

SHORT TAKES

FB'S OVERSIGHT BOARD TAKES UP CASE FROM INDIA

New Delhi: An independent board set up by Facebook to look into hate and other undesirable content on the platform has taken up a case from India wherein a user had called for violence against French President Emmanuel Macron over a cartoon of Prophet. In a statement on Thursday, the Oversight Board said it has selected an additional case for consideration, which had been referred by Facebook. Facebook has already removed the particular content that displayed a sword and hate messages, and now the Board will review the matter. "In its referral, Facebook stated that it considered this case to be significant, because the content could convey a 'veiled threat' with a specific reference to an individual, President Macron. Facebook referred to heightened tensions in France at the time the user posted the content," the Board said. Facebook has indicated that although its policies allow it to determine a potential threat of real-world violence and to balance that determination against the user's ability to express their religious beliefs, it was difficult to draw the line in this case, according to the statement. The Board noted that the new case replaces one of the six cases that it was to review. The review of those six cases were announced on December 1. — PTI

City govt launches forum for EV policy

New Delhi: Delhi government, on Friday, launched a forum aiming at engagement with stakeholders for the successful implementation of its newly launched electric vehicle (EV) policy. The vice chairperson of Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC) of the Delhi government, Jasmine Shah, said, "Realising chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's vision to make Delhi the EV capital of India requires participation of all stakeholders including original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), fleet operators, charging station energy operators, and others." The DDC will host the Delhi EV Forum with the support of independent think tank RMI India working in the field of clean energy and mobility. "The first meeting of the Delhi EV Forum will be held virtually on December 18 and will discuss and understand challenges towards deployment of EVs and charging infrastructure and identify potential solutions," Mr Shah added.

Vaccine ready in a few weeks: PM

■ **Continued from Page 1** better than most others," the Prime Ministersaid at the meeting, which is the second such called by the government over the issue.

Three vaccines from India are also at different stages of trial, he said. "The Centre is in talks with state governments over the price of vaccines and a decision on it will be taken keeping public health as the topmost priority," he added.

In an effort to administer the vaccine in an efficient, smooth, transparent manner, the database of healthcare and frontline workers, augmentation of cold chains and procurement of syringes and needles are in advanced stages of preparation, the Prime Minister told the leaders of the various parties.

Covid positivity rate drops below 5% for 5th day

4,067 new cases, 73 deaths

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain, on Friday, said that the positivity rate in the national capital is less than five per cent and if this continues for five consecutive days the city will successfully combat the outbreak.

The national capital, meanwhile, recorded 4,067 new Covid-19 cases, taking the infection tally to over 5.86 lakh with 73 more fatalities reported in the last 24 hours.

According to the Delhi health bulletin, these fresh cases came out of a record 85,003 tests in a day which includes 40,191 RT-PCR tests.

While the positivity rate dropped to 4.78 per cent, 73 more fatalities were recorded, pushing the toll in the national capital to 9,497. The active cases tally on Thursday dropped to 28,252. The total number of cases has climbed to 5,86,125.

Mr Jain said that the positivity rate has become less than five per cent as compared to the surge since November 7, which is a sign of relief as it points to perpetual declining of the effect of the pandemic in Delhi.

"More than 65 per cent beds and more than 40 per cent ICU beds remain vacant. If this rate of positivity stays for five consecutive days, it will be indicative of the fact that Delhi has combated the virus," he said.

"Delhi has the infrastructural ability for



Satyendar Jain

storage as well as application of the vaccine," he added.

Mr Jain pointed out that according to Delhi government's live app, there are 18,700 beds in totality out of which more than 12,000 are vacant while 6,658 beds are occupied.

"Total ICU beds are 5,029, out of which 2,013 beds are vacant. This is indicative of the situation getting better gradually. If the positivity rate continues to stay below five per cent, we will overcome the pandemic. Due to aggressive testing, we have been able to achieve this," Mr Jain added.

Mr Jain emphasised that the Delhi government has the infrastructure to roll out the vaccine to the entire population of Delhi in a few weeks.

"We have facilities like mohalla clinics, poly clinics, and dispensaries to facilitate application of the vaccine. This vaccine is stored in thermocol boxes with dry ice. So, storage of this vaccine will not be a problem," said the Delhi health minister.



A health worker gears up to collect samples to test for Covid in New Delhi on Friday.

— AP

Covid: Govt begins enrolment of healthcare staff for vaccination

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

The Delhi government has begun the process of enrolment of healthcare workers of different hospitals, nursing homes, and other facilities for Covid-19 vaccination.

According to a public notice, a link has been provided on the website of the Delhi state health mission for uploading data.

Hundreds of healthcare workers (HCWs) at government and private facilities in Delhi had contracted the novel coron-

avirus and many more are still getting affected by it.

"Delhi government is enrolling healthcare workers for Covid-19 vaccination. Many registered nursing homes and hospitals, along with many smaller unregistered clinics, have already submit-

ted data," said the notice. "The Delhi government invites all those remaining healthcare facilities to submit the names of healthcare workers in their institutions, nursing homes, clinics, and OPDs," it said.

"Healthcare workers include medical, paramedical, supporting, security, and administrative staff of all allopathic, dental, AYUSH, physiotherapy clinics, diagnostic laboratories, radiology centres, and other healthcare settings," the notice added.

travel to and from Delhi," DCP (Noida) Rajesh S. told a news agency.

Thousands of farmers are currently staying put at Delhi's borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in protest against the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

They have expressed apprehension that these laws would pave the way for the dismantling of the minimum support price system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporations.

Farmers' stir: Traffic chaos continues

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

Scores of farmers opposing the Centre's new farm laws stayed put at the Noida-Delhi border for the fourth day on the trolley on Friday even as a key road connecting Uttar Pradesh and the national capital remained partially shut due to the stir.

Traffic moved at snail's pace at several border points as police kept key routes connecting Delhi to Haryana and Uttar Pradesh closed.

The protesters, including some women, are camping at one carriageway of the Delhi-Noida Link Road at the Chilla border while some are demonstrating at the nearby Dalit Prerna



Vehicles move slowly during a traffic congestion due to farmers' protest at Delhi border in Noida on Friday.

— PTI

Sthal near the Mahamaya Flyover, according to officials.

"One carriageway of the Noida-Delhi Road is closed while the other side, Delhi

to Noida, is open. The law and order situation is under control and commuters have been advised to take alternative routes of DND and Kalindi Kunj to

Farmers call for Bharat Bandh

■ **Continued from Page 1** towards finality when the next round of discussions is held on Saturday."

With the agitation entering ninth day on Friday, commuters continued to suffer due to the sealing of multiple borders connecting the national capital with the surrounding states. A writ petition, seeking immediate removal of protesting farmers from border areas of Delhi-NCR on the ground that that they increase the risk of Covid-19 spread in Delhi, was also moved in the Supreme Court.

The petition filed by Rishabh Sharma, a law student, stated that the protesters were "posing a hurdle for accessing emergency medical services." It also sought a direction that the protesters be asked to shift to the places designated for protest and that they be directed to follow the Covid-19 norms related to social distancing and face-mask wearing.

But support for the farmers' is growing. On Friday, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee spoke over the phone with some leaders at the Delhi-Haryana border. "I want to say Satsriakal to you, too. I want to congratulate you for raising your voices for farmers' rights. I had gone on a hunger strike for 26 days for farmers' rights when they were trying to acquire farmers' land forcefully," she

said. "Your movement is our movement, India's movement. Bengal will support you. We will start programmes in support of you from tomorrow and if you wish we will send our people to you. They will have to withdraw anti-farmer laws and until they do so, keep your movement alive. The changes they've made in the Essential Commodities Act are also wrong and false... You have my full support. Your movement will be successful," she said.

Farmers call for Bharat Bandh on Dec. 8

In Amritsar, newly appointed SGPC president Bibi Jagir Kaur said they will be sending portable bathrooms and lavatories for the use of female protestors who are agitating with farmers on the borders of Delhi.

Former national boxing coach Gurbax Singh Sandhu also announced that he would return his Dronacharya Award in support of the agitating farmers. On Thursday, Shiromani Akali Dal leader and former Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal had returned his Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian award, in protest against the government's "betrayal of farmers". Sahitya Akademi Award winners from Punjab — renowned poet Mohanji, story writer Jaswinder and playwright Swarajbir — have also returned their awards.

Gurgaon builder fined ₹10.33cr for green laws violation

New Delhi, Dec. 4: A committee formed by the National Green Tribunal Friday recommended a penalty of ₹10.33 crore on a builder for construction in the green area in a housing complex in Gurgaon in violation of environmental laws.

The three-member committee visited the sites of Ambiance Lagoon and Ambiance Island in Gurgaon and found illegal construction of commercial complex at part of the land of the housing colony as also violation of environmental clearance.

The committee has recommended that the illegal commercial structure be immediately demolished for development of green area and other activities of lagoon apartments.

On the basis of calculations, the total value of environmental compensation to be paid by the project proponent has been assessed as ₹10.33 crore, it said. The panel also suggested that the government may impose an immediate fine of 10 per cent of the project cost ₹138 crore.

The NGT committee comprised representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Central Pollution Control Board and the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal.

The NGT had earlier

■ **THE COMMITTEE** has recommended that the illegal commercial structure be immediately demolished for development of green area and other activities of lagoon apartments

levied an interim compensation of ₹68.51 lakh on Ambiance Developers & Infrastructure Private Limited for building Ambiance Lagoon Apartment in Gurgaon.

The bench said that the assessed amount does not deal with the loss of ecological services to the applicants who are allottees of apartments prior to the revised plans.

"Compensation has been assessed for period from July 2, 2019 only on the basis of violation of law without considering the value of loss of environmental services. The component of compensation is the value of ecological services lost and the violation of law which cannot be the sole basis for determining compensation for loss of environmental services on account of illegal construction in open area," it had said.

The apartment owners had contended that commercial tower construction was not part of the Deed of Declaration and the original sanctioned plan which was for 10.98 acres.

— PTI

BJP councillor from Vasant Kunj held in a bribery case

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI DEC. 4

The CBI has arrested Manoj Mehlawat, a BJP Councillor from Vasant Kunj, in connection with a bribery case.

Sources in the central probe agency said after receiving information that Mehlawat had allegedly demanded a bribe of ₹10 lakh from a person to allow the construction of a house without any hindrance, a trap was laid by the CBI sleuths. Sources further said Mehlawat was caught red hand by the CBI and placed under arrest. Mehlawat was produced before a special court here, which sent him to judicial custody.

After his arrest, the Delhi BJP said Mehlawat had been suspended from the primary membership of the party with immediate effect. Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta said: "The Delhi BJP under its zero-tolerance policy for corruption suspends you from the primary membership of the party with immediate effect over corruption charge against you."

Mehlawat was elected from Vasant Kunj in the 2017 municipal elections on the ticket of BJP.



Manoj Mehlawat

'Trudeau remark may damage ties'

■ **Continued from Page 1**

India about the protests by farmers. The situation is concerning and we're all very worried about family and friends ... Let me remind you Canada will always be there to defend the right of peaceful protest. We believe in the importance of dialogue and that's why we reached out in multiple means directly to the Indian authorities to highlight our concerns."

In a statement Friday, the external affairs ministry said: "The Canadian high commissioner was summoned to the ministry of external affairs today and informed that the comments by the Canadian Prime Minister, some Cabinet ministers and members of Parliament on issues relating to Indian farmers constitute



Justin Trudeau

an unacceptable interference in our internal affairs. Such actions, if continued, would have a seriously damaging impact on ties between India and Canada."

India had also earlier this week on Tuesday attacked the remarks by the Canadian PM without naming him directly then, saying these were "ill-informed and unwarranted" and pertained to the "internal affairs of a democratic

country". New Delhi also said "diplomatic conversations" should "not be misrepresented for political purposes".

With fringe elements in the Canadian Sikh community often raising the issue of "Khalistan", India has been uncomfortable over the Trudeau government's perceived reluctance in cracking down hard on such pro-Khalistan radical elements. In fact, Mr Trudeau's week-long India visit in February 2018, was marred by controversy. In a clear warning to pro-Khalistan anti-India separatists operating in Canada, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after holding talks with Mr Trudeau in New Delhi then, had said "no tolerance will be shown" for those challenging India's "unity and integrity".



Vehicles ply amid low visibility due to smog at outer Ring Road in New Delhi Friday.

— PTI

IN BRIEF MIFFED MANN REFUSES TO ACCEPT AWARD

Chandigarh, Dec. 4: Punjabi singer-actor Harbhajan Mann on Friday announced that he will not accept the state government's 'Shiromani Punjabi' Award, expressing solidarity with farmers protesting against the new central farm laws.

The Punjab Languages Department had on Thursday chosen Mann for the award. The department had announced Sahitya Ratna and Shiromani awards for 18 different categories of literature and art.

Though I'm grateful to be selected, I humbly cannot accept the Shiromani Gayak award from the Department of Language. People's love is the biggest award of my career, & all attention & efforts right now from us all must be dedicated to the peaceful farmers' protest (sic), Mann said on Twitter.

Mann, along with many Punjabi singers and artists, has been supporting the farmers' agitation for the last several months. The singer-actor had also attended the farmers' protest at the Delhi borders.

You had to be there to experience their energy, fervour & optimism. Amidst adversity, they smile & share moments of happiness. Proud of the peaceful & resilient protesters from far & wide, Mann said in another tweet.

He had come out with a new song *Murde ni laye bina haq, Dilliye* (Delhi, we aren't turning back without getting our rights) on Wednesday. The video of the song shows how farmers braved water cannons and broke police barriers en route to Delhi border points. About a month back, Mann had released another song *Anndataa, Khet Saadi Maa, Khet Saadi pagg* (fields are our mother, fields are our pride).

