

**OPINION 6**  
COMBAT  
CLIMATE CHANGE

**WORLD 8**  
US CARRIES OUT RARE EXECUTION  
DURING PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

**SPORT 12**  
ROHIT CLEARS  
FITNESS TEST AT NCA

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## BJP plans massive awareness drive on farm laws

Party to hold 100 press conferences, 718 farmers' meetings in various parts of the country to explain 'correct' implications of new farm laws

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With agitating farmers reluctant to accept Government's offer on farm laws and intensifying their stir, the BJP has sought to launch a strong counter-awareness campaign to mobilise support for the new agriculture marketing laws with the public and the farmers outside Punjab and Haryana.

The ruling party's vigorous outreach programme in "next few days" would involve 100 press conferences and 718 farmers meeting in as many districts to explain "correct" implications of the three farm laws to the farmers of the country, sources said.

The BJP leaders would organise "kisan sammelans" in rural "chaupals" to convince the farmers that the new farm laws would give them "unrestricted freedom" to sell and "increase" their income by way of contract farming, said sources in the party.

The new Central farm laws have allowed trade and contract in agricultural produce as also removed restrictions on hoarding by amending essential commodities Act. Farmers are demanding that the Government rollback these laws which they say would put farmers at the mercy of corporate traders and their profiteering business.

According to BJP leaders, their "awareness campaign" (on the farm laws) which got thwarted on account of coronavirus pandemic, would be expanded and also involve



Farmers gather in large numbers at Singhu Border during their Delhi Chalo protest march against the Centre's new farm laws in New Delhi on Friday  
Ranjana Dimri | Pioneer

farmers outside Punjab and Haryana, the States which, they claim, are "mainly feeding" the current stir on the outskirts of Delhi.

Union and State Cabinet Ministers will take part in the intense communication campaign with documents and "point-by-point" allay farmers' apprehensions on the laws as they would also list out Government's "readiness" to amend the sections which may help neutralising their fears on contract farming.

The farmers wing of the RSS — "Bhartiya Kisan Sangh" (BKS) — is too planning to organise a massive farmer outreach and around "Kisan Chaupals" in different parts of the country to showcase the benefits of the farm laws.

"The exercise has already begun in right earnest in rural areas," said one of the BKS leaders.

The BKS has asked all its units to "help farmers in procurement and payment" issues across the country.

The BKS while supporting demand for guaranteeing Minimum Support Price to the farmers has not joined the farmers agitation, citing "politicisation" of the protest.

The BJP is attempting to rope in farmers who are inclined to toe a middle-path in the ongoing protest and be satisfied with the amendments and guaranteeing the MSP and not be with the "extremists" wanting a complete annulment of the three farm laws, sources said.

## Protesters to block Delhi-Jaipur highway today

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

On the 16th day of farmers' protest against the three recently introduced farm laws, farmers stayed put at borders across the national Capital. With farmers sitting at borders across the city, the alternative routes to neighboring Haryana and Uttar Pradesh continued to witness long traffic queues during office hours.

"On December 12, the farmers have decided to block the Delhi-Jaipur Highway and if still the law is not rolled back, the farmers on December 14, will stage sit-in protests in front of Deputy Commissioner's (DC) offices across the country and houses of BJP leaders. We will also block Reliance and Adani toll

plazas. There is no programme to stop trains.

Alternative routes to/from Haryana, UP witness traffic chaos in national Capital



Children ride a bicycle on Delhi-Meerut Expressway during farmers' Delhi Chalo protest against new farm laws at UP side of the Ghazipur Border of New Delhi on Friday  
PTI

## Don't allow anti-social elements to hijack your stir: Tomar to farmers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday cautioned farmers agitating against the three farm laws not to fall prey to false propaganda and not allow anti-social elements to take advantage of their peaceful agitation.

He said some "anti-social elements" are conspiring to spoil the atmosphere of the peasants' movement under the

guise of farmers and appealed the protesters to be vigilant against their platform being misused.

Tagging a media report about posters coming up at farmers' Tikri Border protest site demanding release of some activists arrested under various charges, Tomar said, "Anti-social elements are conspiring to spoil the atmosphere of the peasant movement under the guise of farmers."

## BKUB approaches SC to challenge Constitutional validity of 3 farm laws

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At Delhi borders against the Centre's three new agri laws, farmers' body 'Bhartiya Kisan Union Bhanu' (BKUB) has moved the Supreme Court seeking to intervene as a party in a pending plea challenging the constitutional validity of the legislations.

