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THE HINDU

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INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

DELHI
CITY EDITION
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11 persons killed in road accident near Dharwad in Karnataka

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President Ram Nath Kovind donates ₹5 lakh for Ram temple work

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Trade with China shrank in 2020, deficit at a five-year low

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Labuschagne's century puts Australia in control in Brisbane Test

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NEARBY

'BSP will contest alone in U.P., Uttarakhand'

LUCKNOW

The Bahujan Samaj Party will not enter into any kind of pact with any party in the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in 2022. Speaking on her 65th birthday, party chief Mayawati said: "Our party will contest alone on its own strength in all Vidhan Sabha seats in these two States."

NEWS ▸ PAGE 9

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Three killed in fire at Delhi scrap shop

NEW DELHI

Three people, including a child, were killed in a fire at a scrap shop in west Delhi's Kirti Nagar, the police said on Friday. The blaze was reported at 10.50 p.m. on Thursday and seven fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Small rooms built above the shop were also engulfed in the fire. DCP (West) Deepak Purohit said a short circuit is suspected to have caused the fire.

CITY ▸ PAGE 2

World's largest vaccination programme begins today

PM to launch drive; more than 3 lakh to get jab on first day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the first phase of the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday during a videoconference.

The world's largest vaccination programme will begin at a total of 3,006 session sites across all the States and the Union Territories, which will be connected virtually throughout the exercise. Nearly 100 beneficiaries will receive the vaccine at each of the session sites on Saturday.

Dedicated call centre

A dedicated 24x7 call centre – 1075 – has been set up to address queries related to the pandemic and the vaccine roll-out, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Friday said adequate doses of both the vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin – had been delivered across the country. He reviewed the functioning of the CoWIN system, the online digital platform that will be used to drive the vaccination programme.

The vaccination drive, where the beneficiaries currently will not have a choice between the two vaccines, has been planned in a phased manner after identifying the priority groups, the Ministry said.

Healthcare workers, both in the government and private sectors, including Integrated Child Development Services workers, will receive the vaccine in the first phase.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Calling the shots

The Health Ministry has ruled out certain population groups from the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine. A lowdown:

WHO SHOULD NOT BE VACCINATED
- Those aged 18 or below
- Pregnant and lactating women
- People with a history of allergic reaction to COVID-19 vaccine or to vaccines in general or injectable therapies, pharmaceutical products and food items

WHO ARE PERMITTED *(apart from the general population)*
- People with a history of COVID-19 infection
- Those with a history of chronic diseases and co-morbidities
- People who have immunodeficiency or HIV, and patients on immunosuppression drugs

Policy cloud delays Brazil vaccine flight

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

A special plane from Brazil to carry the first exports of Covishield, the India-made coronavirus vaccine, was delayed on Friday, amid confusion over clearance for the shipment, officials here said.

The flight, due to leave Brazil on Thursday and return on Saturday with two million doses of the vaccine, was put off, the Brazilian Ministry of Health announced, citing logistical and licensing issues.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Farmers, govt. to continue talks

Friday's talks fail to break impasse but both sides agree to meet on January 19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The ninth round of talks between the Centre and the farmer unions on Friday failed to break the impasse over the demand to repeal the three contentious farm laws. It was, however, agreed to continue the direct dialogue in parallel with the Supreme Court-appointed panel's proceedings on the same issue.

The date for the next round of talks was set for January 19, the same day as the court-appointed panel is likely to hold its first meeting. The unions have refused to participate in the proceedings of the court-appointed committee, but were apprehensive that the Centre would use the court's order as an excuse to end the direct negotiation process. However, it has now been agreed that this process would continue.

Speaking to presspersons after the meeting, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said a solution could emerge from the Centre's talks with the farmers as well as from the court-appointed panel's deliberations. He emphasised that the Centre was fully committed to the court's order and would present its perspective to the panel when invited to do so. He accepted that the unions wished to continue their own dialogue with the government alone, but emphasised that the court was the supreme authority in the country, and its panel would also work in the interests of farmers' welfare.

Mr. Tomar expressed the hope that the talks would "reach a decisive stage" on January 19.

On Friday, the unions again refused to consider the Centre's suggestions for amendments to the laws, or for a clause-by-clause discussion by a smaller group. Near the end of the discussions, he asked the unions what exactly it would take for the protests to be called off.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8
MORE REPORTS ON ▸ PAGES 2 & 9

No relief: Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait and other farmer leaders leaving Vigyan Bhavan after discussions with Union Ministers on Friday. ▪ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Tractor parade: SC may pass orders on Monday

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the farmers' protests case on Monday amid reports that one of the four members of its expert committee, set up on January 12 to negotiate between the government and the farmers, has recused himself.

The case list on January 18 shows that the court is to pass orders/directions on a plea by the government to injunct protesters from holding tractor/trolley/vehicle marches to "disrupt" the Republic Day celebrations on January 26.

There is also a change in the composition of judges on the Bench sitting on Monday. The Bench, though still headed by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, will have Justices L. Nageswara Rao and Vineet Saran as puisne judges.

The Bench on January 12 had Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian accompanying the CJI.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

City all set for first day of inoculation drive

First dose of vaccine to be administered to 100 persons each at 81 sites

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

From showering flower petals on vaccine boxes reaching the hospitals to posters reading "COVID-19 vaccine is safe" and a hand-picked list of 100 persons who would be administered the first dose at each of the 81 sites, Delhi is all geared up for Saturday, the first day of the vaccine roll-out.

Vaccine doses have reached many of the hospitals and in some cases, the linked government facilities close to them. Directions have been given to inoculate only healthcare workers below 50 years of age on the first day. Officials played down apprehensions about the vaccine saying it's "completely voluntary".

Earlier this week, vaccine vials from the airport had reached the central vaccine store at Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH). From there it went to the district vaccine stores, one in each of the 11 districts, and then to the 81 hospitals.

Each vaccination site has three rooms: one for waiting, a second where the vaccination actually happens and an observation room where the people who have been vaccinated have to wait for 30 minutes to see if there is any adverse effect following immunisation (AEFI).

At 9.30 a.m. on Friday, red carpets were being laid at the vaccination site in RGSSH and the authorities were setting up a pre-waiting area outside the building to avoid crowding.

When asked if healthcare workers are apprehensive, Namrata Makkar, Deputy Medical Superintendent of the hospital, said, "People are aware about the vaccine, but there is a little apprehension. But we trust our government and they have been hand-holding us since the beginning of the pandemic."

She said that the hospital has not issued any instructions to the 100 selected persons that they should take the vaccine on Saturday. "We didn't even hold a meeting of these beneficiaries, so that they do not feel any pressure," she said.

But officials said that since the list of 100 beneficiaries have been chosen by hospitals for the first day and not randomly selected by the CoWIN platform, they expect not too many persons to back out on Saturday.

At Lok Nayak Hospital, around 2.30 p.m. Medical Director Suresh Kumar and others showered flower petals on a blue-coloured cold box inside a van ferrying the first set of vaccine vials to the hospital.

Red carpet being laid out at the vaccination site in Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi on Friday. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

'We are thrilled'

"The last eight to nine months were a struggle with many of our staffers getting infected by the virus and three of our colleagues dying because of it. We are thrilled that the vaccination is starting," he said.

"In case of an AEFI, there is an entire medical team ready and they have been equipped with drugs, oxygen cylinders and a ventilator," said Dr. Amit Gupta, the supervisor of the vaccination site. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Health Minister Satyendar Jain are scheduled to inspect Lok Nayak Hospital at 12 p.m. on Saturday. The vaccination will take place four days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Arnab's chats with ex-Barc chief revealed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In the supplementary chargesheet filed by the Mumbai police on TRP tampering by a few news channels, the alleged WhatsApp conversations between *Republic TV* Editor Arnab Goswami and recently arrested former Broadcast Audience Research Council (Barc) CEO Pratho Dasgupta point to a cosy relationship.

The transcript of the WhatsApp messages, running into more than 1,000 pages and intercepted from Mr. Dasgupta's phone, shows many instances of him asking Mr. Goswami to reach out to the government on his behalf.

In one such instance, on April 4, 2019, just days before the Lok Sabha poll, Mr. Dasgupta asked Mr. Goswami to stall a proposal of the Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRAI) to make the Barc's viewing data public instead of just supplying it to the channels.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Car passengers in back seat must wear seat belts, says Delhi Police

Two-wheelers must have rear-view mirrors

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Four-wheeler passengers seated at the back must wear seat belts while drivers of two-wheelers must ensure they have rear-view mirrors and should use them while commuting.

These are some of the safe-driving rules being shared by Delhi Traffic Police in its special awareness campaign that started in west Delhi from January 13. The drive will continue till January 23.

Violation of these rules can result in a fine, and habitual traffic offenders can be penalised ₹500.

"It has been found that serious injuries and fatalities in an accident usually occur due to the absence of rear-view mirrors in two-wheelers or passengers not wearing seat belts in four-wheelers," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic - Western Range) Prashant Gautam.

An order issued by Mr. Gautam noted that a high number of two-wheeler riders have removed rear-view mirrors from their vehicle.

Driving without a rear-view mirror is not only "irresponsible" but also "dangerous" since it blocks a significant viewing arc of the driver, causing collisions with faster moving vehicles coming from the rear, said the senior officer.

"There is also very little compliance with the provisions for use of rear seat belts in cars. This is reflective of poor awareness," Mr. Gautam added.

54 held in U.P. under unlawful conversion ordinance so far

An overwhelming number of them are Muslims

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

At least 91 persons have been booked and 54 arrested so far, an overwhelming number of them Muslims, under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020.

The most number of arrests have been made in Etah (14) followed by Sitapur (13), Mau (8), Gautam Buddha Nagar (4), Azamgarh (3) and Firozabad (3).

In a counter affidavit submitted before the Allahabad High Court on January 4, a copy of which has been seen by *The Hindu*, the U.P. government said it had registered 16 cases under the new ordinance, booking 86 persons, of whom 54 had been arrested while 31 others were yet to be arrested.

The FIRs were spread across 14 districts of six administrative zones of the State. The other districts are Moradabad, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Bareilly, Kannauj, Hardoi, Bijnor and Shahjahanpur.

In addition to these cases, an FIR was registered in Shahjahanpur on January 3 against five persons, including two Christians from Tamil Nadu and two local Dalits, on charges of allegedly trying to allure a Bajrang Dal convener into conversion for jobs and free education for children. However, no arrests were made in the case.

A look into these 17 cases shows that barring a Hindu driver in Sitapur, two Tamil Christians and three Hindus in Shahjahanpur, and seven persons with Hindu names accused of unlawful conversion in Gautam Buddha Nagar and Azamgarh, the rest of the accused are Muslims.

Charges dropped

On January 7, more than a month after booking a Haridwar-based Muslim labourer under the new ordinance for allegedly trying to coerce and allure a married Hindu woman from Muzaffarnagar to convert, the U.P. government told the Allahabad High Court that it found no evidence of unlawful conversion against him and had dropped the charges.

However, the police filed a chargesheet under charges of criminal intimidation against him. The case had been connected to a petition filed in the High Court challenging the ordinance.

Asked if there had been additions to the number of cases lodged under the ordinance since the filing of the counter affidavit on January 4, Additional Advocate General Manish Goyal said the counter reflected the status of the cases at the time it was filed. "Further progress might have taken place. Some other cases might have been filed after the filing of the counter," he said, adding that he was unaware of any new cases.

'Morally repugnant'

A petitioner, Saurabh Kumar of Prayagraj, had prayed for the ordinance to be declared ultra vires saying it was "both morally and constitutionally repugnant".

Following this, the Allahabad High Court had issued a notice to the government and sought its response.

In its reply, the State government in a counter affidavit filed through the Special Secretary-Home Department defended the ordinance and said it was safeguarding community interests.

The matter will be heard next on January 18.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Lakshadweep. Dense/very dense fog likely at a few/isolated places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	–	24.2	12.5	Kozhikode	3	33.0	24.4
Ahmedabad	–	30.5	15.0	Kurnool	–	32.2	19.2
Aizawl	–	18.0	10.5	Lucknow	–	21.3	6.4
Allahabad	–	19.7	8.6	Madurai	3.3	28.0	22.4
Bengaluru	–	27.4	17.3	Mangaluru	–	34.7	24.2
Bhopal	–	27.8	8.4	Mumbai	–	30.1	19.5
Bhubaneswar	–	30.6	19.0	Mysuru	–	30.7	19.4
Chandigarh	–	20.6	7.2	New Delhi	–	20.8	6.4
Chennai	–	30.7	23.3	Patna	–	16.0	7.8
Coimbatore	0.9	24.6	21.4	Port Blair	–	30.2	25.6
Dehradun	–	21.3	7.4	Puducherry	21.5	29.2	21.6
Gangtok	–	17.1	6.1	Pune	–	32.3	15.8
Goa	–	33.4	21.8	Raipur	–	29.8	12.2
Guwahati	–	23.7	13.0	Ranchi	–	24.9	7.3
Hubballi	–	29.0	19.0	Shillong	–	14.9	4.6
Hyderabad	–	29.7	17.6	Shimla	–	16.0	5.6
Imphal	–	22.0	4.3	Srinagar	–	6.8	-6.8
Jaipur	–	25.0	8.2	Thiruvananthapuram	–	32.0	24.7
Kochi	–	30.8	24.2	Tiruchi	30.1	27.3	22.4
Kohima	–	16.2	4.0	Vijayawada	–	31.2	22.2
Kolkata	–	24.2	13.4	Visakhapatnam	–	29.8	22.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing — **Yesterday**

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	16	.94	.53	88	95	
Bengaluru	13	.79	.19	86	84	
Chennai	10	.14	.35	129	–	
Delhi	18	.61	120	492	.448	
Hyderabad	.9	.49	.40	225	–	
Kolkata	45	.23	.56	336	.209	
Lucknow	.8	.96	.47	382	.356	
Mumbai	44	.94	.16	164	.205	
Pune	–	.85	.58	121	.102	
Visakhapatnam	26	.51	.50	170	.139	

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Noida, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 475 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Madikeri, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 42

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

THE HINDU
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Three killed in fire at scrap shop in city

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three people, including a child, were killed in a fire at a scrap shop in west Delhi's Kirti Nagar, the police said on Friday.

The blaze was reported at 10.50 p.m. on Thursday and seven fire tenders were rushed to the spot, according to the Delhi Fire Service (DFS).

Small rooms built above the shop were also engulfed in fire, it said, adding that some people living there suffered injuries.

Three bodies were recovered after the fire was doused. Two of the victims were in their 20s and the third was a child below the age of 10 years, a senior police officer said. One of the deceased has been identified as Rohit, a resident of Kamla Nehru Camp in Kirti Nagar.The scrap shop is owned by Tony Mehto, who is absconding, they said.

DCP (West) Deepak Purohit said a short circuit is suspected to have caused the fire, but the exact cause will be known after the probe.

Shopkeepers fume at protest on Singhu border

Minimal business has seen them incurring massive losses

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Shopkeepers at the stretch of Singhu border, where the farmers' protest is under way, said they are incurring heavy losses and are drifting closer to a breaking point.

An angry Hari Chand (70), a resident of Sonipat, said he has been bearing a loss of nearly ₹1 lakh a month and there is minimal to no work since the protest began. "I have to pay a rent of ₹35,000 and I have to pay salaries for four boys at ₹15,000 each plus electricity bill and daily tea. How am I supposed to pay for this?" he questioned.

The shopkeeper, who has been running a hardware store for the last 40 years, said his customers - essentially factory owners and workers - don't come because the factories are shut. "The owners of these factories have to come from Delhi or further in Haryana. Their supply-demand chain is shut so they don't open," Mr. Chand said, adding that their supplies come from Delhi or the other side of Haryana, which is why they're selling articles stocked earlier.

Farmers protesting at the Singhu border on Friday.
• SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Praying for the end

Mr. Chand sells wooden sticks, tarpaulin, brooms, and hardware articles. "Honestly, I don't even want to sell to the farmers. We are irritated and angry. We want the protest to end," he said.

Another shopkeeper, who identified himself as Varun Tayal (38) and runs an electrical store, said he is scared to say anything to the farmers. "I don't want to die. They're huge in numbers," he said.

Apart from netting losses, he said reaching the shop every day takes him more than an hour and a half because he has to take the route through the inside of villages. "What is our fault? We are taxpayers. Why do we have to suffer?" he asked. Mr. Tayal said that the entire Dahiya Market is rented and all the shopkeepers are running losses to the tune of lakhs and crores.

Professionals from Pune join farmers' stir

'Want to give, take energy from agitators'

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

In further evidence to the swelling support for the farmers' protest across the country, a group of nine persons has joined them from Pune, under the banner Lokayat to extend solidarity and witness "one of the biggest protests in recent history".

They came here to give energy and take energy from this "huge" protest, fighting for their rights against the corporates, members of the group said. They were wowed by the support they received from the protesters. "I, as a woman, feel safe here. The people here are so warm and welcoming. There is food everywhere. I haven't seen a protest like this before," said Varsha (36), an accounts professional who took seven days off to come for the protest.

Rushal Heena (35) said, Lokayat was started by four-five people in 2004, who wanted to bring changes in the society. It is now 50-member strong. "We are all working professionals, who contribute a part of our salaries every month in the group fund," he said, adding that they essentially work on awareness programmes in schools, colleges, streets, and institutions.

Raising voice

Mr. Rushal said he and other members took a train to reach Delhi on Friday morning and will stay here for the next four days including two days at the Singhu border and one each at Tikri and Ghazipur border. "Our aim has always been to collect people to raise their voice so that the authorities feel the pressure to change policies in favour of the people and not those who are already rich. One of the important aspects of this protest is that it is calling the spade a spade and fighting against the corporates," he said.

He said that the group also fights against communalism by celebrating all festivals on the streets in public display. "The only way to bring about a change is to come together and raise our voice," he said.

'34% families in the Capital live in rented houses'

Maximum average monthly expenditure incurred by 90% of total households is ₹25,000: report

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

Every second Delhiite is dependent on pension, returns from investments or some form of remittance for income and more people earn their livelihood through the private sector or are unemployed than working in the public sector or with the government, an official survey of over 1 crore people - half the population of the Capital according to the 2011 survey - has found.

Over 66% of the total households in Delhi are owned by their occupants while the rest pay rent. Almost 80% do not own air conditioners or computers and ₹25,000 is the maximum ceiling of average monthly expenditure incurred by 90% of the city's total households.

While a little more than half of the total population, around 52%, has a personal vehicle, mostly a two wheeler. Around 6.59%, have both a two-wheeler and a four-wheeler, compared to those who have only four-wheelers, which constitute 4.34% of the total households with vehicles.

These are some of the findings of the Delhi government's Directorate of Economics and Statistics' two-part report on the Socio-Economic Profile of Residents of Delhi - the first part titled, and pertaining to, 'Households Characteristics' and the second on 'Individual Characteristics' - on the basis of data collected through a survey of a population of 1.02 crore from 20.05 lakh households in the city from November 2018 to November 2019.

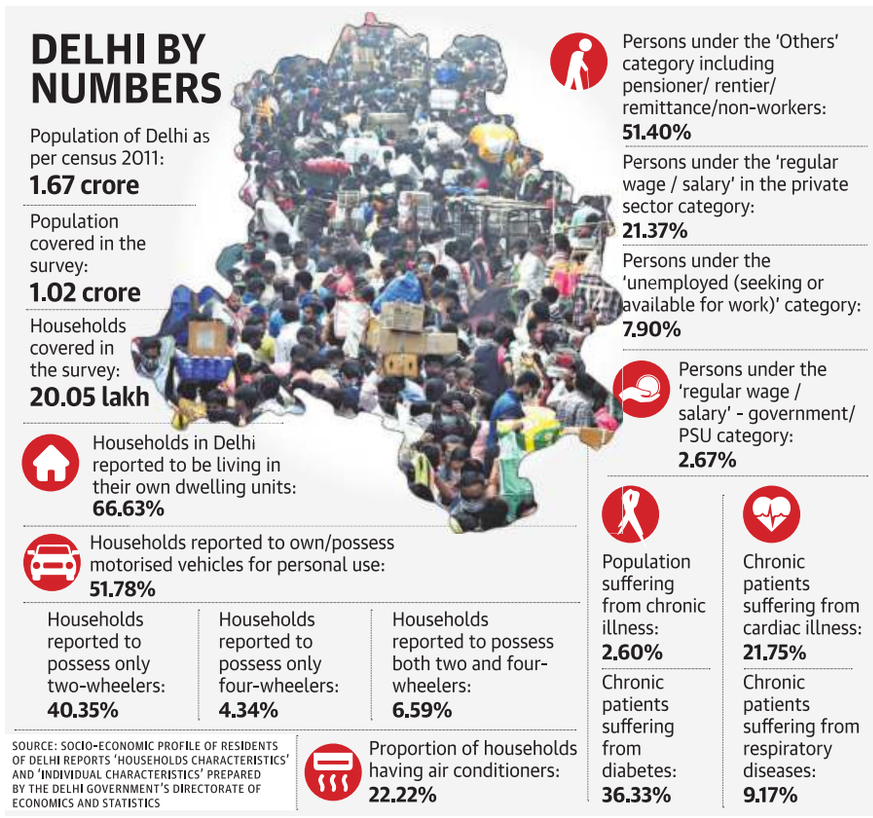
With the population census of 2011 putting the population of Delhi at 1.67, this survey, according to government sources, may present the clearest picture yet regarding the Capital's current demography. However, it is accompanied by a disclaimer that about 55% of the total projected population has been covered till the closing date of the survey.

The labour force participation rate was reported as 48.81% and the unemployment rate at 16.25%. The percentage distribution of the category of occupation put the percentage of those in the 'Others' category including pensioners, rentiers, those dependent on remittance and non-workers at 51.40%.

Pension benefits

Senior citizens constituted 5.41% of the total population. Among them, 43.28% avail old age pension, which is provided to those eligible for it over 60 years of age, from the Delhi government.

Though the total percentage of Delhi's population assessed in the survey reported to be suffering from chronic illness was 2.60%, a majority of them, over 36%, were afflicted by diabetes, almost 22% by cardiac illness and over 9% by respiratory diseases. As many as 72.87% of the population in Delhi, the report stated, avail medical facilities from govt. hospitals and dispensaries while only 27.13% depends on private ones.



Air quality of Delhi, Noida in severe category

NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi and Noida continued to be in the "severe" category and Gurugram's in the very poor category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. The national capital's air quality is expected to continue in severe levels for the next few days. The AQI of Delhi was 460 on Friday, up from 429 on Thursday, as per CPCB's 4 p.m. bulletin.

INDIAN COUNCIL OF FORESTRY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION
(An Autonomous Body of Ministry of Enviornment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India)
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Age limit : The person applying for the position of chair shall not be more than **65 years as on 31 January 2021.**

Last date for submission of application: 12 February 2021.

ADG (Media & Extension), ICFRE, Dehradun

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क्र. सं.	ई–निविदा संख्या	सामग्री / कार्य का नाम	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य जी.एस.टी. सहित (रू.)	धरोहर राशि (रू.)	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत (रू.)	ई–निविदा प्रपत्र आन लाईन एवं ऑफ लाईन आवेदन एवं जमा करने की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय	ई–निविदा के प्रथम भाग के आन एवं ऑफ लाईन खुलने की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय
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RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION- LUCKNOW

OPEN e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender No: RE-LKO-EL-Reroll-121 **Date- 12.01.2021**

Open e-Tenders in single pocket system are invited by the Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Railway Electrification, Lucknow for & on behalf of the President of India for the work of:-

1.	**Name of the work with its Location:**	Re-rolling of contract and catenary wire from damaged drum to good condition released drums (shall be provided by Purchaser free of cost) including transportation of drums from different sites of Railway Electrification, Lucknow.
2.	**Approximate cost of work**	₹ 3330600 (Rupees Thirty Three Lacs Thirty Thousand Six Hundred) only
3.	**Earnest Money**	₹ 66600.00 (Rupees Sixty Six Thousand Six Hundred) only
4.	**Cost of Tender Paper**	Nil
5.	**Tender closing date and time**	08.02.2021 at 15:00 Hrs.
6.	**Validity of offer**	45 Days
7.	**Completion Period**	03 (Three) months

1. The cost of Tender form & Earnest Money deposit through net banking debit card, credit card or payment gateway only as per payment option available in **http://www.ireps.gov.in** website. Earnest money in any other form shall not be accepted.
2. For other details and to download the entire Tender Paper, please visit website **http://www.ireps.gov.in**
3. Online offer without earnest money will be summarily rejected.
4. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
5. Railway reserve the right to accept/reject any or all tenders without assigning reasons to any or all tenderers.
6. General Condition of Contract September, 2019 of Railway or latest shall be applicable in this tender.

Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer
Railway Electrification, Lucknow
For & On behalf of President of India

PR/643/2021 Adk

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NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
Email: dycmmgkpd@gmail.com
Website:www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in & www.tenders.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No. 14 dated 12 .01.2021
Invitation of tenders through e-Procurement system

Dy Chief Material Manager, North Eastern Railway, Gorkhpur and on behalf of the President of India, invites tenders through e-procurement system for the supply of the following items. Complete description of the item and other condition are available on website **www.ireps.gov.in** & **www.tenders.gov.in**

Item No.- 1. **Tender No. & due date: 10187554B Due on Dt.- 09.02.2021, Brief Description of Stores :** Design. Supply, Installation, Commissioning And Maintenance of Automatic Fire Detection Cum Suppression System. **Qty. Required** : 15 Nos. **Earnest Money(Rs.) :** 19,5000/-

01-Above tenders are available on IREPS site i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in.** the firm desirous in participating against e/tender are advised to electronically regd. themselves on the above website for which they would require to obtain class-III digital certificate (if already not obtain) from certifying agencies authorized under govt, of India IT Act,2000. Manual offers will not be accepted. **2-** Advertised tender and bulletin tenders of Dy.CMM/Depot office, NER are being opened through EPS (E-Procurement system) only. Firms desiring to participate in Dy.CMM/Depot. Tenders should obtain necessary digital certificate and get themselves registered with CRIS/New Delhi. Necessary details in this regard can be obtained from the website **http//www.ireps.gov.in 3-** In case of difference between English and Hindi version of the tender notice the Englsh version shall prevail. **4-** Head of allocation towards, S D money is 00844517 and Earnest, money is 00084506. **5-** The Tender Cost & EMD will be accepted through On-line payment on IREPS Portal only for the tender published on or after 01.09.2016 against all the Dy. CMM/Depot/ NER/ GKP tenders accept Global Tender

Dy. Chief Material Manager/Depot
CPRO/S-44 N.E. Railway, Gorakhpur

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• PUNCHKUIAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
• WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
• JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
• NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
• LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Administration of Union Territory of Chandigarh
(Electricity Wing of Engineering Department)
Corrigendum
For
SELECTION OF BIDDER FOR PURCHASE OF ONE HUNDRED PERCENT(100%) SHARES IN DISTRIBUTION COMPANY RESPONSIBLE FOR DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY AND HAVING DISTRIBUTION LICENSE IN THE UNION TERRITORY OF CHANDIGARH (Tender No. OP-2/SPL-1/2020-21)

The following amendments in dates are issued on notice inviting tender published on dated 09.11.2020:

1.	Cost of RFP Documents	INR 5,00,000.00+GST
2.	Bid-Security	INR 10,00,00,000.00 in the form of Bank Guarantee as per RFP
3.	Bank Details	Account Name: EXEC ENGG ELECTY(OP) DIVN NO. 2, CHD Account Number: 00000038677374645 IFSC Code: SBIN0000628
4.	GST Details	GST Number: 04PTLE10623E1D6
5.	Sale of RFP	Start Date: 10.11.2020 End Date: 25.01.2021
6.	Last date of submission of queries	31.01.2021
7.	Date of second pre-bid meeting (if needed)	02.02.2021
8.	Last date of bid Submission	08.02.2021, 4.00 P.M.

Note: The other terms and conditions of RFP shall remain the same.

Executive Engineer
Electricity OP Division No. 2
Industrial Area Phase 1
Union Territory of Chandigarh
Phone-0172-2655531
Email: elop2-chd@nic.in

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Corrigendum **BATCH No. 57A/20** **Date: 14.01.2021**

E-Tender Notice for supply of materials - "Participation in through" web portal of IREPS - www.ireps.gov.in *offers are invited for supply of the following materials : The closing time for all tenders is at 14.00 hr.*

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Documents: Existing	Documents: To be read as
1	17205228	Thin Client Card reader	IRS condition & Tender Document	Tender Document

Participants are required to submit their offer only on-line through the web portal of IREPS **www.ireps.gov.in** before the closing date and time. Other details regarding Consignee, and detailed description of stores are available in tender document in tender notice on the above portal.

PR/1304/HQ/Store/C/20-21/32 **Principal Chief Material Manager**

EXE ENGINEER PANCHAYAT R&B DIVISION CHHOTAUDEPUR
TENDER NOTICE NO.08/2020-21

Online tenders are invited by Executive Engineer, Panchayat R&B Division, Chhotaudepur from Govt approved & eligible contractors for 12 packages (108 works) for MMGSY & 3 packages (12 works) total 120 works with estimate from Rs.155 lakhs to 484 lakhs. For further details, contact above office or visit www.statetenders.com. Tenders can be filed online from https://nprocure.com.

Last date of filing Tender	18:00 hrs Dt 08/02/2021
Tender fees, EMD & Document submission	Tender fees DD, EMD amount with documents must be uploaded by scanning & hard copies must be presented by RPAD only upto 15/02/2021 office hours.
Date tender opening	12:00 hrs Dt 09/02/2021
Tender opening location	Office of Sup. Engg, Panchayat R&B circle office, Vadodara

Agencies must mention name, address & work details on cover while presenting documents by RPAD.

Executive Engineer
Panchayat R&B Division
Chhotaudepur
(INF-VAD-1126- 2020-21)

Timings
DELHI

SATURDAY, JAN. 16		
RISE	07:15	SET 17:48
RISE	09:40	SET 20:58
SUNDAY, JAN. 17		
RISE	07:15	SET 17:49
RISE	10:15	SET 21:55
MONDAY, JAN. 18		
RISE	07:15	SET 17:50
RISE	10:46	SET 22:49

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	21	06
Safdarjang	21	06
Palam	19	09

Delhi Palam Today
19°C Dense fog would prevail at some places with cold wave condition at some places would continue. A pleasant day with mainly clear sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
18°C A very cold morning with moderate to dense fog. A partly cloudy sky and light winds with cool day.

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Non-essential expenses of civic bodies may stop

HC says salaries of front-line workers should be prioritised

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday hinted that it may stop all non-essential, discretionary expenses of the three municipal corporations, including perks of councillors and senior officers, so that salaries and pensions of COVID-19 front-line workers can be paid.

A Bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Rekha Palli directed the civic bodies to give details of expenses incurred on top officials. It said the payment of salaries of health workers, including doctors and nursing staff,

and sanitation staff – who are at the frontlines during the current pandemic should be prioritised over other discretionary expenses.

The court said "paucity of funds cannot be an excuse for non-payment of salaries and pensions" as these are fundamental rights. The court also expressed its disapproval over Delhi government's decision to deduct from the amounts transferred to the corporations the loans given to them, saying even the Reserve Bank of India had imposed a moratorium on recall of loans and declaration of accounts as NPA by banks and financial institutions.

The court will hear the case again on January 21. It was hearing several petitions claiming non-payment of salaries and pensions of serving and retired employees, including teachers, doctors and sanitation workers, of the three corporations.

'Pan masala firms serial tax defaulters'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Pan Masala companies have been found as the serial tax evaders in the Delhi, says a survey conducted by the Department of Trade and Taxes of Delhi government.

During the December, 2020, the Anti Evasion Cell - 1 of State GST, Delhi has conducted 46 surveys on the premises of taxpayers of different natures such as pan masala/ gutka, craps and metals, hardware, etc. wherein the department has realised ₹5.41 crore tax and penalty from the taxpayers. It has also blocked Input Tax Credit of defaulter tax payers of ₹4 crore.

During the search, some premises were sealed and prohibition order was also issued to the taxpayers.

City records 295 new cases

Lowest daily count in 8 months: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The city witnessed 295 fresh COVID-19 cases in 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,31,884, stated a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Friday.

Also, 10 more deaths have been reported in 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 10,732. A total of 66,921 tests were done in a day. Of the total cases, 6,18,357 people have recovered and there are 2,795 active cases.

The positivity rate of COVID-19 cases was 0.44% on Friday and the overall positivity till now was 6.49%, as per the bulletin. "Well done Delhi! Delhi records the lowest number of Covid cases in the last 8 months. The positivity rate stands at an all-time low at 0.44%. With the resilience of the Delhiites, we are committed to fight and beat Corona [sic]," CM Arvind Kejriwal tweeted.

Delhi government on Friday reduced the number of total beds reserved for COVID-19 in six government hospitals to 610 from existing 2,000. In another order, the government also reduced the number of beds in private hospitals reserved for COVID-19.

There were 2,451 containment zones in the city as of Friday.

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases	Total deaths
6,31,884	10,732
New cases in the past 24 hours	**New deaths**
295	10

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

IN BRIEF

BJP expresses gratitude to PM for vaccine drive

NEW DELHI

The BJP on the eve of COVID-19 vaccination drive in India, sought to express gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and those involved in the formulation of the vaccine here on Friday.