— PTI

GOVT SHOULD FIND A SOLUTION: DHARMENDRA

Mumbai, Dec. 4: Veteran actor Dharmendra on Friday urged the central government to find a solution to farmers' protests over the farm laws, a day after he deleted a similar post on Twitter. On Thursday, the 84-year-old actor had urged the government to resolve the protests soon, citing the growing number of coronavirus cases in Delhi.

"I request the government... please quickly find a solution the farmers' problems... the number of corona cases are on a rise in Delhi... it is painful," Dharmendra had written in a post. However, the veteran actor soon deleted the post, without any explanation.

On Friday morning, a user posted the screenshot of the tweet, wondering what prompted the actor to delete the tweet.

Dharmendra said, "I deleted the tweet because I felt saddened by comments like these. You can abuse me to your heart's content, I am happy that you are happy. Yes, I am sad for my farmer brothers."

The *Apne* actor further said, "The government should find a solution fast, nobody is listening to us." When another user claimed that he must have deleted the post on the insistence of his son, actor and BJP MP from Gurdaspur Sunny Deol, Dharmendra replied, "I won't say anything about your mentality."

RAJ CM: FARM LAWS SHOULD BE REPEALED

Jaipur, Dec. 4: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday asked the Centre to immediately repeal the new farm laws and apologise to the protesting farmers for allegedly misbehaving with them.

"The central government enacted all three agricultural bills without consulting the state governments, farmer organisations, agricultural experts and the bills were passed unconstitutionally without any discussion in Parliament even when the Opposition was demanding to send the bills to a select committee, Gehlot tweeted.

Chief Ministers of four Congress-ruled states including himself and Amarinder Singh had sought time from President Ram Nath Kovind to discuss the issue but the request was turned down.

He criticised the Centre for its handling of the protests over the contentious farm laws. "The centre should withdraw the laws without any delay and should seek apology from the farmers for the misbehaviour, he said.

Crucial meet between farmers and Centre today

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC 4

Union home minister Amit Shah has held a series of meetings to find a resolution to the ongoing farmers' agitation. There is a growing view within the government that the issue should be resolved at the earliest as a delay could have an adverse impact on both economy and security situation.

The home minister has been playing an active role behind the scene holding discussions with agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar along with BJP leaders from Punjab and Haryana to help find a solution to the ongoing deadlock with farmers.

The Centre is keen that the farmers deadlock should be resolved at the earliest as a long agitation, which can also turn violent with number of farmers growing almost daily, hurts both the economy and the security situation also.

It was largely on account of the Home Minister's initiative that the Centre had decided to introduce some important changes in the three farm laws as was being demanded by the farmers. Most of these are related to assuring the Minimum Support Price and continuation of the mandi or markets in Punjab and Haryana where Government procurement of wheat and paddy is done.

In its meeting with the farmers on Thursday, the Centre had agreed to all these demands following a green single from Home the Minister. Now another crucial meeting between farmers unions and Centre is scheduled to be held on Saturday.

Sources said the Home Minister has asked the teams negotiating with the farmers to adopt a "flexible and humanitarian" approach towards the farmers demands. Farmers have raised nine major objections regarding the three agriculture Bill and it is believed that Centre has agreed to amend all these nine provisions and this will conveyed to the farmers in Saturday's meeting.



Enhanced security to stop farmers during their protest against the new farm laws, at Delhi-Meerut Expressway in New Delhi on Friday.

Mamata ups ante, talks to protesting farmers

Tells them to protest till new farm laws are withdrawn

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, DEC. 4

Reaching out to the agitating farmers, West Bengal chief minister and Trinamul Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Friday extended her "full support" on phone to their agitation in her desperate bid to encash their growing anger against the BJP in the next year's Assembly Election. She has also instructed her party to organise a three-day dharna at the Gandhi Statue in Kolkata from December 8-10.

Sent by Ms Banerjee, TMC Rajya MP Derek O'Brien and Swaraj India chief Yogendra Yadav facilitated her conversation with a farmer leader Paramjit Singh on mobile in loudspeaker mode at the protest site at Singhu on the Delhi-Haryana border to boost the farmers' morale.

The TMC chief told Mr Singh, "I thank you for leading the farmers' movement. I also observed a 26-day hunger strike against the forcible acquisition of farmers' land. Your movement is our movement. It is a movement of entire Hindustan. We will provide you whatever assistance needed in support of the farmers. We can send our people if you want. These anti-farmer laws should be withdrawn. Until and unless they are withdrawn, you continue the farmers' movement. We stand by you."

"Secondly," she claimed, "The changes brought in the Essential Commodities Act are totally wrong. They (BJP) introduced many laws forcefully thinking that



People take part in a candlelight march in Jalandhar, Friday in support of the farmers protesting against the new farm laws.

— PTI

land. Your movement is our movement. It is a movement of entire Hindustan. We will provide you whatever assistance needed in support of the farmers. We can send our people if you want. These anti-farmer laws should be withdrawn. Until and unless they are withdrawn, you continue the farmers' movement. We stand by you."

"Secondly," she claimed, "The changes brought in the Essential Commodities Act are totally wrong. They (BJP) introduced many laws forcefully thinking that

they can now do anything and even sell the country since they got votes. We do not want Modiji to sell our country. So we need to work unitedly. Hindustan will have to be made for farmers, youth, labourers and others. Yogendraji knows me. We have worked together a lot and will do more. Our full support is with you. Your movement will be successful."

Mr Singh expressed his gratitude to her for support. Mr O'Brien and Mr Yadav later spoke to more leaders during their four-hour visit.

Remove farmers at Delhi borders, urges plea in SC

New Delhi, Dec. 4: A petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Friday seeking direction to the authorities to immediately remove farmers, who are protesting at several Delhi border points, saying commuters are facing hardships due to the road blockades and the gatherings might lead to increase in Covid-19 cases.

The plea has sought the SC directions to the authorities to open the roads at Delhi borders, shift these protestors to allotted place and provide guidelines on social distancing and use of mask at the protest place.

The petition, by a law student, has claimed that Delhi Police had on November 27 allowed these protesters to hold demonstration peacefully at Nirankari ground at Burari here but despite that they have blocked the borders of Delhi. — PTI

■ 'This award means a lot to me but plight of my fellow farmers means even more' Ex-boxing coach offers to return Dronacharya

New Delhi, Dec. 4: Former national boxing coach Gurbax Singh Sandhu, during whose tenure India secured its maiden Olympic medal in the sport, on Friday said he will return his Dronacharya award if demands of the farmers protesting against new agriculture laws are not addressed.

Mr Sandhu, who served as India's national men's coach for over two decades before guiding women boxers for a couple of years, said it is his way of showing support



Gurbax Sandhu

► **GURBAX SINGH** Sandhu was the national coach when Vijender Singh became the first Indian boxer to fetch an Olympic medal back in 2008. It was during his tenure that a 8 Indian boxers qualified for the 2012 Olympics in London.

► Sandhu won the Dronacharya much before that in 1998

to the farmers, who are protesting in "bitter cold without any consideration for their own well-being".

"By doing this, I feel a huge morale pressure is off me. I come from a fam-

ily of farmers, their fears need to be addressed. If the ongoing talks do not yield a result satisfactory to the farmers, I will return the award," Mr Sandhu told PTI from his home in Patiala.

Mr Sandhu was the national coach when Vijender Singh became the first Indian boxer to fetch an Olympic medal back in 2008. It was during his tenure that a then unprecedented eight Indian boxers qualified for the 2012 Olympics in London.

Mr Sandhu won the Dronacharya much before that in 1998. He also served as the national women's coach after his stint with the men came to an end.

"This award means a lot to me but the plight of my

fellow farmers means even more. It is painful for me to see them sitting on roads in this cold. All that the government needs to do is talk to them, clear their doubts and assure them," he said.

"If the situation is resolved to their satisfaction, then I would not go ahead with it but if it is not, I will return the award," he added.

Mr Sandhu joined several former sportspersons in extending their support to the agitating farmers.

— PTI

12 infants die in govt hosp, Shivraj reviews situation

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, DEC. 4

As many as 12 infants have died in the intensive care units of a government hospital in a Madhya Pradesh district in the last one week, setting alarm bells ringing in the state administration.

The deaths occurred in the special newborn care unit and pediatric intensive care unit of district hospital in Shahdol.

"Total 12 infants died due to various reasons such as premature birth, underweight and pneumonia in the district hospital since November 27", V.S. Waria, civil surgeon in Shahdol district hospital said on Friday.

According to him, four infants died in the hospital in last 48 hours itself.

While one of them died due to premature birth

● **THE DEATHS** occurred in the newborn care unit and pediatric ICU of district hospital in Shahdol

● **THE CM** ordered the local administration to take urgent measures to check mortality of infants in the hospital

and underweight, 11 other infants succumbed to pneumonia and other cold related diseases in the hospital in the last one week, he added.

He, however, admitted that the only pediatrician in the hospital had earlier tested positive for Coronavirus and was absent in his duty for some time. He joined his duty on Thursday.

He attributed the high infant mortality in the hospital to the late arrival of sick children for treatment. The sick infants

were being brought from far off places such as Annupur and Umaria for admission in Shahdol district hospital.

All the sick newborns admitted in the hospital were found to be in critical conditions, he added.

Death of 12 infants in the government hospital has alerted the state government with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan convening an emergency meeting here on Friday to review the situation.

Chouhan ordered the local health administration to take urgent measures to check mortality of infants in the hospital.

In a related development, former chief minister and MP Congress president Kamal Nath constituted a 4-member-team of the party to make on-the-spot inquiry into the matter and submit him the report.

Delhi held hostage, says Kapil Mishra

New Delhi, Dec. 4: Amid the ongoing agitation by farmers on city's borders, Delhi BJP leader Kapil Mishra has urged President Ram Nath Kovind to take steps to provide respite to Delhiites who he claimed were being "held hostage" through protests.

In his letter to Mr Kovind, Mr Mishra said workers of many political parties have held Delhi hostage for many days. He said the supplies of essential items like milk, vegetables, oxygen cylinder and medicines has been affected, he said.

"This is not the first time but it has been recurring. At the start of this year, Delhi was held hostage in the name of Shaheen Bagh movement and an atmosphere of hatred and violence was creat-



Kapil Mishra

ed in the capital," he said in his letter. Mr Mishra's name has figured in connection with the Delhi riots, with many political and social outfits accusing him of giving "provocative" speech at Jafarabad that was followed by riots in north east Delhi.

Mr Mishra said the people of Delhi were getting "deprived" of their fundamental rights and simple freedoms like going to office, opening shops and hospital visits for treatment were being snatched away from them. "Delhi people being held hostage frequently. This toying with the lives of children and elderly must stop," he said in his letter. — PTI

Kangana served another legal notice

Mumbai, Dec. 4: It was Kangana Ranaut versus not just Diljit Dosanjh but several other Punjabi artistes as well as the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee on Friday with the actor's comments against an elderly participant in farmers' protest leading to a bitter war of words and demands for an apology.

Ranaut, who made headlines with her ugly spat with Dosanjh on Twitter, was served a legal notice on Friday by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee which is seeking an unconditional apology from the actor.

Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee president Maninder Sirsa said Ranaut's tweets tried to portray farmers protest as "anti-national" and were derogatory against the aged mother of a farmer.

This is the second legal notice against the actor, who has already been served a legal notice by a lawyer from Punjab's Zirakpur town on December 2 over her tweet.

Prominent singers and artistes from Punjab,



Kangana Ranaut

including Mika Singh, Ammy Virk and Jazzy B, meanwhile, have also criticised Ranaut while backing Dosanjh for his war of words with Ranaut.

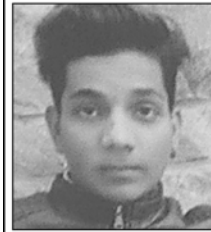
Dosanjh had taken Ranaut to task for misidentifying the woman farmer as Bilkis Bano, a septuagenarian who had attracted international attention for her participation in the anti-CAA protests earlier this year at Delhi's Shaheen Bagh neighbourhood. He had shared a BBC interview that identified the woman farmer as Mahinder Kaur.