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde, on October 12, had issued a notice

to the Centre by agreeing to test the validity of the laws on the pleas filed by RJD lawmaker from Rajya Sabha, Manoj Jha and DMK Rajya Sabha MP from Tamil Nadu, Tiruchi Siva, and one by Rakesh Vaishnav of Chhattisgarh Kisan Congress.

BKUB, through its Mathura-based president Bhanu Pratap Singh, has sought impleadment as a party in the lead petition filed by DMK lawmaker Tiruchi Siva.

## Bengal Chief Secy, DGP defy MHA's summons

Top officials were called to report on law & order after attack on Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Friday summoned West Bengal's Chief Secretary and DGP on December 14 for an explanation on the law and order situation in the State.

While the two officials refused to turn up saying the matter was being examined by the State Government, TMC launched scathing attack on the Centre for bypassing the State Government.

Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay and Director General of Police Virendra were asked to present before the Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla to explain the law and order situation based on the report of



BJP workers block a road during a protest against the attack on party national president JP Nadda's convoy in West Bengal, in Kolkata on Friday  
PTI

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar's on the attack on BJP president JP Nadda's convoy.

In response to the Home Ministry's letter, Chief Secretary wrote back saying his and DGP's presence in Delhi was avoidable as the matter is "already being examined" by the State Government.

He also wrote, "While further reports are being obtained and compiled, in the circumstances, I am directed to request you to kindly dispense with the presence of State officials in the meeting, considering the State Government is already addressing this issue with utmost seriousness."

## Nod for SII vaccine's emergency use in India soon after UK's OK

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) may get emergency use nod for Covishield in India as soon as the UK's drug regulator gives go ahead to the vaccine, which officials here expect to be before year end.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said at an event

that in the coming weeks vaccination process will kick-start in India as soon as it is approved by the regulatory agency concerned. Sources said SII might take the lead in getting nod.

Dr Harsh Vardhan was speaking at the inter-ministerial meeting on vaccination of South Asia organised by the

World Bank through video conference.

The sources said the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is currently evaluating data, including which dosing regimen is best to use for the Covid vaccine developed by UK's Oxford and AstraZeneca. "The MHRA approval is

Vaccination process to start in India in a few weeks: Harsh

expected before Christmas and India may give a go-ahead soon after that," sources said.

"The regulatory approval in the UK is crucial to strengthen SII's application seeking emergency use authorisation in India because the proposal here refers to trials being conducted in the UK and Brazil. Moreover, the vaccine is yet to be approved in any country. It is a sensitive matter and only once we are sure of the safety, efficacy and immunogenicity of the vaccine, we can grant an approval," an official said.

The MHRAs evaluation of data is likely to bring more clarity on dosage of the vaccine — which has shown efficacy of 62 per cent when two full doses were given to trial participants, but 90 per cent for a smaller sub-group given a half dose and then a full dose.

Vardhan said, "Effective planning and strategic management has enabled India to keep its cases per million at 7,078 against the global average of 8,883. The fatality rate is 1.45%, well below the global average of 2.29%."

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	18,72,440	48,059	17,49,973
Karnataka	8,99,011	11,928	8,68,471
Andhra Pradesh	8,74,515	7,049	8,62,230
Tamil Nadu	7,96,475	11,870	7,74,306
Kerala	6,58,684	2,563	5,96,593
Delhi	6,03,535	9,934	5,74,925
Uttar Pradesh	5,61,161	8,011	5,32,349
West Bengal	5,16,505	8,966	4,84,258
Odisha	3,23,029	1,851	3,17,870
Rajasthan	2,88,692	2,514	2,68,457
Telangana	2,76,516	1,485	2,67,427
Chhattisgarh	2,54,129	3,068	2,32,715
Haryana	2,50,394	2,699	2,37,009
Bihar	2,42,152	1,312	2,35,614
Gujarat	2,25,304	4,148	2,07,629
Madhya Pradesh	2,21,115	3,382	2,04,641

## Protest against surgery by Ayurveda docs

It is an attempt to corrupt healthcare system, say IMA members, doctors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Thousands of doctors on Friday held nationwide strike under the banner of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) opposing the Centre's move to allow postgraduate practitioners of Ayurveda to be trained in performing surgical procedures.