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Mr. N SELVA KUMAR
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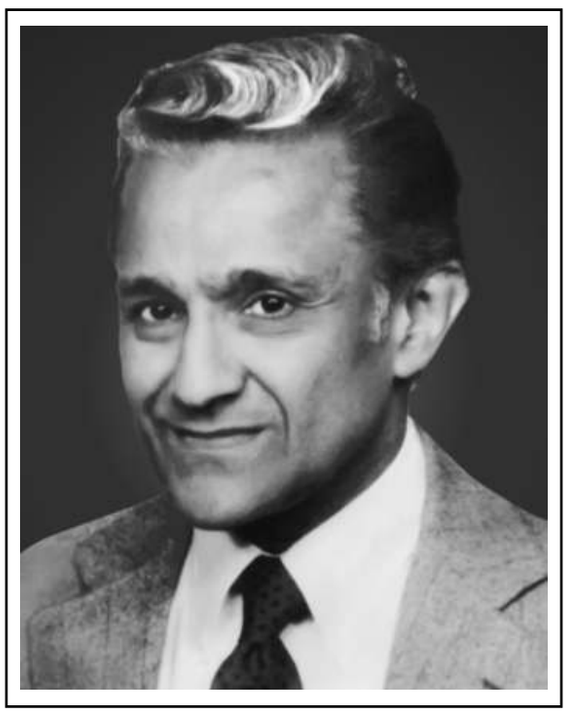

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Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
(Govt. of Bihar)
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At - Nagi-Nakti Bird Sanctuary, Jamui

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Date : 15-17 January 2021

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- Glass tournament
- Culture
- Maithili Thakur's folk Song
- Bicycle rally
- Bird Village

Inauguration by:
Shri Nitish Kumar
Honorable Chief Minister, Bihar

Chaired by :
Shri Tarkishore Prasad
Honorable Dy CM-Cum-Minister,
Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

Inauguration Program : 16th January 2021
Venue : Nagi Bird Sanctuary, Jamui, Bihar

Dignified Presence :
Member of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly & Member Legislative Council, Jamui

PR No - 011309 (Forest)D. 2020-21

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JUDICIARY — WEEKEND : 11 APRIL. — ✆ 8800660301
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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that share certificate(s) no. 661936 for 8010 Equity Shares of Rs. 10/- (Rs. Ten Only) each bearing distinctive nos 81425251 to 81433260 of Pasupati Acrylon Ltd. N. Delhi, Registered in the name of Rajiv Sirohi has/have been lost has/have applied to the company to issue duplicate certificate(s). Any person who has/have any claim in respect of the said shares certificate(s) should lodge such claim with the company at its registered office at M-14, Connaught Circus New Delhi - 1, within 15 days of the publication of this notice, after which no claim will be entertained and the company will proceed to issue duplicate share certificate(s).

PUBLIC NOTICE

FORM NO. NCLT 3A
Advertisement detailing petition
[see rule 35 of the National Company Law Tribunal Rules, 2016]
IB Petition 781 of 2020.
In the matter of Section 9 and other applicable provision of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016
Deepika Surana
Proprietor of "Harsh Trading Company"
R/o G-448-A, Paryavaran Marg, IND. Area, Madanganj, Kishangarh (Ajmer), Rajasthan-305801
..... Petitioner/Operational Creditor

NOTICE OF HEARING OF THE PETITION

A petition under section 9 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, for initiating Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process of V.K. Aggarwal & Company Pvt. Ltd was presented by Deepika Surana on March 12, 2020
The said petition is fixed for hearing before New Delhi Court-II bench of National Company Law Tribunal on February 23, 2021.
Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said petition should send to the petitioner's advocate, notice of his intention, signed by him or his advocate, with his name and address, so as to reach the petitioner's advocate not later than 'two days before the date fixed for the hearing of the petition. Where he seeks to oppose the petition the grounds of opposition or a copy of his affidavit shall be furnished with such notice.
A copy of the petition will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.
Dated:- 13/01/2021
Sd/- Reema Jain
Advocate for the Petitioner
1561/30, 2nd floor, Naiwalan, Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005
Email: adv.reemajain@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform the general public that my clients Shri Ram Pal Sharma S/o Late Shri Dhan Singh and his wife Smt. Kunti Rani both R/o S-82, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, have severed all their relations from their son Shri Rajeev Sharma and his wife Smt. Savita Sharma, both R/o C-112, Jeewan Park, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 due to their illegal activities, misdeed & misconduct and debarred them from all their movable and immovable properties. My clients have no concern whatsoever with them in any manner and shall not be liable for their any acts & omissions & whoever deals with them shall do so at his own risk & responsibilities.
Naresh C. Sharma, Advocate
Chamber No. 53, Civil Wing, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-110054

Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency

First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp-IT Park, Sahastradhara Road, Dehradun

Ref. No.: 2383/II-02(xix)/ITCO/URRDA/20 Dated: 15.01.2021

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)
e-Procurement Notice- 15(Rebid)/2020-21

The Government of India has received a loan/credit number "LN 8864 IN" from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/International Development Association towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed in NIT. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the bidding document.
The Chief Engineer, URRDA on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of Roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of **Chamoli, Nainital & Tehri** for 03 number of Package with estimated cost totaling to **Rs. 21.99 Crore** including their maintenance for two years from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent*.
Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 18.01.2021.
Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with **CONCERNED/RESPECTIVE CIRCLE OFFICES, only up to or before the time and date of the submission of the Bids (for World Bank funded works) and on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid (for Regular PMGSY Works),** either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids.
Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 08.02.2021 01:00 PM.
For further details please log on to www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in
Chief Engineer,
URRDA, Dehradun.
*Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.
Note: For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2608125 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.

एसजेवीएन लिमिटेड SJVN Limited

(भारत सरकार एवं हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार का संयुक्त उपक्रम)
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of H.P.)
CIN No. L40101HP1988GOI008409

Jangi Thopan Powari Hydro Power Project
PROCUREMENT & CONTRACT DEPARTMENT
Notice Inviting Tender
(Through e-tendering process only)

Open e-tender under two bid system are hereby invited on behalf of SJVN Limited from the eligible Contractors registered in State Govt./PSU/ any other Govt./ Semi Govt. Organization as per description given below:
Name of work: Construction of Exploratory Drift for geological investigation at Power House of JTPHEP.
Tender No. JTPHEP-PCD-08, **Estimated cost-** ₹ 3,21,91,210/-, **Cost of Tender Document:** ₹ 5900/- **(Tender cost ₹ 5000/- + GST ₹ 900/-)**, **Date of Availability/ Downloading of bid:** 16.01.2021 (1000 hrs.) to 07.02.2021 (1200 hrs.), **Date of submission/uploading of bid:** 08.02.2021 (1300 hrs.) **Date of opening of bid:** 08.02.2021 (1400 hrs.) **Completion period:** 12 Months.
Detailed Notice Inviting E-Tender shall be available on websites **www.sjvn.nic.in**, **www.eprocure.gov.in** and **https://sjvn.abcprocure.com**, however, Tender document is available for viewing/downloading on website **https://sjvn.abcprocure.com** only. In case of any amendment/corrigendum to this Tender Notice as well as to the Tender Document shall be issued by SJVN on all afore mentioned websites and no press notice thereof shall be issued in any other form except that extension of bid submission and/or modification in qualification criteria or may contact on Phone Nos. 01782-222030/01782-221807/088941-96835.
Sr. AGM (P&C)

JHARKHAND BIJLI VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED

CIN :-U40108JH2013SGC001702
Register office :- Engineering Building, HEC, Dhurwa, Ranchi-4
Fax: 0651–2400799 & Fax : 0651-2400799
https//www.jbvul.co.in

E-Procurement Notice
NIT No. 87/PR/JBVNL/2020-21

Jharkahd Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited, Hq. Office at Dhurwa, Ranchi – 834004, Jharkhand invites E-tender for bid from eligible Bidders for Supply, Installation, Operations and FMS of AMI System in Electric Supply Circle of Jamsedpur & Dhanbad for 3 Lakh Consumers (Approx.)
Calandar of Events :

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Details
1	Name of Work	Supply, Installation, Operations and FMS of AMI System in Electric Supply Circle of Jamshedpur & Dhanbad for 3 Lakh Consumers (Approx.)
2	Date of Publication of NIT on website	15.01.2021 at 12:30 hrs.
3	Pre-Bid Meeting Date and Time	02.02.2021 at 12:30 hrs.
4	Last Date / Time for receipt of bids	03.03.2021 till 18:00 hrs.
5	Date and Time for opening of Technical bid	04.03.2021 at 16:00 hrs.

1. The tender documents with detailed conditions can be obtained through web site http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in and should upload all relevant documents as mentioned in the tender document only through online e-tender portal / website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in
2. Due to Covid – 19 pandemic, interested bidder may participate in the pre-bid meeting Video Conference by sending a request on email ID : itcelljbvnl@gmail.com by Date 01.02.2021 and Time 15:00 hrs. Also, the bidder may send their pre-bid queries through email : itcelljbvnl@gmail.com by date : 02.02.2021 and time 11:00 hrs.

स्वहित एवं राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचावें। कृपया अपनी शिकायतों को टॉल फ्री नं० 1800 345 6570 पर दर्ज करायें।

Sd/-
General Manager (IT)
PR 239356 Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd (20-21)_D **JBVNL**

Boy forced to undergo sex change operation; 2 held

Accused, 4 others gang-raped, pushed him into prostitution

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two persons have been arrested for allegedly forcing a 13-year-old boy to undergo a sex change operation and also for gangraping him multiple times in Delhi's Geeta Colony, said Delhi Commission for Women.

The victim, *Shubham* (name changed), met the accused at a dance event three to four years ago. They became friends and took him to Mandawali on the pretext of teaching him how to dance and getting him a job in the same field, the statement said.

Initially, he participated in some events and was also paid money. But after some time, the accused started pressurising him to undergo sex change operation. They told him that he cannot go back home as he needs to stay with them in Mandawali. The victim was intoxicated and brutally beaten up. After a few days, he was forced undergo sex change operation. He was given hormones to make him look like a girl, it added. The two accused along with four others gang-raped him for several months. They also pushed him into prostitution and made to beg on the streets. He was threatened that if he told anything to police or his family, he and his mother would be killed. The victim used to secretly meet his mother when he was sent to fetch groceries. He said that the accused had guns and weapons. After a few months, another person, known to him was brought at the same hideout. He was also subjected to sexual abuse. They then managed to escape and reached New Delhi Railway Station.

A lawyer found them and brought them to the DCW office at ITO.

Three held for issuing fake COVID challans

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three Civil Defence Volunteers have been arrested for allegedly issuing fake COVID-19 challans and collecting the penalty amount, the police said on Friday.

Sunny, Yashwant Rathi, and Lucky, were posted in the office of SDM (New Delhi) in Jamnagar House. They issued fake challans to people visiting the Talkatora Garden. The matter came to light on December 31 when a resident of Shakarpur was issued a challan for not wearing a face mask while he was sitting inside the garden with his friend, the police added.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **(1) Nitin, S/o: Dorilal, R/o: H. No. M-30, Gali No. - 13, Brahampuri, Delhi and (2) Shiva, S/o: Ramjeevan, R/o: M-28, Gali No. - 13, Brahampuri, Delhi** have committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 134/20 U/s 147/148/ 149/ 308/188 IPC & 25/27 Arms Act has been registered at P.S. New Usmanpur, Delhi** and it have been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **(1) Nitin and (2) Shiva** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **(1) Nitin and (2) Shiva** have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said**(1) Nitin and (2) Shiva** accused of **FIR No. 134/20 U/s 147/148/149/308/188 IPC & 25/27 Arms Act has been registered at P.S. New Usmanpur, Delhi** are required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **17.02.2021**

By order
Sh. Dinesh Kumar
CMM,
Karkardooma Court, Shahdara, Delhi
DP/502/NE/2021

HC judge recuses from plea against WhatsApp policy

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A Delhi High Court judge on Friday recused herself from hearing a petition challenging the updated privacy policy of messaging app – WhatsApp.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh took objection to an email sent on behalf of WhatsApp stating that she ought not to hear the matter. "I was, in any case, not going to hear it," Justice Singh remarked.

Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL)

In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar-751 001
Tel. : (0674) 2380660 / 2380608 ;
Website: www.osmcl.nic.in, Email: logistics.osmcl.od@nic.in
Assuring Quality, Saving Lives

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF HOMEOPATHIC DRUGS, GLOBULES AND NEUTRAL PLASTIC PHIALS FOR THE YEAR (2021-22)

Bid Ref. No.: OSMCL/2021-22/DRUGS-AYUSH-HOMEO/05 **Date:18.01.2021**
OSMCL/2021-22/DRUGS-AYUSH-HOMEO/06

Online Bids through **e-Tender portal (https://tendersodisha.gov.in)** are invited from eligible bidders for **Supply of Homeopathic Drugs, Globules And Neutral Plastic Phials** as per the particulars mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date and time	
1.	Date & time of release of bid	18/01/2021, 3 PM	
2.	Date & time for submission of queries by E-Mail id- logistics.osmcl.od@nic.in	21/01/2021, up to 5:00 PM	
3.	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time	Start Date & Time
		25/01/2021, 3.00 PM	12/02/2021, 6.00 PM
4.	Date & time for submission of Tender Documents, Tender Document Fee and EMD amount as per section-IV of tender document	Start Date & Time	Start Date & Time
		13/02/2021, 10.00 AM	19/02/2021, 11.00 AM
5.	Date & time of online Technical Bid Opening	19/02/2021, 11:30 AM (Homeopathic Drugs and Globules) 19/02/2021, 12:30 PM (Neutral Plastic Phials)	
6.	Date of opening of Price Bid	To be informed to the qualified bidders	

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, EMDs, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: **www.osmcl.nic.in** and **https://tendersodisha.gov.in** . The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

SD/-
Managing Director, OSMCL
CAD-1082 OIPR-10112/11/0043/2021

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार

शुद्धि - पत्र

पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार का ई0–प्रोक्योरमेंट निविदा सूचना सं0– DWSD/GARU-05/2020-21 दिनांक– 08.01.2021 पी0आर0 – 239024 Drinking Water and Sanitation (2020-21) (D) से दैनिक सामाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित है जिसमें निम्न प्रकार संशोधित किया जाता है।

क्र0 सं0	कार्य का नाम	केन्द्र प्रायोजित योजना 'जल जीवन मिषन' के अन्तर्गत :– Detailed survey, designing and drawing, Construction of 5.0 M. dia R.C.C. intake well cum pump house, Gangway 50 mtr. length and 3.00 mtr. wide, Infiltration gallery,01.0 MLD capacity Water Treatment Plant, 01 No. ESR, 01 No. GSR, Compound Wall, Supplying and laying Raw/Clear water rising main and Laying Distribution Network, Supplying and installation of VT and Centrifugal pump motor, Five years operation & maintenance with allied works etc. all complete job for **Garu Rural Pipe Water Supply** Scheme under Drinking Water & Sanitation Division, Latehar on turnkey basis. "for the year 2020-21)
1	प्राक्कलित राशि (लाख में)	**918.280** लाख (नौ करोड़ अठारह लाख अठाईस हजार रू0) मात्र।
2	अग्रधन की राशि (लाख में)	**9.19** लाख (नौ लाख उन्नीस हजार रू0) मात्र।
3	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	**10,000/-** (दस हजार रूपये मात्र)
4	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	24 (चौबीस) महीना + 03 (तीन) महीना **Trial & Run.**
5	वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि एवं समय	**16/01/2021 / 12.30** बजे अपराहन तक।
6	प्री बीड मिटिंग की तिथि एवं समय	**24/01/2021 / 12.30** बजे अपराहन में अभियंता प्रमुख का कार्यालय, पेयजल एवं स्व0 विभाग, झारखंड, रांची।
7	बीड प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	**08/02/2021 /05.00** बजे अपराहन तक।
8	अग्रधन की राशि एवं परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य जमा करने की तिथि एवं समय	**09/02/2021 /05.00** बजे अपराहन तक :– (1) क्षेत्रीय मुख्य अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता, विभाग रांची प्रक्षेत्र, रांची। (2) अधीक्षण अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता अंचल, मेदिनीनगर। (3) कार्यपालक अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्व0 प्रमंडल कार्यालय, लातेहार।
9	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	**10/02/2021 /12.30** बजे अपराहन में।
10	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी के कार्यालय का पता	कार्यपालक अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार।
11	निविदा खोलने वाले पदाधिकारी के कार्यालय का पता	कार्यपालक अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार।
12	प्रोक्योरमेन्ट पदाधिकारी का सम्पर्क नं0	**9430725642**
13	ई–प्रोक्योरमेन्ट सेल का हेल्पलाईन नं0	**0651-2490920**

कार्यपालक अभियंता
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, लातेहार
PR 239343 Drinking Water and Sanitation (20-21)_D

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA CORRIGENDUM

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP./AUTH	OLD REFERENCE/NIT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	UHBVN	292/ P&D/ 2020 (BID NO. B- 633)	DATE OF CLOSING E-TENDER: 27.01.2021 (17:00 HRS.) DATE OF OPENING OF PART- I: 28.01.2021 (13:00 HRS.)	www.uhbvn.org.in	01723019145 xendd3@uhbvn.org.in
2	UHBVN	293/ P&D/ 2020 (BID NO. B- 634)	DATE OF CLOSING E-TENDER: 27.01.2021 (17:00 HRS.) DATE OF OPENING OF PART- I: 28.01.2021 (13:00 HRS.)	www.uhbvn.org.in	01723019145 xendd3@uhbvn.org.in
3	UHBVN	295/ P&D/ 2020 (BID NO. B- 636)	DATE OF CLOSING E-TENDER: 28.01.2021 (17:00 HRS.) DATE OF OPENING OF PART- I: 29.01.2021 (13:00 HRS.)	www.uhbvn.org.in	01723019145 xendd3@uhbvn.org.in
4	UHBVN	294/ P&D/ 2020 (BID NO. B- 635)	DATE OF CLOSING E-TENDER: 28.01.2021 (17:00 HRS.) DATE OF OPENING OF PART- I: 29.01.2021 (13:00 HRS.)	www.uhbvn.org.in	01723019145 xendd3@uhbvn.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in
Samvad 13/2021/80/1427/I/199/7

SEARCH FOR MISSING

Anjali

The general public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Anjali D/o** Nirottam Singh **R/o** H.No. 1289, Gali No. 1, Rakesh Pt. Kg Mahal, Kapas Hera, Delhi has been missing since . In this regard, **FIR No. 12/21, dated 09.01.2021 has been registered at PS Kapas Hera, Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing girl, but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing girl is as under:
Name: Anjali, **Gender:** Female, **Age:** 15 years, **Height:** 5', **Face:** Round, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Identification:** Old injury mark on the left hand, **Hair:** Black, **Wearing:** Black colour jeans, black and white colour jacket and slippers on her feet.
If anyone has any information regarding this missing girl, kindly inform SHO/ Kapas Hera, Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
SHO
P.S. Kapas Hera, Delhi.
Ph. No. 011-25063758, 25066105
DP/468/SW/2021

OFFICE OF THE RANCHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, RANCHI

{ENGINEERING SECTION}
KUTCHERY ROAD, RANCHI, PIN – 834001
e-mail :- support@ranchimunicipal.com

LETTER No :- 55/Eng DATED:- 12-01-2021

Short e-Procurement Notice

1. Name of Tender Inviting Officer :- Chief Engineer, RMC, Ranchi
2. Date of Publication of Tender on Website :- 18-01-2021
3. Last date/Time for receipt of online bids :- 18-01-2021 to 02-02-2021 5:00 PM
4. Last date/Time for receipt of EMD (Hard Copy) :- 03-02-2021 Up to 3:00 PM
5. Date/Time of Opening bid :- 04-02-2021 Up to 12:30 PM
6. Helpline number :- 8541053592

Sl. No.	Ward No.	Name of the Work	Approximate value of work (Rs)	Earnest Money (Rs)	Cost of Tender Document (Rs.)	Period of completion
1	16	Construction of Big Drain in Albert Campus under Ward No-16	2,00,00,000	4,00,000	10,000/-	270 Days
2	19	Construction of PCC Road at Pidhi Toli near Karamtoli Chowk under Ward No-19	69,95,800	1,40,000	10,000/-	180 Days

Further details can be seen on website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in
Sd/-Chief Engineer
Ranchi Municipal Corporation, Ranchi.
PR 239345 Ranchi Municipal Corporation(20-21).D

We can beat Corona by COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 VACCINE IS SAFE

Vaccination for COVID-19 will start for Health Workers on

16th January 2021

This will be followed by vaccination for Front Line Workers & citizens above 50 years of age or to citizens with any co-morbid condition

For vaccination you must:

- Registration is mandatory for vaccination. Carry your Photo ID for verification
- Wait for 30 minutes after you have been vaccinated
- Do take the second dose at due date for complete protection

For complete protection, follow the five even after vaccination!

Use mask correctly

Wash hands with soap and water frequently and thoroughly or use hand sanitizer

Maintain 6 feet (2 gaj) physical distance

If you see any symptom, prompt self-isolation

If you see any symptom, promptly get yourself tested

When we are safe, Delhi is safe!

For more Information Helpline No.: 1075 (Tollfree)

https://www.facebook.com/Directorate-of-Family-Welfare-Delhi-296539800989345 https://twitter.com/DelhiDfw

दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

Directorate of Family welfare, Delhi Government

DIP/Shabdarth/D/0099/20-21

A ND-NDE

Private space

Making public notices optional under Special Marriage Act is a relief for inter-faith couples

The Allahabad High Court ruling that people marrying under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, can choose not to publicise their union with a notice 30 days in advance may not exactly be a judicial pushback against problematic anti-conversion laws enacted by several BJP-ruled States. But it serves to get a major irritant out of the way of couples wanting to marry against the wishes of their parents or their immediate community. Many intercaste and inter-faith marriages have faced violent opposition from those acting in the name of community pride or those raising the bogey of 'love jihad'. Hindutva activists have been targeting Muslim men marrying Hindu women, especially if the women have converted to Islam prior to the marriage. The court said that mandatorily publishing a notice of the intended marriage and calling for objections violates the right to privacy. According to the new order, if a couple gives it in writing that they do not want the notice publicised, the Marriage Officer can solemnise the marriage. Under Section 5 of the Act, which enables inter-faith marriages, the couple has to give notice to the Marriage Officer; and under Sections 6 and 7, the officer has to publicise the notice and call for objections. But, in his order, Justice Vivek Chaudhary said the Act's interpretation has to be such that it upholds fundamental rights, not violate them. Laws should not invade liberty and privacy, he said, "including within its sphere freedom to choose for marriage without interference from state and non-state actors, of the persons concerned".

The HC ruling came on the plea of a Muslim woman who converted to Hinduism for marriage as the couple saw the notice period under the Special Marriage Act as an invasion of their privacy. Justice Chaudhary's remarks on 'state and non-state actors' will undoubtedly be read in the context of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, that particularly targets inter-faith marriages. This new law declares conversion of religion by marriage to be unlawful, mandates a 60-day notice to the District Magistrate and also requires the Magistrate to conduct a police inquiry to find out the explicit reason for the conversion. Enacted last November, there have been 54 arrests till date by the U.P. police. The HC ruling can now be cited across India to prevent public notices under the Special Marriage Act. Inter-faith couples will hope that when the Supreme Court hears pleas on the U.P. conversion law, it will be guided by progressive verdicts, such as the 2017 Aadhaar ruling, on the right to privacy as a basic right, and the 2018 judgment on Hadiya, upholding the student's right to choose a partner, a Muslim man in Kerala, as an essential freedom.

Double ignominy

Second impeachment is an opportunity for Republicans to reassess the Trump presidency

Outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump has entered the record books for being the only American President to be impeached twice. The moment of ignominy came after the House of Representatives passed a motion of impeachment against him, this time for "incitement of insurrection," following the assault on the U.S. Capitol building on January 6 by a violent pro-Trump mob. His first impeachment, in September 2019, was for "abuse of power" and "obstruction of justice" over his dealings with Ukraine and attempts by Congress to investigate the same, yet he survived in office owing to a Senate acquittal. On this occasion, not only did the House vote resoundingly, by a margin of 232-197, to impeach him but it passed with an unprecedented margin of bipartisan support after 10 Republicans crossed the aisle. This might signal a broader mood across Congress, particularly in the Senate, to vote differently to the outcome last time, specifically that there will be sufficient support among Republican ranks for a Senate conviction. Given the tight timeline leading up to the inauguration of Democratic President-elect Joe Biden on January 20, it might be that the Senate does not have the opportunity to conduct a full trial based on the article of impeachment sent to it by the House, before Mr. Trump demits office. Nevertheless, Senate Democrats have vowed to carry out the trial even after the fact, including not only a vote on convicting him for high crimes and misdemeanours but also potentially on barring him from running again.

The question looming before Congressional Republicans is this: are they, as a group united in safeguarding mainstream conservative values, convinced that the harm that Mr. Trump has done to the presidency and the fabric of American society warrants banning him from the highest office in the land, or will there be too many holdouts within their ranks to successfully bring closure to this turbulent saga in American politics? The answer also depends on what Senate and House Republicans make of the broader "movement" that he has come to represent – a rowdy, vicious campaign built on white privilege and regularly indulging in racist attacks, yet one that has pulled in elements of economically disenfranchised middle America. Will they believe that they can cut off Mr. Trump from leading this cohort, yet appear responsive to the needs of the 74 million Americans who voted for him? Or will they fear that they have no other leaders of national standing who could bring the kind of support that he did into the Republican tent? The course of action that Senate Republicans choose now will determine which vector the country's battered politics will travel along – one that strikes a balance between national interest and the traditional formula of economic growth with social pluralism, or one that gives ever greater voice to nativist populism and disregard for the cherished institutions of democracy.

A fast fading promise, of growth with trust

The present government must shed its many distractions that now grossly impinge on the values and rights of Indians

DUSHYANT DAVE

Recent events in the country leave citizens wondering whether the Prime Minister can ensure his promise to the Nation, of '*Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*' ('Together, for everyone's growth, with everyone's trust'). With one of the largest populations of Muslims in the world, India needs to tread carefully in its approach towards them.

Developments of concern

The race among States ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to issue ordinances or bring laws against the so-called "love jihad" and the challenging if not provocative statements by some of their Chief Ministers, the latest happenings in Madhya Pradesh, and lopsided investigations into the Delhi riots must be viewed with concern by sensitive citizens.

Of greater concern has been the Nizammuddin Markaz episode (in the context of the novel coronavirus pandemic) where many worshippers including several foreigners were arrested and jailed for no reason whatsoever as has now been pronounced by series of judgments including a powerful expression by the Division Bench of the High Court of Bombay, Aurangabad Bench in an order dated August 21, 2020 (https://bit.ly/2MWIOxs).

Contrast this with the "Namaste Trump" meeting attended by thousands of people between February 24-25, 2020 at Ahmedabad, and, separately, hundreds of congregations, religious, social and political, which were permitted during the height of COVID-19 in India. Were they not superspreaders as well? Constitutional institutions, especially the judiciary, need to be on guard and proactive in this regard.

Clearly, the BJP, the dominant ruling party at the Centre and in the majority of States in India, is paying no heed whatsoever to the warnings given by India's greatest leaders, during the Constituent Assembly debates.

Past advice still relevant

On November 4, 1948, Dr. Ambedkar had cautioned future India with these words (https://bit.ly/2XFD39B): "... To diehards who have developed a kind of fanaticism against minority protection I would like to say two things. One is that minorities are an explosive force which, if it erupts, can blow up the whole fabric of the State... The other is that the minorities in India have agreed to place their existence in the hands of the majority... It is for the majority to realize its duty not to discriminate against minorities...."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while laying the foundation stone of the Ambedkar Memorial in 2016 said, "Baba Saheb was guardian of Human Values" and that "... if you make a list of founding fathers whose ideas are most relevant today, Baba Saheb will be right at the top". He added: "... the time has come when we must again strengthen the unity of our society and we can learn about this from Baba Saheb." Yet, the Prime Minister maintains virtual silence even when citizens from the minority community are killed in the name of cow protection or jailed in the name of being COVID-19 and 'love jihad' spreaders.

Sardar Vallabhai Patel, another towering figure, and who Mr. Modi paid tribute to by giving the nation a statue of him, its tallest, in Gujarat, was the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Minorities in the Constituent Assembly. On May 25, 1949, he presented the report of the said Committee, and in his speech had these poignant words for future India (https://bit.ly/39Nhud5), "... It is not our intention to commit the minorities to a particular position in a hurry. If they really have come honestly to the conclusion that in the changed conditions of this country, it is in the interest of all to lay down real and genuine foundations of a secular State, then nothing is better for the minorities than to trust the good-sense and sense of fairness of the majority, and to place confidence in them. So also it is for us who happen to be in a majority to think about what the minorities feel, and how we in their position would feel if we were treated in the manner in which they are treated. But in the long run, it would be in the interest of all to forget that there is anything like majority or minority in this country and that in India there is only one community...."

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Yet, Mr. Modi, as the undisputed leader of the BJP, does little to follow the sound advice of the Iron Man of India and reassure the minority community.

Even Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee on December 17, 1946 declared, "... We shall go ahead with our work in spite of all difficulties and obstacles and help to create that great India, united and strong, which will be the motherland of not this community or that, not this class or that, but of every person, man, woman and child, inhabiting this great land, irrespective of race, caste, creed or community, where everyone will have an equal opportunity, an equal freedom, an equal status so that he or she could develop himself or herself to the best of his or her talents and serve faithfully and fearlessly this beloved common motherland of ours."

Undisputably, the BJP and other respectable organisations supporting it have treated Dr. Mookerjee with great adulation and rightly so. Yet, the BJP, the governing party, is following a path different from the one he envisioned.

A blow against rights

Laws in the name of stopping 'love jihad' strike at the very basic principles of human values and the fundamental rights. Nobody can justify forceful conversions but when two adults fall in love, it can never be equated as such. 'Jihad' has been defined in the dictionary as "religious warfare or a war for the propagation for the defence of Islam" or "a campaign or crusade in some cause". Some of the most respected Indians from all walks of life – judges, lawyers, politicians, artists, bureaucrats, men in uniform belonging to both majority and minority communities – have fallen in love and married. It has been happening for centuries. To regulate it in the garb of stopping forced conversions is to strike at the very freedom of conscience that citizens possess.

Judiciary's path

Sadly, even the Supreme Court of India did not credit itself well when in August 2017 (https://bit.ly/3bSmIXF), it asked the National Investigating Agency to examine the marriage between two adults, Hadiya and Shafin Jahan. Pertinently, the Bench comprised the Chief Justice of India, J.S. Khehar and Justice D.Y. Chandrachud. Ultimately, the young lady appeared before the Court and confronted the judges by professing her love for the man she had married, compelling the Supreme Court to set aside the judgment of the High Court which had annulled their marriage, and allowing the happy couple to be united. But in the interregnum, the legally wedded wife was kept away from her husband under the protection of paramilitary forces. This was the seed that was sown in the country to justify so-called 'love jihad'.

Political footprints were made and many who were associated with the case were conferred benefits by the BJP government. Sadly, some of us lawyers, who appeared for the hapless husband were targeted by the government by instituting an inquiry through the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Income Tax Department.

The Supreme Court has decided to examine the validity of the laws on 'love jihad' but declined to protect citizens being arrested and jailed under them. The laws on 'love jihad' are draconian. The words of Justice Hidayatullah must sound a warning bell, "...If a halt is to be called, we must declare the right of Parliament to abridge or take away Fundamental Rights. Small inroads lead to larger inroads and become as habitual as before our freedom was won. The history of freedom is not only how freedom is achieved but how it is preserved. I am of the opinion that an attempt to abridge or take away Fundamental Rights by a constituted Parliament even though an amendment of the Constitution can be declared void. This Court has the power and jurisdiction to make the declaration."

Let us hope the Court does not put this case also in cold storage as it has done with many cases which the Executive may not want to be heard. Since 2014, the Executive has had an almost total approval by the Court of all its Executive actions, the latest being the Central Vista case. One can only wonder: does the government ever falter?

The Supreme Court, which showed great alacrity in staying the implementation of the Farm Laws, ostensibly to save the lives of innocent people, failed to stay the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, resulting in avoidable violence that caused the deaths of many innocent citizens and damage to properties worth crores. Many people are languishing in jails following violence. What should a citizen make out of this selective administration of justice by the highest court of the country?

India needs to move forward and the present government has a great role to play here. It does not need such distractions, even for political mileage. The ruling party is firmly in the saddle and can continue its popularity with development and progress.

Let us hope and trust that we can together re-affirm '*Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*'.

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Vaccine optimism and the scientific uncertainty link

Amidst the vaccine rollout, there is a critical need for a climate of transparency and data sharing for scrutiny and debate

RAJIB DASGUPTA & RAMA V. BARU

With its robust domestic vaccine industry and strong fundamentals of the Universal Immunisation Programme, India is now embarking on the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination programme, on January 16, 2021. This represents the forging of a novel public-private collaboration wherein the vaccine supply is under the responsibility of Indian pharma companies and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the implementation of the vaccination programme.

