's XI against the visiting West Indians in Bengaluru in 2002. Overall, Patel played 194 First-Class matches – 25 Tests, 26 matches for India A and 6 for touring Indians. Relegated to the domestic circuit, Patel played 137 First-Class games in which he scored 8,964 runs at an average of 43.3. His finest hour in domestic cricket was leading Gujarat to their maiden Ranji Trophy triumph in 2016-17.

land captain Nasser Hussain ruffling Patel's hair playfully after the youngster had defied the home

team for 82 minutes and 60 balls to shut the door firmly on England at Nottingham. — TNS

SA to tour Pak for 2 Tests, 3 T20Is

KARACHI, DECEMBER 9 South Africa will tour Pakistan for the first time in 14 years for two Tests and three T20Is starting in January, the country's cricket board (PCB) said today. While Karachi and Rawalpindi will hosts the two Tests, the three T20Is will be held in Lahore. The Tests will be held on January 26-30 (Karachi) and February 4-8 (Rawalpindi), while the T20Is will be held on February 11, 13 and 14, all in Lahore. The PCB said upon arrival in Karachi, the visitors will “observe an isolation period following which they will hold training ses-

sions and play intra-squad practice matches.”

The last time South Africa toured Pakistan was in 2007 when they won the Karachi Test by 160 runs to clinch the series 1-0. The subsequent series in 2010 and 2013 were played in the United Arab Emirates. The two sides have played 11 Test series since 1995 with South Africa winning seven and Pakistan one in 2003. This will be the first time the two sides will go head to head in a T20I series in Pakistan, having previously played two series in the UAE. South Africa won both the series. — PTI

England returning to Lanka for 2-Test tour

LONDON: England will return to Sri Lanka for a rearranged two-Test cricket tour in January, 10 months after leaving the Asian country as the coronavirus pandemic began to take hold. England's players will isolate for three days after arriving in Sri Lanka on January 2, with the first Test starting January 14. The second Test starts on January 22. The travelling squad will undergo full coronavirus testing every two days throughout the trip and players are expected to be offered mental health screening ahead of the tour. AP

TODAY ON TV

ISL
EAST BENGAL VS JAMshedpur
STAR SPORTS 7:30PM
EUROPA LEAGUE
DUNDALK VS ARSENAL 11:25PM
TOTENHAM VS ANTWERP
LEICESTER VS ATHENS
1:30AM (FRIDAY)
SONY TEN

LONDON: England will return to Sri Lanka for a rearranged two-Test cricket tour in January, 10 months after leaving the Asian country as the coronavirus pandemic began to take hold. England's players will isolate for three days after arriving in Sri Lanka on January 2, with the first Test starting January 14. The second Test starts on January 22. The travelling squad will undergo full coronavirus testing every two days throughout the trip and players are expected to be offered mental health screening ahead of the tour. AP

Never saw Messi as a rival, says Ronaldo

BARCELONA: They defined the ‘El Clasico’ rivalry between Real Madrid and Barcelona for the past decade but Cristiano Ronaldo said he has always got on well with Lionel Messi and never saw him as a rival. Between them the pair have won the Ballon d'Or in 11 of the past 12 years.

“I have always had a cordial relationship with Messi,” Ronaldo said. “As I have said before, for 12, 13, 14 years (I have been) sharing prizes with him. I never saw him as a rival. He always tried the best for his team, and I tried the best for mine. I always got on well with him. I am sure he will say the same if you ask him. But we know in football, people always look for a rivalry to create more excitement.”

Ronaldo is hoping the win could provide an “injection of confidence” for Juventus, who are currently fourth in the Italian Serie A standings. Barcelona are also looking to recover from a below-par start to their domestic league campaign. “Messi is the same as ever (on the pitch),” Ronaldo said. “Barcelona are in a difficult moment, but they are still Barca. I am sure they will come out of it. All teams have bad runs, but Barcelona are a very good team.” REUTERS



Cristiano Ronaldo greets Lionel Messi before the match. REUTERS

Players walk off over alleged racism

MANCHESTER: UEFA has opened a disciplinary proceeding into Tuesday's Champions League match between Paris St Germain and Istanbul Basaksehir when players walked off in protest at after the Turkish club accused a match official of racism. The incident was sparked when Basaksehir's assistant coach Pierre Webo was shown a red card for protesting against a refereeing decision and the Turkish side then alleged that the Romanian fourth official Sebastian Coltescu used a racist term towards the Cameroonian. The players from both teams left the field after about 10 minutes of discussions with Romanian referee Ovidiu Hategan, a first in European football. The game, which was suspended after 13 minutes, will be completed today with new match officials. TV footage showed fourth official Coltescu saying in Romanian, “The black one over there. Go and check who he is. The black one over there, it's not possible to act like that” after Webo vehemently protested against a refereeing decision. “Why he say negro?” Basaksehir substitute Demba Ba repeatedly asked match referee Hategan as confusion reigned on the touchline. The Romanian word for black is “negru”. REUTERS

“Only some cases remain, and the court asked these to be listed in the third week of January. The BCCI application seeking amendments to its constitution was not taken up today,” he said.