The strike involved the withdrawal of non-Covid and non-essential activities from 6 am to 6 pm.

Last month, the Central Council of Indian Medicine — the regulatory body for the study and practice of Ayurveda



in India — amended the Indian Medicine Central Council (Post Graduate Ayurveda Education) Regulations, 2016, to include the regulation to permit postgraduate students of Ayurveda to receive training and practice of "shalakya" and

"shalakya". Shalaky refers to general surgery, shalaky is related to diseases of the ear, nose, throat, head, eye, and ophthalmology. The IMA condemned the move, terming the decision as a "deceptive camouflage of mixing the sys-

tems of medicine". The Ayush Ministry then issued a statement clarifying that the amendment was specific to 58 surgical procedures only. However, the body of medical practitioners said: "It is nothing but a blatant attempt at mixopathy and khichdification of medical education and practice."

On Friday, doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and various other Government-run hospitals in Delhi and the municipality-run Hindu Rao Hospital performed duties while wearing black armbands and ribbons.

Dr R Sharma, national president of the association, said: "Modern medicine is controlled and research-oriented, we are proud of the heritage and richness of Ayurveda but the two shouldn't be mixed."

## China's bid to change LAC cause of tension: MEA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rebutting Chinese claim that India is responsible for tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), New Delhi on Friday hit back and said the situation worsened due to efforts by Beijing to "unilaterally change" the status of the LAC.

These strong comments by External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava came at a media briefing. He was asked about the fresh comments by the Chinese foreign ministry blaming India again for the border situation in eastern Ladakh.

"Our position has been very clear and has been articulated several times in the past. The situation that we have seen since the last six months has been a result of the actions of the Chinese side which has sought to effect a



unilateral change in status along the LAC in eastern Ladakh," he said.

"These actions are in violation of the bilateral agreements and protocol on ensuring peace and tranquility along the LAC in the India-China border areas," Srivastava added.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson on Thursday blamed India again for the

actions," Srivastava said.

Incidentally, the latest war of words between India and China broke out after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said two days back that relations between the two countries are at worst stage in the last 30 to 40 years. He also said ties with China have "significantly damaged."

Striking a strident note in the backdrop of armies of both the countries locked in face-offs at the 1,700 km long LAC in Ladakh, Jaishankar said the ties were "very significantly damaged" because of Beijing's violation of agreements on maintaining peace and tranquility on the LAC.

He admitted the talks at various levels had so far failed to address the basic issue that "agreements are not being observed."

## CAPSULE

### FOREX RESERVES SURGE TO RECORD \$579.346 BN

Mumbai: The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by \$4.525 billion to touch a record high of \$579.346 billion in the week ended December 4, the RBI data showed.

### ANTI-CAA PROTESTS BEGIN IN ASSAM

Guwahati: Fresh agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was launched by 18 organisations in Assam on Friday demanding repeal of the legislation and release of jailed KMSS leader Akhil Gogoi who was taken into custody during the protests last year.

### 3 MORE NEWBORNS DIE AT KOTA HOSP, TOLL 12

Kota: Three more newborns died at a state-run hospital in Rajasthan's Kota city on Friday, bringing the number of such fatalities to 12 in the last two days at the facility, officials said. Kota-Bundi MP and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla called a meeting of district and medical officials at his office in Kota on Friday.





# Probe ₹2,400 cr fund swindling by Delhi MCD, Add chief secy told

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of Urban Development Satyendar Jain on Friday asked the Additional Chief Secretary (Urban Development) to investigate the matter of alleged "misappropriation" of funds by the North Corporation. The AAP on Thursday accused the North Corporation of waiving off ₹2,400 crore due to the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).

Jain said that there is a misappropriation of more than ₹2,400 crore done by BJP led North Corporation. "The incapacity of North MCD to pay the salaries of the doctors and staff is quite transparent. Delhi Government pays off all the dues to MCD before time and their accusations towards us are baseless," he said.

On the ongoing farmer agitation, he said that the cen-

tral government should comply with the demands as they are the food soldiers of the nation. However, when asked about the lack of social distancing at the Singhu border, the minister retorted by saying that the media did not raise eyebrows when BJP supporters attacked deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's residence without following social distancing.

"The Central Government should comply with its demands. The farmers are our food soldiers. They have travelled kilometres together, leaving their homes, so the central government should take immediate action," he added.