The vaccine development programme has received unstinted support from the government, and two vaccines (Covishield and Covaxin) have been granted permission for restricted use in an emergency situation subject to certain regulatory conditions. The clinical trial ongoing within the country by the firms will continue. These vaccines are thus deemed to be market ready while regulatory processes and logistic requirements are being laid out.

The expedited development was guided by the "adaptive and seamless" approach advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO) for public health emergencies and promoted by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, and some of the current discourse of regulatory issues is focused on the authorisation process.

Traditional clinical trials follow a straightforward but mandatory three-step approach: designing, conducting and analysing the collected data, according to a prespecified analysis plan. Seamless adaptive designs add a 'review-adapt' loop to the linear design-conduct-analysis sequence, with a pre-defined one primary endpoint and several secondary endpoints. An adaptation is referred to a change made to the trial procedure, such as eligibility criteria, study dose, treatment duration or study endpoints, and/or statistical procedures such as randomisation, study design, study hypothesis or statistical analysis plan, while a clinical trial is at the design stage. These are a *priori* planned adaptations and should be based on data collected from the study itself, and different from unplanned *ad hoc* modifications that are common in traditional trials.

Impact of modifications

In the current situation, where the clinical trial of both vaccines shall continue, community engagement is critical to establish community acceptability of control arms, placebo, and blinding and should adhere to WHO's guidelines on good participatory practice (GPP). Acceptability may impact whether trials are individually or cluster randomised, blinded or unblinded, and have use of a placebo or other comparator. Unique cultural considerations such as drawing of blood may impact the study design, and in turn the choice of endpoints collected in the study.

There are some key regulatory concerns and the challenge of communicating them to the users and beneficiaries of research including policymakers. What is the level of adaptation that is agreed to by the regulatory agencies? What are the regulatory standards for the review and approval process of data obtained from adaptive trials with different levels of modifications? And, most critically, has the trial become a totally different trial after the modifications for addressing the study objectives of the originally planned clinical trial?

AP

Need for more caution

The European Medicines Agency cautions that while the increased flexibility of this option may well fit the needs in early phases of drug development, their use in late Phase II or confirmatory Phase III trials deserves a more cautionary approach. Pharmacology experts thus opine that "not every trial can be rescued by adaptation and adaptive designs... these should not be a cure for poor planning". While adaptive designs do have a risk of introducing bias in a trial, that is not to be construed as a reason for staying away from these designs. The challenge is to minimise operational bias by rigorous planning and transparency. There is also a need to build and sustain trust through clear and comprehensive sharing of the adaptive design protocols in scientific journals for peer guidance, particularly in projects with major translational relevance. These challenges are as critical to the regulators as to those designing communication strategies and messages, with obvious implications for vaccine confidence.

Given the conditions under which the vaccines are being rolled out, there is considerable debate among scientists, the medical community and the public at large. Among these diverse constituencies, there are optimists and sceptics about the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines. According to WHO, vaccine confidence encompasses trust in the effectiveness and safety of the vaccine as much as in the system that delivers.

Adequacy of processes

An important aspect is also the perceived motivations of policymakers making decisions about the vaccine. Given the fact that data are still awaited on the effectiveness and safety of the vaccine, the rollout decisions may well add to the scepticism. In addition, there is a need for imaginative social and behavioural research that takes on board the scientific uncertainties and helps to build trust in the health service system and the community. Trust-building in the vaccine and its rollout is important for a robust communication strategy. The lack of this does not augur well for programme implementation even while efforts are being made to promote and sustain vaccine demand.

Therefore, it is critical at this stage for the government and establishment scientists to communicate how the regulatory processes and authorisation are adequate and appropriate. Are we, as a community of researchers and policymakers, making adequate and appropriate efforts to communicate these uncertainties? Communicating uncertainty entails identifying facts that are specifically relevant to potential vaccinees, characterising the relevant uncertainties, assessing their magnitude, drafting possible messages and evaluating their success. Underlying the vaccine optimism is the search for a strong signal that the evidence is certain enough and how far the predictions of valued outcomes can be relied upon.

Needed, openness

Scientists are trained and professionalised in dealing with doubt and uncertainty, given that all scientific knowledge is uncertain. To quote Richard Feynman, "... to solve any problem that has never been solved before, you have to leave the door to the unknown ajar. You have to permit the possibility that you do not have it exactly right. Otherwise, if you have made up your mind already, you might not solve it." The task, particularly in the current context, is to be able to communicate scientific uncertainty – both to policymakers and the public at large. This requires a climate of transparency and data sharing that allows for public scrutiny and a healthy debate.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Court on farm laws

Judicial review is a powerful constitutional power conferred on the Supreme Court. After having entertained the question of the validity of the farm laws, which had been passed hurriedly without debate, and with the farmers' struggle having gone on for more than a month, the Court should have decided on the validity of the law then and there and made the parties know where it stood in the scheme of things. This would have ensured that the government and the farmers negotiated on an even keel and resolved the problem. That way, it would have been a case of constitutional adjudication and the Supreme Court would have weathered the storm.

But bringing in a committee of known views amounts to constitutional abdication. The farmers have rightly refused to appear before the committee. Howsoever powerful the Court may be, there are always limits to power.

N.G.R. PRASAD,
Chennai

Trump's tenure

The banning of Donald Trump from social media, should be a lesson to all heads of state – that propagation of peace-threatening policies under the guise of nation building will not be tolerated, whether this is an era of free speech or not.

SARAH REBELLO,
Bengaluru

Vaccine rollout

While the reservations raised by medical experts on the undue haste in approving the COVID-19 vaccines for use without proper trial and testing are justified, still, one must look at the larger picture. The enormous cost to livelihoods and the economy caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic cannot be ignored. At such a juncture, some amount of compromise has to be made if one is to get the lives of people back on track. Without an income you are only injuring him even more.

SHARADA SIVARAM,
Kochi, Kerala

Betrayed by blind faith

The alleged rape and death of an Anganwadi helper in Budaun has once again highlighted the lapses on the part of the Uttar Pradesh administration in investigating crimes against women. **Anuj Kumar** reports on the brutal death of a woman who was the lifeline of her family, involving a temple priest and his aides

Police personnel stand guard near the temple where the alleged gang rape occurred in Mevli village in Budaun, U.P. (Below): A woman walks near the temple. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

On the bitterly cold evening of January 3, when the skies of western Uttar Pradesh were a menacing grey, a middle-aged woman left her home in Kyawali village in Sahswan block of Budaun district to go to the Thakurji temple in the neighbouring village of Mevli, her *mayka* (mother's village). She walked for 3 km through fields to reach the temple, surrounded on three sides by farmland and a god-fearing neighbourhood on the fourth. Given the inclement weather, she was in two minds whether or not to go, but the temple priest, Satyanarayan, had insisted over the phone that she come.

The habitual visit ended in unspeakable tragedy, however. The woman, a mother of five, was dumped in front of her house in Kyawali at midnight by Satyanarayan and his two aides, Vedram and Jaspal. Her faith had been betrayed, her private parts oozed with blood, and her rib cage and left leg were fractured. Within minutes, the woman, an Anganwadi helper, died in the arms of her son and two minor daughters. The priest and his aides made a hasty retreat into the darkness and clambered into their SUV, the lights of which were turned off, before the children could confront them. Their father, who was tending to his ailing brother in the neighbourhood, rushed home, but by then, his wife had almost lost her battle with life.

Had life not been snuffed out of her, the woman would have been contributing to the COVID-19 vaccination programme being rolled out today. The alleged gang rape and murder of the Anganwadi helper in a place of worship has, yet again, raised questions about women's security in U.P. In October 2020, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the Mission Shakti programme for the security of women. He promised that those committing crimes against women in U.P. would be punished swiftly. The three accused have been arrested, but accounts show that there were multiple lapses on the part of the administration in the investigation. Mediapersons reached the crime spot before the police did. Two police officials have been suspended so far.

Delay in investigation

The morning after the incident, when the woman's family members gathered the courage to go to the police station in Ughaiti, merely 2.5 km away, they were told that the police were busy. By the time the police collected the woman's body and took it to Budaun, 42 km from Ughaiti, it was evening. Curiously, the post-mortem started only on January 5 at 3 p.m., and was not videographed.

It was only after the Chief Medical Officer confirmed injury to the private parts, signs of dragging, described the case as "prima facie a case of rape" and said that the woman had died of "excessive bleeding and trauma" that the administration woke up. The family was asked to give a written complaint and a First Information Report was lodged under Sections 376 (punishment for rape), 376D (punishment for gang rape) and 302 (punishment for murder) of the Indian Penal Code against the three accused. By then, at least 48 hours had passed from the time the crime took place.

Till then, Satyanarayan kept telling the villagers and the local media that the victim had fallen into the dry well in the temple premises, and that he had responded to her cries. Everyone including the Station House Officer (SHO) of the Ughaiti police station, Raghvendra Pratap Singh (now suspended), and the local pradhan fed his version of the story to the senior officers in Budaun. By January 5 evening, Vedram and Jaspal were arrested, but Satyanarayan had quietly slipped away. It took the police another 48 hours to nab him. Surprisingly, he was found hiding in Mevli whereas four teams of the Budaun Police and the U.P. Special Task Force were looking for him in the neighbouring districts.

Locals say that when mobile surveillance revealed Satyanarayan's presence in the area, the message spread in the village that he must be handed over, else every household would be checked. "'*Lath bajega* (everyone will be caned),' said the officials on the ground. Policemen in civil clothes covered the entire village. Soon after the warning, those who were hiding the priest backed off. Within 10 minutes, Satyanarayan was nabbed in the fields just outside the residential areas of the Thakurs and Mauryas," says a local, requesting anonymity. "The baba [as Satyanarayan is called in the village] was not a hardened criminal and could not have survived in the cold on his own," he adds.

There were other lapses too. The local media declared that the age of the victim was 50. Her Aadhaar card says she was 38 and the post-mortem report records her age as 40. Officials haven't put her correct age on record.

'The most industrious daughter'

Wailing in her rat-infested residence in Mevli, the mother of the victim de-

scribes her daughter as the most "industrious" of her four daughters. Her son-in-law, she says, is "*moti buddhi* (slow-witted)". "*Wohi kamati, khawati thi* (She was the one who used to earn and feed the family). She would buy me medicines and pass on her saris to me. She was helping me renovate this house," she says, pointing at the tin-roofed residence that has an electricity meter firmly attached to the unplastered wall.

The victim's mother lost her husband early and single-handedly raised her four daughters. "Like me, she sent all her children to school. I could afford to educate her only until Class 9. She made sure that her two older daughters completed intermediate education. Her son is in the first year of graduation." To those pointing fingers at her daughter's character, she says they are undermining her struggle. "Do they mean I also 'compromised' to give my children whatever I could," she asks.

The mother says her daughter often visited the temple in the evening. "She knew she could stay back with me and return home the next morning to work. But on January 3, I had no idea that she was in the village," she says.

Early on Monday morning, she reached the temple premises soon after her son-in-law came and broke the news to her, she says. "The baba was sleeping on a cot. When my son-in-law woke him up, I saw that his clothes had bloodstains. I also saw my daughter's shoe and the string of her petticoat lying in the room." When they confronted Satyanarayan, she says he told them that the woman had fallen into the well and his clothes got stained while he was trying to pull her out. "He had no answer when asked why my daughter would undress herself and then fall into the well. Also, why would she go into that quarter, considering that it is nowhere close to where the idols are placed and secured by doors," she asks. The mother says they wanted to take the priest to Kyawali but the local pradhan refused as he felt that Satyanarayan would get beaten up by the villagers. "He promised us that he wouldn't let the priest escape till the police came, but he didn't stand by his promise," she says.

Suresh Shakya, the pradhan, denies that he helped the priest in finding refuge in the village or brokered any deal on behalf of the priest after the incident. "I had no role in the case. Let the police investigate," he says.

Death and the morning after

In Kyawali, the Anganwadi helper's son, aged 18, is struggling to come to terms with the death of his mother who was building their home brick by brick. A section of the roof is still covered by tarpaulin. One room was built by his mother under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna and the rest was being built after selling half of the six bighas of land.

It was the son who forced the administration to act when he spoke to the local media about the brutal treatment meted out to his mother. "We froze on seeing her that night. My father is not of much help, but on that day he was not home when the baba arrived with his aides," he says. "I knew them all. The baba had visited us twice in the past. He told us she had fallen into the well. Vedram said my mother was lying outside the well when he reached the temple premises. Before I could say anything, they left. She was barely breathing. Her leg was twisted and she was bleeding only from her private parts. After a few minutes, my father came," he recounts.

He looked for the only phone that the family had, which his mother carried. "I found it in the clothes she was wearing. It was smashed. I approached a neighbour, borrowed his phone and called up my brother-in-law who lives in Palpur, 7-8 km from our village," he says.

The brother-in-law says he could go to the house only at around 4 a.m. the next morning as it was raining on January 3 night and he could not get any transport. "Later, I went to Mevli along with my father-in-law and some others to confront the priest. Satyanarayan said he had taken my mother-in-law to a private hospital in Chandausi after taking her out from the well with the help of his aides. But when the hospital refused to admit her, he dropped her home, he said. He took us to the well. In the torchlight, I could see a shoe of my mother-in-law lying in the well," he says.

The victim's son says Satyanarayan had called his mother at around 4 p.m. on that fateful day. "She left home at around 5 p.m, saying she would stay at my grandmother's place at night. It was not unusual as she used to go to the temple every 8-10 days."

After returning from Mevli, where they had gone to confront the priest, the son says they approached the Ughaiti police station, which falls between the two villages. "But we were told that the police were busy elsewhere. At noon, I called up 112. The police then took the body for post-mortem," he says.

In a leaked video, the victim's husband could be heard telling someone that his wife told him before dying that she fell into the well. This was not mentioned in his complaint lodged on January 5. On January 11, his second son-in-law, who was in Delhi at the time of the incident, says the victim's husband was hospitalised in Budaun after he tried to hurt himself. "He might have been tutored to say this as part of the deal that the pradhan and a ration dealer tried to broker on January 4," he alleges.

Character of the priest

In Mevli, there are multiple opinions about Satyanarayan, a Thakur from Aonla town, Bareilly district. Some say he indulged in tantrik practices. Some say he used to roam around the village trying to impress upon women to visit the temple. Om Pal Singh, a neighbour of the victim's mother, asks why the priest failed to inform the mother and other relatives of the incident if he was innocent. "One of the daughters of the victim is married in Mevli [She and her husband were in Delhi at the time of the incident]. Why were her in-laws not informed? It is clear that he wanted to hide something," he says.

"He doesn't have any knowledge of the scriptures. He doesn't even have a flair for words that babas usually have," says an officer who was present during the interrogation.

Local media reports suggest that the priest took drugs but police officials say he was addicted only to tobacco, which was what forced him to come out of his hiding place. This is corroborated by Mahesh Chandra Gupta, the old grocery store owner at the corner of the lane leading to the temple. "The baba's behaviour was never in question. Otherwise he would not have survived in the village for seven years. Yes, there were rumours of his relationship with a 50-year-old woman, but the villagers had more or less accepted it. This is his first real transgression that has come to light," he says.

Tikam Singh, a Jatav who was not allowed to enter the temple, says the baba believed in untouchability and did not accept any charity from his community. "But there was nothing else that made us doubt his character or intentions. He was feeding off the goodwill that the previous mahant had nurtured over decades. Devotees, especially childless couples, used to come to seek the blessings of the deity, not the priest. They believed that since the priest was the *chela* (disciple) of the previous guru, he must also have some knowledge. Even if two of the 200 people visiting the temple got the desired result, the priest's influence remained intact," he says.

Ompal, a Jat, hints at the hegemony of the Thakurs and Mauryas/ Shakyas in the village. "They are in a majority and perhaps that's why they made a Thakur the priest," he says. The victim comes from a Marwari Thakur family. Hers was one of the many families that migrated from Rajasthan years ago, say villagers.

Meanwhile, at Vedram's residence in Mevli, empathetic relatives gather around his mother Shiv Devi. "He was trapped by the baba because my son had blind faith in him," Shiv Devi claims. "The baba called him around 9 p.m. on January 3 and asked him to come to the temple as there was an emergency. He didn't tell him what the emergency was," she claims.

Pulling out medicines that her son was purportedly taking for a respiratory disorder, Shiv Devi says her son, a carpenter, came under the influence of Satyanarayan ever since he lost his wife.

Local sources say one more person helped Satyanarayan take the victim out from the well. His name is not being made public because he is not named in the FIR, they say. A senior police official says there is a strong possibility of another person being involved.

Official clarifications and beliefs

On the basis of call records, local intelligence and Satyanarayan's statement during interrogation, a senior police officer claims that the priest was in a relationship with a 50-year-old woman, who, along with her two sons, tilled a section of the agricultural land of the temple, the proceeds of which go to Satyanarayan. "The woman got a hint that the priest was now moving on to a younger woman. Possibly, on the date of the incident, she came to know about the Anganwadi helper's presence in the temple premises and confronted him. It could have spiralled into a series of events that will become clear once the forensic reports come out," he claims. Asked how the woman went inside the shed where the dry well is located, he says it looks as though she visited the place using the back door.

The official adds that Satyanarayan's claim that he took the victim to a private hospital in Chandausi, 32 km away in Sambhal district, has been corroborated by the CCTV footage of the hospital.

About 14 bighas of land separate the 50-year-old woman's house from the temple premises. As the wheat crop is still young, she can see the temple clearly. "I went to the temple twice on Sunday evening but couldn't find the baba. I called him over the phone to ask why he had left all the doors open in such weather. He said he had gone out to buy tobacco and would return soon. When the police picked me up for questioning, I told them the same thing," she says. She lost her husband in 2018.

Devendra Singh Dhama, the SHO of Ughaiti police station and investigating officer of the case, says he is pretty sure that the victim fell into the well. "But what circumstances contributed to that is still not clear," he says. Dhama went down the well. It is 32 feet deep, he says.

Whether she fell into the well or not does not absolve the former SHO of laxity, says Senior Superintendent of Police Sankalp Sharma. "That is why he and the outpost in-charge, Amarjeet Singh, have been suspended and charged with dereliction of duty under Section 166A of the IPC. He tried to reach conclusions before the investigation and didn't keep senior officials in the loop," he says.

Sharma admits that sometimes, the constabulary fail to take into account the changed rape laws that followed the gang-rape of a woman in Delhi in 2012. He reels out figures to defend Mission Shakti. "We have taken remand of the accused for further questioning as some of their claims are not matching with our investigation. A forensic team from Lucknow has come to reconstruct the crime scene. Their report is awaited. We will also seek medico-legal opinion on the post-mortem report," he adds.

The post-mortem report has not been given to the family. The District Magistrate, Kumar Prashant, has ordered an inquiry into the leaking of the post-mortem report to the media. When asked whether this is a priority, he says the post-mortem report is an important document of the investigation process. If leaked, it can help the accused plan for the trial even before the chargesheet is filed, he says. It also compromises the dignity of the deceased, he says.

Yashpal Singh, Chief Medical Officer, admits that videography of the post-mortem was not conducted. "It is the administration's job. They didn't ask for it," he says. Sharma says the police will examine why the post-mortem was not videographed.

On the delay in conducting the post-mortem, Singh says while the body was with them, they were waiting for a three-member panel to be formed. A doctor took time in reaching the hospital. "It didn't affect the forensic investigation and the slides were formed well within time," he insists.

Prashant says the case will be heard in a fast-track court. The administration, he says, is contemplating invoking the National Security Act against Satyanarayan. "It is because of him that the peace and tranquility of the area remained disturbed for three days," he says. He says the formalities of the U.P. Rani Laxmi Bai Mahila and Bal Samman Kosh, that provide ₹1,00,000 to the family of a victim of rape and murder, had started. "The victim's son could be absorbed as a 4th class employee in the municipality of Sahaswan. As an Anganwadi helper, she was also insured under a scheme of the Integrated Child Development Services. At our level, we have provided ration and refilled the gas cylinder of her mother," he says.

Meanwhile, Sunita Devi, an Anganwadi worker in a neighbouring village, says women's security remains a major issue. "When we go out for work, some men pass obscene comments. They can't digest the fact that women are working. We listen and move on. Recently, an Anganwadi worker ended her life because the pradhan allegedly called her to his residence," she says.

The Thakurji temple remained sealed in Mevli on Lohri but a priest offered prayers in the Ughaiti police station.

FROM PAGE ONE

Farmers, government to continue talks

"He asked us, 'if any one demand is fulfilled, will you take your movement back?' We said no, both demands are equally important to us, and the movement will continue until both demands are met," said Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh spokesperson Abhimanyu Kohar. Both demands – for a legal guarantee for minimum support prices, and a full repeal of the three farm laws – will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Earlier, the farmer unions also raised allegations of government intimidation and harassment against their movement and its supporters. The Haryana government has filed FIRs against protesters there, while the National Intelligence Agency, which comes under the Union Home Ministry, has been interrogating Punjab transporters who provide logistics support to the farmers, said Rakesh Tikait, who heads one faction of the Bharatiya Kisan Union.

The unions also explicitly clarified that their movement has nothing to do with the 'Sikhs for Justice' organisation, which has been making inflammatory statements.

The meeting also discussed various provisions of the Essential Commodities Amendment Act, 2020, and the financial health of the Food Corporation of India, which has implications for government procurement of foodgrains for the public distribution system.

Tractor parade: SC may pass orders on Monday

It is to be seen whether the court on Monday will take note of the recusal of Bhupinder Singh Mann, national president, Bhartiya Kisan Union and All India Kisan Coordination Committee, from the expert panel.

However, the stated objective of the Monday hearing is to address the Centre's apprehension about protesters disrupting the Republic Day ceremonies.

"The proposed march is slated to disturb and disrupt the august celebrations of the nation on Republic Day and would be bound to create a massive law and order situation," the government application has said.

Largest vaccination drive begins today

The Health Ministry has also issued a three page letter to the States/UTs regarding contraindications and fact-sheets for the vaccines, indicating that the jab be administered with caution in persons with a history of any bleeding disorder.

The letter further added that persons with COVID-19 infection history and those with history of chronic illness are not contraindication for the vaccine.

"Persons with immuno deficiency, HIV, patients on immuno-suprresion due to any condition – the response of COVID-19 vaccination may be less in these individuals," the communication said.

The CoWin platform will facilitate real time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualized tracking of beneficiaries for COVID-19 vaccine. "This digital platform will assist programme managers across National, State, and District levels while conducting vaccination sessions," the Ministry added.

Policy cloud delays vaccine export to Brazil

According to the officials, Brazilian authorities have now intimated them that the plane would leave Recife in Brazil on Saturday morning (IST), but only if it receives clearances from India.

The MEA declined to comment specifically on the Brazilian shipment of vaccines, and whether the Brazilian plane would receive the necessary permissions in time. Asked on Thursday how soon India might release vaccines for export to other countries including those in the neighbourhood like Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka who have also put in requests, MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava had said that it was "too early" to tell. "As you know, the vaccination process is just starting in India," Mr. Srivastava said, adding, "It is too early to give a specific response on the supplies to other countries.."

However, Brazilian officials cited a statement made by Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on January 5, saying in "absolutely clear" terms that there was no hold on exports of the vaccines.

The Health Ministry did not respond to a question from *The Hindu* on whether its orders were at variance with the MEA's statement.

Arnab's chats with ex-Barc chief revealed

Mr. Dasgupta tells Mr. Goswami that if the data is made public, many channels could be blacked out by multi system operators (MSOs) and local cable operators (LCOs).

"With public data, MSOs and LCOs will push you guys for more carriage," Mr. Dasgupta tells Mr. Goswami.

At this, Mr. Goswami assures him that when the BJP government returns, the TRAI won't have teeth. He also asks Mr. Dasgupta to send him points on how these reforms could politically hurt the government.

"With channels getting blacked out, impact of messaging on TV will reach lesser people and hence diluted impact," Mr. Dasgupta replied as per the transcript.

Mr. Dasgupta further added: "Can you help by telling AS to tell TRAI to pipe down on Barc?"

The reference to "AS" is also made repeatedly in the transcript, with Mr. Goswami claiming to have a close relationship with him. The initials have not been spelt at any place in the transcript. Two days later, Mr. Goswami responds that, "a strong message has been conveyed to TRAI".

There are also many instances in the transcripts of Mr. Goswami boasting about his proximity to the "PMO" and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; he details his visits to Delhi to meet various Ministers.

Kerala budget promises 20 lakh jobs in 5 years

Finance Minister lays emphasis on welfare measures and infrastructure projects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Creating "a new edition to the Kerala development model," the 2021-2022 budget presented by Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac on Friday aims at a knowledge-based society with strides in new employment opportunities and industrial growth while consolidating the achievements made in the social sector.

The budget, which focuses on welfare measures, provides for additional expenditure of ₹1,164 crore and tax concessions of ₹191 crore against additional revenue mobilisation of just ₹200 crore, leaving a cumulative deficit of ₹1,306.69 crore.

In recognition of their role in COVID-19 management, ASHA workers' allowance would be hiked by ₹1,000. All welfare pensions were enhanced to ₹1,600. A total of 4,000 new posts would be created in the Health Department. Local bodies will get an additional ₹1,000 crore.

Many goodies: Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac leaving for the Assembly from his residence on Friday. ▪ MAHINSHA S.

As part of the biggest anti-recession infrastructure package being executed, projects worth ₹15,000 crore will be completed through the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) in 2021-2022.

Describing the budget as a blueprint of the post-COVID development initiatives, Dr. Isaac said 8,00,000 jobs – three lakh for the youth and five lakh for others – would be created in 2021-22.

He has also come up with a scheme to provide jobs to at least 20 lakh through digital platform in five years, the registration of which will begin from February. The government employees, teachers and pensioners would get new salary and pension from April 1, 2021, Dr. Isaac said.

In a boost to the real estate sector, the stamp duty on sale deed has been reduced from 8% to 4% and the registration fee from 2% to 1%.

The Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council would be registered as a society and ₹200 crore has been earmarked for it to take up skill training of youth. Thirty centres of excellence would be set up in universities. An outlay of ₹2,000 crore for universities and ₹1,000 crore for affiliated colleges was announced. He announced 500 post-doctoral fellowships for young scientists .

The first phase of Kerala Fibre Optic Network (K-FON) project will be completed in February. Dr. Isaac also proposes to distribute laptops at half the cost to children from fisherfolk, scheduled communities and Antyodaya households.

The floor price of rubber was hiked to ₹170; paddy procurement price increased to ₹28 and that of coconut to ₹32.

Hyperbole as usual, says Opposition leader

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Leader of the Opposition in Kerala Assembly Ramesh Chennithala termed the budget an election stunt. It smacked off a desperate political attempt to stave off sure defeat in the Assembly polls, he said.

Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac had attempted to pull the wool over the electorate's eyes by peddling half-truths, the Congress leader said.

As usual, hyperbole and unkept promises characterised Dr. Isaac's latest budget. The government's promise in the previous budget to give jobs to 25 lakh people remained on paper. Dr. Isaac had a history of coming up with flighty schemes. In an earlier budget, he had proposed mining the deep sea for sand. Then he suggested launching three mobile phone factories in the public sector. Generating fuel from marine debris was another quixotic project that did not take form, Mr. Chennithala said.

Debt trap awaits: BJP

BJP State president K. Surendran said the budget will push Kerala into an inescapable debt trap,

Dr. Isaac had struck a perilous course that would cause Kerala's public debt to shoot up from the current ₹3 lakh crore to ₹5 lakh crore and more, he said on Friday. Dr. Isaac's budget was a sham, he added, saying it had no concrete proposal to expand and fortify Kerala's economy and free the people from the outstanding debts incurred by successive Congress- and CPI(M)- led governments.

TDP, BJP cadre behind desecration, say A.P. police

STAFF REPORTER
GUNTUR

The Andhra Pradesh police have made a startling revelation that there is a conspiracy by the Opposition parties to foment communal hatred by directly getting involved in desecration of temples across the State during the last one year.

With the arrest of 15 persons – 13 belonging to the Telugu Desam Party and two from the Bharatiya Janata Party – the police have claimed to have unravelled the mystery behind the attacks on temples and the alleged conspiracy in spreading religious hatred with a "malicious design to destabilise the State government'.

In the year 2020 and 2021 so far, there were 44 incidents involving temples. In connection with them, 29 cases were registered and 84 persons arrested."

Of the 44 incidents, 38 pertained to idol theft and desecration, two were related to chariot burning and four to digging of temple premises.

Police appeal

"The police investigation has revealed that 21 persons belonging to different political parties were directly involved in nine cases so far. In every other case, the conspiracy of political parties was seen as a deliberate attempt to create religious hatred and disturb communal harmony. I am appealing to parties not to indulge in such acts and also not to spread rumours on social media," Director-General of Police Gautam Sawang said here.

11 killed in accident near Dharwad

Reunion plan at Goa turns tragic for old students of Davangere school

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HUBBALLI

A reunion plan at Goa turned tragic for old students of St. Paul's School, Davangere, as their mini-bus collided with a tipper near Dharwad on Friday, killing 11 persons.

Superintendent of Police, Dharwad, P. Krishnakant said the accident occurred on Hubballi-Dharwad Bypass Road near Swarga Farmhouse at Itigatti village.

The accident occurred when the tipper driver, who was allegedly overspeeding, lost control while trying to overtake another vehicle proceeding to Hubballi and collided head-on with the mini-bus coming from the opposite direction.

Police and rescue personnel had a tough time extricating the bodies from the mangled remains of the mini-bus and rescuing trapped inside. The rescued people were rushed to hospitals in Hubballi.

The mangled mini-bus being removed from the Hubballi-Dharwad road in Karnataka on Friday. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The schoolmates had left Davangere during the early hours and were proceeding to Goa for a get-together. One of their distraught classmates, who visited the hospital in Hubballi, said they had planned a three-day trip to Goa for the reunion. They were to be joined by a few others who, however, cancelled at the last minute, she said.

The names of the deceased were given as: Preeti Ravijumar, 46; Varshita Viresh, 47; Paramjyoti Shashidhar Hunchur, 47; Manjula Natesh G.B., 47; Rajeshwar Shivakumar Bandammanavar, 46; Dr. Veena Prakash Mattihallil, 47; Ksheera Sureshbabu Poral, 21; Hemalatha alias Manashi, 48; Yashmita alias Aishu, 20, all from Davangere, driver of the mini-bus Raju Somappa Gorabannavar, 38; and cleaner Mallikarjun Udagatti, 27, of Ranebennur.

Those in the twenties among them were children of the schoolmates.

The injured are: Asha Jagadish Betur, 47; Veda Manjunath, 46; Usharani Ramesh, 46; Poornima Prakash, 46, all from Davangere, Praveena Prakash, 46, from Bengaluru and driver of the tipper Basavaraj Irappa Khadarolli, 25 of Ugarkhold in Kittur taluk of Belagavi district.

100 booby traps found in Telangana

Two Maoists held from Chhattisgarh border

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHADRADRI-KOTHAGUDEM

The detection of around 100 booby traps by a joint squad of the local police and the CRPF personnel during a combing operation near Pusuguppa, a remote village at Charla mandal in Telangana, bordering Chhattisgarh, on Thursday sparked tension in the forested border region.

The police arrested two alleged Maoist militia members of Pusuguppa during a search operation following the detection of the booby traps, police sources said.

The incident comes at a time when the Bhadrachalam sub-division police ramped up anti-Maoist operations along the densely forested border with Chhattisgarh as part of a calibrated strategy to prevent the ultras from entering into the State.

The booby traps recovered near Pusuguppa in Telangana's Bhadradri-Kothagudem district. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The police had mounted extra vigil in the border areas to pre-empt any attempt by the rebels from crossing over to the State from Chhattisgarh's south Bastar division, sources said.

A joint team of police and the CRPF men detected and removed as many as 100 booby traps with sharp metal spikes concealed in as many as 78 pits covered by grass adjacent to the Pusuguppa (Telangana) and Rampur (Chhattisgarh) route during a combing operation on Thursday morning, said Ashok, Circle Inspector of Police, Charla.

Following instructions from the State leaders of the banned outfit, the local Maoist militia members laid the booby traps near the inter-State border targeting the police combing parties, he said.

The two Maoist militia members held were involved in setting up the booby traps, the Inspector said.

IN BRIEF

More leaders may join Karnataka Cabinet

BELGAVI

More leaders will be inducted into the Karnataka Cabinet during the "bigger round of expansion" after the zilla panchayat elections, said Major and Medium Irrigation Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi on Friday. He, however, was quick to clarify that he was not making a categorical statement. He was in Belagavi to review preparations for the BJP rally to be addressed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday.

Former A.P. Minister P. Subbaiah passes away

TIRUPATI

Former Andhra Pradesh Minister and three-time TDP MLA Patnam Subbaiah died of cardiac arrest at his native Kothapalle village in Chittoor district on Friday. A medical practitioner, he had responded to the call given by TDP founder N.T. Rama Rao to professionals and joined the party. Subbaiah won from Palamaneru seat during 1985-1999, and had served as Minister for Civil Supplies and Health in the combined State of A.P.