It means that Ganguly, Shah, and George would continue in the chair into 2021, despite their terms having got over in the past few months. Interestingly, BCCI will have its Annual General Body Meeting on December 24, and Ganguly would chair that meeting.

The new BCCI constitution makes it mandatory for its office-bearers — president, vice-president, secretary, joint secretary, and treasurer — to go into a three-year cooling-off period after being in the chair for six consecutive years, either in BCCI or its affiliate state associations, or a combination of both. After being elected BCCI president on October 23 last year, Ganguly had only 278 days to remain as BCCI chief as his previous tenure at the Cricket Association of Bengal was added to his BCCI term. So, his BCCI term effectively ended on July 26, 2020. — IANS

Ganguly, Shah stay as SC lists case in Jan

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

The Supreme Court today disposed of a “substantial number” of interlocutory applications, filed by state cricket associations, in the cricket administration reforms case. But a ruling on the continuation of the Indian cricket board (BCCI) president Sourav Ganguly, secretary Jay Shah and joint secretary Jayesh George, whose terms have got over, was deferred to next year.

BCCI has filed an application in the top court seeking crucial amendments to the Supreme Court-approved constitution, framed by an SC-appointed Lodha Committee. The court today listed the case in the third week of January. “A substantial number of applications were disposed by the court today. A large number of cases that were related to funds have become infructuous while the court said that in the state cricket associations where the amicus curiae had successfully mediated and helped their hold elections, like Karnataka, were also disposed of,” amicus curiae PS Narasimha said.

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH, CHANDIGARH

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

This Hospital Engineer (Const.) PGIMER Chandigarh re-invites on behalf of the Director PGIMER Chandigarh online Percentage rate bids from the enlisted contractors of appropriate class in CPWD/Department of Posts/BSNL/Railways/M.E.S./Chandigarh Administration/CHB/MC Chandigarh/State PWD & HUDA/PUDA/State Electricity Boards & Corporations dealing in civil works on two bid system (Eligibility Bid & Financial Bid) for the following work:-
NIT No. - PG/Engg./Const./2020-21: Name of Work: Outfitting of Hospital Services for Civil & Public Works on jobs for period of 12 months at Nehru Hospital Extension Block, PGI, Chandigarh. Estimated Cost: Rs. 33.63 Lakhs. Earnest Money: Rs. 67,360/- Period of Completion: 12 Months. Last date and time of submission of bid: 14.12.2020 up to 3:00 PM. Last date and time for submission of Original EMD: 15.12.2020 at 3:00 PM. Date and time of opening of Eligibility bid: 15.12.2020 at 3:00 PM. The Original EMD as scanned & uploaded shall be deposited physically by all the intending bidders in the office of H.E. (Construction) as per above schedule failing which the bid shall be treated as invalid. The tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> and official website of the PGIMER www.pgimer.edu.in. Press notice is also available on www.eprocure.gov.in. The Contractors are requested to get their firm registered on the website <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>, for participating in e-tendering process (Helpdesk No. for registration-9988447883). For any technical information Contact (0172-2755861, 7087008861).

HOSPITAL ENGINEER (CONSTRUCTION)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR EMpanelment

Haryana School Shiksha Pariyoja Parishad invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from interested and eligible organizations/firms in the field of Self Defense Training Programme for Girl Students of Govt. Schools in Haryana State. Agency/s will be selected based on the evaluation of proposal. Eligibility Criteria, TOR and other documents may be downloaded from the website www.hsssp.in.

Application may be deposited along with fee of Rs. 5000/- (Non Refundable) in the shape of Demand Draft in favour of State Project Director, HSSPP, Panchkula payable at Panchkula. Application form complete in all respects must reach the Procurement Officer O/o State Project Director, HSSPP, Shiksha Sadan, Sector-5, Panchkula latest by 3:00 p.m. on 29.12.2020 and application received thereafter shall not be entertained.