Responding to the queries surrounding this fund transfer, he said, "I became aware of this development through newspaper and media reports which stated that BJP run North MCD misappropriated an

amount more than ₹2400 crore from South Delhi MCD. I have given orders to investigate the matter."

"Delhi government has been instrumental in paying off whatever is due to MCD, before time. We are not supposed to pay them anything, instead, they are the ones who owe us thousands of crores" Jain said on the alleged claims made by MCD on Delhi Government.

When asked about the demand of ₹13,000 crores by Mayors, the Minister said "The Corporations should ask the Central Government. During the last elections, they were confident about getting funds from the Central Government. The amount that Delhi Government owes to the MCD as per the Finance Commission is duly paid off before time. We have rather loaned them money which is yet to be recovered" he added.

## We will run offices from dharna site: Mayors

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

All three Mayors of A.Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-ruled corporations announced that they will run their offices from a dharna site outside the Chief Minister's residence from Monday. Mayors and leaders of the three municipal corporations has been sitting outside Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence for days, demanding to clear dues of ₹13,000 crore.

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash, Mayor of South Delhi Anamika Mithlesh and Mayor of East Delhi Nirmal Jain in a joint press conference informed about the move.

North Mayor Jai Prakash

said that the Delhi government wants to create a state of anarchy in Delhi by not giving the outstanding funds of the three corporations.

Prakash accused the government of playing party politics keeping in mind the

upcoming corporation elections. He said that due to non release of funds by Delhi government, all development works in Delhi have stopped and corporations are facing lot of problems even in timely release of salaries of their

employees.

SDMC Mayor Anamika said that they failed to meet Delhi Chief Minister on the fifth consecutive day. Mayor said that AAP leaders are not bothered about the ongoing fund crisis in MCDs resulting in delay of salary payment of employees. They are only showing their sympathy for farmers sitting at Delhi borders but no sympathy for councilors sitting outside his residence since the last five days," she said.

Anamika further said that employees of all three civic agencies will also join the protest if Delhi Government fails to meet our demand of immediate release of outstanding money.

"Salaries of frontline workers like healthcare staff, safai karmis, DBC workers, teachers, etc are pending since long. Delhi Government must show sympathy towards them and should release its dues," she said.



## Delhi's air quality improves

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Air quality in Delhi improved marginally with overall AQI settled at 302 µgm-3 on the National Ambient Air Quality Index (NAAQI) on Friday.

According to System of Air Quality and Weather

Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), air quality improved to poor category from Very Poor.

"Surface-level winds are calm, but likely to pick up during the day. Under the influence of fresh Western Disturbance, isolated to scattered rainfall and better ventilation conditions are expected on Friday night and Saturday and Air Quality Index is likely to further improve on to the lower end of the Poor to Moderate category by December 12."

"However, respite is not expected to last longer. As an aftermath of WD, high moisture availability with higher air holding capacity, dense fog formation is expected (mainly during early morning hours) which will lead to deterioration of AQI to Poor to lower end of the Very Poor category on December 13 and 14th," it said.

Meanwhile, values of Suspended Particulate Matters (SPMs), PM 10 and 2.5 were recorded 265 and 122 µgm-3.

## Delhi reports 2,385 new Covid cases

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi on Friday reported 2,385 new cases of Covid-19 taking the total number of people infected with coronavirus to 603535 while the death toll touched 9,934.

According to the health bulletin, which details information about the fresh cases registered in the last 24 hours, 71679 tests (31724 RT-PCR, CBNAAT and True NAAT tests figures; 39955- Rapid Antigen). The number of containment zones stood at 6501. The Covid-19 positivity rate

has also come down to 3.33 per cent.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said that the third wave of covid in Delhi is on the wane and urged everyone to continue following the precautions to effectively combat the virus.

Deliberating on the status of health in the city, Jain said "November 7 was the peak of the third wave in Delhi. The positivity rate was 15.26 per cent on that day, which has been on the perpetual decline ever since. For the past 10 days, the positivity rate has been

below five per cent. I can say that the third wave is on the wane. More than 70,000 tests however are still being carried out."

"The situation is very much under control, but still, I will request you all to wear a mask, follow social distancing. Wearing a mask will help us in eradicating the virus from the city. I applaud the citizens for their continued support, as well as the healthcare workers who have been working tirelessly," he added.