Bonsai tree stolen from ex-DGP's house found

HYDERABAD

A rare Bonsai tree, which was stolen from a retired IPS officer's house five days ago, was traced by the Jubilee Hills police on Friday. A construction worker and his friend were booked for the theft. On a complaint from former Director General of Police V. Appa Rao's wife on Monday, the police examined the footage of surveillance cameras in the area and found two bike-borne men stealing Saru (Casuarina chettee) early on Sunday.

Clouds mar annual temple phenomenon

For the first time in 50 years, sun's rays didn't fall on idol on Sankranti day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Clouds played spoilsport on Thursday while citizens celebrated Sankranti and blocked the Sun's rays from falling on the Shiva Linga at the Gavi Gangadhareshwara Temple in Gavipuram here. It is an annual phenomenon every Sankranti.

The ancient cave temple, said to be renovated by Kempegowda I, is built in such a way that the Sun's rays fall on the south-facing idol on Sankranti day, when the Sun begins to move northwards with respect to Earth.

Somasundara Dixit, chief priest of the temple, said that though the Sun's rays entered the cave temple premises at the expected late afternoon time on Thursday, clouds covered the Sun before the rays could fall on the idol.

Cave marvel: The Gavi Gangadhareshwara temple in Bengaluru.

"In my experience of nearly 50 years at the temple, this is the first time that something like this has happened," he said.

C.S. Patil, Director, India Meteorological Department, Bengaluru, said that while the State usually enjoyed clear dry weather on Sankranti, this year Bengaluru had cloudy weather, which seemed to have disrupted the annual phenomenon at the temple.

"There was cloud formation observed in the city area because of the impact of easterly winds. Sri Lanka and Kanyakumari region receive rain during this time of the year. This impacting Bengaluru is rare, but not that extraordinary," he said.

In fact, the IMD had on Wednesday forecast isolated spells of rain in south interior Karnataka and the coastal region due to a weather system near Maldives, 4.5 km above the mean sea level.

The IMD has also forecast "fog and mist very likely over Bengaluru over the next four days."

AI's Chicago-Hyderabad direct flight arrives

This is the first service on this route

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

The first-ever non-stop service of Air India between Hyderabad and Chicago commenced with the maiden flight arriving at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) here early on Friday. The flight, operating on Wednesdays, left Chicago at 21.30 hours (local time) on January 13 and arrived at 1 a.m.

The return flight AI-107 from Hyderabad to Chicago, which operates once a week every Friday, left Hyderabad at 12.50 p.m. to arrive in Chicago at 18.05 hours (local time) the same day with 226 passengers and 16 aircraft crew. amidst fanfare at the airport.

The AI flight is a Boeing 777-200LR aircraft with a seating capacity of 238, including eight first class, 35 business class, 195 economy class seats, besides four cockpit and 12 cabin crew.

The total flight time from Hyderabad to Chicago will be approximately 16 hours 45 minutes, while the duration from Chicago to Hyderabad will be 15 hours 40 minutes.

The city being a gateway to south and central India, will connect Air India's direct flight from Chicago to Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Bengaluru and Chennai, said an official spokesperson. GMR Hyderabad International Airport, AI officials and others were present at the terminal to see off passengers.

'BSP will go it alone in U.P., Uttarakhand'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) will not enter into any kind of pact with any party in the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) and Uttarakhand in 2022.

Speaking on her 65th birthday, party chief Mayawati said, "Our party will contest alone on its own strength in all Vidhan Sabha seats in these two States with full preparation and force." Ms. Mayawati, a four-time former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, last held power in 2007-2012. In 2012, the BSP secured 80 seats and claimed the second position behind the SP, but since the 2014 Lok Sabha election, in which the party could not win even a single seat, it has been on a downward slide and loss of vote percentage and seats. In the 2017 Assembly poll, the BSP could manage to win only 19 seats. In the 2019 Lok Sabha poll, the party won 10 seats, but that was as part of an alliance with the SP.

Congress stages nationwide protests

Rahul Gandhi accuses Prime Minister of being 'remote controlled' by three or four corporates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday alleged that the Narendra Modi government was being "remote controlled" by a handful of corporate houses and the three farm laws were an example of Mr. Modi trying to "hand over" what belongs to farmers.

He said the Centre's talks with farmers were "delaying tactics" to tire out the farmers as Mr. Modi did not respect farmers, but the government would have to repeal the laws.

The Congress leader also took strong objection to farmers being referred to as "Khalistanis" by some leaders of the ruling party.

Tough stance: Rahul Gandhi participating in a protest against the three controversial farm laws in New Delhi on Friday. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

An illusion

Speaking to presspersons at Jantar Mantar, where Congress MPs from Punjab have been protesting for nearly 40 days now, Mr. Gandhi said the Supreme Court-appointed expert committee was a *maya* [illusion] and the myth would be busted soon.

To coincide with the ninth round of talks between farmers' unions and the Centre, the Congress observed 'Kisan Adhikar Diwas' (Farmers' Rights Day) and took out nationwide protests, including marches to *gherao* the Raj Bhavans in State capitals.

Party workers held protests in States, including Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. In Uttar Pradesh, the police detained party leaders when they attempted to take out a march to the Raj Bhavan in Lucknow.

In Delhi, Mr. Gandhi led the protests organised by the State unit and was joined by other leaders, including party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

"These farm laws have been brought to finish off the farmers," Mr. Gandhi said in his brief address to party workers who had gathered near the Chandgi Ram Akhada in north Delhi, close to the Raj Bhavan, the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor.

Soon after, he shifted to the protest venue of Congress MPs at Jantar Mantar, where he addressed the media.

"Narendra Modi does not have basic respect for farmers. He does not even care if over 100 farmers die. He thinks he has the power and the protesting farmers will tire out after some days but they will not relent," he said, adding, "The talks are being held only to delay. PM Modi thinks he has the power and will tire the farmers out, but he is mistaken."

He said the farmers had maintained the country's independence by ensuring food security and the day food security is lost, the country will lose its independence. "This is a financial issue, not a political issue. PM Modi wants to hand over everything that farmers have to three-four corporate leaders ... He is the country's Prime Minister but the remote control is in the hands of three-four people," Mr. Gandhi alleged.

Biden's NEC pick sparks celebrations in Srinagar

Fazili has been named Deputy Director

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The appointment on Thursday of Kashmiri-origin Sameera Fazili as Deputy Director of the U.S. National Economic Council (NEC) by President-elect Joe Biden sparked off celebrations among her extended family in Srinagar.

"Since the news broke, I am continuously watching CNN television channel to get her glimpse. I did talk to her mother yesterday. They are elated. But Sami is very busy. This is a great moment for the family ... She quit medical school to pursue her passion," Ms. Fazili's aunt Mehmooda Fazili told *The Hindu*.

Daughter of a Kashmir-born doctor couple, Muhammad Yusuf Fazili and Rafiqa Fazili, Ms. Fazili started her career as a clinical lecturer at Yale Law School's community and economic development clinic.

Sameera Fazili

"She did join [former President] Barack Obama's regime and she was very popular. On demitting his office, Mr. Obama organised a separate farewell party for Ms. Fazili and her family," said her cousin Shuja Durrani, a businessman. He described her appointment as "Kashmir's proud moment".

BJP to keep up pressure on Trinamool Congress

Key leaders to visit poll-bound State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The next few weeks will see frequent visits to poll-bound West Bengal by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda to keep up the momentum of its electoral charge against the Trinamool Congress government. State Forest Minister Rajib Banerjee is likely to join the BJP when Mr. Shah visits Bengal at the end of January.

The frequent visits and schedules for the events were decided at a review meeting on Bengal held in New Delhi and attended by Mr. Shah, Mr. Nadda, BJP general secretary in charge of the State Kailash Vijaywargiya, State unit chief Dilip Ghosh and general secretary organisation in charge of the State, Shiv Prakash. "To keep up the momentum, frequent visits by these leaders will take place and some significant joinings will also happen," said a senior leader present at the meeting.

While there have been several crossovers from the Trinamool Congress to the BJP, the party is now taking a call on how many people will be accommodated after the big-ticket inclusion of Suvendu Adhikari last month. "Many MLAs have approached us and while it is a sign that the BJP is the main political force going up against the TMC, we are not interested in taking on the anti-incumbency of many of these. We feel that TMC itself will drop a large number of sitting MLAs from its list for this very reason..." said a BJP source.

Trinamool MP Satabdi Roy had created a flutter on Friday after a Facebook post by her complaining about internal party matters. She was even slated to fly to New Delhi to meet BJP leaders. Sources said she was placated after a visit to Trinamool leader Abhishek Banerjee.

President gives ₹5 lakh for Ram Mandir work

Trust starts nationwide drive for funds

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The trust set up to oversee the construction of a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya started a nationwide drive on Friday for collecting funds, with President Ram Nath Kovind making the first contribution of ₹5 lakh.

Mr. Kovind, along with his family, donated a cheque for ₹5,00,100 to a delegation of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi.

President Kovind donated the cheque to a delegation at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The President donated in his personal capacity, said Alok Kumar, international working president of the VHP, which has been mandated to collect the funds for the temple.

The target was to reach 65 crore people across the country, he told presspersons.

In Rae Bareli district of Uttar Pradesh, Surendra Singh, who had contested the Assembly election, donated a sum of ₹1.11 crore. "I donated on the call of my *aatma* and it has been a tradition of my family to donate," he said at the event attended by Champat Rai, the general secretary of the trust.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan handed over a cheque for ₹1 lakh to the VHP delegation. "Not just a Ram Mandir, this is in reality a Rashtra Mandir. Ram is our existence," Mr. Chouhan said in a tweet as he shared pictures of the meeting.

China got befitting reply: Army chief

Naravane says no one should make the mistake of testing India's patience

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The "unilateral conspiracy" by China to change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh last year was given a "befitting reply", and "no one should make the mistake of testing our patience", the Chief of the Army Staff, General Manoj Naravane, said on Friday.

In a first, during the Army Day parade, the Army carried out a live demonstration of "drone swarming" capability using 75 indigenously designed and developed drones, which executed an array of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled simulated offensive missions and close-support tasks.

Paying homage to the Army personnel who lost their lives in the violent clash at Galwan, Gen. Naravane said their sacrifice "will not go waste". "We are committed to resolving disputes through dialogue and political process, but no one should make the mistake of testing our patience," he said in the customary address at the Parade Ground in Delhi Cantonment on Army Day.

Grand occasion: General Manoj Naravane reviewing a parade on Army Day in New Delhi on Friday. ▪ PTI

Gen. Naravane awarded 15 Sena Medals, five posthumously, for individual acts of gallantry, and 23 Chief of the Army Staff Unit Citations to various units.

38 deals

On military modernisation, Gen. Naravane said 38 deals were made through "emergency and fast-track" route worth about ₹5,000 crore. In addition, capital procurements worth ₹13,000 crore were also concluded last year. The procurements included light machine guns, light special vehicles and protective gear for infantry, infantry combat vehicles for mechanised infantry and long-range vectors for artillery and also equipment for Engineers and Signals regiments.

An Army statement said the demonstration was a recognition of the Army's steady embrace of emerging and disruptive technologies to transform itself from a manpower-intensive to a technology-enabled force to meet future security challenges. The swarm drone technology was developed by an Indian start-up, NewSpace Research & Technologies.

"The Army is investing heavily into AI, autonomous weapon systems, quantum technologies, robotics, cloud computing and algorithm warfare in order to achieve a convergence between the Army's war fighting philosophies and military attributes of these technologies," the statement said.

On the situation along the Line of Control with Pakistan, Gen. Naravane said 300 to 400 terrorists were waiting at launch pads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to cross over. Stating that there had been a 40% increase in ceasefire violations, he said there had been attempts to smuggle weapons using drones and tunnels.

On the northeast, he said over 600 insurgents surrendered last year and joint operations with Myanmar had been successful.

'Love affair no defence against a minor's kidnapping'

The law deems a minor incapable of giving lawful consent, says Supreme Court

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A consensual love affair is not a defence against the criminal charge of kidnapping a minor girl under 18 years of age, the Supreme Court has held in a judgment.

The law deems a minor incapable of giving lawful consent, a three-judge Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana said. "Section 361 of the Indian Penal Code (kidnapping from lawful guardianship) bestows the ability to make crucial decisions regarding a minor's physical safety upon his/her guardians. Therefore, a minor girl's infatuation with her alleged kidnapper cannot by itself be allowed as a defence, for the same would amount to surreptitiously undermining the protective essence of the offence of kidnapping," Justice Surya Kant observed in the judgment.

The case relates to a young man found guilty of kidnapping a 15-year-old girl in 1998 in Gujarat. The man said they were in love and the girl had voluntarily run away with him. He was found guilty of rape by the trial court, but the Gujarat High Court, in 2009, acquitted him, and held him guilty of kidnapping her by enticing her.

However, the SC said the man himself was not older than 18 or 19 at the time of the crime, and it was admittedly a love affair. His was a "crime of passion", the court said, and reduced the man's quantum of sentence to the period of imprisonment already undergone.

SC to consider pleas in EPF pension case

It will take up the petitions on Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

After 21 months, the Supreme Court will be considering the review petition filed by the EPFO (Employees Provident Fund Organisation) against the top court verdict on pension and the appeal filed by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The three-judge Bench headed by Justice U.U. Lalit will consider the petitions on January 18.

The pensioners are hoping that their long wait for pension in accordance to the salary would end with this verdict. Earlier, both the Kerala High Court and the SC had pronounced verdicts in their favour. The full pension was denied stating that the appeal of the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the review plea of the EPFO were pending.

The SC had upheld the Kerala HC verdict on monthly pension from the Employees' Pension Scheme on April 1, 2019. The Ministry of Labour then filed an appeal against the HC verdict despite the review petition filed by the EPFO. The Bench led by the then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi ordered on July 12, 2019 to hear both pleas in the open court. However, no further action was taken. Meanwhile, the parliamentary standing committee sought an explanation on the matter last October.

APPOINTMENT

UTKARSHA ALUMINUM DHATU NIGAM LTD.
C/o. Midhani, PO:Kanchanbagh, HYDERABAD - 5000058

The UADNL (A Joint venture of NALCO & MIDHANI) invites Applications for the following vacancies on contract basis for a period of 3 years

Name of the post	No.of posts	Age limit	Consolidated Pay per month
Company Secretary (Gr. III)	one	35 years	Rs.60,500/-
Executive (Purchase)-Gr.IV	one	40 years	Rs.72,600/-
Executive (Finance)-Gr.II	one	30 years	Rs.48,500/-
Executive(Projects)-Gr.II	one	30 years	Rs.48,500/-

The interested and suitable candidates may submit their applications latest by 02.02.2021(5PM) for detailed advertisement visit our websites: www.midhani-india.in & www.nalcoindia.com

DGM (HR-NIr Plant)
MIDHANI

CHANDIGARH INDUSTRIAL & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
E-TENDER NOTICE

E-tenders/E-Bids are invited for licensing out open space (Approx 500 Sq. Yds) at Leisure Valley Area, Sector 10, Chandigarh for running/ managing of Hanging Restaurant (in the Sky) on revenue sharing basis.
Detailed E-Tender document is available on portal http://etenders.chd.nic.in for online participation.A pre-bid meeting will be held on 22.01.2021 at 11:00 a.m. at the registered office to clarify any concerns, bidders may have regarding the tender document. Any corrigendum/ amendment in the terms and conditions of the tender document or any other change will be published/uploaded on http://etenders.chd.nic.in only.
Last date of submission of E-bid is 29.01.2021 strictly upto 05:00 p.m.
Managing Director reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Chief General Manager

CIN: U45202CH1974SGC003415
Regd Office: SCO – 121-122, Sector 17-B, Chandigarh – 160017.
Phone No. 0172 – 4647925 & 4647931, Fax No. 0172-4644441.
Email: info@citcochandigarh.com, Website: www.citcochandigarh.com

GUJARAT URJA VIKAS NIGAM LTD.
Sardar Patel Vidyut Bhavan, Race Course, Vadodara 390007
Phone 0265-2334751, Fax: 0265-2344543 www.guvnl.com

GUVNL, a Govt. of Gujarat Undertaking hereby invites e-tender for purchase of 700 MW RTC power for the period **01-03-2021** to **31-07-2021** at GETCO Periphery (interconnection point of Gujarat STU with CTU) as per Ministry of Power (MoP), GoI Guidelines dated 30-03-2016.RFP will be available at www.mstcecommerce.com from 16-01-2021. Bid has to be submitted online through DEEP Portal of MoP. All terms and conditions shall be as per RFP.

Date: 15-01-2021 General Manager (Commerce)

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE
Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao Road, Nagarabhavi P.O. Bengaluru-560 072. www.isec.ac.in

NOTICE

1. The 48th Annual General Body Meeting of the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru will be held on **Friday, the January 29, 2021 at 12.00 p.m.** 2. His Excellency, the Honourable Governor of Karnataka and the President of the ISEC Society, Shri Vajubhai Vala ji has kindly consented to preside over the meeting. They are requested to partake in High Tea at 11.15 a.m. and occupy their seat by 11.50 a.m. Sharp. 3. All the members of ISEC society are cordially invited to participate in this Annual General Body Meeting. 4. The members are requested to confirm their participation by email / phone / other modes for making necessary arrangements at the earliest.

January 15, 2021
sd/- M K Mohan Kumar, Registrar I/c
registrar@isec.ac.in; Landline: 080-23217011
ISEC-20102

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
'Khanij Bhavan', 10-3-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad - 500 028.
Telephone: 0091-40-23538710/770, 23538713 to 23538721 Ext: 138/270/228
Email: csreddy@nmdc.co.in; bmkumar@nmdc.co.in; jpsingh@nmdc.co.in
CIN: L13100TG1958GOI001674

OPEN TENDER NOTICE

Online Tenders are invited through e-Procurement Mode for following Items from reputed manufacturers directly or through their accredited agents in India, required for our NMDC Ltd projects.

Description of item	Qty (No.)	Display & Sale of Tender Documents Period	Last Date & Time for Submission of offer
Tender No. & Date : HQMM/2008-20/36A102, 36A300 & 36AN159/374, Dt : 15-01-2021			
Supply of various sizes of OTR Tubeless Bias ply, Cut Resistant,Tyres with suitable 0 Rings as per Technical specifications mentioned in Annexure-III of tender document required for Kirandul Complex, Bacheli Complex and Donimalai.	As per Annexure -V	16-01-2021 to 16-02-2021	16-02-2021 by 2.30 PM (IST)
Tender No. & Date : HQMM/2020-20/05B115/290, Dt : 15-01-2021			
Recon Transmission Assembly under Recon Exchange basis suitable for BEML Make, BH-100S Model, 100 Ton capacity Dumpers as per specifications mentioned in Annexure-III of tender document required for Donimalai Complex.	02	16-01-2021 to 16-02-2021	16-02-2021 by 2.30 PM (IST)

Complete Tender document is available in website **www.nmdc.co.in** under tender section; **www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome;** CPP Portal **http://eprocure.gov.in**
Any corrigendum to the above tender will be uploaded only on our website www.nmdc.co.in and will not be published. Prospective bidders should visit the above NMDC Limited website from time to time to take note of corrigendum, if any.
For further details logon to Tender Section of our website : **www.nmdc.co.in.**

Chief General Manager (Materials)

NMDC Limited
(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE)
"Khanij Bhavan", 10-3-311/A, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500 028.
Email : nvyadagiri@nmdc.co.in
CIN : L13100TG1958GOI001674

Tender Ref: HQMM/7004-19/17TN17/limestone/289 Date: 16-01-2021

OPEN TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers directly or through their accredited agents in India for supply of 7000 MT of Limestone to NMDC Limited, Pellet Plant, Ranjitpura, Donimalai, Bellary District, Karnataka as per the details furnished in the tender document.

Description	Qty. (MT.)	Display & Sale of Tender Documents	Last date & time for submission of offer	Tender fee in Rs.
Supply, Transportation, Loading, Unloading of 7000MT Limestone	**7000**	**16-01-2021 to 15-02-2021**	**15-02-2021 by 2:30 PM**	**Rs. 5900/- incl. of GST**

The detailed information of the tender can be obtained from our websites under e-procurement section **www.nmdc.co.in; www.eprocure.gov.in** and **www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc** of MSTC Ltd. Any Corrigendum to the above Tender Notice will be uploaded only on our website **www.nmdc.co.in & www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc** and will not be published. Prospective bidders should visit the above websites from time to time to note the corrigendum, if any.

Chief General Manager (Materials)

CSIR-Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee-247667

Advertisement No. Estt./2020/03
Closing date: 25.01.2021

CSIR-CBRI is intends to hire 4 consultants (Retired/ Serving) Civil Engineers having expertise in the area of preparation of bid document, tendering process, construction supervision of buildings, reporting, monitoring progress, preparation of project completion report proficiency in Govt. of India projects on contract basis for a period of One Year which may be extended till the duration of the project Kathmandu, Nepal on fixed remuneration of Rs. 75,000/- P.M. (Emoluments will be paid in Indian Currency in India) . For details regarding eligibility criteria mode of interview and terms and Conditions etc may please visit CBRI website http://cbri.res.in

Sr. Controller of Administration

INTERVIEW | SAMIRAN PANDA

'In a crisis, scientists and regulatory authorities have to be innovative'

It is crucial to find faster ways of vaccine assessment but not at the cost of safety, says the scientist at the ICMR-National AIDS Research Institute

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

As India begins one of the world's largest COVID vaccination drives, **Samiran Panda**, *head of Epidemiology & Communicable Diseases Division with the Indian Council of Medical Research - National AIDS Research Institute, explains the various stages of vaccine development. He points to a March 2019 amendment in rules for new drugs and clinical trials in India that allows for accelerated drug approval.*

How do you see the role of a vaccine when the number of cases are fast coming down in India?

■ The COVID epidemic curve is on a decline but India is a huge country and there are some States where we are seeing second and third waves of the infection. Also there are places where the case fatality rate is still above the national average. Moreover, new mutants are making their appearances and we are yet to understand them fully.

Look globally. Never before have scientists come up with a vaccine in such a short time. It was January 12, 2020, when scientists decoded the genomic make-up of the virus and so many vaccines were ready to enter the clinical trials in less than 10 months.

We are, after all, dealing with a virus which is easily transmissible. And it leaves a devastating effect on people, especially those who are elderly and those who are suffering from chronic illness.

Bharat Biotech's Covaxin has been approved before it completed its Phase-3 trials. How do you look at the decision?

■ We are struck by a pandemic. In such a crisis, scientists and regulatory authorities have to be innovative and find faster ways of assessment of a vaccine but certainly not at the cost of safety.

Phase-I trials primarily test a vaccine for its safety. Phase-II trials test it for its immunogenicity while additional safety data is also obtained. In Phase-III, we give vaccines to one group and placebo to another and examine if the number of infections in the group to which placebo was given are significantly higher than the group vaccinated.

This number should be significantly higher for us to know that the vaccine is protecting against the possibility of acquisition of the virus.

The regulatory authority must have considered all these points before it approved Covaxin. To answer some critical questions, such as if we can wait for the Phase-III trial to be completed, the regulators have to

New mutants are making their appearance, and we are yet to understand them fully

look at various aspects of the pandemic – how it is impacting on lives, and how promising a particular vaccine candidate seems to be, based on the data available at hand.

Please explain the various stages of vaccine development in the context of Covaxin?

■ A vaccine is tested first in small animals such as mice, hamsters, and rabbits with a focus on efficacy and, particularly, potential toxicity. Following encouraging results, vaccines are then tested in larger animals such as rhesus monkeys as certain human diseases are mimicked in them.

The vaccine, under scrutiny, is given to one group of animals which is then exposed to the virus, and a second group is exposed to the virus without being administered the vaccine. In the case of Covaxin, we found that the vaccinated animals were able to clear off the infection from their respiratory tract much faster. Histopathology revealed that all their tissues were normal, whereas in the animals which were not vaccinated, the tissue damage following a challenge with the virus (SARS-CoV-2) was extensive.

After this, when the ICMR-Bharat Biotech vaccine was moved to Phase-I of human trials, to check for its safety in humans. The results, I must tell you, were highly impressive.

You know, a vaccine is scrutinised on three critical parameters: the first is safety; the second, if it gives rise to adequate immune response (its immunogenicity), and the third, how long the immune system memorises the infection (the durability of the vaccine effect).

Is there a provision to approve a vaccine before it completes its Phase-III trial?

■ On March 19, 2019 (much before COVID-19 hit the world), a provision was added to the new drugs and clinical trial rules in India for drug approval process.

Under this provision, in situations where there is a threat to life or danger of disability due to a disease and where we do not have a better treatment alternative, Phase-II clinical trial results, if remarkable, could help in facilitating an accelerated approval of a drug, which is yet undergoing a trial and yet unregistered.

It is being said that Covaxin could be more effective in fighting the new mutant coronavirus variant. How?

■ Post-vaccination immune status of an individual, which would counter the effects of a new mutant of the same virus on its host, is dependent on multiple factors. Although, some of them are yet incompletely understood, the inactivated whole virion used in the development of Covaxin is expected to achieve a wider antigenic presentation to our immune system resulting in a versatile spectrum of immunity.

Worth noting in this regard is that the whole inactivated virus-induced immune response, in some experiments, have fared better compared to the subunit vaccines in case of influenza. Whether a similar phenomenon would hold true at population level for COVID-19, needs to be examined over the coming years. In the meantime, well-designed laboratory experiments could throw some light in this regard.

It will not be inappropriate to mention here that some of the viruses, such as influenza, have evolved mechanisms to evade recognition by immune memory. Slight change in viral structural proteins, known as drifts, is one of these mechanisms, which cause local epidemics by avoiding recognition of the progeny virus by the poorly efficient immune system.

On the other hand, when the influenza virus replaces one of its genes with a new one – a major change indeed – that is called shift and such radically different influenza viruses, sweeping through the world, are capable of causing pandemics.

'Pregnant women must not take vaccine now'

They have not been part of trials so far, says Health Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Pregnant and lactating women have not been a part of any COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial so far and should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine at this time, cautioned the Health Ministry in its note on precautions and contraindications for the vaccines. It added that vaccine-specific contraindications may apply as new information becomes available.

Meanwhile, health experts feel the logistical challenges the COVID-19 vaccination process would encounter in India are expected to be tackled effectively by the healthcare system.

However, Rajeev Jayadevan, past president of the Indian Medical Association, Kochi, said, "I would like to point out two potential problems that I foresee with the delivery of vaccines in India – the first is vaccine hesitancy and the second is fake news and anti-vaccine hoaxes."

He said, "We must take stringent measures to stop such rumours, perhaps even take pre-emptive legal measures to stop and discourage such activities under the Epidemic Act."

The total number of persons found positive with the U.K. strain of COVID-19 was 114 on Friday, said the Health Ministry.

India in the past 24 hours has reported 191 COVID-19 case fatalities with six States and Union Territories accounting for 73.3% of new deaths, said data released by the Health Ministry on Friday. Maharashtra saw the most casualties (70), followed by Kerala (19) and West Bengal (17).

India is reporting one new death per million population in the last seven days, with a case fatality rate of 1.44%. Deaths per million population in India are among the lowest in the world, said the Ministry.

First phase: Medical staff checking the COWIN app at a vaccination centre in Mumbai. ▪ VIVEK BENDRE

Scientists divided over Covaxin nod

The absence of efficacy data has sparked off a battle of statements

R. PRASAD
CHENNAI

Scientists and doctors are divided on the issue of restricted use approval granted to Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, a COVID-19 vaccine, even as India prepares to vaccinate three crore people from Friday.

In a tweet on January 14, the Health Ministry said Covishield and Covaxin approved for restricted use by the Indian regulator were safe. On Thursday, the Ministry released a statement by four dozen scientists and doctors to "collectively assure" the safety of the vaccines.

The statement came on the same day as 12 other scientists issued a statement asking for efficacy data before vaccination.

The statement comes after Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology at Christian Medical College, Vellore, told *The Hindu* that she would not take Covaxin in the absence of efficacy data.

While acknowledging the safety and promising immunogenicity data of Covaxin, the 12 scientists say: "It is imperative that relevant data from the larger Phase-III trial become available before administering the vaccine to large numbers of people." They also add: "A greater degree of transparency prior to the start of the vaccination programme is essential. This is especially true for Covaxin, for which Phase-III safety and efficacy data are not yet available."

Restricted emergency use approval was given to Covaxin on January 3.

In the statement released by the Health Ministry, the scientists and doctors agree that efficacy data is not available for Covaxin. Ironically, lack of efficacy data is exactly what scientists who have been cautioning against using Covaxin for vaccinating people have been highlighting.

"Once the regulator has approved the vaccine based on data, then who are we to object it?" asks Dr. T.D. Dogra, former Director of AIIMS, New Delhi, and one of the four dozen signatories of the statement. "They have the data and guidelines and have taken a decision accordingly. We should trust the regulator and the process of vaccine approval."

'Robust response'

The scientists, who have criticised those raising concerns about granting restricted use approval to Covaxin even in the absence of efficacy data, point out to animal and Phase-I and Phase-II trial data that shows the vaccine is safe and provides robust immune response.

Dr. Sunil Kumar Arora from the Department of Immunopathology at PGIMER, Chandigarh, told *The Hindu* that even robust immunogenicity data from Phase-II cannot be used as a substitute for efficacy data from Phase-III trials.

Professor of Physics and Biology at Ashoka University Dr. Gautam Menon, who is also co-author of COVID-19 modelling studies, said in an email, "Even robust immune response data from human participants cannot be a substitute to efficacy data collected during Phase-III trials."

To talk of the need for safety in a vaccination program where many hundreds of millions of healthy people will be vaccinated is not about "vested interests", "defamation" and "irresponsible statements", says Dr. Menon.

By not waiting for efficacy data from Phase-III trials, the Indian regulator has bypassed the approval process even for restricted use, says Dr. Aniket Sule from Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education at Mumbai's Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR).

DCGI nod for Phase 3 trial of Sputnik V

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has received the approval of the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to conduct Phase-III clinical trial for Russia's COVID-19 vaccine candidate, Sputnik V, in the country.

The Phase-III trial will be conducted on 1,500 subjects as part of the randomised, double blind, parallel group, placebo controlled study in India, said the firm, which has its headquarters in Hyderabad.

Dr. Reddy's and Russian Direct Investment Fund had announced a partnership in September on clinical trials for Sputnik V and its distribution rights in India.

"We expect to commence the Phase-III study within this month and will continue to fast-track our efforts to bringing in a safe and efficacious vaccine for the Indian population," Dr. Reddy's co-chairman and MD G.V. Prasad said in a statement on Friday.

EC seeks protection for top officials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission directed State and Union Territory governments on Friday to seek its approval before initiating disciplinary action against Chief Electoral Officers, and those up to the rank of Joint Chief Electoral Officer, stating that it had come across some instances of victimisation for political reasons.

The EC, in a letter to the Union Cabinet Secretary, Secretary to the Department of Personnel and Training and Chief Secretaries of all the States and Union Territories, said they must seek its permission before acting against officials during their tenure and up to one year from its expiry.

The Commission also directed the State/UT governments not to reduce facilities such as vehicles, security and other amenities provided to the office of the Chief Electoral Officers for proper discharge of their duties.

The EC said many a time, political vendetta was behind disciplinary cases being filed against officials after the completion of their tenure. "An environment of fear is created to convey that the upright, steadfast and sincere officers can be taken to task at any time, on the flimsiest of grounds," it said.

HC extends protection to Arnab in TRP scam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday extended the protection granted to Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and other employees of ARG Outlier Media Private Limited from the Mumbai police till January 29 in the alleged Television Ratings Point (TRP) manipulation case.

A status report on the ongoing investigation in the case was submitted by the police to a Division Bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and Manish Pitale.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, representing ARG, said all the allegations made by the Mumbai police of Mr. Goswami paying bribes to rig TRP numbers were "nonsensical".

Mr. Salve told the court that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had also registered a money laundering case against the accused and urged the court to call for a status report on the ongoing probe in it. He said by doing so, the court would see that the case against ARG by Mumbai police was malafide.

CBI books sub-inspector of SSB in LTC scam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has booked a sub-inspector (ministerial) of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and others for alleged forgery, cheating and conspiracy in fraudulent Leave Travel Concession claims made by over 750 officers and personnel of the force.

Sub-inspector Milan Kherkatary has been accused of being instrumental in institutionalising the illegal practice, operating as a travel agent and providing fake air/train tickets, boarding passes and other documents.

In its complaint, the SSB also raised security concerns stating that the beneficiaries travelled on edited tickets, but none of the agencies operating at airports, including airline staff and Central Industrial Security Force personnel, detected it. Such activities went on for about four years. The names of two Air India officials, Sunita Kumar and Kamal Kishore, beside travel agents at Port Blair and Havelock Island, have also surfaced.

The main accused received commission for inflating the fare amounts by editing the tickets.

Nepal raises Kalapani boundary issue with India

Foreign Minister attends Joint Commission meeting

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Nepal has raised the Kalapani boundary dispute with India during the Joint Commission meeting, visiting Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali said here on Friday. The Minister said that the Indo-Nepal boundary dispute existed in "two segments" and Kathmandu wished to find a solution to the matter urgently. Mr. Gyawali also took up Nepal's requirement for vaccines to fight the COVID-19 pandemic as Kathmandu has approved Serum Institute of India's (SII) Covishield vaccine.