Ranaut had shared a tweet on November 27, alleging that the "Shaheen Bagh dadi" also joined the farmers' agitation over the new laws at various border points of the national capital. — PTI

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE	
No. 128-W/260/Tender Notice/NIT 37-W-IV/20-21	Date: 04.12.2020
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-IV, Northern Railway, Delhi Division for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender on prescribed form for the following work.	
Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)	
1 Name of work with its location	Pre-Post attention work with deep screening of track with BCM in the section of Sr. DEN-IV.
2 Approx. cost of work.	Rs. 3,58,07,485.10
3 Earnest money.	Rs. 3,29,000.00
4 Date and Time of submission of tender and opening of tender.	Bidding Start date for work no. Up to 15:00 hrs. on 15.12.2020 opening of e-Tender at 15:00 hrs. on 29.12.2020.
5 Website particulars, published e-tender, notice location etc. complete details of tender can be seen and web site where the tender form can be downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	
2720/20	

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT	
419-Udyog Sadan, Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi-110092	
No.Addl.MHO/HQ/EDMC/HQ/2020/D-896	Dated 02/12/2020
Public Health Department invite tenders to purchase 15000 nos. of Anti Rabies Vaccine Purified chick embryo cell rabies vaccine prepared on vero cells/Human diploid cell rabies vaccine IM/ID pack, one dose with 1 ml amp of solvent through e-tendering system. Further information is available on website- http://mcdetenders.com	
Sd/- Addl. Municipal Health Officer East Delhi Municipal Corporation	
R.O. No. 68/DPI/EDMC/2020-21 EDMC'S CITIZENS HELPLINE NO. 155303	

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Mohd. Adanan, S/o Shahabuddin, R/o H.No. 1310, Gali No. 13, Chauhan Banger, Delhi, Age: Approx 20 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Oval, Built: Medium, wearing White Checkdar Shirt, Sky Blue colour Jeans and Rubber**

Chappal in feet, has been missing from his house since 07.11.2020. In this regard a **DD No. 60-A, dated 11.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641
SHO
P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi
DP/429/NE/2020 Ph. No.: 011-22560191, 22560192

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering)	
Tender No. 558-Sig-16-M-TENDER-1356	Dated: 03.12.2020
Name of work with its location	Signaling work in connection with Provision of Railway siding at Naultha Railway station of Delhi Division.
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹ 68,44,140/- only
Earnest Money Deposit(₹)	₹ 1,16,900/-only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender	Tender uploading / closing date & time- 30.12.2020 up to 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	
2708/20	

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

It is notified for the information of passengers that the services of following Special trains will be discontinued due to operational reasons from the dates shown against each:-

Train No. & Name	Date of Cancellation
02438 Hazrat Nizamuddin-Secunderabad Rajdhani Superfast Special	From 06.12.2020 till further advice
02437 Secunderabad-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Superfast Special	From 09.12.2020 till further advice
09415 Ahmedabad - Delhi Special	From 13.12.2020
09416 Delhi - Ahmedabad Special	From 13.12.2020

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

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

An advertisement for Northern Railway. On the left, a vertical banner contains the text '2717/20' and 'Security Helpline No. 182' and 'Integrated Helpline No. 139'. The main body of the ad features the text 'Please join us on' followed by icons for YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Below this is the Northern Railway logo, which is a circular emblem with 'NORTHERN RAILWAY' and 'INDIAN RAILWAYS' text. To the right of the logo, the text 'NORTHERN RAILWAY' is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Below the logo and the railway name, it says 'Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in'. At the bottom, a black banner with white text reads 'SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE'. On the far right edge, there is a small vertical text '© 2017 Northern Railway'.

An advertisement for Northern Railway. On the left, a vertical banner contains the text '2717/20' and 'Security Helpline No. 182' and 'Integrated Helpline No. 139'. The main body of the ad features the text 'Please join us on' followed by icons for YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Below this is the Northern Railway logo, which is a circular emblem with 'NORTHERN RAILWAY' and 'INDIAN RAILWAYS' text. To the right of the logo, the text 'NORTHERN RAILWAY' is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Below the logo and the railway name, it says 'Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in'. At the bottom, a black banner with white text reads 'SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE'. On the far right edge, there is a small vertical text '© 2017 Northern Railway'.

SHORT TAKES

SC unhappy over Rajoana case delay

New Delhi: The Supreme court on Friday questioned the Centre over delay in sending proposal to the President for commuting Beant Singh murder case convict Balwant Singh Rajoana's death penalty. Rajoana, convicted for the 1995 assassination of Beant Singh, has been in jail for 25 years awaiting his execution. The Centre had decided to commute his death sentence to life imprisonment in 2019. Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde heading a bench also comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian asked how appeal by the co-accused could come in the way of the Central government not sending to the President, under Article 72 of the Constitution, its decision to commute the death sentence of Rajoana to life imprisonment.

3 kids dead, 5 hurt as bus runs amok

Muzaffarnagar, UP: Three children died and five others were injured when a speeding bus lost control and rammed into them when they were waiting for transport in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district on Friday, police said. An infant, a toddler and a 12-year-old boy died when the state-run bus ran over the passengers who were standing at a bus stop on the Delhi-Saharanpur highway in Thana Bhawan town, police said. Five people, including three women and two children, were injured and shifted to a hospital in a serious condition. The bus driver has been arrested, police said. — PTI

Cops attach assets of rape accused

Muzaffarnagar, UP: The Bareilly police has attached the property of a rape accused for not appearing in court, officials said. The property of Naveen Kumar was attached under Section 83 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) on Thursday, they said. Kumar allegedly abducted and raped a minor girl in Bareilly district some time ago, police said. A case has been registered against the accused under relevant sections of the IPC and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO). He is absconding and has not surrendered before the court in Bareilly, they said. A team of Bareilly police reached here and attached Kumar's property following a court order, said SHO, Bhopa police station, Sube Singh. — PTI

PLEA LINKED TO AYODHYA MOSQUE TRUST JUNKED

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

The Supreme Court on Friday junked a PIL seeking directions for nominating Central and state government representatives to the "Indo Islamic Cultural Foundation" trust for building a mosque in Ayodhya. A Bench comprising Justices Rohinton Fali Nariman and K.M. Joseph dismissed the plea by two Uttar Pradesh-based lawyers Shishir Chaturvedi and Kamlesh Kumar Shukla who had said that like Ramjanmabhoomi Trust set up for the construction of Lord Rama's temple in Ayodhya, government nominees should also be there in the Indo Islamic Cultural Foundation Trust. The court by its November 9, 2019, judgment had paved the way for the construction of a Ram Temple by a trust in Ayodhya, and directed the Centre to allot an alternative five-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a new mosque at a "prominent" place in the town in Uttar Pradesh. The top court had directed the inclusion of three government nominees on the trust that will undertake the construction and management of the Lord Rama's temple. Advocate Shukla is a Naga Sadhu from Hanuman Garhi and was a junior lawyer of Mahant Dharam Das of Nirmohi Akhara in the Ayodhya case in the top court. The petitioner had sought the government nominees in the Trust for "a strict vigilance and supervision to maintain public peace and to control over any misuse of funds of the trust".

Omar Abdullah condemns terrorist attack ■ Over 50% voter turnout recorded in Phase 3 DDC poll candidate shot at in Anantnag

Srinagar, Dec. 4: In the first attack on a District Development Council (DDC) election contestant in Jammu and Kashmir, militants shot at and injured an Apni Party candidate in Anantnag district on Friday, police said. The third phase of District Development Council polls in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday saw a total turnout of 50.53%, according to the data provided by the Election Commission. Jammu region recorded a turnout of 68.88%, while Kashmir division saw a turnout of 31.61%. The highest turnout of 75.20% was recorded in Reasi, and the lowest of 10.87% was in Pulwama. Aneesul Islam Ganaie was shot at by the terrorists in Sagam area of Kokernag in the south



West Pakistani refugees celebrate after casting their votes during the third phase of DDC election at Chak Jafar village in Jammu on Friday.

Kashmir district, a police official said. Ganaie, who is contesting the ongoing DDC polls on an Apni Party ticket, sustained minor injuries to his hand and leg. "Today at about 1200 hours Anantnag police

received information about a terror crime incident at Sagam Kokernag area of District Anantnag, where terrorists had fired upon a DDC candidate. Senior police officers immediately reached the terror crime spot," a

police spokesperson said. This was the first attack on a candidate contesting the eight-phase DDC polls being held from November 28 to December 19. Meanwhile, the police also instructed all election candidates to provide information before going out for campaigning, pointing out that Ganie had failed to do so. "The information regarding his movement was neither conveyed to PCR nor to concerned police station," the statement said. "He was instructed to get escort personnel for campaigning purpose which he did not take." National Conference leader Omar Abdullah condemned the incident. "I hope and pray that he [Islam], survives the attack," tweeted Mr Abdullah. — Agencies



Due to heavy showers, the ancient Nataraja temple at Chidambaram witnesses flooding of its inner corridors on Friday. Heavy rains continued in Tamil Nadu leading to inundation of crops and waterlogging in many rural and urban areas while the deep depression over the Gulf of Mannar near Ramanathapuram is likely to weaken into a depression on December 5.

Cong likely to get its new chief next month

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

Elections to the post of the Congress party president can be held as early as next month if everything goes as per schedule, claimed party insiders. The Congress is in its poll mode after the one-year term of the interim president Sonia Gandhi ended in August this year.

Former president Rahul Gandhi has also been getting involved in the working of the organisation. As Sonia Gandhi is in Goa on the advice of her doctors, it was Mr Gandhi who was holding parleys with party leaders in several poll-bound states. Many within the party add that the writing on the wall is clear that Rahul is once again getting ready for the top job within the party. Interestingly, state in-charges have recently been appointed in the states of Assam, Puducherry, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu but it was Mr Gandhi who was at the helm of affairs. Sources say that he will also be engaging with the prospective alliance partners in these states.

All of these states go to the polls around April and May 2021. It will be keenly watched whether Mr Gandhi will be able to sew up alliances that are beneficial to the party as well as the alliance. After the party fared badly in the Bihar Assembly elections, several observers said that the performance of the Congress let the alliance down. Mr Gandhi was elected unopposed in December 2017 and resigned after electoral debacle in 2019 Lok Sabha election. Several leaders have been demanding early polls to the Congress Working Committee.



Rahul Gandhi

Opp. flags GST shortfall in PM's all-party meet

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

Though the main agenda of the Prime Minister's all-party meeting was the strategy for rollout of a Covid-19 vaccine, many Opposition parties flagged the need for the government to urgently bring the economy back on track. Most parties demanded financial help from the Centre and a holistic plan for rollout of the vaccine.

The meeting was attended by 13 parties which included Congress, Shiv Sena, Trinamul Congress, DMK, among others. The parties highlighted the GST dues that the Central government owed states adding that they were facing severe revenue shortfall due to Covid-19.

The Congress was represented by Ghulam Nabi Azad, who said that the pandemic should be a part of India's internal security policy, and all political parties should be involved against any misinformation campaign on vaccine.

Telangana Rashtra Samithi MP Namma Nageshwar Rao said the government should provide the vaccine free of cost. The Central government, he said, should

ensure that cold storage units are set up across the country for easy transport of the vaccine. The Shiv Sena's Lok Sabha MP Vinayak Raut said that the GST collection by the Central government was more than ₹1 lakh crore and thus the Centre should not withhold the share of the State governments.

Similar views were echoed by the Trinamul Congress, represented by Sudip Bandopadhyay. He too said there was a need for additional financial help for the state governments, considering the financial stress they were going through.

The DMK, was the only party which raised the issue of the farmers' agitation. The sources said that at the end of the speech when DMK's T.R. Baalu raised the issue, parliamentary affairs minister Prahalad Joshi interrupted and told him to stick to the topic and the two had a somewhat heated exchange.

■ Cadres will be skinned if they don't mend ways: Ghosh 'TMC trying to turn Bengal into Bangladesh'

Joka (West Bengal), Dec. 4: West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh Friday warned TMC workers to mend their ways or else they will be beaten up and "skinned" on streets, comments the state's ruling party termed "vicious" and said he should be boycotted by the media and politicians.

While addressing a "Cha Chakra" (Chat over a cup of tea) on the south-west fringes of the city bordering South 24 Parganas district, Mr Ghosh lashed out at the TMC, accusing it of trying to turn West Bengal into Bangladesh, with its cadre using slogans like "Joy Bangla".

"Joy Bangla" was a battle cry that was used by warriors of East Pakistan



Dilip Ghosh

ADDRESSING A 'Cha Chakra' on the south-west fringes of the city bordering South 24 Parganas district, Mr Ghosh lashed out at the TMC, accusing it of trying to turn West Bengal into Bangladesh, with its cadre using slogans like 'Joy Bangla'.

during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 that led to the creation of Bangladesh.

"TMC leaders have problems with slogans of Jai Shri Ram. They are more comfortable with slogans like 'Joy Bangla'. This is a conspiracy by the TMC to turn West Bengal into Bangladesh. The TMC has opposed CAA with this very intention so that persecuted religious minorities... refugees can't get

Indian citizenship. "We will never allow West Bengal to turn into Bangladesh," he asserted.

While referring to alleged attacks on BJP workers by the TMC, Ghosh warned activists of the state's ruling party of dire consequences if they did not mend their ways.

"There's still time to mend your ways, or else you people will be beaten up in the middle of the

BJP: Hyd result shows rejection of dynastic, appeasement politics

New Delhi, Dec. 4: Lauding its "astounding" performance in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) polls, where it has made big gains, as a "moral victory", the BJP said it has emerged as the "only alternative" to the ruling TRS in Telangana. BJP president J.P. Nadda described the results as "historic" for the saffron party and claimed it showed that people of the country support "only and only development agenda". This result reflects people's unequivocal support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development and governance

model, he said. The BJP believes that it has now emerged as the main challenger to the TRS, replacing the Congress, which won only two wards. "GHMC results show rejection of Dynastic, Corrupt & Appeasement politics. I Congratulate State President @bandisajay & hardworking @BJP4Telangana Karyakartas for their spirited efforts that led to great success. Gratitude to people of Hyderabad for their faith & support," Mr Nadda said in a tweet. The K. Chandrasekhar Rao-led TRS had swept the elections four years ago, winning 99 of the 150 wards. — PTI

Nadda embarks on 12-day tour to tone up BJP units

BJP chief begins his nationwide tour from U'khand

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Friday began his nation-wide tour to assess the party's organisational strength, till the booth level, and further strengthen the party machinery before Assembly polls and the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Mr Nadda commenced his tour from Uttarakhand, where Assembly polls are scheduled in 2022 and is also the venue for the religious congregation 'Kumbh' next year.

On a four-day visit to the hill state, Mr Nadda visited the Shanti Kunj Gayatri Pariwar in Haridwar on the first day and met saints and seers of the Niranjani Akhara and later participated in the Ganga aarti.

Mr Nadda will be holding meeting with the chief ministers, state office-bearers, MLAs, MPs and cadre to take stock of the party's "real strength on the ground."

During this nation-wide tour, Mr Nadda's priority will also be visiting those constituencies which the BJP lost in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Nadda will take stock of the Assembly election preparations in the states and



BJP president J.P. Nadda and his wife Mallika being presented a memento during their visit to Har Ki Pauri in Haridwar on Friday.

will also meet eminent citizens in each and every state. He will also hold meetings with the social media volunteers, who play a key role in conveying the party's messages, including during the election season.