Addressing the query surrounding the delay in reports of RT-PCR tests, he said "I agree that there has been a delay, but that is being looked into. We followed the Central Government's orders to double the testing, which led to the delay. But now, there is betterment in the turnaround time"

As per the bulletin, 314 beds in COVID care centres are occupied by persons under quarantine, including travellers who have returned by Vande Bharat Mission and bubble flights, it said.



## Woman sustains severe burn injuries after setting self ablaze

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman, in her late 30's, allegedly tried to end her life by setting herself ablaze using kerosene in Sagarpur area of southwest Delhi on Friday morning. Police said that she has sustained 90-95 per cent burn injuries and is currently unfit for statement.

According to Ingit Pratap Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southwest district, the incident took place in Buddha Jayanti Park and she was rushed to Deen Dayal

Upadhyay hospital by some of the morning walkers who found her engulfed in flames.

"They managed to douse the fire and informed the police. During enquiry, a witness told police that the woman was seen carrying kerosene cane in her hands just before the incident.

"The kerosene cane was also lying on the spot," said the DCP.

"It appears that the woman tried to commit suicide. However, further enquiry is underway to ascertain the reason for the incident," he said.

## Security upped at key Gurugram road along with toll plazas

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

After protesting farmers decided to intensify their demonstration in support of their demands, Gurugram Police have already beefed up security at key city's road along with, toll plazas, Delhi-Haryana border and State highways in view of protesters' plan to block the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway on December 12.

More than 1,500 police personnel have been deployed at various points along National Highway 48 on December 12 to ensure law and order is maintained and there is no disruption to traffic movement.

"As precautionary major around 68 magistrates have been appointed along with police officers to maintain law and order situations across the district. Nobody will be allowed to disrupt peace inside the district and if anyone found involved in disrupting or forcefully blocking the road a necessary action will be initiated against the offenders as per law," Khatri said.

Moreover, the Gurugram Police have deployed a number of police personnel at the sensitive locations throughout the city.

"Concern police officers

including DCPs will be on patrol in their areas. We have issued an advisory to all officials concerned to take necessary precautionary measures in view of plans to block the expressway and toll plaza," KK Rao, commissioner of Gurugram police said.

Police officials have been asked to intensify patrolling in all sensitive locations, especially in border areas and Kherki Daula toll plaza so as to prevent any untoward incident.

Furthermore, the Delhi Police on Friday again tightened security at the Delhi-Gurugram border on the national highway. CISF per-

sonnel and Delhi police personnel were stationed at the border point and kept an eye on suspicious people surrounding the border areas. In view of the decision of various farmers associations to block the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway on December 12, the District Magistrate of Gurugram, Amit Khatri, has appointed 68 Duty Magistrates at multiple locations in the district on Friday.

These duty magistrates will be on duty along with the police officers throughout the day. Meanwhile, Anju Chaudhary, Chief Executive Officer of Gurugram Mahanagar City Bus Limited,

has been appointed as overall in-charge for the entire district in case of blocking the highway. Apart from this, Sub



Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Gurugram, Badshahpur, Pataudi and Sohna will be in charge in their respective areas.

## Over 20L UP farmers to get free vegetable seeds

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the aim to promote horticulture, vegetable and fruit farming in the Purvanchal region as it is very effective in doubling the income of farmers of this region, the Yogi Adityanath government will be giving vegetable seeds free of cost to over 20 lakh farmers. Agriculture and Agriculture Education and Research Minister Surya Pratap Shahi said that horticulture had immense potential in Purvanchal. "In this region, while cereals are ready in six months, vegetables take 2-3

months to reap. Farmers should be made aware of such technology so that they can earn maximum income from horticulture," he said.

Shahi, who was speaking in the technical session of the primary sector on the second day of the national webinar-cum-seminar on 'Sustainable Development: Issues, Strategies and Future Direction of Purvanchal' in Gorakhpur, said that the reason for the backwardness of the farmers was that they did not have updated knowledge of technologies. "Diversification and multi-cropping are the

demands of the agriculture sector and horticulture can play an important role in this," he said. The state government is continuously making efforts for the development of the agriculture sector. A centre of the International Rice Research Centre, Philippines, has been opened in Varanasi and efforts are also being made to open a centre of International Potato Research Centre. In the last three years, about Rs 300 crore has been given to Krishi Vigyan Kendra and other agricultural institutions, Shahi added. "Weather-based crop insurance for protection of

crops is being provided at a mere 5 percent premium and mandi fee has been reduced from 2 percent to 1 percent. At least 50 percent grant is also being provided on construction of poly houses," he said.