Mapping of territory

"We started the demarcation and mapping of the boundary since 1981. At that time, a Joint Technical Committee was founded which had tenure till 2007. It produced 182 strip maps which depicts the border... but for various reasons [work on] two segments – Susta and Kalapani – were not completed. If we talk of the overall boundary between Nepal and India, it is a smaller segment. However, it is an unfinished work and that's why we are talking of the need and urgency of finalising and finishing those segments as well," said Mr. Gyawali, addressing a gathering at the Indian Council of World Affairs.

Pradeep Gyawali

This is the first time that the Foreign Minister of Nepal has presented the dispute on the boundary front from the Indian capital since the issue erupted in November 2019 prompting Nepal to unveil a new political map that showed the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura region of Pithoragarh district as part of the country's sovereign territory.

The Hindu had reported earlier citing sources that the Indian side was aware the Nepalese delegation would raise the boundary issue in Friday's interaction but said that India would not discuss the matter at the Joint Commission level as the boundary dispute has a dedicated Foreign Secretary-level mechanism that is yet to meet.

Addressing the bitterness that was witnessed in India-Nepal relations in 2020, Mr. Gyawali said there were "ups and downs" and there were differences on some issues. "But overall partnership and relations moved smoothly and we should take this momentum ahead by drawing lessons from that," said Mr. Gyawali, highlighting that Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared "very personal" ties.

A statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal said "boundary and border management" was part of the discussion. In contrast, a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said "border management" was part of the discussion.

The statement from Nepal said that both the teams "discussed the review of the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950". It is understood that the review has been recommended by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) constituted by Mr. Modi and Mr. Oli in 2016. The EPG report, which has been completed, is yet to be submitted to the Indian Prime Minister. The Nepalese statement said the issue of "submission" of the report was also raised during the meeting.

PM's trusted official gets an elevation

A.K. Sharma nominated as MLC in U.P.

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Former bureaucrat A.K. Sharma's nomination to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council by the BJP on Friday, a day after he joined the State unit of the party, has set off speculation that he may be made a Minister in the Yogi Adityanath government and given important infrastructure-related portfolios as the BJP wants to give a push to such projects in the run-up to the 2022 Assembly election.

If these events come to pass, which they likely will, it will be one in a line of long careers that bureaucrats in the confidence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi have had since he came to power in Delhi.

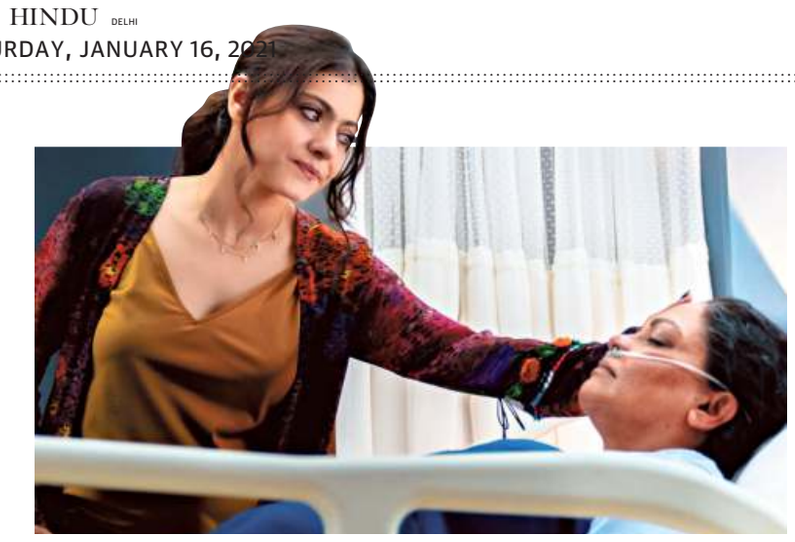
Mr. Sharma, who served in Mr. Modi's PMO (Prime Minister's Office) handling infrastructure-related projects, had been with him even in the Gujarat Chief Minister's Office. His move to Lucknow is a sign that when it comes to getting the job done to Mr. Modi's satisfaction, the latter prefers his trusted bureaucrats, calling on skills of handling administration coupled with the nuances they have picked up in handling the roles of the very political offices they have served in.

A similar example, though not exactly the same, is that of current Comptroller and Auditor-General (C&AG) G.C. Murmu, who had served as Principal Secretary to Mr. Modi while the latter was Chief Minister of Gujarat. Mr. Murmu had been appointed the first Lt. Governor of the newly reconstituted Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

A.K. Sharma

The trend of long careers in semi-political positions, even post retirement, for bureaucrats who have served Mr. Modi in the past has now become quite common.

K. Kailashnathan, who joined Mr. Modi's CMO in Gandhinagar in 2006 as his Principal Secretary, has had an an uninterrupted stint there, even after retirement. He now serves as Chief Principal Secretary in the Gujarat CMO, having had six extensionssince he retired as Additional Chief Secretary in May 2013. A source in Gandhinagar terms Mr. Kailashnathan as the "keeper of the institutional memory" of Mr. Modi's CMO.



(Clockwise from left) Behind the scenes on the set of *Tribhanga* and stills from the film, and (bottom left) director Renuka Shahane

Mother knows best?

Renuka Shahane's Netflix flick, *Tribhanga*, will have you re-examining your relationship with your mother

NEHA BHATT

At a time when notions of motherhood are being subverted in literature and in film comes *Tribhanga – Tedhi Medhi Crazy*, written and directed by Renuka Shahane. It pries open the complex dynamic between three generations of mothers and daughters with generous helpings of humour, chutzpah, and grace. Mothers falter. They fail. They are fallible. It is important to not judge them for it, the film appears to say.

The upcoming Netflix film marks Kajol's digital debut, playing a famous actor and Odissi dancer Anu, who resents her writer mother Nayan (Tanvi Azmi). Added to the mix is Anu's daughter, Masha (Mithila Palkar), who is about to have a baby. Shahane, who adores Odissi, uses it as a metaphor for her characters. Anu describes Nayan as the slightly off-centre pose '*abhang*', Masha as the in-balance '*sama-bhang*', and herself as '*tribhanga*', the pose with three bends at varying angles.

Not always perfect

The story, says Shahane over a warm, laughter-filled Zoom conversation, along with Kajol and Azmi, came from a desire to explore how our relationships with the mother figure affects our journeys, especially when we become mothers. "For me it is a very strong relationship and for everything I am today, I would thank my mother [writer Shanta Gokhale]. When I was doing [TV show] *Surabhi*, I had met someone who mentioned that after her marriage she was so glad to get out of her premarital home because she hated her mum. I was stunned by that admission. Meeting her was the beginning of the story."

At the core of the story is Anu's resentment of her mother's unconventional decisions that she believes ruined her life. "Then Masha followed because I wanted the intergenerational difference," says Shahane.

> *When I was doing* Surabhi, *I had met someone who mentioned that she was so glad to get out of her premarital home because she hated her mum. I was stunned... That was the beginning of the story*
>
> RENUKA SHAHANE, director

Telling it like it is

What drew Kajol to the film is the way the three lives and relationships are woven together. "I've always had strong women around me – like my mother and my grandmother – who made non-conformist decisions and encouraged that in me as well," she says. Much of the film's energy comes from Anu's outbursts against her mother.

"The script is the hero of the film," says Azmi, adding that she found it fascinating how "Anu is almost exactly like her mother, which she doesn't realise till she has a daughter of her own". And indeed, the film counters the image of the perfect, self-sacrificing mother we've long held on to.

So what does motherhood mean to the three women off screen? For Shahane, "Motherhood has never been what was projected in a small box by society. There is so much pressure to be that kind of mother. I have never seen my mother like that. She has been non-conformist, warm and amazing."

Meanwhile, Kajol quips that motherhood is like being an intern forever, always learning on the go. What they hope the audience takes away from the film is the idea that women, whether they are mothers or not, need to be appreciated as human beings. And to not expect mothers to be demi-gods who know the answers to everything and do everything perfectly, adds Azmi.

Looking inwards

Did working on *Tribhanga* make them reflect on their own relationships with their mothers and children? "My mother is the only person in the world who understood me, spoke my language and still does. We are not putting up a strict manual saying if you don't do this right, you are wrong. You aren't wrong, you are just different," says Kajol.

It is perhaps natural that the process of making the intense, unfiltered family drama has been a cathartic experience. "Playing a part, crying in front of a 100 people on set is always cathartic," says Kajol. For Shahane, it was the culmination of a long journey. "I wanted people to look at the characters, forgive them, and not judge them for their actions. I wanted the expectations that I have as a mother from myself to be kinder and more compassionate. I could look at myself with a little more grace."

Tribhanga *is now streaming on Netflix. Watch an interview with Kajol, Tanvi Azmi and Renuka Shahane on thehindu.com*

Pick of the week

Concerts, stand-up and other online events you just can't miss.

Take a trip

Join Vasundara Devi Gohil — better knows as the Girl with the Backpack — on an eight-day trip to ski or snowboard in Gulmarg. From February 13 to 20, at ₹47,000 + taxes on a twin-sharing basis. This includes meals and equipment rentals. Travel arrangements to Gulmarg not included. Email girlwiththebackpack@gmail.com to register.

Get booked

As part of their year-long virtual event, the Neev Literature Fest has announced a Reading Challenge 2021. Children aged 10 to 13 can sign up to read over 60 books from January to June, in competitive and non-competitive tracks. School teams can compete in a quiz at the end of the challenge. Register on neevliteraturefestival.org

Design with Dastkar

The *bazaar* season begins in Delhi with Design Fair 2021. Apart from carpets, studio pottery and Kutchhi crafts, Gujarati weaver-designer Chaman Siju, who showcased his saris at Lakme Fashion Week 2017, will launch a line of stoles, shawls and *dupattas*. At the Nature Bazaar Venue till January 24, from 11 am to 6.30 pm. ♣9910802970

A date with heritage

Heritage organisation Madras Inherited pays homage to the buildings and places that are central to the city's history with a bilingual calendar featuring photos by Binsan Oommen Baby. It includes a list of significant dates pertaining to Chennai. Each page transforms into a picture card keepsake. At ₹449 each. ♣8925704437 Email: mail@madrasinherited.in

Luxury meets manga

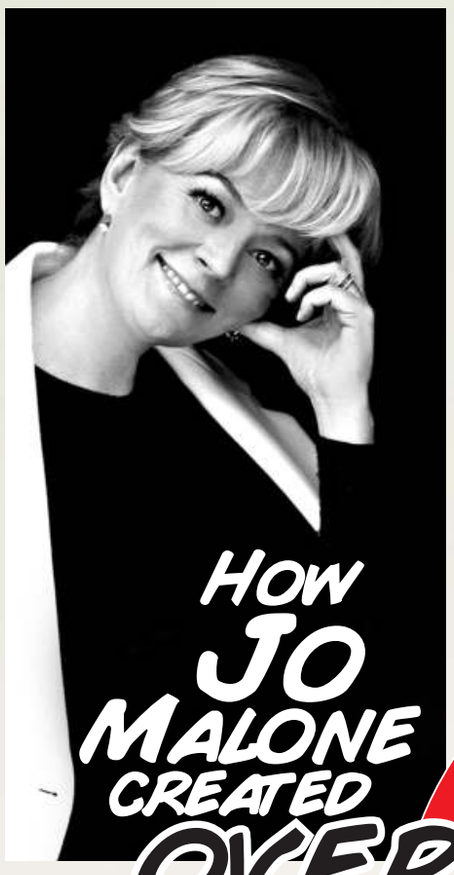
A much-loved cartoon meets Italian luxury in the new Gucci x Doraemon collection, designed by creative director Alessandro Michele. The robot-cat from the future also stars in the visual campaign that marks the show's 50th anniversary. The collection of separates, jackets, shoes and more for men and women is now available online and in stores from January 20.

OPOS goes offline

Aviyal in five minutes, butter chicken in six, and mutton *biryani* in 12? Not to mention lesser dishes to clean up once you're done cooking. After building a cult following for his quick 'one pot one shot' cooking method on YouTube and Facebook, B Ramakrishnan has compiled *The Complete OPOS Cookbook* (HarperCollins). At ₹399 online and in book stores.

Clean up

Known as Britain's cheekiest bath and body brand, Anatomicals has launched their line of paraben- and cruelty-free products (complete with colourful and pun-covered packaging) in India. First on the market will be their signature body scrubs and cleansers in five different variants as well as hand wash. From ₹299, on Amazon, Flipkart and Myntra.



How Jo Malone created over 40 fragrances in 2020

The London-based perfumer says her Zara collab and being homebound taught her to work harder, push herself

ROSELLA STEPHEN

The sense of smell is closely linked with memory, possibly more so than any of our other senses. This is something we have come to deeply appreciate during the pandemic, COVID-19 induced anosmia or no. Perfumer Jo Malone knows this connection well, having launched two successful fragrance businesses and currently enjoying the rewards of her collaboration with high street giant, Zara. When we meet on a Zoom call, Malone, 57, talks about her "year within four walls" with her husband and son, likening herself to an athlete "practising and practising and working every day". Zara has been receptive to her creativity, she says. As for Zara Emotions, the new collection of eight fragrances, launched in India in December 2020 is budget friendly and delivers the Jo Loves experience.

Best known for Jo Malone London that she sold to Estée Lauder in 1999 and introducing Jo Loves in 2011, where her Pomelo fragrance wasted no time in becoming a classic, this entrepreneur has been candid about her struggles when she left Jo Malone London. "With Jo Loves, it was like starting from the beginning. It demanded so much more from me. Working with Zara, I'm on the top of that mountain again, and every day I see opportunity. I'm braver and stronger. I used to create three to four fragrances a year but now it's probably 40 to 50 a year," she says. She has turned one floor of her house into her workspace where everything is archived. "I think the quietness and isolation [of lockdown] has really caused something in me to come to the surface that I didn't know existed. So you're going to see in 2021 all of that creativity and storytelling come to reality." Known for her clean and unforgettable unisex perfumes – Red Truffle 21 with green fig, bitter citrus and pine is a personal favourite – and her minimalist bottles, Malone has something new for Jo Loves fans. "I have a fragrance where I have created art for the bottle [not clear glass which is the norm]. It is a very masculine, rich fragrance with notes I have not used before. You can feel the heritage and the spirit of London, and the things I love about this city. It is about looking up and dreaming again," is all she gives away about the perfume to be launched in March-April in the UK. While citrus and the Orange Flower have been her all-time favourites, she says it is this new fragrance that will always remind her of 2020.

As it did for most of us, last year taught Malone to work and live differently. "My team and I created even while not being in the same room and it has shown me the most powerful way of working that I've ever known," she says. New Jo Loves stores were launched in Dubai and China despite the lockdown, where she checked every detail virtually. Malone places emphasis on experiential retail – popular concepts include letting customers create their own scented candles, and a Fragrance Brasserie Bar with a 'tapas menu' encourages you to try out her scents in creative ways. While her candles and another successful product, her Fragrance Paintbrush – a paintbrush-style scent applicator – are yet to come to India, Malone hopes to be present when the latter launches. "I want to be there in India to show you how to paint your body with fragrance, so it becomes a new form of a tattoo. You can paint Monet's water lilies all over your body. It's a whole new way of wearing and looking at fragrance," she says.

She adds that the pandemic has brought with it heartfelt stories about the impact of her fragrance among people in isolation. One of them is about a woman who made pillow slips with pictures of her family and sprayed it with their favourite Jo Loves fragrance, Pomelo. "It was like a love letter for her mother who lived in a home; she put those pillows on her bed and could still smell her family, although she couldn't touch them and hold them," says Malone, concluding, "It is a privilege to be able to unlock those memories, to be a part of the intimacy of a family, and bring people together."

Zara Emotions 40 ML at ₹1,590 or a collector's set of eight at ₹9,990

Zara select

"2020 has been the year of citrus for me," says Malone, recalling how she craved grapefruits, limes and pomelos. "I shied away from anything too scented or heavy florals. Although, in the next Zara collection you will start to see my personality change a little bit." From the existing collection, Malone picks The Waterlily Tea Dress, with primary notes of bergamot, spearmint and musk, for it reminds her of "*The Great Gatsby*, with vintage jewelled dresses, Louboutin shoes and champagne". Fleur D'Oranger, her favourite, with orange flower, neroli and ylang ylang, would be about the celebrations of life "from weddings to Sunday lunches with the family, sitting in the South of France". But Vetiver Pamplemousse is what she wears every day. "It is like a white cotton shirt, a quiet whisper that says 'I've been here every day and every day we have survived'."

(Clockwise from above) Jo Malone scented candles; perfumes from the Zara collab and perfumer Jo Malone

Garden for control

"Urban homes aren't usually spaces to spend the entire day in. Most of our life was spent outside it, between work, socialising and entertaining. Then suddenly, last year, we were faced with this situation where the home turned into a restaurant, office, school. And people started to think about what access to nature and greenery really meant. That balcony, that window, that access to the sun became extremely important. It goes back to an emotional, psychological need — both visually of having a connect with nature, but also [by nurturing plants] of sustaining some sort of control over our surroundings at a time when we don't necessarily have it. Earlier, the help used to water the plants. Now we are engaging with them daily, much like pets. For a lot of people, this is quite a unique experience. And there are many who swear by the idea of talking to plants! If one is ever solitary, they are fantastic companions. This trend for greenery is also moving into our interiors. We are seeing more people interested in wallpapers, frames and prints with botanical themes, and colours that are 'nature inspired'. Zoom frames incorporate plants along with artefacts. Look up Bengaluru-based architect Vinita Chaitanya's videos on Instagram. She's become popular for her styling with flowers. When people start to go back to work, balcony gardening may peter out for some and stay on for others. But should we continue to have growing, nurtured objects in our homes? I say, 100%."

Manju Sara Rajan is the editor-in-chief of beautifulhomes.com

As told to **Surya Praphulla Kumar**

Green stylist

The interest in indoor plants has led to a new profession. Plant styling, which *The New York Times* calls 'a career of our times', is picking up abroad. For a minimum of $2,000, a stylist will come home, design and fill your space with beautifully-potted plants, and provide a detailed care guide. It may not have caught on as much in India, but people like Archana Shivanandan (@plantstylistmumbai) are setting the tone. The marketing professional, who recently diversified her career, visits her clients' homes, measures the light at various spots, and advises them on suitable plants, seating and even flooring. Not surprisingly, she receives some weird requests. "Everyone wants plants in their bathrooms! Most bathrooms in Mumbai don't get any sunlight, yet people are obsessed with the idea [possibly after seeing them on Instagram]." For such requests, she kindly suggests artificial foliage.

A consultation costs ₹5,000.

In the #houseplantclub

Becoming 'plant parents', a millennial trend that's been around for a few years, came to a head in 2020. Now, influencers, stylists, and master classes are helping keep the momentum

CHRYSELLE D'SILVA DIAS

"Our plant, Lola, had a baby!" announced a #proudplantparent yesterday, on the 'gram. Another parent introduced us to Hera and Odin, two succulents that had "graduated to bigger pots". The comments sections were flooded with congratulatory messages. Seems odd? Not so in our post pandemic world, where houseplants – often with unusual names, much like our pets – are our new companions.

People are picking up Monsteras (one of the trending plants of 2020), talking to them every morning (many swear by it), and taking photographs with them. It is not just the average garden enthusiast who has taken it up with an enthusiasm last seen for sourdough. The world over, the houseplant industry is blooming with workshops, live videos, and plant talk shows. Even *MasterClass* had a session with Ron Finley, the Gangsta Gardener of Los Angeles.

India's 'plant influencers' are keeping up. "Interest in gardening has grown since lockdown," says Vinayak Garg, who founded Delhi-based Lazy Gardener in 2019. His Reels about growing microgreens and knowing when to repot have seen his Instagram followers increase from 100k in March 2020 to 290k+. "During lockdown, I was alone at home. So I decided to do a 21-day series that included the basics. The number of people attending it [10,000 at one point] was a reflection of the growing interest. Since then, we've attracted a mixed crowd, between 25 and 50 years."

Pot parenting

Lawyer Shefali Alvares is a new plant parent; she began gardening during the lockdown after seeing how therapeutic her grandmother found it. "I started with hardy varieties such as palms and money plants, and then moved on to others like caladiums and peace lilies." She also went on a buying spree. "It became like a disease," she laughs. "I made the mistake of buying from vendors who forced plants to flower prematurely, so they'd look attractive, but these don't last." The death of several species was a huge setback to her confidence. Since then, Alvares has "spent hours reading up about plants" and following experts.

Plant blogger and researcher Ekta Chaudhary (@GardenUp) has dealt with many such 'mourners' of late. "Often, in DMs and comments, I see that people need encouragement after they've killed their first plant. I tell them to try again because nobody is born with a green thumb. Over time, you develop a kind of intuition," she says. Another influencer who fields similar questions is Ann Mathew (@geeksofgreen). She'd started gardening a few years ago with 40 succulents she'd brought from her aunt's garden in Mysuru. After she "killed them all", she began studying plants seriously and, as her knowledge grew and her north-facing garden flourished, she started putting up videos on social media. Today, the Mumbai-based entrepreneur has 58k+ followers on YouTube and 32k+ on Instagram, who wait for her videos on gardening tips and nursery tours.

Vinayak Garg, and Ann Mathew

Some Swiss cheese?

Foliage is having a moment – perhaps because not too many flowering plants grow well indoors, in India's climate. For Bengaluru-based architect, George Seemon, however, it is the "forest feel" that he finds most attractive. "When I design a space, I usually bring in a lot of minimalism. But when it comes to my own home, I love the clutter of having plants everywhere," he says. His house currently has more than 300 plants, over 100 of which he bought last year (think Plum aralias and the Taro vine). Seemon also used his spare time to research plants. "I follow international accounts, such as @lostinplantopia and @houseplantclubto. Unlike most Indian influencers – who are straightforward, giving information about what looks nice, how to pot, how to water – these content creators go into greater detail. Such as light metering or what the browning in different parts of a leaf signifies."

At Mumbai's Vriksha, customers are lining up to buy rare and unusual plants. "We have seen a notable increase in interest from younger people," says owner Shaan Lalwani. "Plants seem to be a great way to flex online. Last week, we sold 160 Venus flytraps, which is very popular now, along with the carnivorous Pitcher Plant."

Water and stay calm

What's pushing this trend of greening our interiors is also the fact that it gives people a sense of control in a world that has gone awry. There is a symbiotic relationship between the 'nature' that they bring indoors and the 'nurture' we exchange with them. A Japanese study found that viewing plants altered EEG recordings – it lowered stress and fear, as well as reduced blood pressure and muscle tension.

For others, it is a coping mechanism. Mumbai-based writer Deepika Gumaste was diagnosed with clinical anxiety and depression, and was put on medication right before lockdown. "Deciding to begin my garden was perhaps the wisest decision I took. They are no-expectation companions," she says. "Caring for something immediately beyond our families and friends served as a daily reminder of the possibility of life. It kept me sane and added a routine to my life. And when I feel alone, I sing to them."

With inputs from **SPK**

FOOD SPOT

RAHUL VERMA

The Chalapeno burger from AKU'S • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Buns of glory

The burger with a good mouth and hand feel at AKU'S

Our young neighbours are great foodies, so we have detailed food conversations. I mentioned AKU'S: The Brrgrr Co. to them one evening, and they assured me that the burgers were "Yum". I had first heard about this place when some friends marked an anniversary picnic with AKU'S. The praise that followed prompted me to take a look at this burger heaven. I found that it had an outlet in Gurugram and Delhi's Defence Colony (call 8826669279).

I looked at the menu and saw that they had an interesting mix of burgers: freshly minced lamb patties, chicken breasts, or a prawn patty. We asked for three kinds: a Bold Bingo, Meister and Chalapeno.

I had the Bold Bingo, tasted the other two, and loved them all! Mine had a lamb patty, blue cheese, caramelised onions, blended cheese and lettuce. The buns were soft, lamb was juicy, the blue cheese gave it a just-right piquancy, and the lettuce lent crunch.

The patty wasn't smothered with sauce (as some 'MNC burgers' are), so it didn't drip messily, but gave the burger a kick. A young nephew who had a Bold Bingo the next day said that the meat, cheese and onions complemented one another well, and what really worked for him was the fact that the burger didn't become a gooey mess in his hands, and the size was just right.

The Chalapeno had a stuffing of a grilled chicken breast, cheese blend, lettuce, jalapeño, peppers and jalapeño spread. This was ordered keeping in mind that one member of the household loves hot food – and she felt it was the best she'd ever had.

The master was the Meister – a lamb patty, with a fried egg, bacon, cheese, caramelised onions and sauce. The egg and the bacon (imported, says the menu) gave the burger a delicious twist. And the egg, of course, added another level of texture and taste.

In the vegetarian section, there is a burger called Master Wu with wild mushroom and jalapeños, and a Master Blu with wild mushroom and blue cheese. The grilled Beetburger has a beetroot patty, and the Giza consists of a crisp potato and cheese patty. There is a gluten-free bun on offer, and a DIY kit.

If you're hearty eater, this burger won't be enough for a meal. You may need side dishes, or if you are a growing boy (like the aforementioned nephew), you may want to have a full meal after the burger.

There are quite a few sides, too. House made chicken nuggets with honey mustard mayo, skin-on French fries, onion rings and more. The fries are of three types: with salt and parsley, paprika, or truffle Parmesan and parsley.

Prices range from ₹250 to ₹285 for vegetarian, and between ₹250 and ₹450 for the non-vegetarian burgers.

Now I know why the young neighbours thought the burgers were yum. They indeed are. Yummilicious, I'd say.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

And the parties are back

Stepping out to a restaurant or someone's home seems like winning a 'get out of jail' card. And we need more of this

FLIGHT OF FANCY

GAYATRI RANGACHARI SHAH *is a Mumbai-based journalist who writes on the good life*

2021 is definitely off to a bang. This last weekend felt like a real one after so long, I almost forgot about COVID-19. On Saturday evening, I went to a five-person dinner party at art aficionado Udit Bhambri's home. Of course, we adhered to our social bubble. Nowadays, going to someone's home seems like winning a 'get out of jail' card. Udit has a fabulous collection and his enthusiasm for Indian art is infectious. His passion began as a young child; as an eight-year-old, he was urging his parents to buy paintings! Those who remember a pre-smart phone era will recall how popular autograph books used to be. Udit showed us his, signed not by movie stars and athletes, but by artists. He flipped through pages signed by MF Husain, Jehangir Sabavala and Ganesh Pyne, amongst others. The evening reminded me of all that we missed out last year, the wonderful feeling of dining with friends, learning something new along the way.

On Sunday, I did something even more risqué – I ate out at a restaurant! Tori recently opened in Bandra, and it is making waves. Chef Thomas Pongsak Catley, who helmed Amaz in Lima, Peru (one of South America's best restaurants), and who has worked at Nobu Park Lane, Maze Grill by Gordon Ramsay, and Ottolenghi in London, is in charge. Proprietor Abhayraj Singh Kohli, better known as 'AB', the man behind joints like The Roll Company and Grandmama's Café, said he conceptualised everything over lockdown, including hiring the chef and assistant chefs over Zoom.

(Clockwise from above) Tori in Bandra, the vegan tuna roll, and the columnist with her friends

A fan of Latin American-inspired Japanese food for almost two decades, he said he has been "waiting to open one in Mumbai for the last 16 years". It was the lockdown that made it happen. Because of the depressed economy, rents in prime locales were down, providing the right opportunity. "Getting a chef of this calibre could not have happened otherwise," he said.

Prior to opening, Catley spent a lot of time researching vegetarian and vegan dishes, and the brunch menu reflected it. The pulled jackfruit tacos were divine and so was the 'sushi': vegan tuna, avocado, and salted melon fat, which was essentially watermelon that had been drained over hours and 'reduced' to look like the fish. The cocktails were yummy, too. I tried Scent of Kochi, a mix of vodka, yuzu, lime and bitters. The one hiccup was around service. New restaurants tend to have such teething problems, but the fact that places of this calibre are opening is exciting.

To top off the week was – gasp! – a proper ladies lunch, replete with floral décor and big hair blow drys. It had been almost a year since I had been to one of these and I had forgotten how much fun they could be. My girlfriend Priya Nathani had insisted on throwing me a belated birthday bash. Again, it was a social bubble, albeit a slightly bigger one than the weekend dinner party. The celebratory lunch involved 10 people, including me, and everyone had braved the gathering after being reassured that it was "just us". Over lamb and mushroom tacos, flatbread, truffle parmesan fries, pink grapefruit avocado salad, baked baby burrata, *rawas* and cauliflower rice, served alongside white wine and Prosecco, we discussed skincare, wellness, and, of course, the pandemic. Some people wore masks, others were more carefree but most importantly, we laughed a lot.

Priya had a little shopping area set up with charm bracelets and necklaces from a newly-formed local brand, for people to browse through. Retail therapy never hurt anyone. It was a perfect afternoon, one that hopefully sets the tone for the year to come.

Biden unveils $1.9 trillion relief package

Plan aims at speeding up vaccination, providing $1,400 via cheques to Americans, and boosting the economy

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WILMINGTON

President-elect Joe Biden has unveiled a $1.9 trillion coronavirus plan to end "a crisis of deep human suffering" by speeding up vaccines and pumping out financial help to those struggling with the pandemic's prolonged economic fallout.

Called the "American Rescue Plan," the proposal would meet Mr. Biden's goal of administering 100 million vaccines by the 100th day of his administration, and advance his objective of reopening most schools by the spring. On a parallel track, it delivers another round of aid to stabilise the economy while the public health effort seeks the upper hand on the pandemic.

"We not only have an economic imperative to act now – I believe we have a moral obligation," Mr. Biden said in a nationwide address on Thursday. At the same time, he acknowledged that his plan "does not come cheaply."

Economic recovery

Mr. Biden proposed $1,400 cheques for most Americans, which on top of $600 provided in the most recent COVID-19 Bill would bring the total to the $2,000 that Mr. Biden has called for.

It would also extend a temporary boost in unemployment benefits and a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures through September. And it shoehorns in long-term Democratic policy aims such as increasing the minimum wage to $15 an hour, expanding paid leave for workers, and increasing tax credits for families with children. The last item would make it easier for women to go back to work, which in turn would help the economy recover.

In a joint statement, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer praised Mr. Biden, saying they would move quickly to pass it after Mr. Biden takes office next Wednesday. But Democrats have narrow margins in both chambers of Congress, and Republicans will push back on issues that range from increasing the minimum wage to providing more money for States, while demanding inclusion of their priorities, such as liability protection for businesses.

Big push: Joe Biden outlining his plan to combat COVID-19 and deal with the economic crisis in Wilmington. ▪AFP

"Remember that a bipartisan $900 billion #COVID19 relief Bill became law just 18 days ago," tweeted Senator John Cornyn, R-Texas. But Mr. Biden says that was only a down payment, and he promised more major legislation next month, focused on rebuilding the economy.

"The crisis of deep human suffering is in plain sight, and there's not time to waste," Mr. Biden said. "We have to act and we have to act now."

Trump to leave before Biden steps in

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump will leave Washington next Wednesday morning, just before President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, to begin his post-presidential life in Florida.

He will be sent off with a departure ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, according to a person who spoke on condition of anonymity. Officials are considering an elaborate event that would have the feel of a state visit, with a red carpet, colour guard, military band and 21-gun salute all being discussed.

Mr. Trump is expected to remain in Florida with a small group of aides.

Unveiled document highlights Trump's mixed China legacy

Beijing slams U.S. Strategic Framework for Indo-Pacific

ANANTH KRISHNAN

The newly declassified 2018 Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific, made public by the Trump administration in its last week in office, underlines how prominently "strategic competition between the U.S. and China" set Washington's regional policy over the past four years, and President Donald Trump's mixed record in effectively addressing that challenge.

Among the objectives outlined in the document are promoting American values throughout the region to "counterbalance" values being promoted by China, deterring China from using force or threats against U.S. allies and partners, and building a credible economic response and advancing "U.S. global economic leadership" to counter China's influence and its projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative.

China this week expectedly hit out at the document, saying it "proves the malign motives of the U.S. side to contain China".

Asked by State media specifically about its references to "protecting Taiwan and helping India contain China", the Foreign Ministry spokesperson in Beijing, Zhao Lijian, dismissed the framework as "certain politicians on the U.S. side want[ing] to mark their legacy", saying it "reeks of Cold War mentality" and "belongs to the dustbin of history".

The Trump administration certainly did achieve some of the outlined objectives, particularly in expanding security cooperation with India, Japan and Australia – or the "Quad". However, its economic aspirations, as well as building a broader coalition to respond to China's actions, remain, at best, works-in-progress.

Zhao Lijian

Mr. Trump's inconsistent approach to many of America's own allies and partners,

NEWS ANALYSIS

particularly on the trade front, has been one major obstacle. Indeed, one of his first acts in office was to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, which would have created the world's biggest trading bloc without China. The agreement was later concluded without the U.S.

China-led trade bloc

The end of his term, meanwhile, saw the China-backed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement come into force in November last year. This includes Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand – four countries that the U.S. had hoped to align with to offer a robust economic regional response to China.