On Sunday, the BJP president will be holding a detailed meeting at the Bijapur House in Dehradun with MPs, MLAs and party leaders and will also hold deliberations with the party leaders on BJP's ideology, political viewpoint and how to guide the party ahead.

He will be meeting chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Monday. In the first phase of his

120-day nationwide tour, Mr Nadda will be visiting Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, Chandigarh, Bihar, Karnataka, Ladakh, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The second phase of his tour will include Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Delhi, Punjab, Odisha, Andaman and Nicobar, Sikkim, Daman Diu and Dadar Nagar Haveli, and Jammu and Kashmir.

He will be visiting Lakshwadeep, Meghalaya and Mizoram during the third leg of his tour.

■ ₹120 crore credited to outfit's accounts under lens ED to attach assets linked to PFI

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 4

A day after conducting searches at 26 premises in nine states linked to the Popular Front of India (PFI), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is set to initiate proceedings to attach assets, worth several crores, belonging to the banned radical outfit.

"Proceedings to attach properties linked to the PFI will be initiated in a day or two. A total amount of ₹120 crore, credited to bank accounts linked to the PFI, is under the scanner of the ED," sources said. These properties will be attached under the provisions of the Prevention

of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), sources said adding the central probe agency has already identified the assets that will be attached.

The ED on Thursday conducted searches at 26 premises linked to the PFI in connection with its ongoing money laundering probe against the outfit. The ED also raided the premises of PFI's chairman O.M. Abdul Salam and Kerala state chief Nasarudheen Elamarom.

ing probe against the outfit. The ED also raided the premises of PFI's chairman O.M. Abdul Salam and Kerala state president of the outfit Nasarudheen Elamarom.

The ED is investigating PFI's financial links on alleged charges of fuelling the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in the country, the Delhi riots that took place in February this year and few other instances.

The action was aimed to collect evidence with regard to multiple money laundering cases, that have been clubbed into one, being probed against the PFI and those linked to it.

BJP failed to judge MVA's strength: Fadnavis

AGE CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
MUMBAI, DEC. 4

With the BJP facing setbacks in the Maharashtra Legislative Council polls, its leader and former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said his party failed to gauge the combined strength of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies. He said the party will analyse the poll results and prepare for the next election in a better way.

Meanwhile, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said that the results of biennial polls to the Legislative Council show that the political situation in Maharashtra has changed.

A senior official from state branch of election commission of India (ECI) said that the biennial elections to six legislative council seats, including three graduates, two teachers and one local body seat, were held on December 1.

Talking to reporters here, Mr Fadnavis said, "We could not judge the combined strength of Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress in these polls. Now we know how big fight they can put up together. We will prepare better for the next polls."

"We could only win one seat out of the six. We will analyse the results and plan for the next challenge. We will also discuss the issue of selection of candidates, though prima facie I think they were suitable ones," he said.

"This time, the state administration carried out registration of voters for the MLC elections. But the names of some members of my family as well as that of Union minister Nitin Gadkari were not found in the voters' list despite the submission of forms in time," he said.

"Generally voter registration in such polls is done by the political parties, but this time administration took the responsibility," he said.

He also taunted Sena saying, "Although Shiv Sena has the chief minister' post, it could only win one seat."

Didi orders crackdown on anti-party activities

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, DEC. 4

Failing to placate rebel Nandigram MLA Shubhendu Adhikari, Trinamul Congress supreme Mamata Banerjee on Friday ordered his father and party MP of Contai Sisir Adhikari to launch a crackdown on the "anti-party activities and elements" in East Midnapore, the home turf of father-son duo. The government also transferred the district superintendent of police ahead of the chief minister's December 7 visit.

IPS officer Sunil Kumar Yadav was shifted to the rapid action force and has been replaced by Praween Prakash, the deputy commissioner (North) in

Howrah city police. At a meeting with the TMC MLAs, MPs and district chiefs, Ms Banerjee called for steps against the "anti-party activities and elements" in Nandigram, Haldia and Contai. Sisir, who is the party present of East Midnapore, was also present in the meeting. The three blocks are known to be controlled by Shubhendu and his followers.

"Those who want to be with the looter, can leave the party and go," sources quoted the chief minister as saying without taking Shubhendu's name. Accusing the BJP of intimidating the district-level party workers for their defection, she also asked the rank and file to put up resistance.

THE ASIAN AGE

5 DECEMBER 2020

BJP real winner in Hyd, though TRS stays No. 1

A municipal election so *sui generis* it grabbed the attention of an entire nation has finally ended with a verdict that will be a watermark moment in the history of Telangana politics. The ruling TRS managed to narrowly edge out all challenges to slip past the ribbon with a wafer-thin margin, to manage to hold on to the GHMC mayoral seat. The AIMIM, player number three and factor X in the polls, held its fortress unscathed.

But the real political winner of the battle and narrative is the BJP, which has succeeded in managing to seed its narrative of being a challenger for power for Telangana, reducing the Congress to an insignificant naught in Telangana politics. The BJP juggernaut has only strengthened from Nizamabad in Lok Sabha elections, 2019, to Dubbaka a few weeks ago to Greater Hyderabad on Friday, promising to keep aggressively surging ahead, with Nagarjunasagar as the next episode.

By holding the TRS far from increasing its tally of 99 to a century or more, to even denying the pink party a clear majority of 76 in popular vote for 150 divisions to bring it below 60 divisions, the BJP has scripted an exceptional win. What is more significant is that it has managed to surpass the AIMIM as the second largest party.

The TRS now has an additional immediate problem of having to formally enter into some alliance or agreement with the MIM to resolve the impasse of the numbers of a hung municipal council. This will further give the BJP an additional benefit of having portrayed the TRS as a clandestine partner of the MIM.

What surprised nobody is that the Congress party has been reduced to a big zero in its ability to impact the politics of the state. The party was the principal Opposition less than two years ago when the results of the December 2018 Assembly elections came out.

The TRS has used many a Machiavellian tactic to weaken the Congress, thus losing its advantage of two incompatible national parties splitting the anti-incumbency vote. Like a snake biting its own tail, the TRS is now paying a price for its strategic blunder. The anti-TRS sentiment was reflected early in the day when postal ballots revealed a strong verdict amongst government employees.

While parties win or lose, the state election commission under the stewardship of a retired IAS officer, C. Parthasarathi, has not covered itself in glory with several controversial decisions, one passed late last night after midnight being stayed by the high court. The perception that SEC was hardly Caesar's wife will go down as a sad day in the otherwise illustrious story of Indian election commissions being the highest upholders of the core values of our democracy.

Finally, now that elections for GHMC are over, it is a fair expectation that the winners will forget politics and apply their minds to addressing the problems of people and bettering the civic amenities of the city. Three cheers to that hope.

Innovate to glory

She is just 15 years old, but this Indian-origin scientist from Lone Tree, Colorado, is making history as *Time's* first-ever "Kid of the Year". Leadership it is that helped Gitanjali Rao make the cut out of 5,000 other talented teenagers. After Malala Yousafzai and Greta Thunberg who was last year's *Time* "Person of the Year", she is now the youngest kid on the role model block. Gitanjali uses her intellectual prowess to tackle some of the world's pressing concerns like cyber bullying and opioid addiction. She is exercised by the gender pay gap and climate change, for both of which she matter-of-factly holds older generations responsible. But she does not believe in big fixes, doing, as she says, what she can and taking on one urgent question at a time.

Surprisingly or not, this isn't the first time Gitanjali has been feted. In 2019, the teenage innovator was included in the Forbes' list of 30 under 30, when she was way below that age bar. Two more years back, at 12, she was named the United States' top young scientist for creating a device that detects lead in water. Gitanjali had been inspired by the drinking water crisis of 2014 that hit Michigan to design the gadget. She has worked in refugee camps and conducts global innovation workshops wherein she has mentored 30,000 students. Her amazing aptitude ranges from artificial intelligence to carbon nanotube sensor technology, while including more commonplace activities such as baking. The Stem School Highlands Ranch student is preparing to pursue genetics and epidemiology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This generates promise: Perhaps, she will be the one to save the planet from the next pandemic.

To diaspora Indians, Gitanjali's feat though is the latest one in a long line of academic laurels that youngsters from the community have been bringing home. The question then is about how to have more people emulate her achievement. Gitanjali's personal experience has been that students just don't know where to start. But if one can give them that spark that they can then build off of, then that changes everything, and may mean that one more person in this world wants to come up with ideas to solve problems. A point to ponder, and take a leaf from, for parents, teachers and child-raisers.

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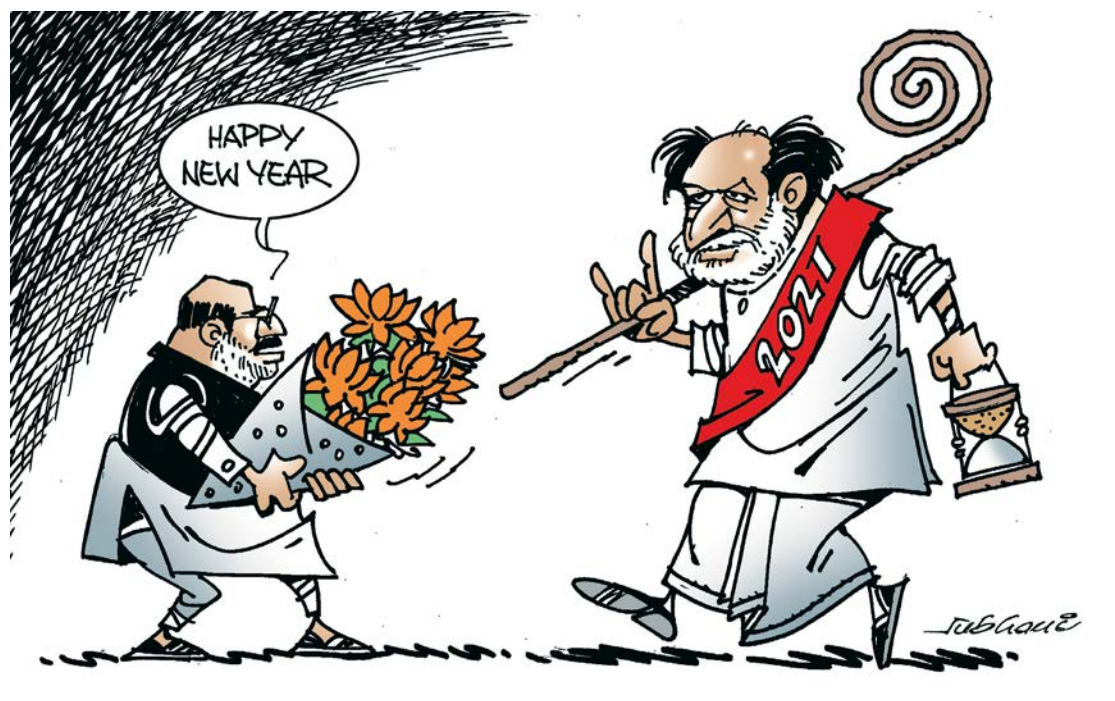
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Subhani



Pivot or perish: India's heartland sends signal

Shikha Mukerjee

Twenty-first century India's farmers have written themselves into the history of the country and into the international chronicles of historic protests. It's an irresistible force that is finally giving voice. Just as the 250 million who joined the nationwide strike by the trade unions had articulated the anger and distress of the working poor.

The solidarity, scale and pared-down simplicity of their call, that is, for the repeal of the three laws rushed through without consultation by the Narendra Modi government in September, as a confirmation of stealthily issued ordinances, is imperative and compelling. The farmers' protest has called out the Modi government as essentially autocratic, and the BJP as unrepresentative of the farming poor, who are the predominant sector of India's population and economy.

The protest has established that if dissent or disagreement is ignored, the discontented will make their presence felt. It proved that brutality against dissenters and the discontented cannot be used as a solution. The use of violence by the State against people is especially dangerous, when the individuals deployed to unleash the violence belong to the same rural base as the protesters. The inadequacy of the Modi government is stark, because it failed to realise the reality of the umbilical connection between the law enforcers and fighting forces and the *kisan*, even as it plagiarised Lal Bahadur Shastri's slogan of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan".

The Modi government, described by the ordinary protesting farmers from Punjab as "arrogant," can now do one of two things: pivot or perish.

The swelling numbers of farmers representing the collective discontent are a fact that cannot be fictionalised as a conspiracy or as anti-national.

Pivoting will require trashing the three laws – Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, and the Essential Commodities Amendment Act – legislating the minimum support price mechanism into law for government and private buyers in agricultural markets, and rewriting the law on commercial rates for power consumed by farmers, cancelling fines for stubble burning. If the Modi government does what is being asked, peacefully and unanimously by the 40 representatives who attended the second round of meetings with agriculture minister Narendra Tomar, then it can save face.

To defy the demands by India's farmers is as politically risky for the BJP as it would be reckless for the Modi government. If the BJP were an urban phenomenon, it could try and confuse its constituents about the character of the protest and the position of the farm union leaders who have virtually surrounded New Delhi. But it is not. The politics of an ephemeral Bharat Mata has been overturned by the reality of farmers, men and women, precisely articulating their problems, their clear-eyed understanding of how their protest shall continue and what is the minimum outcome they are waiting for.

The remarkably controlled and peaceful farmers, especially from Punjab, as the Modi government ought to understand, have quit their fields at the beginning of the rabi crop season. The

winter wheat, rice, pulses, oilseeds, is a commercial crop, sold to sustain the permanently indebted farmer. As every economist and cultivator-politician like Narendra Singh Tomar and Rajnath Singh is well aware, farming is a zero-profit and negative profit sector the world over. Generation after generation a few farmers barely break even, that is, zero profit, while the rest remain in debt, that rolls over, season to season. The cash they make is not profit.