State Project Director,
Haryana School Shiksha,
Pariyoja Parishad, Panchkula.

PRDH/84209

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr.DEE/G/ZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders (www.reps.gov.in) against below titled Tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only.

Tender No.	Name of work	App. Cost. (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Completion period	Opening of tender	Website Particulars
251-Elect / T-21-2020-21	Annual maintenance contract (AMC) of 10 KVA inverter of Hi-Rel made fit in RA-0102 and RA-600 in Firozpur Division.	1,89,147.60/-	3,800/-	36 months	30.12.2020 after 15:00 Hrs.	www.reps.gov.in
251-Elect/T.Notice No. 24-Elect/2020-21 Dated: - 08.12.2020						

2746/20

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

Sr.DEN-I/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.reps.gov.in with closing date 31.12.2020 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tender, and any such Contractors are allowed to make payments against these tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on www.reps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

S.N.	Tender No.	Details of Tender
1	51-2020-21-ADEN-LDH	Proposed Crossing of OFC through 40 mm dia HDPE pipe by central Govt Department with in Railway Boundary and over Jagraon Bridge for connection MCO at Ludhiana. Advertised Value Earnest Money Validity of Offer Period of Completion ₹1996448.06 ₹39900 45 days 02 Months Bid Starting Date : 17.12.2020, Bid closing Date: 31.12.2020

2753/20

Serving Customers With A Smile

STOPPAGES OF SPECIAL TRAINS TEMPORARILY WITHDRAWN FOR UPGRADATION WORK

It is notified for the information of all concerned that the stoppage of following trains mentioned in the table below will be withdrawn temporarily to execute the Non Interlocking work at Kosikalan Railway station on the dates shown as under:-

STOPPAGE WITHDRAWN OF SPECIAL TRAINS

Train No.	Train Name	Date of Stoppage Withdrawn
08237	Korba - Amritsar Jn. Special (Tri-weekly)	
08238	Firozpur Cantt. Jn. - Bilaspur Jn. Special (Tri-weekly)	20.12.2020 to 28.12.2020
02137	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj T. - Firozpur Cantt. Jn. (Daily)	
02138	Firozpur Cantt. Jn. - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj T. (Daily)	

The passengers shall adhere to the COVID-19 related safety norms & guidelines issued by the state and central Govt. from time to time

Note:- For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in.

Integrated Helpline No. 139 and Security Helpline No. 182

Please join us on 2

Lavrov: Quad a new game, West undermining Indo-Russian ties

TREND NEWS SERVICE

'ENGAGING DELHI IN ANTI-CHINA GAMES'

India is currently an object of western countries' persistent, aggressive and devious policy. They are trying to engage India in anti-China games by promoting Indo-Pacific strategies – the so-called 'Quad'.

Sergei Lavrov, RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER



later. "It is trying to draw all others into a unipolar world by any means possible," he said.

Lavrov had begun his address by directing his ire against France and Germany for kowtowing to the US agenda. The attitude of the two big European nations had compelled the European Union (EU) to give up claims to its role as a pole in the multi-polar system that is taking shape for objective reasons, he charged.

The Russian Foreign Minister has almost given up on Germany, but has hopes for France. "Germany's recent policy on

many issues convinces us that this is exactly what Berlin wants to do (step back from leadership). France has a somewhat different position... If France wants to claim this role, we will have to wait and see what happens," he observed.

Attacking the "rules-based order", Lavrov said they were invented on the go, at various get-togethers. The Russian Foreign Minister's ire was instigated by the EU approving a framework for imposing sanctions on a country for human rights abuse. It had earlier

adopted the mechanisms of sanctions for chemical and cyber-hacking violations. All these are interpreted as targeted against Russia at Washington's bidding.

Lavrov said, "While raising unilateral structures, the West is doing everything it can to discredit universal bodies or cow them into submission by privatising their secretariats, as we in the case of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons."

"When this fails, they take these issues outside UN structures and universal conventions and impose on others convenient decisions (sanctions) as the ultimate truth, the only correct version of a multilateral approach," he said.

Moscow offered a "unifying agenda", where G20 is the only mechanism outside the UNSC where it is still possible to come to terms based on balance of interests.