The document notes China's aims "to dissolve U.S. alliances and partnerships in the region" and "exploit vacuums and opportunities created by these diminished bonds". Yet, one of the biggest criticisms of Mr. Trump's foreign policy has been his hot-and-cold approach to allies, for instance, demanding South Korea pay more to maintain a U.S. military presence there. His successor, Joe Biden, has declared repairing alliances as one of his immediate priorities as well as a shift away from the messaging of "America First".

Unpredictable U.S.

Wary of the unpredictability in Washington, countries including India and Japan moved to try and shore up relations with China. India in June 2017 proposed holding an "informal summit", which it went ahead with in 2018 and 2019 despite a border crisis in Doklam erupting only days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

However, China's own actions on several fronts, ultimately, would end up, more than anything else, help further some of the goals in the U.S. strategic vision, particularly in building security partnerships. Rather than look to "dissolve" U.S. partnerships as the framework had feared, Beijing's actions, from the crisis sparked on the India border by its transgressions last year to renewed tensions in the Taiwan Straits and the South China Sea, only helped deepen them.

Relations with India emerge as one major positive. The framework describes as one of its "desired end-states" the U.S. becoming India's "preferred partner on security issues" – a trend that the past four years has certainly seen - as well as the two countries cooperating to counter Chinese influence in South and Southeast Asia – which, however, remains a work-in-progress.

Mounting pressure on China, U.S. blacklists Xiaomi, CNOOC

It adds 9 more to the list of Chinese firms with military links

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HONG KONG

The U.S. government has blacklisted Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi Corp. and China's third-largest national oil company for alleged military links, heaping pressure on Beijing in President Donald Trump's last week in office.

The Department of Defense added nine companies to its list of Chinese firms with military links, including Xiaomi and state-owned plane manufacturer Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China (Comac).

U.S. investors will have to divest their stakes in Chinese companies on the military list by November this year, according to an executive order signed by Mr. Trump last November.

Xiaomi did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Xiaomi Corp. overtook Apple Inc. as the world's No. 3 smartphone maker by sales in the third quarter of 2020, according to data by Gartner.

Shoppers walking past a Xiaomi outlet in Beijing on Thursday. ▪AFP

Separately, the Commerce Department put China National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC) on the entity list, an economic blacklist that forbids U.S. firms from exporting or transferring technology with the companies named unless permission has been obtained from the U.S. government. The move comes after about 60 Chinese companies were added to the list in December, including drone maker DJI and semiconductor firm SMIC.

CNOOC has been involved in offshore drilling in the disputed waters South China Sea, where Beijing has overlapping territorial claims with other countries including Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Taiwan, and Malaysia.

"China's reckless and belligerent actions in the South China Sea and its aggressive push to acquire sensitive intellectual property and technology for its militarisation efforts are a threat to U.S. national security and the security of the international community," U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said. "CNOOC acts as a bully for the People's Liberation Army to intimidate China's neighbours," he added.

'U.S. rioters sought to assassinate lawmakers'

Justice Dept. cites strong evidence

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. prosecutors now believe supporters of President Donald Trump planned to "capture and assassinate elected officials" in their siege of the Capitol building last week, according to a new court filing.

The filing, submitted by Justice Department lawyers late on Thursday, sought the detention of Jacob Chansley of Arizona, the QAnon conspiracy theorist pictured in the riot dressed as a horned shaman at the desk of Vice-President Mike Pence.

"Strong evidence, including Chansley's own words and actions at the Capitol, supports that the intent of the Capitol rioters was to capture and assassinate elected officials in the U.S. government," prosecutors said of the January 6 siege.

They said Chansley, 33, left a note for Mr. Pence at the dais in the Senate Chamber, which read: "it's only a matter of time, justice is coming."

Jacob Chansley

The filing gives further insight into the FBI probe on the day of chaos at the Capitol, which left elected officials holed up fearing for their lives and at least five people dead.

It comes as authorities lay charges against individuals involved in the riot, including a man who flew the confederate flag inside the building, a man who wore a "Camp Auschwitz" sweatshirt and a U.S. Olympic swimming gold medalist.

Chansley is due to appear in court on Friday.

ELSEWHERE

Dutch govt. resigns over child welfare scandal

THE HAGUE

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and his entire Cabinet resigned on Friday to take political responsibility for a scandal involving investigations into child welfare payments that wrongly labelled thousands of parents as fraudsters. The move was seen as largely symbolic as the government will remain in office until a new coalition is formed after a March 17 election in the Netherlands. AP

Fiji wins presidency of UN rights body

GENEVA

The UN Human Rights Council elected Fiji's Ambassador as its 2021 President in an unprecedented secret ballot after a diplomatic stand-off blocked the usual consensus decision. Fiji's Ambassador in Geneva, Nazhat Shameem Khan, who served as the council's Vice-President in 2020 and is considered a rights champion, won with 29 out of 47 votes. AFP

After U.S., Russia pulls out of Open Skies treaty

The pact allowed unarmed surveillance

REUTERS
MOSCOW

Russia announced on Friday it was pulling out of the Open Skies treaty, saying that the pact, which allows unarmed surveillance flights over member countries, had been seriously compromised by the withdrawal of the United States.

The move, announced by Russia's Foreign Ministry, comes days before U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's January 20 inauguration amid fears of a burgeoning arms race. Moscow's last major nuclear arms pact with Washington is set to expire next month.

The United States left the Open Skies arms control and verification treaty in November, accusing Russia of violating it, something Moscow denied.

Russia said in a statement that Moscow had made specific proposals to other members to mitigate against the impact of the U.S. exit but that those proposals were not backed by Washington's allies.

Moscow will formally notify other member states about its exit once it has completed unspecified withdrawal procedures at home, it said. The exit process usually takes months to be finalised.

Sharing of intelligence

Russia has raised concerns that despite leaving the treaty Washington could potentially retain access to overflight intelligence gathered by allies who remain members in the treaty.

The *Kommersant* newspaper reported earlier that Moscow had tried to get guarantees from other countries that they would not share such intelligence with the U.S. but had not been given any assurances.

Arms control tensions have been rising between Moscow and Washington and New START, their last remaining major nuclear arms control treaty, is set to expire in February.

Mr. Biden has said he's keen to renew it but it remains unclear for how long.

42 dead after powerful quake rocks Indonesia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JAKARTA

A powerful earthquake rocked Indonesia's Sulawesi island on Friday, killing at least 42 people, levelling a hospital and severely damaging other buildings, authorities said, as they warned there were people trapped beneath rubble.

Hundreds were injured when the 6.2-magnitude quake struck the island, triggering panic among residents.

Uganda's Bobi Wine rejects election results, claims victory

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KAMPALA

Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine on Friday claimed victory in the presidential election, rejecting as a "complete sham" early results that gave President Yoweri Museveni a wide lead.

Mr. Wine said he felt under threat as soldiers surrounded his home on Friday evening after he alleged that Thursday's election was rigged and said "every legal option is on the table" to challenge the official results, including protests. He referred to himself as the "President-elect."

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029

Tender Notice – 4th Call

National Board of Examinations (NBE) invites tender under two bid system from eligible firms for conduct of Hybrid Examination (Offline) and Digital Evaluation of Answer scripts for various examinations. Last date for Bid Submission is **8/2/2021 12 noon**. Please refer to the Tender Documents available at NBE website **https://natboard.edu.in** and Central Public Procurement Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in**

PARADIP PORT TRUST

FIRST CORRIGENDUM TO e-TENDER CALL NOTICE NO. : MD/ACCTS-WK-R-7/2020/1379 Dt. 24.12.2020 for the work "Manning, Operation & Maintenance of Port Crafts ML KALI, 300 Ton Reception Barge and Pollution Control Equipment for a period of 05 (five) years"

Estimated cost put to the tender ₹ 2,05,57,108/- Plus GST. With reference to the above e-tender, a Pre-bid meeting will be held in the chamber of the undersigned at **12.00 hrs. on 18.01.2021** where all the doubts of prospective bidders with respect to tender clauses will be clarified. Further the last date and time for downloading the e-tender document and submission & opening of bids are extended as follows : **Document download end date :** 25.01.2021 at 13.30 hrs. **Bid Submission end date :** 26.01.2021 at 15.30 hrs. **Tender Opening date (Technical Bid) :** 27.01.2021 at 16.00 hrs. All other terms & conditions remain unchanged. For details, please log on to the website : **https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app**

Dy. Conservator
PPT/PR/366/20-21 Dt : 14.01.2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BOLANGIR.
e - Procurement NOTICE

1.	Name of Work	Completion of incomplete road & bridges for the year 2020-21
2.	Total no of Work	**2 (two)** road Works.
3.	Time for Completion	9 (nine) & 11 (eleven) calander months
4.	Approximate Estimated Cost varies from	**Rs.340.00 lakhs to Rs.798.00 lakhs**
5.	Mode of Submission of tender	Tender should be submitted online in **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
6.	**Other details are as follow**	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Superintending Engineer, R.W.Circle, Bolangir.	BLGR-Online-10/2020-21	18.01.2021 At 11.00 A.M.	01.02.2021 up to 5.00 P.M.	30.01.2021 upto 1.00 P.M.	02.02.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	The date will be intimated to the technically qualified bidders later on

- Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
- Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender website only.

O-887 : Sd/- **Superintending Engineer, R.W.Circle, Bolangir**
OIPR-25118/11/0010/2021

UT OF LAKSHADWEEP
LAKSHADWEEP DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(A GOVT. OF INDIA UNDERTAKING)
Ph: 04842323448/458
Web: www.ldcl.nic.in
E-mail: amindivi@asianetindia.com

Tender No. LDC/Stevedoring/Barges/2020-21
Tender No. LDC/Steamer/Laundry/Barges//2020-21
Dt. 13.01.2021

TENDER

E-tenders are invited for engagement of Steamer/Laundry and Stevedoring Agents for 600MT and 800MT cargo barges vide Tender No. LDC/Stevedoring/Barges/2020-21 and Tender No. LDC/Steamer/Laundry/Barges//2020-21 operated by LDCL at Old Mangalore and New Mangalore Ports. For details and E-tendering please visit website **https://tendersutl.gov.in.** Tender due on 02.02.2021 at 2.00 PM. For any help in e-tendering, please contact help desk: **0120-4001002, 4001005, 6277787.**

Sd/- MD (LDCL)

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
(A group company of IndianOil)
CPCL
Regd. Office: 536, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai 600 018.
Website: www.cpcl.co.in; Email id: shankarp@cpcl.co.in
Tel: 044-24349833/24346807 CIN: L40101TN1965GOI005389

REVISED NOTICE

Further to our Board Meeting Notice dated 11.01.2021 and pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015, notice is hereby given that the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is rescheduled to be held on Monday, the 25th January, 2021, inter alia to consider and approve the Unaudited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter and nine months ended 31st December, 2020.

The said notice can be accessed on the Company's website at www.cpcl.co.in and also on the Stock Exchange websites at www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com.

As communicated to the Stock Exchanges on 28th December, 2020, 7th January and 15th January, 2021, it is further notified that the Trading Window for dealing in securities of CPCL is under closure from 1st January, 2021 to 27th January, 2021 (both days inclusive) for all connected / designated persons as per the Insider Trading Code of the Company. The Insider Trading Code is available on the Company's website www.cpcl.co.in.

Sd/-
(P.Shankar)
Company Secretary

Place: Chennai
Date: 15.01.2021

Uttarakhand Urban Sector Development Agency (UUSDA)
Urban Development Department, Government of Uttarakhand
777, Saatvik Tower, Kaulagarh Road, Rajendra Nagar, Dehradun
Telephone +91-135-2753894, Tele-fax +91- 135-2754895
Email: uusdip@gmail.com, Website: www.uusdip.org

Ref. No: UUSDA/P-78/40 Date: 14.01.2021

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

The Government of India, has applied for a loan from Asian Development Bank for financing the **Uttarakhand Integrated Urban Development Project (UIUDP), in the State of Uttarakhand**. The Project involves development of urban infrastructure facilities like 24X7 Water Supply, Wastewater Management, Urban Drainage and Urban Roads, in the proposed Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for works.

The **"Program Director"**, Uttarakhand Urban Sector Development Agency (UUSDA), Government of Uttarakhand" **(the Employer)** invites online bids through the Uttarakhand state e-procurement portal **https://uktenders.gov.in**, from eligible Bidders for the design, execution, commissioning and O&M of the work as detailed below;

e-procurement Notice for Package No- WW – NTL – 01 through e-tender system	
Invitation for Bid No: UIUDP/OCB - N/WW - NTL - 01/2020-21	
Name of work: Development of Sewerage System involving STP, Trunk Sewer and Allied Works including 5 Years Operation and Maintenance, at Nainital in Uttarakhand	
Bid Publication Date	14th January 2021 at 04:00 PM
Pre-Bid Meeting:	30th January 2021 11:30 AM
Last Date/Time for downloading the Tender Document:	16th February 2021 till 02:30 PM
Last date for uploading of Bid document online	16th February 2021 till 03:00 PM
Date for opening of Technical Bid online	16th February 2021 till 03:30 PM

The prospective bidders can download the detailed bid document in the prescribed format and upload the bid in the website, https://uktenders.gov.in. Program Director, UUSDA reserves the right to rejects any or all of the proposals or to cancel the entire process without assigning any reason thereof. Further details of the bid document including subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be downloaded from the website https://uktenders.gov.in.

Program Director
UUSDA

"हमारा संकल्प आपका सहयोग बेहतर कल"

DELHI JAL BOARD
(Govt. of N.C.T. of Delhi)
OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER(C) DR. VIII
Yamuna Vihar Sewage Treatment Plant
(Adjoining Dr. Ambedkar College)
Delhi - 110094
Phone: 011-22813593
Email:- eecdr8@gmail.com

"STOP CORONA; Wash Your Hand, Wear Mask, Maintain Social Distancing"

PRESS NIT NO -5 (2020-21)

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Contract Value (ECV)/ amount put to tender (Rs.)	Earnest Money (EMD) (Rs.)	Tender processing Fee Non Refundable (Rs.)	Date of Release of Tender/Tender Id.	Last date/time of receipt of tender
1.	Providing, Laying & Jointing 250mm dia internal sewer line in left out portion of different colonies in AC-68 Gokalpur	3,60,52,527/-	Nil (declaration form to be filled)	1500/-	2021_DJB_198729_1 dtd. 14.01.2021	08.02.2021 upto 3.00 P.M.

Further details in this regard can be seen at **https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in.**
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 320 (2020-21)

Executive Engineer(C) DR-VIII

MARKET WATCH

	15-01-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	49035	-1.11
US Dollar	73.07	-0.04
Gold	48690	-0.38
Brent oil	54.98	-2.22

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	527.95	-9.00
Asian Paints	2590.90	-73.00
Axis Bank	674.85	-1.15
Bajaj Auto	3580.30	4.25
Bajaj Finserv	8636.10	-111.25
Bajaj Finance	4883.60	6.25
Bharti Airtel	602.65	22.10
BPCL	414.60	-12.10
Britannia Ind	3609.05	-56.40
Cipla	823.70	-17.20
Coal India	143.25	-3.40
Divis Lab	3644.80	-79.90
Dr Reddys Lab	5212.80	-96.10
Eicher Motors	2857.30	-29.30
GAIL (India)	138.50	-5.50
Grasim Ind	1033.05	12.80
HCL Tech	989.80	-37.90
HDFC	2632.75	-51.30
HDFC Bank	1466.65	-2.10
HDFC Life	704.85	-2.05
Hero MotoCorp	3203.00	-63.60
Hindalco	253.35	-8.05
Hind Unilever	2351.15	-47.40
ICICI Bank	543.00	-10.30
IndusInd Bank	965.90	-3.80
Infosys	1344.95	-25.55
Indian OilCorp	101.30	-1.90
ITC	217.85	3.70
JSW Steel	394.20	-2.20
Kotak Bank	1863.90	-28.75
L&T	1354.15	-22.45
M&M	819.65	-10.25
Maurti Suzuki	8024.75	-124.70
Nestle India Ltd.	17834.00	-298.60
NTPC	100.45	-1.75
ONGC	101.40	-3.65
PowerGrid Corp	203.00	-2.10
Reliance Ind	1937.45	-23.15
SBI Life	910.25	-14.90
State Bank	303.85	-3.40
Shree Cement	24413.80	-441.80
Sun Pharma	604.30	-2.75
Tata Motors	260.30	15.20
Tata Steel	705.90	-0.45
TCS	3233.35	-17.35
Tech Mahindra	1007.30	-45.30
Titan	1477.25	-12.70
UltraTech Cement	5452.25	-130.10
UPL	522.55	13.15
Wipro	438.55	-15.80

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on January 15

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.87	73.19
Euro	88.43	88.85
British Pound	99.50	99.94
Japanese Yen (100)	70.31	70.62
Chinese Yuan	11.26	11.31
Swiss Franc	82.13	82.50
Singapore Dollar	54.90	55.15
Canadian Dollar	57.43	57.68
Malaysian Ringitt	18.04	18.14

Source:Indian Bank

IN BRIEF

Forex reserves increase $758 mn to $586 billion

MUMBAI

Foreign exchange reserves rose by $758 million to reach a record high of $586.08 billion in the week ended January 8, RBI data showed. In the week ended January 1, the reserves had increased by $4.48 billion to $585.32 billion. Gold reserves rose $568 million to $37.59 billion in the reporting week. PTI

Indigo Paints's ₹1,170-cr. IPO to open on Jan. 20

MUMBAI

Indigo Paints Ltd. said its initial public offering (IPO) will open on January 20. The price band has been fixed at ₹1,488 - ₹1,490 per equity share. The IPO comprises fresh issue of ₹300 crore and an offer for sale by existing investors amounting to ₹870 crore at the upper band. From the net proceeds, the company proposes to use ₹150 crore towards funding capital expenditure.

Trade with China shrank in 2020, deficit at five-year low

India's exports to China, however, jumped 16% to a record high of $20.86 billion as Asia's largest economy consumed more iron ore

ANANTH KRISHNAN

India's trade with China declined last year to the lowest level since 2017, with the trade deficit narrowing to a five-year low as the country imported far fewer goods from its northern neighbour.

Bilateral trade slid 5.6% to $87.6 billion, according to new figures from China's General Administration of Customs (GAC). India's imports from China shrank by 10.8% to $66.7 billion, marking the lowest level of inbound shipments since 2016.

India's exports to China, however, jumped 16%, crossing the $20 billion-mark for the first time to a record high of $20.86 billion.

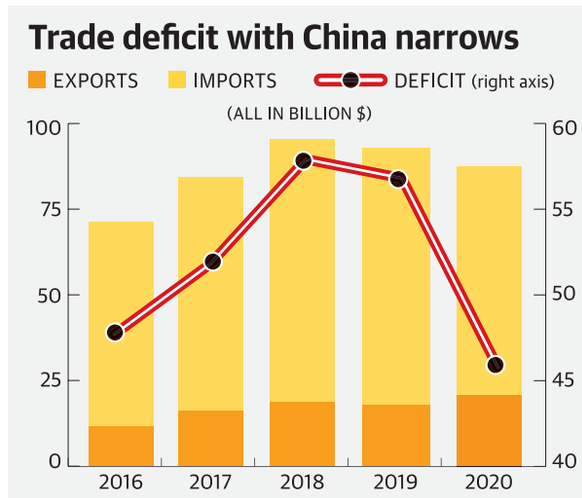
The trade deficit, a source of friction in bilateral ties, shrank to $45.8 billion, the lowest level since 2015.

While there was no immediate break-up of the data for 2020, India's biggest import in 2019 was electrical machinery and equipment, worth $20.17 billion. Other major imports in 2019 were organic chemicals ($8.39 billion) and fertilisers ($1.67 billion), while India's top exports that year were iron ore, organic chemicals, cotton and unfinished diamonds.

Appetite for iron ore

The last 12 months saw a surge in demand for iron ore in China, as a slew of new infrastructure projects aimed at reviving growth after the COVID-19 slump lifted consumption of steel. Total iron ore imports in Asia's largest economy rose 9.5% in 2020.

The drop in India's imports from China largely mirrored a decline in overall inbound shipments last year as domestic demand slumped in the wake of the pandemic.



SOURCE: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF CUSTOMS, CHINA

That makes it difficult to determine whether 2020 is an exception or marks a turn away from the recent pattern of India's trade with China, especially since there is, as yet, no evidence to suggest India has replaced its import dependence on China by either sourcing those goods elsewhere or manufacturing them at home.

The dip in exports to India bucked a strong year for Chinese exports, which surged 10.9% in December and grew 4% in 2020, aided by the economic recovery in China while many countries worldwide remained in various stages of lockdown.

The full year's export performance marked a sharp turnaround for the world's second-largest economy, which saw its GDP contract 6.8% during the height of the COVID-19 outbreak in the first quarter, while foreign trade fell 4.9% year-on-year over the first five months through May. With a stringent lockdown containing the outbreak in China by the summer, the economy rebounded to grow 3.2% in the second quarter and 4.9% in the third, with China's industries humming back to life even as much of the rest of the world remained in varied states of lockdown.

'Positive growth'

China was "the world's only major economy to have registered positive growth in foreign trade in goods," said Li Kuiwen, spokesperson of the GAC, with China's foreign trade and exports in the first 10 months of the year accounting for a record 12.8% and 14.2% share of the global totals, respectively.

That was reflected in the annual export figures, as China posted sharp increases with most of its major trading partners. Exports to the ASEAN bloc, China's largest trading partner last year with bilateral trade amounting to $684 billion, rose 6.7%, while exports to the EU, China's second-largest trading partner, also rose 6.7% as total trade reached $649 billion.

Despite the trade war with the U.S. and the pandemic, two-way trade was up 8.3% to $586 billion, with China's exports rising 7.9% to reach a record $451 billion. The trade surplus with the U.S. expanded to $317 billion in 2020, compared with the $288 billion figure at the end of President Donald Trump's first year in office in 2017, underlining the limited impact of his tariff measures as he ends his presidency.

HCL Tech Q3 profit rises 31% on digital, cloud momentum

Firm declares ₹4 interim dividend; raises growth guidance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

HCL Technologies said it posted a 31% increase in net profit for the third quarter ended December to ₹3,982 crore driven by a 'robust momentum' in the company's businesses led by digital, cloud and products and platform segments.

The company also announced that it crossed $10 billion in revenue in 2020.

For Q3, revenue rose 6.4% to ₹19,302 crore. The IT firm also revised upwards its quarter-on-quarter revenue growth expectations to 2-3% in constant currency from the previous estimate of 1.5-2.5% growth.

"We posted a strong financial performance in Q3 FY21 with a constant currency revenue growth of 3.5% sequentially and 1.1% YoY and an EBIT of 22.9%," said C. Vijayakumar, president and CEO.

"This solid performance was driven by a robust momentum in our Mode 2 and Mode 3 businesses led by digital, cloud and products and platform segments."

"Looking ahead, a combination of a strong pipeline and good order booking gives us a lot of optimism about the growth trajectory," Mr. Vijayakumar said.

The board of directors has declared an interim dividend of ₹4 per equity share. The firm's shares closed at ₹989.40 per share, down 3.73% from the previous close on BSE.

Mr. Vijayakumar said during the quarter, the firm won 13 transformational deals across industry verticals, including financial services.

Exports rise a tad, imports surge in Dec.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India's exports rose marginally to $27.2 billion in December, while imports surged 7.6% to $42.6 billion, official data showed.

Merchandise exports were valued at $27.1 billion in December 2019.

"The trade deficit for December 2020 was estimated at $15.44 billion as against the deficit of $12.49 billion in December 2019, an increase of 23.66%," according to the data.

India's overall exports (merchandise and services) in April-December 2020-21 were estimated at $348.5 billion, showing a negative growth of 12.7% YoY. Overall imports fell 25.9% to $343.3 billion.

Indian economy 'weak,' credit growth bottoming out: BofA

Real lending rates are dropping, says U.S. brokerage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

American brokerage BofA Securities said the Indian economy continues to be 'weak,' pointing to activity indicators tracked by it.

On the positive side, the brokerage said credit demand is bottoming out and the real lending rates, adjusted for wholesale price inflation, are falling.

It can be noted that there has been a slew of reports lately about a stronger recovery being underway after the jolt caused by the pandemic. The government expects the GDP to contract 7.7% in financial year 2021 because of the reverses.

"The bad news is that the continued drop in our BofA India Activity Indicator reinforces our view that the economy still remains weak," the brokerage said in a note.

The indicator fell by 0.6% in November on top of the 0.8% decline in October, and 4.6% drop in the September quarter, it said, adding, "this supports our call of GVA (gross value added) contractions of 1% in the December quarter and 6.7% in FY21."

The credit growth for FY22 will come at 12%, it said. It can be noted that credit growth had been declining for the last few years, in sync with a dip in the overall economic growth which has been on a downward spiral since demonetisation in late 2016 as borrowers went slow on expansion.

The real lending rates adjusted for WPI will be one of the prime reasons for the faster credit growth estimate in financial year 2022, the brokerage said.

Army inks $20 mn deal with ideaForge for UAV

'Indigenous technology for surveillance'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Indian Army has signed a $20-million contract with ideaForge, a player in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology, to procure undisclosed quantities of a high-altitude variant of SWITCH UAV, an indigenous system used in surveillance operations.

SWITCH UAV is an indigenous system built to cater to the most demanding surveillance operations of the Indian forces.

This fixed-wing vertical take-off and landing UAV can be deployed at high altitudes and under harsh environments for day and night surveillance, ideaForge said in a statement.

"UAV player ideaForge has been awarded this one-year contract after it qualified the operational requirements in an evaluation done in real-world conditions. The contract marks a strategic shift in the Indian defence procurement process," the company added.

GAIL announces ₹1,046.35-crore share buyback, govt. to participate

Gas firm aims to return surplus cash; declares dividend

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

GAIL (India) Ltd., the country's largest gas distribution firm, on Friday announced a ₹1,046.35 crore share buyback programme as it looked to return surplus cash to shareholders, the biggest being the Government of India.

In a stock exchange filing, the company said its board had approved the buyback of 6.97 crore shares at a price of ₹150 per share.

The shares being bought represent 1.55% of the total number of fully paid-up equity shares.

The company board also declared an interim dividend of 25% (₹2.50 per share) for financial year 2020-21. The government owns 51.76% of GAIL and is expected to participate in the share buyback.

It stands to get ₹583.6 crore from the dividend payout and another ₹541.5 crore if it participates in the buyback by tendering a proportionate number of shares. The buyback plan of ₹1,046.35 crore represents "2.5% and 2.26% of the aggregate of the fully paid-up equity share capital and free reserves of the company," GAIL said in the filing.

The plan was within the statutory limits of 10%, it said. The record date for buyback of equity shares as well as payment of the interim dividend will be January 28, GAIL said.

The government has asked at least eight state-run companies to consider share buybacks as it scours for ways of raising funds to rein in its fiscal deficit.

OneWeb fundraising nudges $1.4 bn: Bharti

SoftBank Group gains board seat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

OneWeb, a global communications firm jointly owned by the U.K. Government and Bharti Global, said it has raised additional funding from SoftBank Group and Hughes Network Systems, taking the total funding to $1.4 billion.

Following this, SoftBank will gain a seat on the OneWeb board, the firm said, adding Hughes is an investor through its parent EchoStar, and also an ecosystem partner, developing essential ground network technology for the OneWeb system.

The capital positions OneWeb to be fully funded for its first-generation satellite fleet, totalling 648 satellites, by end 2022, it added.

The company did not disclose the details of funding raised from the two groups. In July last year, the U.K. Government and Bharti Global had announced an investment of $500 million each in OneWeb.

SPORT

RACING

In-form Cerise Noir for feature event

BENGALURU: Cerise Noir, who maintains form, may score again in the Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy (1,200m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Saturday (Jan. 16). False rails width about 8mts from 1,600m to the winning post.

1 **FLASHING STAR PLATE** (1,100m), maiden 3-y-o only (Terms), 2-00 p.m.: 1. Cool Rider (3) Srinath 56, 2. The Omega Man (8) D. Patel 56, 3. Tommy Shelby (5) R. Marshall 56, 4. Twilight Fame (7) S. Naik 56, 5. Angel Dreams (4) P.P. Dhebe 54.5, 6. Diamond Queen (11) R. Vaibhav 54.5, 7. Domina (2) Antony Raj 54.5, 8. Gulfstream Park (6) Neeraj 54.5, 9. Moon's Blessing (9) P. Trevor 54.5, 10. Perfect Empress (1) Suraj Narredu 54.5 and 11. Spirit Dancer (10) R.N. Darshan 54.5.

1. COOL RIDER, 2. MOON'S BLESSING, 3. PERFECT EMPRESS

2 **HASSAN PLATE** (1,400m), rated 00 to 20, 5-y-o & over, 2-30: 1. Antheia (4) Shreyas Singh 60, 2. Happy Dancing (6) Md. Aliyar 60, 3. Nawabzaadi (8) Siddaraju P 60, 4. Scintilla (2) Naveen Kumar 60, 5. Challenging Star (7) Likith Appu 58.5, 6. Song And Dance (5) Tousif Khan 58.5, 7. Hawking (1) Arvind Kumar 58, 8. Barog (10) S. Saqlain 56, 9. Golden Heaven (9) Salman Khan 56, 10. Prime Star (11) J.H. Arul 55.5, 11. Ruler Of Nation (3) Chethan G 55 and 12. Blackhawk (12) Ankit Yadav 54.

1. PRIME STAR, 2. CHALLENGING STAR, 3. SONG AND DANCE

3 **KALINADI PLATE** (1,200m), rated 15 to 35 5-y-o & over, 3-00: 1. Lightning Attack (8) J.H. Arul 60, 2. Silken Striker (4) Siddaraju P 59.5, 3. Anakin (10) Srinath 59, 4. Princess Pride (12) S. Saqlain 58.5, 5. Chantelle (2) Shreyas Singh 58, 6. Augustina (11) Chethan G 57, 7. Kingsfield (9) P. Mani 55, 8. Celestial Highway (5) Nazerul Alam 54.5, 9. Lifeisamiracle (3) P. Surya 54.5, 10. Polar Express (1) R.N. Darshan 53, 11. Sir Piggot (7) Arshad Alam 53 and 12. Skiathos (6) Rayan Ahmed 53.

1. ANAKIN, 2. AUGUSTINA, 3. CELESTIAL HIGHWAY

4 **DARIA DAULAT PLATE (DIV. II)**, 1,200m, rated 30 to 50, 3-30: 1. Darahasini (7) P. Surya 60, 2. Gypsy (2) S. Asgar 57.5, 3. Jersey Legend (1) R. Shelar 57, 4. Palm Reader (11) Anjar Alam 57, 5. Anne Boleyn (10) Rayan Ahmed 56.5, 6. Cherokee Moon (3) Suraj Narredu 56.5, 7. Mr. Humble (5) Kiran Rai 56.5, 8. She's Innocent (9) Chetan K 56.5, 9. Stroke Of Genius (6) P.P. Dhebe 56.5, 10. Realia (8) P. Trevor 56, 11. Ultimate Striker (4) R. Vaibhav 55 and 12. Black Whizz (12) S. Shareef 53.5.

1. REALIA, 2. MR HUMBLE, 3. CHEROKEE MOON

5 **KEMPE GOWDA CUP** (1,400m), 6-y-o & over, rated 45 to 65, 4-00: 1. Turf Magic (7) Ashok Kumar 60, 2. Dr Logan (2) R. Vaibhav 59, 3. Ashwa Raftar (10) Raja Rao 57, 4. Excellent Sorrento (4) Naveen Kumar 57, 5. Big Moon (6) Angad 56, 6. Knotty Oak (11) Antony Raj 56, 7. Alpha (3) P.P. Dhebe 55, 8. Crack Of Dawn (8) P. Trevor 54.5, 9. Harbour Sunrise (9) Akshay Kumar 54, 10. Silver Dew (1) R.N. Darshan 53.5, 11. Land Of Liberty (5) B. Harish 53 and 12. Good Time Indeed (12) J.H. Arul 52.5.

1. KNOTTY OAK, 2. HARBOUR SUNRISE, 3. CRACK OF DAWN

6 **DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY MEMORIAL TROPHY** (1,200m), rated 75 & above, 4-30: 1. Saint Petersburg (3) P. Trevor 61.5, 2. Aeisir (6) R.N. Darshan 58.5, 3. Cerise Noir (4) Suraj Narredu 57, 4. Ashwa Joshila (8) Rayan Ahmed 56.5, 5. Silver Ikon (7) Ankit Yadav 53.5, 6. Star Carnation (5) Jagadeesh 51.5, 7. Psychic Warrior (1) Akshay Kumar 51 and 8. Treasure Delight (2) Khurshad Alam 51.

1. CERISE NOIR, 2. SAINT PETERSBURG, 3. PSYCHIC WARRIOR

7 **CHAMUNDI HILL PLATE** (1,600m), rated 15 to 35, 5-00: 1. Mahalakshmi (1) S. John 60, 2. Redoubtable (7) P. Trevor 60, 3. Garamond (4) Suraj Narredu 58, 4. Almanach (8) Srinath 57.5, 5. Livisilla (2) Neeraj 57.5, 6. Max Mueller (3) Ashhad Asbar 57.5, 7. Smithsonian (12) R.N. Darshan 57.5, 8. Southernaristocrat (10) Arshad Alam 57.5, 9. Tyto Alba (6) R. Ravi 56.5, 10. Royal Blossom (11) Antony Raj 56, 11. Dream Chaser (5) B. Dharshan 55.5 and 12. Gazebo Talk (9) S. Shareef 53.