Having harvested the kharif crop, which for the 86 per cent marginal and small farmers of India, is the crop they stock to feed their families and sell only the tiny surplus that is left over, missing the rabi season, which is irrigation and therefore power intensive, means that they are impoverishing themselves in order to change the rules enacted by the Narendra Modi government. Recent reports indicate that around 40 per cent of the rabi crop has been sown in Punjab. Without the 60 per cent that remains to be sown and cannot be sown without the men, who are joining the protest in increasing numbers from Punjab, western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra, the Indian economy could be looking at an unprecedented crisis, deeper than the current level of contraction and recession.

India is the third largest producer of wheat, rice, pulses, cotton, peanuts in the world. Its trade in agricultural commodities is around \$40 billion. The states that produce the surplus which keeps the Indian economy ticking, including Karnataka, where farmers have called a seven-day protest from December 7, have

all registered their solidarity by joining the protests that surround the national capital. This is not conspiracy or a blockade masterminded by terror outfits; it is farmers who have reached the end point.

Nine days of protesting out on the highways in the coldest weeks in 70 years is a visual document drawing attention to the land alienation of farmers who once owned the tiny plots they cultivated, to the thousands of farmers who have committed suicide because they had lost hope in dealing with the accumulated debt. India's marginal and small farmers never expect to the debt free; they hope to keep their debts within manageable limits.

Around 500 have committed suicide, according to reports, in Punjab between June and September. Farmers, men and women, are clear that the new laws will deepen the crisis, unless they are cancelled.

The demand is clear and simple; and new laws are needed. The new laws must be drafted in consultation with the farmers' organisations, who know what they need and what is due to them as the backbone of India's economy, as the backbone of its law enforcing machinery, its fighting forces, its cheap, unprotected labour force, the source of the endless army of domestic workers who ease the lives of India's middle class. To negotiate for anything less, by breaking up the totality of the demands, as the farm leaders point out, would be a sellout.

Good faith as a negotiating principle has been rejected by the farmers' unions. The farmers are seeking structural changes that would shift the paradigm within which agriculture and farmers have been perceived by the "modern" State. It is the Narendra Modi government's hard luck that it finds itself in the mess which is as much of its own making as it is an accumulated mountain of grievances.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

ADVANTAGE FARMERS

The farmers' protest, seeking repeal of the new farm laws, is proving to be a thorn in the flesh of the BJP-led NDA government. Though the Centre offered to make eight changes to the contentious farm reform laws and provided assurances that the minimum support price would continue, it didn't cut much ice with farmers. To add insult to injury, former Punjab CM Parkash Singh Badal has returned his Padma Vibhushan in protest against the "betrayal of farmers" and indifference of the Centre towards their protest.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

AT BJP'S BEHEST

IF RAJINIKANTH, who till a few days ago has been expressing serious concerns about his kidney transplant and the Covid pandemic as deterrents for him, has decided overnight to make an volte-face and announce his decision to start a new party, it should only be due to some inevitable pressure. It is not difficult to guess wherefrom he has got the directions to announce so. We only pity the actor who has taken a wrong decision as he is not the charismatic and charitable MGR or the no-nonsense iron lady Jayalalitha. Needless to say, the people won't fall prey to Rajini's designs to bring the BJP to power through the backdoor.

Tharcus S. Fernando
Chennai

HONOUR FOR BORIS

IT'S GREAT TO KNOW that India will host British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, under whose strong leadership the people of the United Kingdom are set to lay the roadmap to eradication of the coronavirus and lead the world in that respect, as chief guest at the 2021 Republic Day parade at Rajpath. If Mr Johnson accepts, he will become the sixth from his country to enjoy this honour. Others before him are John Major, Prince Philip, the Queen, Raj Butler and Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Sunil Chilwal
Haldwani

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

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"They say it's not over till the fat lady sings
That final and fatal aria
And in that moment stumbles and clings
To the neck of the lover who'll carry her
Off the stage and into the wings
Without having promised to marry her!"
— From *Showcase Mein Itna Tho Godown Mein Kitna* by Bachchoo

The empire strikes back! Secret plan is unveiled

My demented second cousin twice removed (each time by the deportation authorities), "Rusty" Immoralearningswalla, would always boast of his intention to balance history by striking back at Britain's imperial past. He's been reading these books by Shashi Tharoor and William Dalrymple and has become obsessive. One of his mad schemes was to start a restaurant in London called "The Revenge of the Empire". He would import a substance we were aware of in our short and happy childhoods in Poona (now Pune), called *jamal gota*, a strong horse purgative fed to the poor

animals who pulled tongas before rickshaws infested the city's streets. Russi would poison bits of the food served to the British clientele of his restaurant, inducing in them the relentless symptoms of Delhi-Belly — or worse.

I attempted in vain to point out that no one would eat at a restaurant called Revenge of the Natives. Better to call it Memories of the Raj. He simply said that the clientele he was aiming at wouldn't notice what it was called — they'd just stagger in after the pubs closed, muttering "I could murder an Indian!" and wouldn't remember where they ate that night.

Rustom's efforts to raise capital for his restaurant came to naught. When he was deported, he left this sack of *jamal gota*, the horse purgative, in my study. I have advertised it on e-bay and other Internet sites but have had no buyers rushing to avail of the low asking price.

At first, I thought nothing of Rustom's deportation. With all his activities and schemes, he was asking for it. But then one day it struck me as extremely odd that he hadn't been

deported to Mumbai but had been sent to Canada and was making a good life there in his usual trade. And when he began sending me, under cover, envelopes marked "Miss Let Up" to be delivered, unopened, by hand, to an address in the posh part of London, I became suspicious.

Who could this mysterious "Miss Let Up" be? I couldn't resist the temptation. Though strictly a betrayal of his trust, I opened one of the missives he had sent under cover of an envelope to my address. "Step up deportations, first of criminals and when the public begins to accept these as routine, then all useful personnel of non-British vintage." Russi does pride himself on rather stylish vocabulary.

I revealed the envelope and delivered it and waited on the opposite side of the road, sitting on a blanket, pretending to be a homeless beggar, a sight that is very common in London. Sure enough, a big black car drove up flying the Union Jack and a lady stepped out of the house and was driven away. Did I recognise the lady? Jesus, Joseph and Mary, the realisation dawned. "Let Up" spelt back-

wards? Putel? Yes, it was she!

Then the whole glorious scheme fell into place when I recalled that after Rustom's plan for his revenge restaurant fell through, he didn't seem in the least despondent. He would disappear for what he said were walks in Crystal Palace, but he'd be gone for hours and why call for an Uber to go for a walk? Then there were the phone calls he shielded from me. Only once I caught him saying "Yes, Canada would be ideal". The next day two immigration fellows called and carried him away.

Now, gentle reader, I am not one to believe in conspiracy theories, but the evidence is overwhelming, and these are my conjectures. Russi has consolidated his attack on the Empire at the highest level. Consider the facts:

Several individuals with an ex-colonial ancestry infiltrate the Tory Party and diligently rise to high positions and begin their work of dismantling the British economy, its social fabric and work unflaggingly towards its ruin. First of all, they pretend to be ardent advocates of Brexit, knowing that it will leave Britain isolated and poorer for decades.

Then, having achieved high office, they begin the ruinous policy of "borrow and sorrow", and then "Free ports and deportations".

Rishi Sunak has compelled the Bank of England to print, in this year, £500 billion in inflationary borrowing to pay for wild schemes — ten times as much as a Labour government did in ten years. Now he proposes 10 "free ports" which will turn Britain into Bringapore — the world's leading money-laundering and tax dodging drug haven destroying what's left of its manufacturing base.

And here, gentle reader, I must apologise for consistently calling home secretary "Pritti" Patel "Clueless". I now realise that as part of Russi's plan, she is grooming the great liberal British public to jail and deport the non-Brits on whom several sectors of the economy and social fabric rely. I can only speculate that the last batch of deportees will include "Miss Let up" who will thus, at the state's expense, be given a free ride to Canada or Uganda and anyway away from a failing, flailing Britain. The Empire strikes mercilessly back!

IN BRIEF

Indian wins \$3M in Dubai raffle draw

Dubai: A 51-year-old Indian expat in Dubai has won a whopping over \$3 million in a raffle draw, according to a media report. George Jacobs, a medical equipment salesperson, was announced the winner in the Big Ticket draw held in Abu Dhabi on Thursday, the Khaleej Times reported. Jacobs, who lives in Dubai with his wife, daughter and son, said that the lucky draw has come as huge blessing as he was suffering from financial difficulties. "Congratulations to George Jacob, from India, with winning ticket no. 069402. He won AED (United Arab Emirates Dirham) 12 Million in The Dream 12 Million series 222," the organisers said in a Facebook post. Jacobs had bought the ticket on November 30.

Rains cause havoc in Indonesia

Medan: Torrential rains in Indonesia's third largest city caused four rivers to overflow, flooding thousands of homes and killing at least two people, officials said Friday. The local disaster mitigation agency said rescuers were searching for six missing people, including a toddler, after the heavy rains in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra province. At least two people were found dead after being swept away by the floods, which began on Thursday evening, the agency said in a statement. More than 2,700 houses were flooded in the city, which has about 2.9 million people, forcing authorities to cut off electricity and water supplies, it said. On Friday, rescuers took 181 people to temporary shelters after floodwaters reached as high as 5 meters (16 feet) in several places.

By 2050, Denmark to halt oil drilling

Copenhagen: Denmark has decided to end to all oil and gas offshore activities in the North Sea by 2050 and has cancelled its latest licensing round, saying the country is "now putting an end to the fossil era." The Danish Parliament voted late Thursday to end the offshore gas and oil extraction that started in 1972 and has made it the largest producer in the European Union. Non EU-members Norway and Britain are larger producers. Denmark is estimated to pump some 83,000 barrels of crude oil and another 21,000 barrels of oil equivalent this year, according to the government. That is relatively little in a global context. The UK produces about ten times that amount while the US, the world's largest producer, pumped over 19 million barrels of oil a day last year. Environmental activists nevertheless hailed the move as significant as it shows the way forward in how to fight climate change.

QATAR HOPEFUL NEIGHBOURS WILL LIFT BOYCOTT

Dubai, Dec. 4: Qatar's foreign minister said Friday that his energy-rich nation has seen "some movements" toward resolving the boycott of Doha by four Arab nations. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani cautioned that the crisis wouldn't be immediately resolved in comments to Italy's annual Mediterranean Dialogue. He declined to offer any timetable nor any details of the negotiations. Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, recently visited Doha along with other American officials in an effort to help resolve the crisis. Sheikh Mohammed said "this needless crisis needs to come to an end." "There are some movements that we hope that this will put an end to this crisis," he said. "We believe actually that Gulf unity is very important for the security of the region." However, even he acknowledged a promised breakthrough over a year ago also fell apart. The four boycotting nations have not publicly acknowledged any coming breakthrough. Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates cut ties to Qatar on June 5, 2017, just after a summit in Saudi Arabia in which Gulf leaders met with Trump. They say the crisis stems from Qatar's support for extremist groups in the region, charges denied by Doha.

Santa can't escape Covid test

A man dresses as Saint-Nicolas (Santa Claus) undergoes a Covid-19 detection test at a street detection centre in Schiphol on Friday as global Coronavirus cases top 65 million. — AFP

Britain defends vaccine decision amid criticism**UK plans to distribute initial batch of 8 lakh doses next week**

London, Dec. 4: Britain's medicines regulator insisted on Friday its world-first approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech Coronavirus vaccine met all safety standards, after officials in Europe and the United States queried the rapid process.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on Wednesday announced emergency approval for the vaccine's general use against Covid-19, and the government plans to start rolling it out next week.

Any vaccine "must undergo robust clinical trials in line with international standards", the MHRA said in a statement.

"No vaccine would be authorised for supply in the UK unless the expected standards of safety, quality and efficacy are met."

Leading US infectious disease scientist Anthony Fauci on Thursday said the MHRA had "rushed through that approval", but later apologised.

"I have a great deal of confidence in what the UK does both scientifically and from a regulator standpoint," Fauci, who leads the US National Institute of Allergy and

German firm's super-coolers to send vaccines around the world

Wurzburg, Dec. 4: At first sight, they look like regular containers. But the rectangular boxes made by German company Va-Q-Tec will in fact play a key role in keeping life-saving Covid-19 vaccines ultra cool as they are shipped across the world.

After Britain this week became the first country to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for general use, other medical authorities around the world could in the next days or weeks decide on similar applications by a host of pharmaceutical companies developing Coronavirus vaccines.

There will be an enormous logistical challenge to transport billions of

Infectious Diseases, told the BBC.

"Our process is one that takes more time than it takes in the UK. And that's just the reality," he said. "I did not mean to imply any sloppiness even though it came out that way."

MHRA chief executive

● **GLOBAL CORONAVIRUS** infections passed 65 million on Friday and countries doubled down on restrictions, even as plans to roll out vaccines gathered pace.

● **JOE BIDEN** said he would ask Americans to wear masks for 100 days when he takes over as president of the United States, the world's worst-hit country from a pandemic that has now killed more than 1.5 million people across the planet, more likely to be victims of other types of property theft.

doses at the right temperature across the globe, maintaining the so-called "cold chain" from a vaccine manufacturer into a patient's arm.

Pfizer/BioNTech's vaccine for instance, must be stored at a frigid minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 Fahrenheit).

The Va-Q-Tec containers will serve this purpose of

keeping the vaccines cool enough, the company's founder and chief executive Joachim Kuhn said, describing them as "big thermos flasks".

In the company's factory in the Bavarian city of Wurzburg, workers were assembling panels with glue or making vacuum-packed linings.