Anti-cow slaughter Bill passed in K'taka

BENGALURU: Amid bedlam, the controversial anti-cow slaughter bill was passed in the Karnataka Assembly on Wednesday, with the Congress members staging a walkout in protest. The Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill-2020 sets a total ban on the slaughter of cows in the state. PTI

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Didi synonymous with intolerance: Nadda

KOLKATA: BJP national president JP Nadda on Wednesday hit out at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, terming her of being synonymous to "intolerance". "Intolerance is increasing in Bengal. For West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee...the name is intolerance," said the BJP chief at a rally in Kolkata. PTI

Pokhriyal holds bilateral meet with UAE minister

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' held a virtual meeting with Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi, Minister of Education, the United Arab Emirates, today.

Al Hammadi appreciated the National Education Policy, 2020. He said, "The policy is a visionary document as it lays emphasis on holistic development of the students and that the education sector has the potential to take mutual cooperation to new heights and both countries should work to increase long-term cooperation." — TNS

in the field of education."

Pokhriyal said India and UAE share a strong and deep bilateral relationship and both sides had been working together to strengthen educational cooperation and collaboration.

"This meeting is being held with a view to further deepen our relations especially in the field of education by way of continuous dialogue and by enhancing active, interactive and long-term collaborations at various levels," he added.

The minister invited students from the UAE to India under "Study in India" programme. — TNS

INDIA'S WEAPON PROCUREMENT FROM US JUMPS TO \$3.4 BN

■ India's weapon procurement from the United States jumped from \$6.2 million to \$3.4 billion in the final year of the Donald Trump's administration, according to the official data

■ As per the data released by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the sale of weapons from the US to other countries has dipped to \$50.8 billion in 2020 from \$55.7 billion in 2019

MANY REPORT DROPS IN PURCHASE

Saudi Arabia: \$14.9 bn in 2019 to \$1.2 bn in 2020

Afghanistan: \$1.1 bn, down from \$1.6 bn

Belgium: \$41.8 mn, down from \$5.5 bn

Iraq: \$368 mn, down from \$1.4 bn

South Korea: \$2.1 bn, down from \$2.7 bn

■ IN 2020, US SALE OF WEAPONS TO PAKISTAN STOOD AT \$146 MILLION

■ IN 2019, THERE WAS NO SALE OF US MILITARY WEAPONS TO PAKISTAN PTI

BRIEFLY



GREY MORNING: A train chugs off amid fog at a railway station in Kolkata on Wednesday. PTI

SC: No need to put up posters outside Covid patients' homes

New Delhi: States and Union Territories are not required "as of now" to affix posters outside the residence of those who test positive for Covid-19 and such an exercise can be done only when direction is issued by a competent authority under the Disaster Management Act, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday. PTI

Anil Kapoor apologises after IAF objects to movie

Mumbai: Actor Anil Kapoor has apologised for unintentionally hurting sentiments of the Indian Air Force (IAF) after the organisation raised objection to certain scenes featuring the actor in his upcoming OTT film, AK vs AK. Earlier in the day, the IAF took to Twitter to express displeasure over Kapoor wearing a wrong uniform and using abusive language in the film, urging the streaming platform Netflix to remove the scenes with the discrepancies. IANS

PM greets Sonia on birthday

New Delhi: Congress president Sonia Gandhi turned 74 on Wednesday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted her and wished her a long and healthy life. Gandhi has led the Congress for 19 years. Punjab CM Capt Amarinder Singh and all senior Congress and opposition leaders tweeted wishes. Gandhi is in Goa on medical advice. TNS

To boost fresh hiring, Cabinet approves ₹23K-crore scheme

TREND NEWS SERVICE

NOD FOR PUBLIC WI-FI NETWORKS

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 9

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday gave approval for "Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana" to give a push to employment opportunities in the formal sector with a goal to fast rev up economy, which has been sapped by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The move is also seen as a detour to economically empower people and increase their purchasing power to engine the demand supply to get over the post-Covid which is comparatively bearish. The Cabinet approved

an expenditure of Rs 1,584 crore for the current financial year and Rs 22,810 crore for the entire scheme period — 2020-2023.

The scheme will provide benefits to lakhs of people in the formal/organised sector," Union Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar said.

Under the scheme, the government will provide subsidy for two years in respect of new employees engaged on or after October 1, 2020 and up to June 30, 2021.

It will pay both 12 per cent employees' contribution and 12 per cent employers' contribution i.e. 24 per cent of wages towards EPF in respect of new employees in establishments employing up to 1,000 employees for two years.

It will pay only employees' share of EPF contribution i.e. 12 per cent of wages in respect of new employees in establishments employing more than 1,000 employees for two years.

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