1. REDOUBTABLE, 2. GARAMOND, 3. MAHALAKSHMI

8 **DARIA DAULAT PLATE (DIV. I)**, (1,200m), rated 30 to 50, 5-30: 1. Lagopus (1) A. Imran Khan 60, 2. Donna Bella (4) Md. Aliyar 59.5, 3. Benediction (3) B. Nayak 58, 4. Brown Bess (9) Naveen Kumar 56.5, 5. Golden Vision (11) Suraj Narredu 56.5, 6. Jack Ryan (2) Neeraj 56, 7. Amazonite (12) S. Shareef 55.5, 8. Ultimate Speed (6) S. Saqlain 55.5, 9. Birchwood (5) P. Mani 55, 10. First Impression (8) Akshay Kumar 55, 11. Schafenberg (7) Indrajeet 55 and 12. The Preacher (10) Vinod Shinde 54.

1. JACK RYAN, 2. GOLDEN VISION, 3. FIRST IMPRESSION

Day's best: **REDOUBTABLE**

Double: **REALIA – KNOTTY OAK**

Jkt: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8; Tr (i): 3, 4 & 5; (ii): 6, 7 & 8.

Born Queen's regal display in South India Derby Stakes

CHENNAI: Satish Narredu's ward Born Queen (Suraj Narredu up) won the The South India Derby Stakes, the star attraction of the season here on Thursday (Jan. 14),

The winner, bred at S. Pathy's Sans Craintes Stud Farm, is owned by United Racing & Bloodstock Breeders Limited.

Suraj, who rode confidently, kept the unbeaten Born Queen third and fourth till the home stretch.

He started manoeuvring his mount in the straight and the filly responded tremendously to few reminders on the 300m and took over from long-time leader Sporting Memories to not only register her fifth win in a row but also complete a Classic hat-trick.

1. A.M.M. ARUNACHALAM MEMORIAL CUP (1,000m), maiden 3-y-o only (Terms), **AMENDMENT** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Tudor (Umesh), Subjucate (R.N. Darshan) 3 and Elegant Touch (Zervan) 4. 3-3/4, 1/2 and lnk. 1m, 0.45s. Owner: Mr. A.C. Muthiah. Trainer: Suresh.

2. BANGALORE TURF CLUB CUP (DIV. II), (1,200m), rated 20 to 45: **PAPPA RICH** (Arshad Alam) 1, Choir (Azfar Syeed) 2, Full Of Surprise (S. Kamble) 3 and Striking Distance (P. Trevor) 4. 1-1/4, 1 and 1/2. 1m, 13.90s. Owner: Mr. D. Nagaraj, Mr. P.S. Jagadish and Mr. V.P. Ghanesh. Trainer: P. Krishna.

3. BANGALORE TURF CLUB CUP (DIV. I), (1,200m), rtated 20 to 45: **COPPER QUEEN** (Nakhat Singh) 1, Shalem (Suraj Narredu) 2, Protea (Brisson) 3 and Pacific (Umesh) 4. 6-1/2, 1-1/2 and neck. 1m, 12.17s. Owner Mr & Mrs. Cyrus Palia. Trainer: R. Foley.

4. HYDERABAD RACE CLUB CUP (1,600m), rated 20 to 45: **SALVO** (P. Sai Kumar) 1. Divina (Brisson) 2, Grand Royal (Zervan) 3 and Brilliant Script (Arshad Alam) 4. 1-3/4, 3/4 and 1. 1m, 41.22s.

Owners: Mr. M.A.M.R. Muthiah & M/s. United Racing & Bloodstock Breeders. Trainer: R. Ramanathan.

Honouring a champion: Jockey Suraj Narredu, left, and trainer S. Narredu, second from right, receiving the South India Derby Stakes trophy from Madras Race Club chairman M.A.M.R. Muthiah, right, in the presence of Bangalore Turf Club chairman D. Vinod Shivappa, in Chennai on Thursday.

▪ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

5. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,400m), 4-y-o & over (Terms): **CAVALLO VELOCE** (A. Imran Khan) 1, Multifaceted (A. Sandesh) 2, Victory Parade (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Megasthenes (P. Sai Kumar) 4. 3/4, 1-1/2 and 3-3/4. 1m, 23.71s. Owner: M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing. Trainer: B. Suresh.

6. SOUTH INDIA DERBY STAKES (2,400M), 4-Y-O (TERMS): BORN QUEEN (TAZAHUM-STATE SECRET) SURAJ NARREDU 1, SPORTING MEMORIES (Leitir Mor-Priceless Memories) Neeraj 2, TAIMUR (Multidimensional-Tammy O) A. Sandesh 3 and SUCCESSOR (Leitir Mor-Sweeping Success) P. Trevor 4. Not run: Illustrious Ruler. 2-1/2. 3-3/4 and 1-1/4. 2m, 33.18s. Owner: United Racing & Bloodstock Breeders. Trainer: S. Narredu.

7. ROYAL WESTERN INDIA TURF CLUB CUP (1,000m), rated 60 to 85: **ABIRA** (Neeraj) 1, Mzilikazi (Zervan) 2, Gods Plan (P. Sai Kumar) 3 and Star Guitar (Azfar Syeed) 4. 2-1/4, 2-3/4 and hd. 58.77s. Owner: M/s. Sarainaga Racing. Trainer: Arjun Mangalokar.

8. TURF AUTHORITIES CUP (1,400m), rated 40 to 65: **TORBERT** (P. Trevor) 1, Nekhbet (Zervan) 2, Demerara (P. S. Chouhan) 3 and Renegade (Arshad Alam) 4. Lnk, 2 and 1-1/2. 1m 26.25s. Owner: Mr. Vazhaparambil J. Joseph. Trainer: Sebastian.

Labuschagne's century gives Australia the edge on opening day

A new-look Indian attack, lacking experience, fights back in the final session to snatch some relief; Saini limps off with groin injury; hosts finish on 274 for five

INDIA IN AUS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRISBANE

An under-strength India fought back in the final session to leave the fourth Test against Australia evenly poised after the opening day at the Gabba here on Friday.

Australia finished the first day on 274 for five, with Cameron Green on 28 and Tim Paine alongside him on 38. The four-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy series is locked 1-1.

Flow interrupted

Australia looked headed for a much stronger position when it reached 200 for three shortly after tea, with Marnus Labuschagne and Matthew Wade scoring freely. But, soon Wade went attempting a rash pull, followed by Labuschagne for a superb 108.

Green and Paine then steadied the innings against a tiring attack. India's efforts were especially admirable considering it was fielding two debutants in the bowling attack following injuries to Jasprit Bumrah and R. Ashwin. India also lost fast bowler Navdeep Saini to a groin injury midway through the second session.

India started the game as underdogs following the loss of four players from the drawn third Test, which finished on Monday in Sydney.

Pace spearhead Bumrah (abdomen), off-spinner Ashwin (back), batsman Hanuma Vihari (hamstring) and all-rounder Ravi Jadeja (broken thumb) were all ruled out.

T. Natarajan and Washington Sundar made their debuts while there were also recalls for batsman Mayank Agarwal and seam bowler Shardul Thakur.

In contrast, Australia made just one change, with Harris coming in for Will Pucovski, who injured his shoulder while fielding in Sydney.

Yet India got away to the perfect start when David Warner fell off the last ball of the first over, edging Mohd. Siraj to second slip, where Rohit Sharma took a superb catch diving to his right.

Natarajan shared the new ball with Siraj and kept the pressure on with some tight bowling, his opening spell of six overs going for just eight runs.

The pressure eventually told when Shardul, playing just his second Test, struck with his first ball, Harris chipping a simple catch to Washington at square-leg to leave Australia 17 for two.

But Labuschagne and Steve Smith, Australia's saviours in so many recent matches, once again steadied the rocking ship. Smith, who roared back to form with a century in Sydney, was impressive but on 36 he clipped a ball to Rohit at short midwicket to give Washington his first Test scalp.

Australia, now 87 for three, should have lost Labuschagne in the next over when he edged Saini to gully, but the normally reliable Ajinkya Rahane spilled a simple chance. To make matters worse, Saini appeared to injure his groin in the delivery stride and left the field.

Cheteshwar Pujara grassed a much harder chance when Labuschagne was on 48, but from that moment he was in fine form, stroking nine boundaries and two all-run fours on way to his century.

Siraj picked up one for 51 in 19 testing overs, while Natarajan (two for 63) also impressed despite showing signs of fatigue late in the day.

Playing XIs:
India: Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (Capt.), Mayank Agarwal, Rishabh Pant (wk), Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Navdeep Saini, Mohammed Siraj, and T. Natarajan
Australia: David Warner, Marcus Harris, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Matthew Wade, Cameron Green, Tim Paine (Capt. & wk), Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, and Josh Hazlewood.

Riding his luck: Marnus Labuschagne made the most of two dropped chances to once again contribute the major chunk of Australia's score. ▪AP

Inexperienced attack

The number of Tests played by the Indian bowlers before the Gabba game

Siraj	Saini	Shardul	Natarajan	Washington
2	1	1	0	0

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS
David Warner c Rohit b Siraj 1 *(4b)*, Marcus Harris c Washington b Shardul 5 *(23b)*, Marnus Labuschagne c Pant b Natarajan 108 *(204b, 9x4)*, Steve Smith c Rohit b Washington 36 *(77b, 5x4)*, Matthew Wade c Shardul b Natarajan 45 *(87b, 6x4)*, Cameron Green (batting) 28 *(70b, 3x4)*, Tim Paine (batting) 38 *(62b, 5x4)*; Extras (b-4, lb-4, nb-5): 13; Total (for five wkts. in 87 overs): 274.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-4 (Warner, 0.6 ov), 2-17 (Harris, 8.1), 3-87 (Smith, 34.1), 4-200 (Wade, 63.4), 5-213 (Labuschagne, 65.5).

INDIA BOWLING
Siraj 19-8-51-1, Natarajan 20-2-63-2, Shardul 18-5-67-1, Saini 7.5-2-21-0, Washington 22-4-63-1, Rohit 0.1-0-1-0.

Toss: Australia.

Amazing opportunity, says Washington

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Friday happened to be a dream day for debutants Washington Sundar and T. Natarajan, two players who were not originally in the squad and staying back just as net bowlers.

At stumps on day one, the duo from Tamil Nadu picked up three of the five wickets India took, with Washington getting the key wicket of Steve Smith.

"It was a dream come true for me. I have to thank the management for asking me to stay through the Test series because I felt I can improve on my skill level both in batting and bowling by being here. Yes, there was little nervousness but, it is an amazing opportunity to represent your country," said Washington.

The all-rounder, known more for his exploits with the white ball in the T20 format, last played a First Class game in 2017 for Tamil Nadu. When asked about if he had to change his preparation for the longer format, the 21-year-old said, "I have always felt my skill level is good with the red ball and I have bowled a lot of overs in First Class and First Division league in Chennai."

Waiting for it

"So I was waiting for the opportunity. The last few months here, I did get to bowl a lot of balls and got a chance to improve my skill levels here. So it was just more to do with quantity and, I didn't have to change anything technically," said the 21-year-old.

Memorable moment: Washington celebrates with Rohit after taking his maiden Test wicket. ▪AP

The youngster also said that he had spoken to senior-pro R. Ashwin on how to tackle Steve Smith and was glad he could take the important wicket.

Had plans for Smith

"Yes, we had some plans for Smith but, I had to bowl good balls over and over again to get him out. I am glad that I got him and being my first wicket, it felt very good."

Washington was pleased for fellow-debutant Natarajan who helped India get back into the game with his twin strikes in the last session.

"Nattu (Natarajan) bowled well. He brought us back in the game. (Matthew) Wade and Marnus (Labuschagne) had a 120 odd-run partnership (sic 113) and, he took both of them out. It feels good to make my debut alongside him," he added.

The debutant duo of Natarajan and Washington — destiny's children

In the mix by happenstance, the two pulled their weight with some tidy bowling on the first day of the Brisbane Test

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

Fate and destiny alter scripts, open pathways. Ask T. Natarajan and Washington Sundar.

Considered limited overs specialists, the two were catapulted to Test cricket by a series of injuries to frontline cricketers, the limitations in selection forced by a pandemic, and their own work ethics and ability that impressed the team-management.

And the Tamil Nadu duo, making their Test debut on the same morning, displayed composure when emotions must have been swirling around.

Natarajan and Washington pulled their weight with tidy bowling on day one of the fourth Test at the 'Gabba. Control was the key as they bowled lengthy spells on a dry surface with some bounce but no moisture on a hot day.

Among wickets

They were among the wickets too. Natarajan consumed Marnus Labuschagne and Matthew Wade with short-pitched deliveries that were slippery in nature and Washington got the big fish, Steve Smith, caught at the leg-trap.

Just consider this. After a strong IPL, Natarajan was slated to travel to Australia as a net bowler and only an injury to Varun Chakravarthy put him in the Twenty20 squad.

And now he has played in all three formats for India! Who would have thought so a few months ago? But then, it was his impressive display in the Twenty20 games and the ODI – he sent down compelling yorkers at will – that opened the door for him in Test cricket.

Inborn tenacity

There is that inborn tenacity, that desire to overcome the odds, that has been the driving force in Natarajan. With abject poverty around him as he grew up, he has faced and conquered so many challenges.

Coach Ravi Shastri, as shrewd as they come, would surely have seen the fighter in Natarajan, that temperament which is so essential for top-flight cricket. He is not quick but makes the most of his ability, bringing into play the left-armer's angle from over and round the wicket and stringing together variations.

There is a calmness about Washington that enables him to soak in the pressures of the occasion and focus on the job on hand. Tall and lithe, he essentially bowled a middle and leg line at the 'Gabba with two men in catching positions.

On a first day wicket, there is only so much a spinner can accomplish, in the absence of any moisture, and Washington did not let his side down.

He is in the eleven for the balance he provides with his smooth-stroking left-handed batting. Big days await him.

Indeed, Natarajan and Washington are destiny's children. This life... it can surprise you.

Ending a 10-year drought

It has been a decade since a player from Tamil Nadu won an India cap. On Friday, it was double delight for the State as T. Natarajan and Washington Sundar both made their debut in the Brisbane Test

THE LIST

Player	Debut		
M J. Gopalan	1934	B. Arun	1986
Cotah Ramaswami	1936	W.V. Raman	1988
C.R. Rangachari	1948	M. Venkataramana	1989
C.D. Gopinath	1951	Robin Singh	1998
A.G. Kripal Singh	1955	Sadagopan Ramesh	1999
A.G. Milkha Singh	1960	Hemang Badani	2001
V.V. Kumar	1961	L. Balaji	2003
S. Venkatraghavan	1965	Dinesh Karthik	2004
Bharath Reddy	1979	M. Vijay	2008
T.E. Srinivasan	1981	S. Badrinath	2010
K. Srikkanth	1981	Abhinav Mukund	2011
T.A. Sekar	1983	R. Ashwin	2011
L. Sivaramakrishnan	1983	T. Natarajan	2021
		Washington Sundar	2021

A very special day

A look at the two Tamil Nadu players who earned their Test caps on Friday

Washington Sundar
AGE: 21
PLACE OF BIRTH: Chennai
MAJOR TEAMS: India, Tamil Nadu, Rising Pune Supergiant, Royal Challengers Bangalore

ODI DEBUT vs. Sri Lanka, *Mohali*, 2017
T20I DEBUT vs. Sri Lanka, *Mumbai*, 2017
FIRST CLASS DEBUT vs. Mumbai, *Rohtak*, 2016
LIST A DEBUT vs. Maharashtra, *Cuttack*, 2017
T20 DEBUT: Rising Pune Supergiant vs. Sunrisers Hyderabad, *Pune*, 2017
IPL DEBUT: Rising Pune Supergiant vs. Sunrisers Hyderabad, *Pune*, 2017

	Mat	Inn	Wkts	BBI	Avg.	Econ.	SR	5W
ODI	1	1	1	1/65	65.00	6.50	60.0	0
T20Is	26	25	21	3/22	29.14	6.95	25.1	0
First Class	12	20	30	6/87	26.93	2.78	58.0	2
List A	39	33	24	2/20	46.83	4.61	60.8	0
T20s	87	85	67	3/10	27.95	6.61	25.3	0
IPL	36	35	24	3/16	31.21	6.87	27.2	0

▪ In the 2020 edition, he took eight wickets in 15 matches for RCB. His economy rate of 5.96 was the best among the Indians

T. Natarajan
AGE: 29
PLACE OF BIRTH: Chinnappampatti, Salem, Tamil Nadu
MAJOR TEAMS: India, Tamil Nadu, Kings XI Punjab, Sunrisers Hyderabad

ODI DEBUT vs. Australia, *Canberra*, 2020
T20I DEBUT vs. Australia, *Canberra*, 2020
FIRST CLASS DEBUT vs. Bengal, *Kolkata*, 2015
LIST A DEBUT vs. Gujarat, *Chennai*, 2018
T20 DEBUT: vs. Karnataka, *Chennai*, 2017
IPL DEBUT: Kings XI Punjab vs. Rising Pune Supergiant, *Indore*, 2017

	Mat	Inn	Wkts	BBI	Avg.	Econ.	SR	5W
ODI	1	1	2	2/70	35.00	7.00	30.0	0
T20Is	3	3	6	3/30	13.83	6.91	12.0	0
First Class	20	33	64	5/41	27.03	3.02	53.5	3
List A	16	16	18	3/22	31.27	4.52	41.5	0
T20s	41	41	41	3/4	25.90	7.47	20.7	0
IPL	22	22	18	2/24	34.39	8.20	25.1	0

▪ In the 2020 edition, he took 16 wickets in 16 matches for Sunrisers

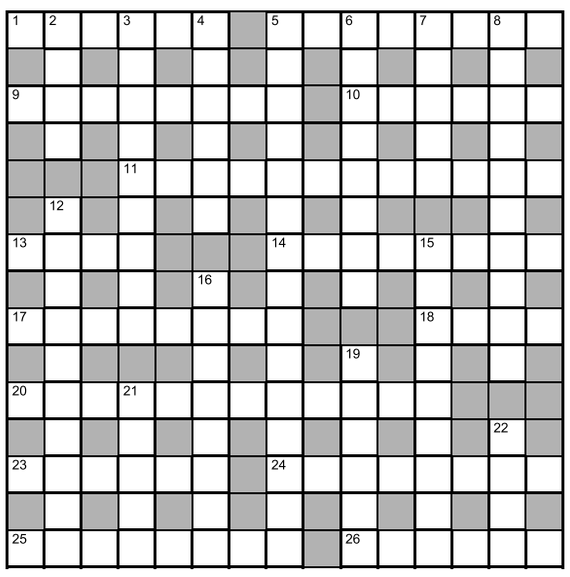
▪ He became the first player to make his debut in all three formats on the same tour

TH CROSSWORD + 13146

(set by Avtaar)

Display keystrokes of genius. Solve crosswords and sudou online: @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



ACROSS

1 Nomadic guy, abandoning love wandered in Otago (6)
5 Throw out scarf in show of gratitude (5,3)
9 Head of Grammar getting lost in variants of "Though" and "About" – essentially, it is all-round confusion (8)
10 Wanting a pipe? Tut-Tut! (6)
11 Architects of the Constitution? (4-8)
13 Far Eastern housing quarter (4)
14 Taxpayer – sucker! wrongly sees rebate at the end (8)
17 Time travel could be cool in the beginning (8)
18 What is served in high teas (4)
20 Vehicle starting to accelerate during a universal magic trick show (12)
23 Bill returned to meet cousin without appointment (4-2)
24 Article about local river having sulphur, naphtha, turpentine etc (8)
25 It doesn't change form of fresh promo – simply goes around (8)
26 Teacher: "According to Newton's second law, force affects rest" (6)

DOWN

2 Rigid seaweed is pulled up (4)
3 A dense figure cast a shadow (9)
4 Empty large boxes for eggs (6)
5 Profile new hit albums played on sailing vessel (9-6)
6 Coordinate review of classics, basically (8)
7 Flustered Queen stripped completely and followed King for massage (5)
8 Doctor sent robust medicines to block passages (10)
12 Some of our predecessors called out without getting answer (10)
15 Pen about the lady's long coats (9)
16 One coming out of fancy drive-in restaurant at East End around noon, for a ready-to-eat meal (2,6)
19 Indian spiritual leader entranced by those girls – divine faith (6)
21 Strand of rope obtained from tree on the foothills of Kathmandu and Sikkim (5)
22 Disengage charge-carrying conductor's base (4)

SUDOKU

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

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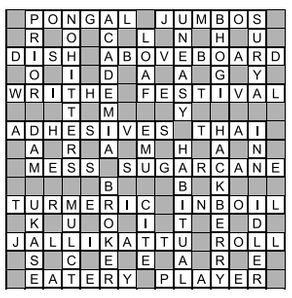
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 13145



Solution to Thursday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Essence of pranava

The significance of the pranava mantra is such that a sanyasi should keep repeating it constantly. Pranava also means 'yes,' in Sanskrit. Those who say 'yes' to superior things in life are great people. And these superior things are, naturally, not of the material world, but they have to do with ways to attain moksha. When one recites the pranava, one's mind must imagine Krishna on the chariot, in the driver's seat, with Arjuna, behind Him. Vedanta Desika shows the importance of Arjuna's chariot in the context of the pranava mantra, said V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. Desika acknowledges that it was his Acharya Kidambi Appullar, who taught him this.

The Lord being in front is symbolically important. The first akshara of the pranava is 'a'. And 'a' indicates Vishnu. It is also the origin of all letters. It is the foundation for everything in this world. The One who drives everything in the world, and sustains everything did not think it was demeaning to be a mere mortal's chariot driver. In the battlefield, dust kicked up by the horses settles on Krishna. Being dust-covered is nothing new to the Lord. Was He not covered in dust when He grazed cows? One is reminded of Krishna's childhood in Gokula when one thinks of Krishna's dust covered body as Arjuna's chariot driver.

Appayya Dikshitar gives yet another interesting interpretation in his commentary on Vedanta Desika's Yadavabhyudaya. In Gokula, He was in the midst of cows. Here, on the battlefield, He is in the midst of Bhishma, Drona, the Pandavas, and others. They are all like cows in the presence of the divine grazer Krishna, says Dikshitar. While chanting the pranava, one should meditate on Arjuna's chariot, for it represents the essence of the pranava mantra.

TV PICKS

Australia v India: Fourth Test, second day, Sony Ten 1, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m.
Thailand Open badminton: Star Sports 2 (HD) & Star Sports 3, 9.30 a.m.
Sri Lanka v England: 1st Test, Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 10 a.m.
Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), Noon & 7 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1(SD & HD), 6 p.m., 8.30 p.m., 11 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday) ; SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 & 10.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF

McNeal suspended for doping violation

PARIS
Olympic 100m hurdles champion Brianna McNeal has been provisionally suspended for doping violations, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) announced on Thursday. The 29-year-old American, who claimed Olympic gold in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and also won World gold in Moscow in 2013, was charged with "tampering" with part of a doping control, AIU said. She faces the prospect of missing the rescheduled Tokyo Games later this year. AFP

Leclerc in isolation after positive test

PARIS
Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc announced on Thursday he had tested positive for COVID-19. "I want to let you know that I have tested positive for Covid-19," the Monegasque driver said on Twitter. Leclerc, 23, added he had "mild symptoms" and was isolating at home in Monaco. AFP

NZ virus restrictions hits FIFA's Club World Cup

ZURICH
Coronavirus restrictions in New Zealand have caused next month's Club World Cup to shrink from seven teams to six. Auckland City told FIFA on Friday it could no longer represent Oceania at the tournament in Qatar because of the "COVID-19 pandemic and related quarantine measures required by the New Zealand authorities." Auckland's absence means Qatari champion Al-Duhail will get a bye into the second round. AP

Trail Blazers' Nurkic fractures wrist

PORTLAND
Portland Trail Blazers center Jusuf Nurkic fractured his right wrist during Thursday's game against Indiana Pacers. The seven-foot Bosnian could be seen holding the wrist after swiping at the ball in the third quarter, and fell to the floor after contact under Indiana's basket. At a timeout he went to the locker room and did not return. AP

Cabrera held in Brazil on criminal charges

SAO PAULO
The Brazil federal police arrested Argentine golfer Ángel Cabrera on Thursday for extradition to his homeland to face several criminal charges, according to inside information. Cabrera, former Masters and US Open champion, was on Interpol's red code list for several crimes committed between 2016 and 2020. AFP

Kerala continues its giant-killing act

Defeats Delhi by chasing down a huge target, thanks to Uthappa and Vinod's exploits

The heroes: Vishnu Vinod and Robin Uthappa's knocks ensured Kerala chased down a daunting target easily. • FILE PHOTOS

MUSHTAQ ALI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOZHIKODE

Kerala's giant- killing act continued at the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament in Mumbai. A day after stunning Mumbai, Sanju Samson's men crushed a star-studded Delhi by six wickets on Friday to register its third straight win.

Kerala moved to the top of Group-E with 12 points and a healthy net run-rate of +1.395. That the side chased down Delhi's daunting target of 213 – the highest in the tournament's history – with an over to spare helped in improving the run-rate, which could come into play in deciding the qualifiers for the knock-out phase.

Masterclass

It was a masterclass chase by the Kerala batsmen, led by Robin Uthappa, whose 91 (54b, 3x4, 8x6) nearly took the side home. Credit should also go to Vishnu Vinod who hammered an unbeaten 71 off just 38 balls (3x4, 5x6). The two added 133 for the fourth wicket.

The Kerala innings got off to a disastrous start when Mohammed Azharuddeen, the hero against Mumbai, was dismissed for a duck by Ishant Sharma, with Anju Rawat taking an excellent diving catch behind the stumps. Skipper Samson (16) and Sachin Baby (22) flattered only to deceive and things could have gone either way at 71 for three, when Vishnu joined Uthappa.

The two ensured the asking rate was under control all the time and rotated the strike well when they weren't hitting the hapless bowlers all around the ground.

Earlier, skipper Shikhar Dhawan (77, 48b, 7x4, 3x6) led from the front after Delhi was put in. He stepped out to drive S. Sreesanth delightfully on either side of the wicket to put the Kerala bowling under pressure. Lalit Yadav (52 not out, 25b, 5x4, 3x6) and Rawat (27 not out, 10b, 1x4, 3x6) then took the score beyond 200, but it was not beyond Kerala's reach.

Saturday's matches

- **Elite A (Bengaluru):** Uttar Pradesh vs Tripura; Railways vs Karnataka; Jammu & Kashmir vs Punjab, all at noon.
- **Elite B (Kolkata):** Tamil Nadu vs Hyderabad; Assam vs Bengal, both at noon; Odisha vs Jharkhand, 7 p.m.
- **Elite C (Vadodara):** Himachal vs Uttarakhand; Baroda vs Maharashtra; Gujarat vs Chhattisgarh, all at noon.

MUSHTAQ ALI SCORES

Friday

Elite D (Indore): Madhya Pradesh 136/9 in 20 overs (Rajat Patidar 50, Rakesh Thakur 32, Yash Thakur 3/25) bt Vidarbha 115/9 in 20 overs (Avesh Khan 5/17).

Services 133/9 in 20 overs (Lakhan Singh 44, Ravi Bishnoi 4/15) lost to Rajasthan 134/4 in 17.3 overs (Ankit Lamba 51, Rajesh Bishnoi 45).

Saurashtra 215/5 in 20 overs (Avi Barot 122, Samarth Vyas 41) bt Goa 125 in 18.4 overs (Eknath Kerkar 32, Jaydev Unadkat 3/28, Chirag Jani 3/24).

Elite E (Mumbai): Delhi 212/4 in 20 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 77, Lalit Yadav 52 n.o.) lost to Kerala 218/4 in 19 overs (Robin Uthappa 91, Vishnu Vinod 71 n.o.).

Mumbai 143 in 19.3 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 35, Sarfaraz Khan 30, Atharva Ankolekar 37, Arun Chaprana 3/22, Jayant Yadav 4/22) lost to Haryana 144/2 in 17.4 overs (Himanshu Rana 75 n.o., Shivam Chauhan 43 n.o.).

Andhra 226/4 in 20 overs (Ashwin Hebbar 45, Srikar Bharat 62, Ambati Rayudu 62 n.o., Prasanth Kumar 32) lost to Pondicherry 228/6 in 19.2 overs (Sheldon Jackson 106 n.o., Paras Dogra 51, Harishankar Reddy 3/35).

Plate (Chennai): Meghalaya 89/9 in 20 overs (Anuj Raj 3/15) lost to Bihar 92/4 in 16 overs (Shasheem Rathour 33, Sakibul Gani 31 n.o.).

Chandigarh 200/3 in 20 overs (Manan Vohra 85, Shivam Bhambri 62, Ankit Kaushik 36 n.o.) bt Mizoram 111/6 in 20 overs (Gaurav Gambhir 3/11).

Nagaland 176/4 in 20 overs (Rongsen Jonathan 56, Shrikant Mundhe 54, Stuart Binny 30) bt Sikkim 76 in 14.2 overs (Anureet Singh 41, Khrievitso Kense 3/27).

Manipur 149/8 in 20 overs (Akhilesh Sahani 3/30, Techi Doria 3/29) bt Arunachal Pradesh 104 in 19.4 overs.

Thursday

Elite A (Bengaluru): Punjab 200/4 in 20 overs (Prabhsimran Singh 63, Abhishek Sharma 107) bt Railways 83 in 17.1 overs (Arshdeep Singh 3/16, Harpreet Brar 4/22).

Uttar Pradesh 124/5 in 20 overs (Priyam Garg 35, Mujtaba Yousuf 3/14) lost to Jammu & Kashmir 126/2 in 15 overs (Abdul Samad 54 n.o., Shubham Khajuria 34 n.o.).

Karnataka 167/5 in 20 overs (Rohan Kadam 31, Devdutt Padikkal 99 n.o.) bt Tripura 157/4 in 20 overs (Rajat Dey 44 n.o., Manisankar Murasingh 61 n.o.).

Elite B (Kolkata): Jharkhand 233/3 in 20 overs (Virat Singh 103 n.o., Saurabh Tiwary 57, Kumar Deobrat 31 n.o.) bt Assam 182/7 in 20 overs (Pallavkumar Das 46, Riyan Parag 67, Monu Kumar 3/23).

Odisha 132/9 in 20 overs (M. Ashwin 3/16) lost to Tamil Nadu 136/2 in 15.1 overs (N. Jagadeesan 61).

Hyderabad 157 in 20 overs (Tilak Varma 50, Ishan Porel 4/24, Akash Deep 4/35) lost to Bengal 161/4 in 18.2 overs (Shreevats Goswami 69 n.o., Writtick Chatterjee 39 n.o.).

Elite C (Vadodara): Chhattisgarh 90 in 17.3 overs (Lukman Meriwala 5/8) lost to Baroda 91/1 in 12.3 overs (Kedar Devdhar 44 n.o., Vishnu Solanki 42 n.o.).

Himachal 141/5 in 20 overs (Prashant Chopra 35, Rishi Dhawan 43, Digvijay Rangi 35 n.o.) bt Gujarat 115 in 19.4 overs (Piyush Chawla 39, Vaibhav Arora 3/16).

Maharashtra 141/4 in 20 overs (Kedar Jadhav 61, Azim Kazi 31 n.o.) lost to Uttarakhand 145/4 in 18.1 overs (Jay Bista 69 n.o.).

Root's ton puts England in driving seat

Bess' career-best five-for bundles out Sri Lanka for 135

ENGLAND IN SL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GALLE

Skipper Joe Root stood tall with an unbeaten 168 as England stretched its lead to 185 against Sri Lanka on a rain-hit day two of the opening Test on Friday.

England reached 320 for four at tea riding on a 173-run partnership between Root and debutant Dan Lawrence, who made 73, after the visitors resumed the day on 127-2 in Galle.

Root, who is batting alongside Jos Buttler (7), hit his 18th Test ton and kept up the pressure on the home bowlers despite losing overnight partner Jonny Bairstow for 47 in the second over of the day.

He moved from 99 to 100 soon after lunch with a single off Dilruwan Perera as he raised the bat and hugged his partner in the two-match series played behind closed doors due to the coronavirus.

Joe Root.

The star batsman, who started the day on 66, recorded his highest Test score in more than a year after going through 2020 without a century and dropping out of the top 10 of the world rankings.

Lawrence, 23, stood firm with his captain, displaying confidence against the spinners as he brought up his fifty in 95 balls with five fours.

Dropped catches

Lawrence, who plays for English County Essex, survived two dropped catches on 60 and 68 in his first international outing and finally fell to Perera.

Earlier Bairstow became left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya's third victim after being caught at gully. The wicket ended a 114-run third-wicket stand for the tourists.

Off-spinner Dom Bess returned career-best figures of 5-30 and helped skittle out Sri Lanka for 135 – the lowest first-innings score at the venue – in two sessions on Thursday after the hosts elected to bat.

The series has resumed after being aborted due to the coronavirus in March.