— AFP

June Raine previously insisted that "no corners had been cut" in vetting the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

With Britain transitioning out of the European Union, the UK regulator obtained an exemption from the EU's medicines

agency, which has stressed it prefers to wait for further review and consultations across the 27-nation bloc.

Britain plans to distribute an initial batch of 8,00,000 doses starting next week, prioritising care homes.

— AFP

POOR COULD BE 'TRAMPLED' IN VACCINE PUSH, WARNS W.H.O.

United Nations, Dec. 4: The head of the World Health Organisation warned on Friday that the poor risk being "trampled" as wealthy nations roll out Covid-19 vaccines, which he said should be a public good. Speaking at a virtual UN summit on the pandemic, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the world was seeing "light at the end of the tunnel" in the nearly year-long Covid crisis.

"But let me be clear. We simply cannot accept a world in which the poor and marginalised are trampled by the rich and powerful in the stampede for vaccines," Tedros said.

"This is a global crisis and the solutions must be shared equitably as global public goods. Not as private commodities that widen inequalities and become yet another reason some people are left behind," he said.

He also warned that the world has plenty of other challenges, saying: "There is no vaccine for poverty, no vaccine for hunger. There is no vaccine for inequality. There is no vaccine for climate change."

Britain has become the first Western nation to approve a vaccine for Covid-19, with the United States and other countries expected to follow soon and begin mass immunization drives.

A UN-backed COVAX consortium has been set up to provide vaccines equitably around the world.

The United States has been a notable holdout, with President Donald Trump attacking Tedros

and moving to pull out of the World Health Organisation, although President-elect Joe Biden plans to stay in the UN body.

Tedros, an Ethiopian doctor and diplomat, praised nations for providing free vaccines, tests and treatment for Covid-19 but questioned why similar efforts are not being devoted for earlier diseases such as cancer, tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS — or for needs such as maternal health.

"The pandemic has only underlined why universal health coverage is so important," he said.

— AFP

Iran's N-plan on track despite scientist killing

In an online chat with **Mohammed Anas**, Dr Foad Izadi, head of the department, International Relations, at Tehran University, tries to explain Iranian response to the assassination of its top nuclear scientist, Dr Mohsen Fakhrizade. Apart from teaching and articulating Iran and its relations with the world, Dr Izadi also advises Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif at times. Excerpts:

Q How big a setback is the assassination of nuclear scientist Dr Mohsen Fakhrizade to Iran's nuclear programme in particular and Iranian scientific development in general?

A: Dr Mohsen Fakhrizade was a renowned nuclear physicist in Iran. He was known throughout the country for his efficiency. Apart from being a good scientist, he was believed to be a good manager. He was attached to Iran's defence ministry and was overseeing several defence projects. In addition to that, he was working on research for Covid vaccine and was instrumental in developing a handy test kit, which was perhaps the only one manufactured in the Middle East. Iran's "peaceful nuclear programme" is extensive and doesn't depend on any individual. However, the loss of a scientist of Dr Fakhrizade's stature is difficult to make up for and Iran will miss him a lot.

However, to think that the absence of Dr Fakhrizade will hamper the Iranian nuclear programme is hogwash. Rather, the Iranian Parliament has passed a Bill this week to enhance the pace of the nuclear programme. So, Iran is now determined more than ever to achieve its nuclear targets.

Q Does Iranian government admit to security and intelligence failure for such a daring attack in the vicinity of its capital in Tehran? If yes, then what is their assessment of this failure?

A: Yes, many government officials, including the secretary of Iranian Security Council, have said that it was a serious security lapse. Dr Fakhrizade was a target of foreign enemies for the last 20 years and there had been previous attempts on his life. Iranian security services managed to save this scientist for all these years but this particular lapse cost his life. As we are talking, the Iranian security establishment is investigating all contours of this assassination. They have discovered that no human being was used in this assassination and that only remote-controlled technology was put to use. It was not done ever before by even Israeli intelligence service.

That's why the Iranian security apparatus was bamboozled. But, I am sure Iranian security services will learn from this mistake and will brace up for future threats more carefully.

Q&A**DR FOAD IZADI**

Dr Foad Izadi

Q Will it impact travel and stay of non-Iranians in Iran for a while?

A: No, there is no indication from the Iranian regime that it will curb the movement of non-Iranians. They will not have any difficulty in traveling to or from Iran. Iran will continue to be friendly towards people from outside.

Q Iran has alleged that Israel is behind this gruesome assassination. Do you see any direct conflict emerging between Iran and Israel in near future?

A: It's not just Iran that has blamed Israel for this assassination. The American and western sources have clearly suggested that it was the handiwork of Israeli intelligence agency. The Zionist regime (Netanyahu government) plotted it thoughtfully. As far as Iranian response is concerned, the reply will come. If Iran doesn't respond, it will embolden the other side and it will continue to attack more often. However, Iran will respond in its own way, at a chosen moment and in a measured extent.

Q If Iran chooses to indirectly respond to its enemies instead of going into direct conflict, what possible steps will Iran take?

A: Iran will not disclose how it will respond. Neither has the Iranian regime hinted any such thing. Even experts like us are not privy to any such detail. Early in the year 2020, when Gen. Qasem Soleimani was killed, Iran had attacked American bases in Iraq. It was a quick and open response. But, this time, there is complete secrecy.

Q Will this assassination have any bearing on the clerical regime in Iran? Will it weaken their position or will it coax people to rally behind them?

A: The news of the terrorist attack (the assassination) was a shock to the people. Irrespective of whether they support the regime (clerical regime) politically or not, they don't want to see scientists of the country getting killed. Moreover, Iran is a religious society. There is a huge respect for martyrdom. In Dr Fakhrizade, people are seeing a martyr who laid down his life for the country. It will inspire people and they would want to emulate Dr Fakhrizade.

China 'greatest threat' to world: US intel chief

Washington, Dec. 4: The US intelligence chief on Thursday branded China as "the greatest threat to democracy and freedom worldwide since World War II," as Washington clamped down hard on travel visas for members of the Chinese Communist Party.

US Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe, writing in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece, pointed to China's theft of US business secrets and defense technologies.

"The People's Republic of China poses the greatest threat to America today, and the greatest

● **US DIRECTOR** of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe, writing in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece, pointed to China's theft of US business secrets and defense technologies.

threat to democracy and freedom worldwide since World War II," he wrote.

He also described operations in which Chinese operatives used economic pressure to influence or undermine US legislators.

"Our intelligence shows that Beijing regularly directs this type of influence operation in the US," he wrote.

"China's leaders seek to

subordinate the rights of the individual to the will of the Communist Party," Ratcliffe said.

"They exert government control over companies and subvert the privacy and freedom of their citizens with an authoritarian surveillance state." Meanwhile, the State Department said Chinese Communist Party members are "hostile to US values" and engage in "nefarious activities." Under new rules effective immediately, visas issued to party members and their immediate family will remain valid for just one month after issuance, and for single entry. — AFP

■ US Prez-elect says he has asked Dr Fauci to stay on in his administration**Biden first acts: Call for 100 days of mask-wearing**

Washington, Dec. 4: US President-elect Joe Biden said Thursday that he will ask Americans to commit to 100 days of wearing masks as one of his first acts as President, stopping just short of the nationwide mandate he's pushed before to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

The move marks a notable shift from President Donald Trump, whose own skepticism of mask-wearing has contributed to a politicisation of the issue. That's made many people reticent to embrace a practice that public health experts say is one of the easiest ways



President-elect Joe Biden arrives at The Queen theater, Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020, in Wilmington, Del. — AP

to manage the pandemic, which has killed more than 275,000 Americans.

The President-elect has frequently emphasised mask-wearing as a "patri-

otic duty" and during the campaign floated the idea of instituting a nationwide mask mandate, which he later acknowledged would be beyond the ability of the President to enforce.

Speaking with CNN, Mr Biden said he would make the request of Americans on Inauguration Day, Jan. 20.

"On the first day I'm inaugurated, I'm going to ask the public for 100 days to mask. Just 100 days to mask not forever, just 100 days. And I think we'll see a significant reduction in the virus," Mr Biden said. Mr Biden also said he

asked Dr Anthony Fauci to stay on in his administration, in the exact same role he's had for the past several Presidents, as the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the nation's top infectious-disease expert.

Regarding a coronavirus vaccine, Mr Biden said he'd be happy to get inoculated in public to assuage any concerns about its efficacy and safety. Three former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton have said they'd also get vaccinated publicly to show that it's safe. — AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	45,079.55	+1.00
Nifty 50	13,258.55	+0.95
S&P 500*	3,690.32	0.64
Dollar (₹)	73.79	0.17
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.50	-0.42
Euro (₹)	89.79	-0.26
Gold (₹)	48,813	-0.27
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	49.21	1.03
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.898	-0.556
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.941	+2.172

*As of 9:30 PM IST

Tata Power gets Lol for two Odisha discoms

Tata Power said it has received letter of intent (LoI) for Odisha's Wesco and Southco power distribution utilities (discoms). The company has received the LoI from the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission for the distribution and retail supply of electricity in Odisha's five circles of Wesco and six circles of Southco. Tata Power will hold 51 per cent equity in the discoms and the state-owned Gridco will have the remaining 49 per cent.

ZyduS Cadila gets DGCI nod for phase 3 trials



ZyduS Cadila said it has received the approval from the drugs controller to start phase 3 clinical trials with its biological therapy PegiHep in Covid-19 patients. The firm had completed the phase 2 clinical trials with PegiHep last month. The trials, which will start this month, will be conducted on 250 patients across 20-25 centres. Sharvil Patel, MD, said, "we are encouraged by the results of phase 2 study."

Uday Shankar to take over as Ficci prez for 2020-21

Media executive Uday Shankar has been named as the president-elect of industry chamber Ficci for the year 2020-21. Shankar will be succeeding Sangita Reddy, current president and joint MD of Apollo Hospitals Group, during Ficci's 93rd AGM on Dec. 11-14.

Diesel crosses ₹73-mark, petrol nears ₹83 in Delhi

Diesel price crossed Rs 73 a litre mark in Delhi and petrol rate neared Rs 83 after 12th increase in the last fortnight. Petrol price was on Friday hiked by 23 paise per litre and diesel by 23 paise. Petrol price in Delhi rose to Rs 82.86 per litre from Rs 82.66. Diesel rate went up from Rs 72.84 to Rs 73.07 per litre. In 15 days, the petrol price has gone up by Rs 1.8 per litre and diesel rate has risen by Rs 2.61.

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■ Status quo on rates; GDP contraction seen at -7.5% RBI ups growth forecast

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, DEC. 4

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy committee (MPC) on Friday unanimously decided to keep policy rates unchanged while continuing with the accommodative policy stance "as long as necessary—at least through the current financial year and into the next year", despite higher-than-expected inflation and growth outturns. This means the equated monthly instalments (EMIs) on home loans, auto loans and personal loans will remain more or less steady for borrowers.

The RBI revised its current fiscal real GDP growth from a decline of 9.5 per cent to a decline of 7.5 per cent; retail inflation (CPI) inflation is projected at 6.8 per cent for Q3, and 5.8 per cent for Q4 FY21.

Contrary to market concerns of measures to withdraw the abundant liquidity in the system, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said the flush liquidity conditions will be kept up while flagging that the RBI is increasingly looking to sterilise its forex interventions keeping in mind the liquidity and inflation dynamics. The RBI announced extended liquidity support to 26 stressed sectors.

"Our expectation on inflation which we had over the last two months has not materialised. And we have to keep in mind that we are dealing with an extraordinary situation, a once in 100 years kind of event that and the kind of impact it has produced on the economy and on

Highlights of RBI's monetary policy statement

- ▶ Benchmark rate kept unchanged for third time at 4%
- ▶ Economy to contract 7.5% against 9.5% projected in October
- ▶ Economy to clock growth of 0.1% in Q3; 0.7% in Q4, FY21
- ▶ Retail inflation projected at 6.8% in Q3, 5.8% in Q4
- ▶ Inflation to remain elevated, barring transient relief in winter
- ▶ Fiscal stimulus helping growth-generating investment



- ▶ Private investment slack, capacity use not fully recovered
- ▶ RBI to ensure ample liquidity is available in the system
- ▶ RBI to maintain accommodative monetary policy stance
- ▶ central bank committed to preserving depositors' interest

Contactless card limit raised to ₹5K

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 4

The RBI has decided to increase the limit on contactless card transactions at Point of Sale (PoS) terminals and e-mandates for recurring transactions via cards and UPI from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 from January 1.

This will help customers execute their high ticket recurring payments like utility bills, investments, two-wheeler EMIs, consumer durable EMIs etc. seamlessly.

The RBI has also decided to make the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) transaction facility available round-the-clock from

December 14.

The RTGS system is used for high value transactions. The system will be available for customers and inter-bank transactions round-the-clock, except for the interval between 'end-of-day' and 'start-of-day' processes, whose timings would be duly broadcasted through the RTGS system.

RBI also has proposed to allow settlement files of payment systems like AePS, IMPS, NETC, RuPay and UPI to be posted to the RBI all days of the year. This measure will reduce build-up of settlement and default risks and enable better management of funds by banks.

human lives not only in India but across countries which is huge and we have

to respond to that situation," Das told reporters at a virtual press conference.

This was the fourth bi-monthly policy for the fiscal and the third consecutive policy where the MPC decided to keep the repo rate (the rate at which RBI lends funds to banks) unchanged at 4 per cent. The policy stated that while growth has begun to recover, it was not yet broad-based and the RBI's objective remains to support growth. Inflation, while sticky, is largely a supply-side phenomenon, with little evidence of demand-side pressures.