SCOREBOARD

Sri Lanka — 1st innings: L. Thirimanne c Bairstow b Broad 4, K. Perera c Root b Bess 20, K. Mendis c Buttler b Broad 0, A. Mathews c Root b Broad 27, D. Chandimal c Curran b Leach 28, N. Dickwella c Sibley b Bess 12, D. Shanaka c Buttler b Bess 23, W. Hasaranga b Bess 19, D. Perera b Bess 0, L. Embuldeniya run out Leach 0, A. Fernando (not out) 0; Extras (b-1, nb-1): 2; Total (in 46.1 overs) 135.

Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-16, 3-25, 4-81, 5-81, 6-105, 7-126, 8-126, 9-130.

England bowling: Broad 9-3-20-3, Curran 4-2-8-0, Wood 6-1-21-0, Bess 10.1-3-30-5, Leach 17-2-55-1.

England — 1st innings: Z. Crawley c Hasaranga b Embuldeniya 9, D. Sibley c Thirimanne b Embuldeniya 4, J. Bairstow c Mendis b Embuldeniya 47, J. Root (batting) 168, D. Lawrence c K. Mendis b Perera 73, J. Buttler (batting) 7; Extras (b-7, nb-5): 12; Total (for four wkts. in 94 overs) 320.

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-17, 3-131, 4-304.

Sri Lanka bowling: Embuldeniya 38-4-131-3, Fernando 8-0-21-0, Hasaranga 15-1-63-0, D. Perera 28-2-82-1, Shanaka 5-1-16-0.

Toss: Sri Lanka.

Commendable show by Chaudhary

SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

After months of training at home, Asian Games gold medallist Saurabh Chaudhary came up with a commendable fare in the men's air pistol event of the National shooting selection trials at the Dr. Karni Singh Range on Friday.

Even before the trials, high performance pistol coach Samaresh Jung had said that Chaudhary was shooting close to his best during the training camp.

The 18-year-old Chaudhary, who won six World Cup gold medals in 2019, shot 590 in qualification and topped the finals with a world record score of 246.9.

The second Olympic quota winner in the event, Abhishek Verma, who also won two individual gold medals in World Cups in 2019, finished fourth. Guarav Rana and Omprakash Mitharval were the others to make the final.

Manu Bhaker was also in brilliant form as she topped the women's air pistol with 239.3 in the final, and 580 in qualification. Shri Nivetha was 1.1 point behind Manu, while Neha finished third. The young Esha Singh who shot 576 in qualification slipped to fourth.

The second Olympic quota winner in the event, Yashaswini Singh Deswal shot 570 in qualification and did not shoot the final.

In the 25m sports pistol second trial on Thursday, Manu topped qualification with 590 but it was Rahi Sarnobat who once again topped the final, as she pipped the other Olympic quota winner in the event, Chinki Yadav 38-37.

Olympian Annu Raj Singh was third, while Tejaswini, Abhdnya Patil, Neeraj Kaur and Neha were the others to make the final.

The results: Men: 10m air pistol: 1. Saurabh Chaudhary 246.9 (590); 2. Amanpreet Singh 244.5 (580); 3. Shiva Narwal 223.3 (579).

Women: 10m air pistol: 1. Manu Bhaker 239.3 (580); 2. Shiri Nivetha 238.2 (572); 3. Neha 217.4 (571).

25m sports pistol: 1. Rahi Sarnobat 38 (582); 2. Chiki Yadav 37 (584); 3. Annu Raj Singh 29 (575).

Tunisia closes tournaments abruptly

TENNIS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

It was an abrupt end to the aspirations of Zeel Desai and Vaidehi Chaudhari as the $15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament was cancelled, quite abruptly, on Wednesday. Both the Indians were looking forward to their second round matches when the ITF made a statement, announcing the cancellation, citing the Tunisian government's restriction on sporting gatherings owing to COVID-19 escalation.

With Paras Dahiya competing in the men's event in Tunisia, it was a big blow for the trainees of coach Jignesh Raval who were accompanied by coach Eetee Maheta. The Indian players were scheduled to compete in two more weeks in Tunisia.

In two circulars in quick succession, the ITF first announced the cancellation of future events in Tunisia, before declaring an end to the current tournament.

"Our kids are in great form. Unfortunately, they have to return back," said Raval of the Altevol Academy in Ahmedabad.

The Indian players were able to secure flight bookings to Mumbai through Dubai, and are scheduled to reach home by Saturday.

Riya loses in semis

Riya Bhatia and Fanny Ostlund of Sweden lost 3-6, 6-0, [10-7] to Gloria Ceschi and Marion Viertler of Italy in the $15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament doubles semifinals in Cairo.

The results: $15,000 ITF, Cairo: Men: First round: Romain Faucon (Bel) bt Muthu Aadhitiya Senthilkumar 6-3, 6-3. **Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals:** Naoki Tajima (Esp) & Jose Fco. Vidal Azorin (Esp) bt Aryan Goveas & Dhruv Sunish 6-2, 6-0; Andrey Chepelev (Rus) & Grigoriy Lomakin (Kaz) bt Yash Chaurasia & Tushar Madan 6-3, 6-3.

Women: Pre-quarterfinals: Sinja Kraus (Aut) bt Riya Bhatia 6-3, 6-0. **First round:** Riya bt Beatrice Ricci (Ita) 1-6, 6-4, 6-3; Anna Morgina (Rus) bt Saumya Vig 6-2, 6-0.

Doubles: Semifinals: Gloria Ceschi & Marion Viertler (Ita) bt Fanny Ostlund (Swe) & Riya 3-6, 6-0, [10-7]. **Quarterfinals:** Ostlund & Riya bt Aya Elaouni (Mar) & Elena Grekul (Ukr) 6-3, 6-1.

Barcelona presidential elections postponed

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BARCELONA

Barcelona's presidential elections have been postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic, the club said on Friday.

Barcelona said the January 24 elections were delayed because of "mobility restrictions decreed by the Catalan government in the current context of (the coronavirus) pandemic."

Barcelona said it has asked the Catalan government to allow voting by mail, "a request that the government has undertaken to study."

DELHI ROUND-UP

Two-wicket win for RSC

Keshav Dalal's 98 and Siddarth Beniwal's 63 helped Rann Star Club beat M-10 Academy by two wickets in the Niz Sports u-19 tournament.

The scores:
M-10 Academy 302/8 in 40 overs (Prashant Tomar 95, Shivam Bhan 92, Mridul Surroch 42) lost to Rann Star 305/8 in 39.2 overs (Keshav Dalal 98, Siddarth Beniwal 63, Aditya Sharma 57, Abhijeet Singh 4/34).

All-round show by Harshit

Man-of-the-match Harshit Kaushik top-scored with 45 and claimed three wickets as Delhi Challengers defeated Hari Singh Academy (HSA) by 40 runs in the Rikhi Ram memorial tournament.

The scores:
Delhi Challengers 191/9 in 40 overs (Harshit Kaushik 45, Govind Mittal 3/51) bt HSA 151 in 39.1 overs (Aman Gurnani 33, Harshit Kaushik 3/35).

Paras and Yug among wickets

Three wickets each by Paras Pandey and Yug Kohli saw Swastik Sports Management (SSM) thump Stallions Academy by 10 wickets in the Turf Youth Cup u-15 tournament.

The scores:
Stallions Academy 48 in 21.3 overs (Paras Pandey 3/6, Yug Kohli 3/10) lost to SSM 49/0 in 5.1 overs.

Sonnet in semifinals

Half-centuries by Kavya Gupta and Mohd. Taif and three wickets by Aditya Bhandari helped Sonnet Club down TN Memorial by seven runs and enter the semifinals of the seventh S.N. Dubey memorial u-16 tournament.

The scores:
Sonnet Club 188 in 39.1 overs (Kavya Gupta 60, Mohd. Taif 51; Prithvi Tyagi 4/25) bt TNM 181 in 38.3 overs (Aaradhya Yadav 81; Aditya Bhandari 3/18).

Agnesh scores unbeaten century

Agnesh Surya slammed an unbeaten 35-ball 104 and claimed three wickets as Ramanujan College coasted to an eight-wicket win over Sri Venkateshwara College by eight wickets in the first Ramanujan Centenary T20 tournament.

The scores:
Sri Venkateshwara 183/9 in 20 overs (Arvind Kumar 35, Agnesh Surya 3/21) lost to Ramanujan 189/2 in 10.4 overs (Agnesh Surya 104 n.o., Mohit Jagota 63 n.o.).

Easy for Bal Bhawan

Mananpreet Singh's 78 and Agrim Sharma's 49 ensured a comprehensive 144-run victory for Bal Bhawan School, Dwarka against SM Academy in the sixth Bal Bhawan Premier League.

The scores:
Bal Bhawan 225 in 40 overs (Mananpreet Singh 78, Agrim Sharma 49) bt SM Academy 81 in 31.4 overs.

Mani claims six

Man-of-the-match Mani Shankar Yadav claimed six for 19 as Push Academy defeated G.D. Goenka School by 148 runs in the Swasthik Sports u-17 tournament.

The scores:
Push Academy 263/8 in 40 overs (Anindo Naharay 56, Rake Kumar 54, Aditya Jain 48, Sarthak Ray 40, Saksham Kumar 39, Dhruv Chanwla 4/48) bt G.D. Goenka 115 in 26.2 overs (Karn Kashyap 52, Mani Shankar Yadav 6/19).

Gyanti Academy, RCC post wins

Himanshu Kumar (four wickets) helped RCC Club beat Vidya Jain Academy by 61 runs in the Endurance u-15 League. In another game, Gyanti Academy downed Turf Academy by four wickets.

The scores:
RCC 134/7 in 25 overs (Sarthak Pal 44) bt VJCA 73/7 in 25 overs (Himanshu Kumar 4/7); Turf Academy 95 in 22.2 overs lost to Gyanti Academy 96/6 in 23.3 overs (Trinav Kumar 30).

Kapil takes four

Man-of-the-match Aryan Kapil took four wickets as Sporting Club edged past Jay Maa Ambey Cricket Academy (JMA) by two runs in the Ratan Lal Saini memorial u-16 tournament.

The scores:
Sporting Club 125 in 31.2 overs (Jay Yadav 3/22) bt JMA 123 in 34.5 overs (Aryan Kapil 4/16).

Anshul, Sehrawat score big

Anshul Sehrawat and Aditya batted Rohtak Road Gymkhana (RRG) to a 157-run win over County Cricket Academy (CCA) in the Sanjeev Tank memorial tournament.

The scores:
RRG 284/8 in 40 overs (Anshul Sehrawat 80, Aditya 61) bt CCA 127 in 36 overs (Abhishek Singh 42; Kartik Datta 3/34).

Aarbin, BHA win easy

Madhav Sharma's fighting 82 helped Aarbin Academy beat Janakpuri Academy by 76 runs in the Shree Manik Chand memorial u-14 tournament.
In another match, half-centuries by Dweep Gahlot and Daksh Drall saw Baba Haridas Academy (BHA) crush Crescent Academy by 162 runs.

The scores:
Aarbin 213/4 in 35 overs (Madhav Sharma 82, Saksham Sharma 3/32) bt Janakpuri 137 in 27.1 overs (Saksham Sharma 57, Suryansh Sharma 3/27).
BHA 225/7 in 35 overs (Dweep Gahlot 54, Daksh Drall 52, Jatin Yadav 40) bt Crescent 63 in 26.5 overs.

Mayank scores unbeaten 116

An unbeaten 116 by Mayank Gosain ensured a one-wicket win for Ravindra Academy against The Cricket Gurukul (TCG) in the Sunil Jain memorial u-19 tournament.

The scores:
TCG 272/9 in 40 overs (Anjaneya Suryavanshi 122, Chirag Kaliraman 57) lost to Ravindra Academy 276/9 in 40 overs (Mayank Gosain 116 n.o., Akashdeep Bhakar 3/42).

Stoppage-time heartbreak for Blasters

East Bengal nets through Neville in the 94th minute, shares honours with the Kerala outfit

ISL 2020-21

SPORTS BUREAU

Kerala Blasters suffered a stoppage-time heartbreak as it was forced to a 1-1 draw by SC East Bengal in the Hero Indian Super League at the Tilak Maidan, Vasco, on Friday.

Just when it looked like the Blasters would celebrate a third victory this season after a Jordan Murray goal shortly after the hour mark, came the East Bengal equaliser from Scott Neville from a corner kick in the fourth minute of injury time.

It was virtually a repeat of the previous meeting between the two teams, on December 20, which also ended 1-1. There was no change at the bottom in the 11-team ladder with East Bengal staying on ninth (11 points) and Blasters on 10th (10) after 11 games.

The equaliser: Scott Neville of SC East Bengal scored with a fine header off Bright Enobakhare's perfect corner. ▪ ISL/ SPORTZPICS

Lively game

The young Sahal Abdul Samad played a lively game as Blasters appeared to control a major part of the first-half. And as the match progressed both sides had plenty of chances but there were also many occasions when the players gave away the ball cheaply.

Drama

Australian Murray, Blasters' top scorer now with six goals, had a chance to score soon after the start but he shot straight to the goalkeeper Debjit Majumdar.

But when he did strike, in the 63rd minute, there was plenty of drama.

It looked like a chest ball, a foot shot and a header all rolled into one as Murray found the target with two defenders desperately chasing him. The assist came from Blasters' goalkeeper Albino Gomes, whose long shot from the box fell straight into Murray's path.

And then, minutes after East Bengal's Aaron Holloway messed up a fine chance to score, came the equaliser. It was virtually the last piece of action in the match and Neville scored with a fine header off Bright Enobakhare's perfect corner.

The result:

Kerala Blasters FC 1 (Jordan Murray 63) drew with SC East Bengal 1 (Scott Neville 90+4).

Saturday's match: Mumbai City FC vs Hyderabad FC, 7.30 p.m.

Goa too good for Jamshedpur

Ortiz scores a brace as the team moves to third in the table

SPORTS BUREAU

FC Goa moved to the third spot in the 2020-21 ISL standings, just two points behind ATK Mohun Bagan, with a 3-0 victory over Jamshedpur FC at the Fatorda Stadium on Thursday.

Jorge Ortiz, who completed his brace in the 52nd minute, and goalkeeper Naveen Kumar were Goa's stars on the night, which saw Jamshedpur being reduced to 10 men after Alexandre Lima was dismissed for receiving a second yellow card in the 86th.

Ahead of the game, Goa manager Juan Ferrando surprisingly decided to leave out leading striker Igor Angulo on the bench, while handing starts to Alberto Noguera, Lenny Rodrigues and Naveen.

However, Ortiz stepped up in his countryman's absence and led the Goa attack. After missing a big chance just moments before, the Spaniard gave his side a 1-0 lead when he received a Noguera pass from the right and fired the ball past JFC shot-stopper T.P. Rehenesh.

Strike force: Jorge Ortiz led the FC Goa attack with aplomb. ▪ ISL/ SPORTZPICS

Ortiz had more chances to increase his team's advantage in the opening 45 minutes, but his first touch and placement let him down. Despite Goa dominating possession in the first-half, it was Naveen who was the busier of the two custodians, making three crucial saves.

Jamshedpur could have opened its account before Ortiz's first goal, with Peter Hartley's header off an Aitor Monroy set-piece missing the target and Isaac Vanmalsawma's shot from just outside the box testing Naveen.

Ferrando's men started the second half brightly with Edu Bedia having an early attempt on target. Ortiz then doubled his team's lead when he was set up by Brandon Fernandes inside the box.

Gonzalez on target

Defender Ivan Gonzalez added a third in the 89th minute after dashing forward with pace, evading a few opposition players, and executing a one-two pass with Noguera to find the back of the net.

Jamshedpur attacker Nerijus Valskis, who is just behind Angulo in the Golden Boot standings of the season, had a dull outing as FC Goa came out on top.

The result: FC Goa 3 (Jorge Ortiz 19, 52, Ivan Gonzalez 89) bt Jamshedpur FC 0.

Real Kashmir downs a depleted CCFC

Chennai team misses four players owing to COVID protocol

I-LEAGUE

SPORTS BUREAU

Real Kashmir FC took advantage of an under-strength Chennai City – without four of its players, including first-choice goalkeeper Kabir Toufik – to score once in each half to secure a 2-0 win against the 2018-19 I-League champion in a match at the Mohun Bagan Ground on Friday.

Incredible win! Gokulam Kerala players can't believe what they have pulled off against Punjab FC. ▪ TWITTER

Quarantine

Toufik and Vijay Thomas tested positive in a RT-PCR test conducted by the AIFF medical team on Tuesday. The two players and their roommates – Vijay Nagappan and Uma Shankar – were quarantined as per pre-agreed protocol.

However, all four tested negative when the club opted for re-testing through a reputed private lab in the city on Wednesday. The players, though, were not allowed to take part in the game after the AIFF turned down Chennai City's appeal to allow their participation following the latest results.

Real Kashmir FC started confidently and took the lead in the 16th minute when Aser Dipanda Dicka found the target. The Cameroonian forward made the most of an assist from strike partner Lukman Adefemi, who did the hard work in the Chennai City box before setting up the former with the opportunity.

Dicka was instrumental in setting up the second goal in the 83rd minute as he played in a nice cross for substitute Lalrindika Ralte, who put the ball in the net.

Gritty Gokulam

Gokulam Kerala FC scored a remarkable comeback win with a fantastic second-half performance to beat RoundGlass Punjab FC 4-3 in an I-League match played at the Salt Lake Stadium on Thursday.

Training 1-3 in the first half Gokulam Kerala rallied spectacularly after the change of ends and scored three without a reply to pick up its first win of the tournament.

Gokulam Kerala was served well by its two Ghanaian forwards Dennis Antwi and Philip Adjah who shared the four goals to realise the fantastic comeback for their side. Punjab FC dominated the first half where Chencho Gyeltshen scored twice and Rupert Nongrum found the target once to give their team a convincing lead.

The results:

Real Kashmir FC 2 (Aser Dipanda Dicka 16, Lalrindika Ralte 83) bt Chennai City FC 0.

Gokulam Kerala FC 4 (Philip Adjah 27, 75, Dennis Antwi 70, 72) bt RoundGlass Punjab FC 3 (Chencho Gyeltshen 17, 25, Rupert Nongrum 44).

Sudeva Delhi FC 3 (Kean Lewis 40, Naorem Mahesh Singh 49, Shaiborlang Kharpan 66) bt Indian Arrows 0.

Mohammedan Sporting 0 drew with Churchill Brothers 0.

Palace holds a fatigued Arsenal

Gunners' mini revival comes to a halt in goalless stalemate

PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCIES
LONDON

Arsenal's recent resurgence in the Premier League was checked by Crystal Palace as it was held to a dull 0-0 draw on Thursday.

Mikel Arteta's side was bidding for a fourth successive league win but could find no way through an obdurate Palace.

Palace was well worth its point and was the better side in the first half in which defender James Tomkins hit the bar and Christian Benteke went close.

Arsenal controlled the second half but lacked spark and rarely troubled Palace goalkeeper Vicente Guaita.

No luck: Even Eddie Nketiah's, centre, acrobatic effort failed to breach the Crystal Palace defence. ▪ AP

Static

The north Londoners remained in 11th spot in the standings with 24 points from 18 games with Palace two places lower with 23 points.

Mikel Arteta admitted Arsenal was suffering from fatigue. "I wanted to see a win and a few goals but we were fatigued. I cannot fault the spirit but it wasn't enough," Arteta said.

Just before Christmas, Arsenal was only four points above the relegation zone, so its current position 12 points away from the bottom three affords Arteta some much-needed breathing space.

But this disjointed display underlined the attacking flaws that have stopped Arsenal building on last season's FA Cup triumph.

Palace has only won one of its past eight matches in all competitions.

Emile Smith-Rowe, Arsenal's promising young midfielder, started after scoring against Newcastle as a substitute last weekend.

But Kiernan Tierney was absent with muscle tightness and the Gunners missed the Scotland left-back's busy presence.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has endured a difficult season and, once again, Arsenal's captain was a diffident figure.

The results: Thursday: Arsenal 0 drew with Crystal Palace 0.

Wednesday: Manchester City 1 (Foden 44) bt Brighton 0; Tottenham 1 (Kane 25) drew with Fulham 1 (Cavaleiro 74).

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LAST DATE OF SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION IS MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 2021

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*For further details refer to section titled "Issue Related Information" on page 31 of the Tranche I Prospectus dated January 11, 2021. Allotment in this Tranche I Issue is required to be made on the basis of date of upload of each application into the electronic book of the Stock Exchange. However, on the date of oversubscription, the allotments should be made to the applicants on proportionate basis.

#Pursuant to the Tranche I Prospectus dated January 11, 2021, the Tranche I Issue opened on January 15, 2021 and was scheduled to close on January 29, 2021, with an option of early closure or extension by such period as may be decided by the Board of Directors or a duly constituted committee thereof. Our company has exercised the option of early closure vide Letter of Approval dated January 15, 2021, and has decided to close the Tranche I Issue on Monday, January 18, 2021. In terms of the Tranche I Prospectus dated January 11, 2021, our Company is giving this public notice for such early closure. The Tranche I Issue shall remain open for subscription on Working Days from 10.00 a.m. till 5.00 p.m. (Indian Standard Time) during the Tranche I Issue Period. On the Tranche I Issue Closing Date, the Application Forms will be accepted only between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. (Indian Standard Time) and uploaded until 5.00 p.m. or such extended time as may be permitted by the Stock Exchange. Further, pending mandate requests for bids placed on the last day of bidding will be validated by 5 PM on one Working Day after the Tranche I Issue Closing Date i.e. January 18, 2021. For further details please refer to the chapter titled "Issue Related Information" on page 31 of the Tranche I Prospectus.

Capitalised terms not defined herein shall have the same meaning as assigned to such terms in the Prospectus.

DISCLAIMER: Power Finance Corporation Limited, subject to market conditions, and other considerations, is proposing a public issue of secured redeemable nonconvertible debentures and has filed a Shelf Prospectus and Tranche I Prospectus with the Registrar of Companies, NCT of Delhi & Haryana, BSE and SEBI. The Shelf Prospectus and the Tranche I Prospectus are available on the website of the Company at www.pfcindia.com, on the website of BSE at www.bseindia.com, on the websites of the lead managers at www.trustgroup.in, www.akgroup.co.in, www.edelweissfin.com and www.jmfl.com, and on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in. Investors proposing to participate in the Tranche I Issue should note that investment in the NCDs involves a high degree of risk and for details in relation to the same, refer to the Prospectus, including the section titled "Risk Factors" beginning on page 15 of the Shelf Prospectus and the section titled "Material Developments" beginning on page 250 of the Shelf Prospectus and page 30 of the Tranche I Prospectus.

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A ND-NDE

'Mr Dakar' lives up to his name

Peterhansel wins eighth car title, for a total of 14

DAKAR RALLY

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JEDDAH

France's Stephane Peterhansel on Friday won the Dakar Rally for the 14th time, 30 years after his initial success in the most gruelling event on the motorsport calendar.

Peterhansel, nicknamed 'Mr Dakar', has now won the car category eight times, having also won the motorbike category six times.

The 55-year-old Mini driver, aided by co-pilot Edouard Boulanger, finished 14min 51sec ahead of Qatari Nasser al-Attiyah (Toyota), with Spain's Carlos Sainz – winner of Friday's 12th and final stage from Yanbu to Jeddah – rounding out the podium in another Mini.

Hail the hero! Stephane Peterhansel celebrates his victory with teammates. ▪AFP

Biker succumbs

Peterhansel's victory came shortly after news that French motorcyclist Pierre Cherpin had died from injuries sustained in a crash on the seventh stage, becoming the race's first fatality this year.

Cherpin's death takes to 27, including 22 motorcyclists, the number of competitors who have lost their lives since the inaugural Dakar Rally in 1979.

Argentina's Kevin Benavides won the motorbike category, leading home defending champion Ricky Brabec of the United States by 4:56 in a first Honda 1-2 since 1987.

Briton Sam Sunderland, the 2017 champion, finished third.

Benavides, who broke his nose in a crash on the fifth stage that saw his helmet shattered, became the first South American to win the category.

Red Bull extends Daruvala's contract

SPORTS REPORTER
CHENNAI

Red Bull Racing, on Friday, confirmed the extension of its support to India's Jehan Daruvala for the 2021 season.

Jehan created history last year when he became the first Indian to win an FIA Formula 2 Championship race.

The 22-year-old from Mumbai will continue with Carlin for his second season in F2 and would hope to follow the footsteps of his teammate from last year Yuki Tsunoda who graduated to F1 for the 2021 season with Red Bull-owned AlphaTauri F1 team.

"I am very thankful to Red Bull for their continued faith in me. I'm extremely excited to be staying in F2 and with Carlin for 2021 as a Red Bull Junior.

It was great to end the season on such a high with my first F2 win and then back that up with front running pace in post-season testing," said Jehan.

Daruvala... earning another chance with Red Bull.

Six Indians in the top-10

Varun, Samiya jump places in BWF's junior world rankings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Young shuttlers Varun Kapur and Samiya Imad Farooqui have attained career-best second spots in their respective categories in the latest BWF's junior world rankings, which features six Indians in the top-10.

Varun jumped four places among male singles players, while Samiya climbed six spots in the female category. Varun had a great run last year as he picked his sixth junior title, claiming the XII Portuguese International 2020 in November.

While 17-year-old Samiya, winner of the U-15 Asian Badminton Championship, has been one of the consistent performers in the junior circuit last year.

"It's great to see many junior shuttlers doing so well. We currently have 10 Indians in the top-20 and the juniors have shown a lot of promise," Badminton Association of India (BAI) president Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a release.

"This ranking will work as a desired boost for each of them and surely motivate them to work harder as it has been tough year for COVID-19 affected sporting world and badminton is trying to make a comeback after almost a year's break."

BWF had frozen the world junior rankings as of March 17, 2020, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, with the recommencement of some international junior tournaments, BWF decided to add subsequent International junior tournament results to the world junior rankings without deducting points from previous weeks, thereby creating a rolling ranking until such time as the world junior rankings can be fully unfrozen.

Samiya. ▪FILE PHOTO

While Varun is the only Indian in the top 10 among male shuttlers, the female singles category has three other Indian shuttlers – Tasnim Mir (4), Treesa Jolly (8) and Aditi Bhatt (10) – in the top-10 list.

In women's doubles, Tressa (8), Tanisha Crasto (9) and Aditi (9) are among the Indians who are placed inside top-10. "BAI's executive council meeting and AGM is scheduled for January 30 in Delhi. We will be finalising a detailed plan on how to conduct domestic tournaments as well as the key junior tournaments that BAI plans to send its players this year," said BAI general-secretary Ajay Singhania. "We will also be discussing the future plans related to coaching and training for junior shuttlers."

Wood fuels Houston Rockets' win

Harden moves to Brooklyn Nets as part of multi-team deal

NBA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

Houston Rockets put this week's franchise-altering trade in the rear view mirror on Thursday night as it kicked off its post-James Harden era with a gutsy comeback NBA win over San Antonio Spurs.

Journeyman Christian Wood scored a team high 27 points and had 15 rebounds for the Rockets in a 109-105 win over the Spurs a day after Houston sent shockwaves through the NBA when they traded three-time league scoring champion Harden to Brooklyn Nets as part of a mammoth multi-team deal.

Houston was coming off back-to-back blowout losses at home to Los Angeles Lakers.

Asked what the feeling was like in the Rockets' dressing room one day after the blockbuster deal, Wood correlated it to the never give up mindset of late Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant.

In Portland, Domantas Sabonis had 23 points and 15 rebounds to lead visiting Indiana Pacers to a 111-87 win over the Trail Blazers, who lost centre Jusuf Nurkic with a broken wrist.

Malcolm Brogdon added 25 points and seven assists for the Pacers, who improved to 4-1 on the road and snapped an 11-game losing skid in Portland.

Elsewhere, Chris Boucher matched his career best with 25 points and added 10 rebounds as Toronto Raptors held off Charlotte Hornets 111-108. In Philadelphia, Shake Milton scored a season-high 31 points off the bench, Tobias Harris added 18 and Philadelphia 76ers rolled over a depleted Miami Heat 125-108.

The results:

Denver Nuggets bt Golden State Warriors 114-104; San Antonio Spurs lost to Houston Rockets 109-105; Philadelphia 76ers bt Miami Heat 125-108; Toronto Raptors bt Charlotte Hornets 111-108; Portland Trail Blazers lost to Indiana Pacers 111-87.

Perfect fit: Christian Wood stepped up to ensure Houston Rockets never felt the absence of superstar James Harden. ▪AFP

Indian campaign comes to an end

Saina, doubles pairs lose; injured Srikanth pulls out

THAILAND OPEN

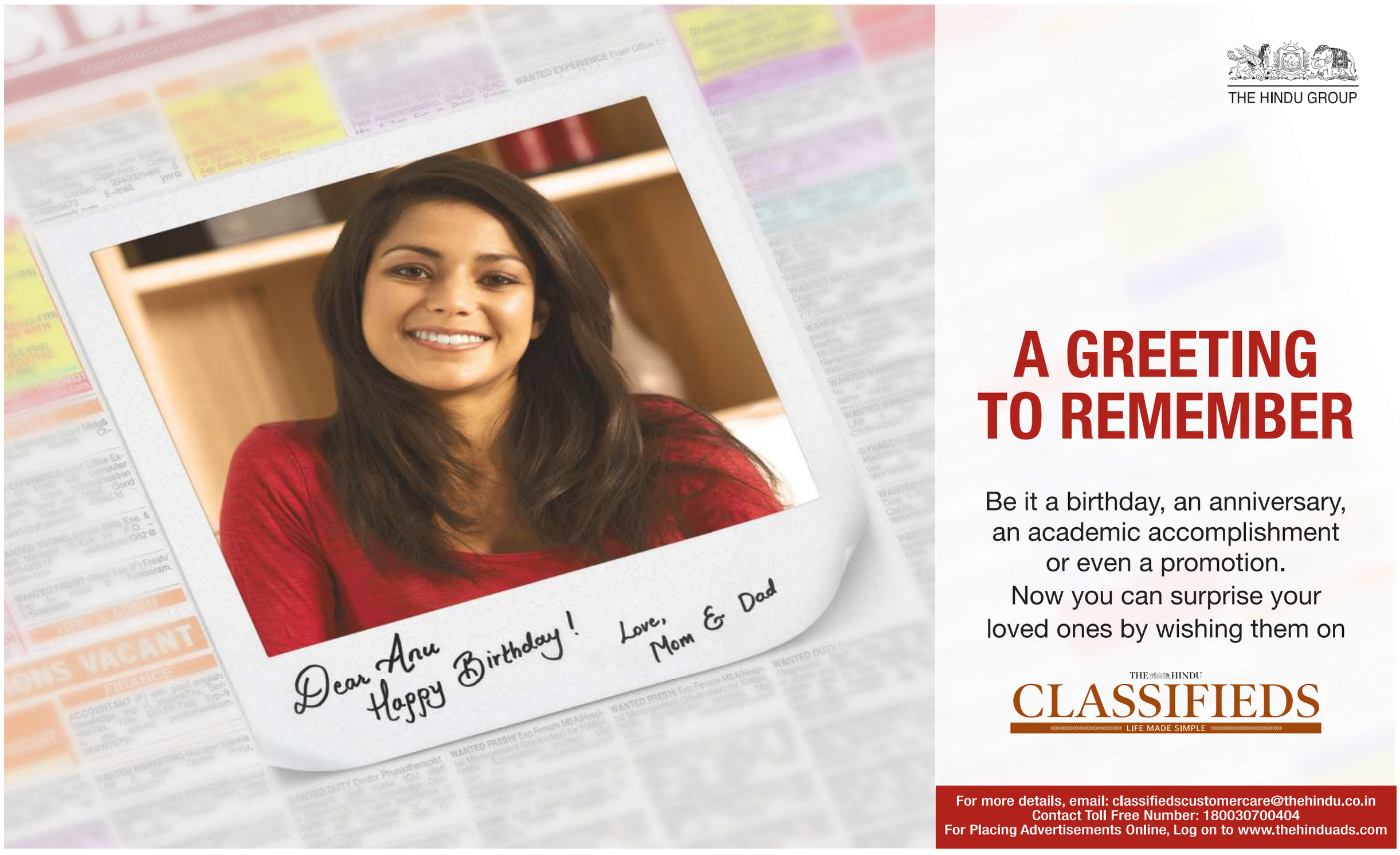
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BANGKOK

Former World No. 1 Saina Nehwal was knocked out of the Yonex Thailand Open Super 1000 event here on Thursday.

Saina managed to grab the opening game but ran out of steam as Thailand's World No. 12 Busanan Ongbamrungphan won 21-23, 21-14, 21-16 in 68 minutes. It was Saina's fourth straight loss to Busanan.

In men's singles, another former World No. 1 K. Srikanth conceded a walkover to his eighth-seeded Malaysian opponent Lee Zii Jia after pulling his right calf muscle.

The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also bowed out of the competition after a 21-19, 21-17 defeat to the second-seeded Indonesian combination of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan.

Saina Nehwal. ▪FILE PHOTO

Later in the day, Satwik and his mixed doubles partner Ashwini Ponnappa went down 21-12, 21-17 to the Hong Kong pairing of Chang Tak Ching and Ng Wing Yung.