The RBI expects a faster economic recovery and has revised upwards its outlook for GDP growth for FY21. At the same time, its outlook for inflation has turned adverse leading it to raise its outlook on prices levels. In his monetary policy statement, Das said, "The MPC was of the view that inflation is likely to remain elevated, with some relief in the winter months from prices of perishables and bumper kharif arrivals. This constrains monetary policy at the current juncture from using the space available to act in support of growth."

"At the same time, the signs of recovery are far from being broad-based and are dependent on sustained policy support... The MPC decided today to maintain status quo on the policy rate and continue with the accommodative stance as long as necessary—at least during the current financial year and into the next financial year—to revive growth on a durable basis and mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the economy, while ensuring that inflation remains within the target,"



Burger King IPO get subscribed 156 times

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, DEC. 4

Burger King India's Rs 810-crore initial public offering received huge response from all categories of investors and was subscribed over 156 times.

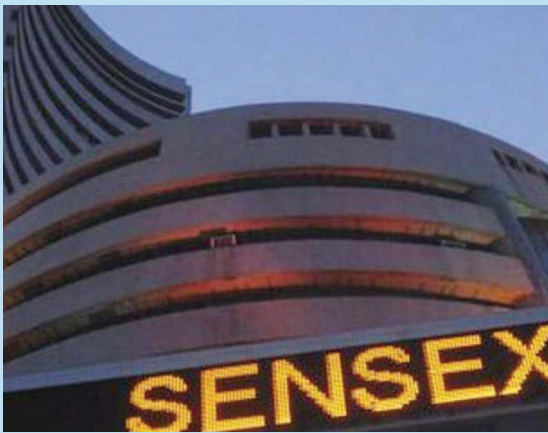
As per NSE data, overall the issue was subscribed 156.65 times, with the issue receiving over 24.15 lakh applications.

Qualified institutional buyers turned up on the last day and their quota of shares was subscribed 86.64 times, non-institutional investors or high net worth individual's portion was subscribed 354.11 times as per sources close to the merchant bankers.

Retail individual investors portion was subscribed 68.14 times.

Burger King India is among the top-3 most-subscribed IPO this year along with Happ0-iest Minds Technologies and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders.

Sensex crosses 45000-mark



RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, DEC. 4

Equity benchmark Sensex rose above the 45000-mark for the first time ever and touched a new all-time high of 45,148.28 as the RBI raised the GDP growth projections for the current fiscal to 7.5 per cent contraction from 9.5 per cent contraction projected in October and positive global cues in expectation of a stimulus package by the new US administration.

The Sensex closed at 45079.55, up 446.90 points while the Nifty-50 gained 124.65 points, or 0.95 per cent, to close at a new all-time high of 13,258.55.

The BSE's market capitalisation hit a new high of over Rs 179.48 lakh crore. Rate sensitive bank, realty, capital goods and auto stocks led the gains as the overall accommodative stance of the Reserve Bank to support economic growth boosted sentiments.

"The MPC expectedly kept the policy rates

unchanged but this was accompanied by strong accommodative guidance and assertive market signaling of lower-for-longer. The MPC reckoned the inflected growth momentum, while also stressed that the case of an eventual fall in inflation with easing supply shocks is yet to play out," said Emkay Global Financial Services.

The BSE Bankex index gained 2.14 per cent and Nifty Bank index gained 2.05 per cent while BSE Realty index gained 1.00 per cent.

The top gainers among the banks included ICICI Bank (4.20 per cent), SBI (2.77 per cent), Axis Bank (1.98 per cent), IndusInd Bank (1.96 percent), Kotak Mahindra Bank (1.34 per cent) and HDFC Bank (0.59 per cent).

Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth Rs 2,969.59 crore while the domestic institutions were net sellers of equities worth Rs 1,971.60 crore.

Banks, co-operatives told to skip dividend this year

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, DEC. 4

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said that commercial banks and cooperative banks will retain their profits and will not make any dividend payout from the profits pertaining to financial year 2019-20, a move that would impact the non-tax revenue for the government. This is the second year in a row the RBI disallowed banks from paying dividends.

The central bank has also proposed a regulatory framework for non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), based on size/scale, risk-based supervision and dividend distribution policy, in line with banks, which could increase the regulatory cost of operations for NBFCs, but would go a long way towards improving systemic stability.

"In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Reserve Bank has focused on resolution of stress among borrowers, and facilitating credit flow to the economy, while ensuring financial stability. In continuation of this effort and to help banks con-



serve capital, while creating room for fresh lending, it has been decided after a review that commercial and co-operative banks will retain the profits and not make any dividend pay-out from the profits pertaining to financial year 2019-20," RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said in his monetary policy statement.

Interestingly for FY20, out of the 12 public sector banks, seven had negative net profit and only five had positive net profit of around Rs 16,500 crore. "With government being the main shareholder, the non-tax revenue will get affected. The non-tax revenue in the form of dividend from RBI and banks and financial institutions was to be around Rs 90,000

crore this year and any distribution would have helped.

Further, 15 of the 18 private sector had positive net profit of around Rs 50,000 crore from which there would be no dividend paid," said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at Care Ratings.

To enhance the resilience of NBFCs, the governor also proposed to put in place criteria and parameters for the declaration of dividends.

"The growing significance of NBFCs and their interlinkages with different segments in the financial system has made it imperative to enhance the resilience of the sector. Therefore, it has been decided to put in place transparent criteria as per a matrix of parameters for declaration of dividends by different categories of NBFCs," he said. A draft circular containing the proposed criteria and parameters will be released soon for public comments.

The RBI will release a discussion paper on scale-based regulatory framework for NBFCs to review the regulatory framework.

HDFC BANK ACTION TO BOOST DIGITAL TRUST

Mumbai, Dec 4: The need to maintain people's confidence in digital banking resulted in the action against HDFC Bank for service outages, Shaktikanta Das said. The regulator is also studying the incident at SBI, which also faced an outage on Thursday, Das said. "In the case of HDFC Bank, there were earlier episodes also. HDFC Bank has an overwhelming presence in the digital payment segment, in the internet banking segment. We have some concerns about certain deficiencies," he said.

BUDGET TO BE PRUDENT; GROWTH-ORIENTED: DAS

Mumbai, Dec 4: With the Budget-making exercise in full swing, Shaktikanta Das said Budget 2021-22 is expected to be prudent and growth-oriented. "I think the response of the government (so far) has been very calibrated and prudent. So, the budget next year also I expect to be very prudent but naturally, it has to be a growth oriented budget. That is something which is bound to happen. It's a no-brainer. It has to be a good supporting budget," he said.

Mumbai gets first batch of e-buses



MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, DEC. 4

Tata Motors, India's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer, on Friday delivered 26 state-of-the-art electric buses to Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST), as part of an order for 340 e-buses under the central government's FAME-II scheme.

The 25-seater Ultra Urban 9/9 e-AC buses were flagged off by Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray in South Mumbai.

The delivery of the first batch of the buses marks the commencement of the first ever gross cost contract (GCC) electric bus service to BEST, which operates the public transport system in Mumbai.

Tata Motors will be undertaking to build, deploy, maintain and operate the complete charging infrastructure along with the buses across four Mumbai depots of Backbay, Worli, Malvani and Shivaji Nagar.

"Tata Motors is delighted to have delivered the first (batch) 26 of the 340 electric buses for the city of Mumbai. The buses have been specially designed keeping the comfort and convenience of Mumbaiers including a "lift mechanism" for differently-abled travelers," Girish Wagh, president, commercial vehicles at Tata Motors, said.

The buses have been tested and validated by Tata Motors across states, including Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh.

IKEA to open second store in Navi Mumbai

New Delhi, Dec. 4: The world's leading home furnishings retailer IKEA will open its second store in the country at Navi Mumbai on December 18. The over five lakh sq ft store would be the second store for IKEA in India after Hyderabad, where it had opened its first store in August 2018.

In a bid to provide a safe shopping experience, the Swedish retailer is taking extra precautions for its new store located on the Thane-Belapur Road. IKEA said it is taking a number of extra precautions from its global best practices and learnings from its Hyderabad operations. —PTI

MSMEs with PSU, govt business to revive faster

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 4

MSME units supplying products and services to the government or public sector undertakings are likely to revive earlier than others, finds a report by Dun and Bradstreet.

According to the government, central PSUs have been pro-active in procuring from the MSMEs and clearing the pending dues in the past six months. This is expected to support the revival of MSME vendors. CPSEs have procured Rs 15,630 crore worth goods and services from MSMEs this fiscal.

However, the recovery time of an MSME is tied to its sector. Sectors like

online gaming, telecommunications and e-education operating in the digital space are witnessing a positive impact by leveraging opportunities arising from the pandemic.

On the other hand, traditional sectors like food, drugs, pharmaceuticals, ITes, banking, retail, automotive, real estate and jewellery are witnessing moderate to high to severe impact. The recovery of these sectors will take six months to more than a year.

Sectors like logistics and warehousing, metals and media and entertainment will also take up to one year to recover and return to February 2020 levels, said the report.

Competition watchdog to study PE investments

New Delhi, Dec 4: Fair trade regulator CCI will shortly commence a study on private equity (PE) investments in the country to look at various aspects, including whether PE investors' rights in invested companies could lead to decisions that can impact competition.

Competition Commission of India (CCI) chairperson Ashok Kumar Gupta, on Friday, said that in the current year, PE investments have surpassed strategic investments in the country due to the coronavirus pandemic situation.

According to him, a new trend has emerged where FDI and other foreign investments have been



uct-market overlaps, the issue of common ownership by minority shareholders across firms and its impact on competition needs to be understood, Gupta said.

"In order to understand the trends and patterns of common ownership by PE investors across sectors in India, the Commission is shortly going to conduct a market study," he said.

Speaking at a CII event, Gupta said the study will aim to gauge the common PE investors' underlying incentives and motivation behind such investments as it is important to look at the rights they get to protect their financial interests. —PTI

Aviation needs ₹35,000-cr funding

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 4

Facing huge losses, the aviation industry will need additional funding of Rs 35,000-Rs 37,000 crore till FY23 to stay afloat, even as the government has allowed airlines to operate with 80 per cent capacity from Thursday.

The aggregate debt of the aviation industry is estimated to have increased to around Rs 50,000 crore, according to rating agency Icr. This debt does not include lease liabilities. The industry is expected to witness a net loss of Rs 21,000 crore in FY21 against a net loss of Rs 12,700 crore in FY20. This has significantly increased the debt of airline companies.

Lower revenues from lesser traffic and high fixed costs have led to higher net loss for the airline companies. Between May and October, domestic passenger traffic dropped 80 per cent to 164 lakh against 825 lakh in the same period last year. Icr. expects FY21 to witness a decline of 62-64 per cent in domestic passenger traffic.

In the case of international passengers, under the Vande Bharat Mission, which started in May, Indian carriers saw a passenger traffic of 10,96,709, a decline of 91.6 per cent from the previous year.

While some airlines with sufficient liquidity and financial support from a strong parentage will sustain over the near-term, airlines, which are in financial stress, will have to face tougher challenges.

Meanwhile, from Dec. 3, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has increased the permitted capacity of carriers to 80 per cent. From Nov. 11, they have been operating with a capacity of 70 per cent. The ministry has been increasing the capacity in phases.

SHORT TAKES

No bar in hotels ahead of Big Bash

Sydney: Players taking part in the upcoming Big Bash League will not have the mini bar at their disposal in hotel rooms with Cricket Australia aiming to minimise interaction between staff and cricketers to reduce the risk of any Covid-19 infections. A “BBL Hub” will be created at the hotels for all stakeholders of the league to minimise exposure to the outside world during the league starting December 10. Besides the no mini bar facility, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the participants will only be allowed enter areas of the “Hub” earmarked for their team. CA has reasoned that if the mini bar is allowed than restocking of it might lead to interaction between hotel staff and players. The “Hub” residents can head to the shops to purchase essentials, the paper reported. — *PTI*

SA-England game put off due to virus

Cape Town: The first cricket one-day international between South Africa and England was postponed Friday after another player tested positive for the Coronavirus in the host team’s secure bio-bubble. The South African player wasn’t named. The game, the first of three ODIs, was postponed from Friday to Sunday, the two cricket federations said. Cricket South Africa and the England and Wales Cricket Board said the decision was made “in the interests of the safety and well-being of both teams, match officials and all involved in the match.” The CEOs of both boards, Kugandrie Govender of CSA and Tom Harrison of the ECB, agreed to the postponement. — *AP*

Chhetri earns 1st win for Bengaluru

Bambolim: Bengaluru FC registered their first win of the season, notching up a 1-0 victory over Chennaiyin FC in an Indian Super League match here on Friday. A 56th-minute penalty strike from Sunil Chhetri was the difference between the two teams as Chennaiyin suffered their first loss of the season. Bengaluru began to take the upper-hand after Thapa’s exit in the fifth minute after a clash of heels with Ashique Kuruniyan. Bengaluru nearly had their second in the 60th minute when a powerful long-ranger from Delgado looked to be going in. Kaith got the slightest of touches to it, diverting the ball from its path. Chennaiyin dominated the final period but they were unable to find a finish to the many chances they created as Bengaluru held on for the win. — *PTI*

Vieira sacked as Nice coach

Marseille: Patrick Vieira has been sacked as coach of Nice and replaced by his assistant following a run of five consecutive defeats, the French League club announced on Friday. The final straw for the former Arsenal player and France 1998 World Cup winner was Thursday’s 3-2 defeat at home to Bayer Leverkusen, which confirmed Nice’s elimination from the Europa League. Adrian Ursea will take over from Vieira. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

Lanka Premier League: Dambulla vs Galle from 3 pm; Kandy vs Colombo from 7.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

Australia ‘A’ vs India ‘A’: Day One from 5 am (Sunday) on Sony Six

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Burnley vs Everton from 6 pm; Manchester City vs Fulham from 8.30 pm; West Ham vs Manchester United from 11 pm; Chelsea vs Leeds United from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Indian Super League: NorthEast United vs East Bengal from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Italian League: Spezia vs Lazio from 7.30 pm; Juventus vs Torino from 10.30 pm; Inter Milan vs Bologna from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2

FORMULA ONE

Sakhir Grand Prix: Practice-3 from 7.25 pm; Qualifying from 10.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

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INDIA ROAR BACK

Turn in allround show to beat Oz by 11 runs

Canberra, Dec. 4: Yuzvendra Chahal turned out to be the perfect concussion substitute after an injured Ravindra Jadeja did his part with the bat as the duo played their roles to perfection in India’s impressive 11-run victory over Australia in the first T20 International here on Friday. While Jadeja smashed an unbeaten 44 off 23 balls to propel India to 161 for 7, his head injury turned out to be a blessing in disguise with India unleashing Chahal (3/25 in 4 overs) on an Australian side caught completely off-guard. The hosts could manage only 150 for 7 in 20 overs. Credit was also due to the lion-hearted effort from debutant Thangarasu Natarajan (3/30) and off-spinner Washington Sundar (0/16 in 4 overs), who bowled well in Powerplay. ICC match referee David Boon allowed the visitors a “like for like” replacement, as mandated by the rules, for Jadeja in Chahal even though home team coach Justin Langer looked visibly angry. And to make matters worse, Chahal dismissed two form men — Aaron Finch (35) and Steve Smith (12) — in his first two overs to turn the game on its head. Earlier, KL Rahul continued his impressive run in the shortest format with yet another fifty but it took Jadeja’s brilliant back-end flourish to take India to a fighting total. The Indian vice-captain hit 51 off 40 balls but leg-spinner Adam Zampa (1/20 in 4 overs) and all-rounder Moises Henriques (3/22 in 4 overs) were brilliant between overs 11th and 15th, which shifted the momentum in favour of the home team till Ravinder Jadeja came into play. — *PTI*



Indian captain Virat Kohli (centre) celebrates with teammates after Thangarasu Natarajan dismissed Australia’s Glenn Maxwell during their T20 cricket match at Manuka Oval in Canberra on Friday. — *AFP*

SCORECARD	
India: Lokesh Rahul c Sean Abbott b Henriques 51, Shikhar Dhawan b Mitchel Starc 1, Virat Kohli c and b Swapson 9, Sanju Samson c Swapson b Henriques 23, Manish Pandey c Hazlewood b Adam Zampa 2, Hardik Pandya c Steve Smith b Henriques 16, Ravinder Jadeja not out 44, Washington Sundar c Abbott b Mitchel Starc 7, Deepak Chahar not out 0. Extras (LB-2, NB-1, W-5) 8. Total (for 7 wickets in 20 overs) 161. FOW: 1-11, 2-48, 3-86, 4-90, 5-92, 6-114, 7-152. Bowling: Starc 4-0-34-2, Hazlewood 4-0-39-0, Adam Zampa 4-0-20-1, Sean Abbott 2-0-23-0,	Swapson 2-0-21-1, Henriques 4-0-22-3. Australia: A. Finch c Pandya b Chahal 35, D. Short c Pandya b Natarajan 34, S. Smith c Samson b Chahal 12, G. Maxwell lbw Natarajan 2, M. Henriques lbw Chahal 30, M. Wade c Kohli b Chahal 7, S. Abbott not out 12, M. Starc b Natarajan 1, M. Swapson not out 12. Extras (LB-4, W-1) 5. Total (for 7 wickets in 20 overs) 150. FOW: 1-56, 2-72, 3-75, 4-113, 5-122, 6-126, 7-127. Bowling: Deepak Chahar 4-0-29-1, Washington Sundar 4-0-16-0, Mohammed Shami 4-0-46-0, Chahal 4-0-25-3, Thangarasu Natarajan 4-0-30-0.

NUMBERS GAME	
KL RAHUL JOINS 1500-RUN CLUB IN T-20 I ● Lokesh Rahul became the Indian and sixth Indian and 33rd batsman overall to complete 1500 runs in Twenty-20 International cricket. The left hand batsman from Bangalore achieved this feat during his 51-run knock on the opening match of the three-match series against Australia at Manuka Oval, Canberra on Friday (Dec. 4). ● Lokesh Rahul scored 749 runs at an average of 44.05 and a strike rate of 142.39 in 119 nnings of 20 matches at home while his 763 runs came at an average of 47.68 and a strike rate of 148.44 in the 20 innings of 23 matches outside India.	
FOR THE RECORD ● Ravindra Jadeja became the eighth Indian and 82nd player overall to complete a half century of appearance in Twenty-20 Internationals. He took 11 years and 298 days to achieve this milestone. The left hand batsman and slow left-arm orthodox bowler from Saurashtra made his debut against Sri Lanka at Colombo (RPS) on February 10, 2009. ● Thangarasu Natarajan became the seventh Indian bowler to take three or more wickets on debut in Twenty-20 Internationals by taking three for 30 runs. He made his inte national debut after playing 38 Twenty-20 matches.	
— <i>S. PERVEZ QAISAR</i>	

Jadeja felt a bit dizzy: Samson

Concussion replacement worked for us, says Virat

Canberra, Dec. 4: Ravindra Jadeja “felt dizzy” after the completion of the Indian innings which resulted in Yuzvendra Chahal showing everyone how to be ready for opportunities that can come at any hour, India batsman Sanju Samson said on Friday. Chahal, who was not in original squad, came in as concussion substitute for Jadeja and grabbed 3 for 25 in a match-winning performance in the first T20 International against Australia. “He got hit on the helmet in the last over (off Mitchell Starc) and when he came back to the dressing room, he was asked by the physio (Nitin Patel) how he felt. He (Jadeja) said that he was feeling a little dizzy,” Samson told mediapersons during the post-match virtual media conference. “He is under observation as per team doctor’s (Dr Abhijit Salvi) advice.” Samson, however, couldn’t provide any update on

how Jadeja’s hamstring is after he suffered a niggle and needed heavy strapping during the 19th over bowled by Josh Hazlewood. “I don’t know how Jaddu bhai is feeling as the physio is taking care of that,” Sanju added. Samson quite rightly didn’t want to comment on whether Jadeja is out of the T20 series even though concussion protocols demand a week’s rest which could mean that he would no longer be available in the next two games. However, he was all praise for Chahal, who till the break didn’t know that he was going to play such a big role in India’s win. “That is the standard that has been set by this team. The quality of players is so high that anytime you ask, they are ready. Chahal grabbed his chance and it was a great lesson for everyone that they need to be ready all the time,” Sanju further added. — *PTI*

Canberra, Dec. 4: India captain Virat Kohli was quite pleased that the concussion substitute rule worked out well for his side even though there were no plans to play Yuzvendra Chahal, who proved to be a match-winner after replacing Ravindra Jadeja in the first T20 International against Australia here. Chahal turned out to be the perfect concussion substitute after an injured Jadeja did his part with the bat in India’s impressive 11-run victory. While Jadeja smashed an unbeaten 44 off 23 balls to propel India to 161 for 7, his head injury allowed India to unleash Chahal (3/25 in 4 overs) on an Australian side caught completely off-guard. “There were no plans of having Yuzi (Chahal) in the game. Jaddu (Jadeja) got a knock on the side of the head and was a bit dizzy and still is,” Kohli said in the post-match presentation.

There were no plans of having Yuzi (Chahal) in the game. Jaddu (Jadeja) got a knock on the side of the head and was a bit dizzy and still is. Concussion replacements are a strange thing, today it worked for us maybe another time he wouldn’t have found a like-for-like.
— **VIRAT KOHLI** on Jadeja’s concussion

were cruising. The batters offered us a few wickets. That is T20 cricket for you,” he said. “In Australia, you need to play hard and show intensity till the end. He (Jadeja) batted beautifully in the last game. Natarajan looks like he can improve a lot. (Deepak) Chahar bowled well as well. Chahal got us back in the game. Hardik’s catch was a game-changer as well,” he added. Earlier, just before the start of Australia’s chase, home team head coach Justin Langer was seen having an animated conversation with match referee David Boon on the sidelines even though it was not known whether it had anything to do with the decision to allow Chahal as a concussion substitute. But Aaron Finch preferred to play it down when asked about the concussion substitute at the post-match presentation ceremony. — *PTI*

No training for Covid-hit Pak

Wellington (New Zealand), Dec. 4: The Pakistan cricket team has been denied the right to train while in managed isolation in New Zealand after eight members of the touring squad tested positive for Covid-19. Under exemptions granted to visiting sports teams, members of the 53-strong Pakistan team could have been allowed to leave their Christchurch hotel to train in small groups after the third day of their 14-day isolation period. But the positive tests and a breach of isolation protocols by team members on their first day in isolation has led New Zealand authorities to withhold the training exemption. Dr. Ashley Bloomfield, New Zealand’s director-general of health, confirmed Friday the exemption would not be granted. I have very carefully considered this situation, Bloomfield said. At this time, I continue to have ongoing concerns about the risk of cross-infection within the squad. There have been a number of active cases identified among the team. Public health considerations will continue to be foremost in our response to Covid-19, whether this involves individuals or teams. We appreciate the challenges that this decision will have for the touring team. The decision is a major setback for the Pakistan team which will begin a three-match Twenty20 series against New Zealand on Dec. 18 and a two-match test series on Dec. 26. The team was issued a final warning after the breaches of isolation protocol occurred shortly after the team’s arrival in New Zealand last week. Close circuit television coverage from their hotel showed players breaking rules by mingling in corridors and sharing food. Further breaches might have led to the team being expelled from New Zealand. — *AP*

NARSINGH CLEARS COVID TESTS, GEARS UP FOR WC

New Delhi, Dec. 4: Wrestler Narsingh Yadav’s participation in the upcoming World Cup in Serbia was confirmed on Friday after he returned a negative test for dreaded Coronavirus. Making a comeback to competitive wrestling after serving a four-year doping ban, Narsingh had replaced Jitender Kinha in the 74kg in the Indian squad but was rendered doubtful for the competition after testing positive for the virus. The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) confirmed that he will travel to Belgrade on December 14 along with the men’s freestyle squad. “I just had minor cold, there was no fever or any other symptom for virus, so I knew that it (test) will be negative. I have been training well for this tournament. We will do well in Serbia,” Narsingh said. Many top wrestlers, including Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat, are skipping the event, anticipating that competition will not be strong but for Narsingh the World Cup, scheduled to held from December 12-18, holds significance. — *PTI*

Sneha shimmers in women’s golf

Noida, Dec. 4: Amateur Sneha Singh took the spotlight with a wire-to-wire win in the seventh leg on Friday, as the Women’s Pro Golf Tour staged its first event after nine months due to the Covid-19 pandemic at the Noida Golf Course here. Hyderabad teenager Sneha, who won a title on the Hero WPGT in 2019, overcame a difficult start and then a potentially crippling triple bogey to hold her nerve over the closing stretch to win by a comfortable margin of four shots. Her closing 74 gave her a total of one-over 217. Hunar Mittal, another talented amateur, carded the final day’s best score with an even par 72 that showcased a bogey-free back nine of two-under 34, as she aggregated five-over 221. With amateurs holding sway, Amandeep Drall was the top professional as she shot two-over 74 and finished in a tie for the second spot with Hunar. Ridhima Dilawari (80) in T-12th and Diksha Dagar (81) in 15th place, just did not get going this week. Sneha opened the day



Sneha Singh in action during the Women’s Pro Golf Tour at the Noida Golf Course on Friday.

with a one-shot lead but bogeyed the par-5 first. She quickly made amends with a birdie on second, but a triple bogey on par-4 sixth endangered her title ambitions. She bounced back again with a birdie on par-4 seventh and added another on par-3 10th. Despite bogeys on 11th and then 14th, she held on with a birdie on 15th. — *PTI*

Williamson hits double ton

Hamilton (New Zealand), Dec. 4: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson hit the highest Test score of his career on Friday with a majestic 251 as the hosts posted an imposing 519 for seven declared on day two of the first Test against the West Indies in Hamilton. In reply, the injury-hit West Indies were 49 without loss with John Campbell on 22 and Kraigg Brathwaite on 20 after cautiously negotiating the 26 overs to stumps. Williamson was thrust into the Test after five overs and over the next 10 hours and 24 minutes he faced 412 deliveries, caressing the ball to all points as he picked the deliveries that needed to be played and rarely touched anything else.



Kane Williamson celebrates his double century against West Indies in Hamilton, New Zealand, on Friday. — *AP*

Williamson’s third double century, eclipsing his unbeaten 242 against Sri Lanka nearly six years ago, included 34 fours and two sixes. It extended his New Zealand record to 22 Test centuries, three more than team-mate Ross Taylor.

It was Alzarri Joseph who finally removed the New Zealand talisman with his sole wicket of the innings, a short delivery that Williamson mistimed and was caught at mid-wicket by Roston Chase.

Three overs later, once Kyle Jamieson reached his half-century, Williamson declared. For the West Indies, Gabriel took three for 89, Kemar Roach took three for 114 and Joseph one for 99. Meanwhile, Kane Williamson was non-committal Friday about his availability for the Black Caps’ remaining Tests this month with his partner Sarah Raheem due to give birth to their first child. — *AFP*

BRIEF SCORES
Day 2: New Zealand 519/7 decl. (Williamson 251, Jamieson not out 51; Kemar Roach 3/114, Gabriel 3/89) vs **West Indies 49 for no loss in 26 overs** (J. Campbell not out 22.

Rapid fire Gunners



Alexandre Lacazette (centre) of Arsenal celebrates after scoring the opening goal against Rapid Vienna in the Europa League match at the Emirates Stadium in London on Thursday. Mari, Nketiah, Smith also scored for Gunners in their 4-1 victory. — *AFP*