"In addition, 80 percent subsidy is being provided on agricultural equipment like sprinklers under the 'Per Drop More Crop' scheme. Such equipment saves water and also increases the production of crops," Shahi said. Two mango packaging houses have been constructed in Amroha and Varanasi at a cost of Rs 9.90 crore each. During the coronavirus times, about 2,000 quintal mangoes have been exported from this region.

## India's tough stand forced Trudeau to soften his rhetoric

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi-led Government's tough stand against foreign interference in India's domestic affairs forced Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to mellow his rhetoric and support to the ongoing farmers' agitation.

Last week, Trudeau had extended his support to India's farm protests, claiming that the situation was "concerning" and Canadians were "all very worried about family and friends" in Punjab.

Sources in Toronto told IANS that soon after the Modi government summoned the Canadian High Commissioner in New Delhi over Trudeau's remarks and Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar announced that he will skip the Canada-led Ministerial Coordination Group on Covid-19 (MCGC), panic struck in the government circles in Canada.

The Indian government had sent a clear message that such behaviour will affect the bilateral trade as it has already happened under the Trudeau government.

The bilateral trade between India and Canada declined by around \$1 billion from 2017-18 to 2018-19 after Trudeau's pro-Khalistani approach. Bilateral trade between India and Canada was worth \$7.23 billion

in 2017-18. India's exports to Canada during this period were \$2.51 billion and imports from Canada were \$4.72 billion. In 2018-19, the trade was worth \$6.3 billion.

Canadian investors view India as an attractive destination for investments, particularly in the post-coronavirus period. More than 400 Canadian companies have presence in India, and more than 1,000 companies are actively pursuing business in the massive Indian market.

Canada exports pulses, newsprint, wood pulp, asbestos, potash, iron scrap, copper, minerals and industrial chemicals and wants India to import more. The Canadian businesses would like their government to sign Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and Bilateral Investment Promotion and Partnership Agreement (BIPPA) with India, sources said.

After some deft diplomacy played by the Indian High Commission in Canada, sources said that Trudeau softened his stand when he was asked about the demarche issued by the Indian government. A humbled Trudeau in response said, "Canada will always stand up for the right of peaceful protest anywhere around world.

## Breast cancer in man successfully treated at Delhi hosp

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 62-year-old person from Delhi was diagnosed with high-grade (stage III) locally advanced 'Invasive Ductal Carcinoma' (IDC), a most common type of breast cancer in men, has been successfully treated at a city hospital.

After an excisional biopsy, a sample of tissue taken from the body in order to examine it more closely, Kumar was diagnosed with Invasive Ductal Carcinoma that started growing on the milk duct and has invaded the fatty tissues on the breast outside of the duct.

He was successfully treated following a staged approach to allow the patient time to tolerate therapies, said Dr Chandragouda Dodagoudar, Director - Medical Oncology at Aakash Healthcare, Dwarka.

Interestingly, subsequent genetic testing showed he has no family history of cancer or hereditary breast and ovarian cancer (HBOC) syndrome, potential risk factors cited for male breast cancer, he said.

"This high-grade (which tend to grow and spread more quickly) cancer was challeng-

ing as the patient was obese and has long-standing diabetes, which made planning and executing chemotherapy difficult. So, we adopted a staged approach to allow the patient time to tolerate therapies," he added.

Dr. Aashish Chaudhry, Managing Director of the hospital said "Male breast cancer is a rare disease. Most of the cases come to the fore at an advanced stage as men are not willing to accept that they can also get Breast Cancer.

This case highlights how sound understanding of oncologists can help not only treat but cure advanced cancers. Men must be aware that breast cancer can happen to them even if they don't have a family history of cancer."

Breast Cancer in male is a rare disease and the ratio of male to female breast cancer diagnosis is 1:120.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, A.J.C Bose Road, Kolkata 700020  
CIN No: L65190GJ1994PLC021012, www.icicibank.com

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Loan Account Number & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Ram Babu Kumar / Pratima Singh / Keshar Awash Rajkishore Nagar Flat No 14 Infront Of Arvan Public School Chhattisgarh BILASPUR 495002 / LBRPR00001915205	Senior Kehar Aawas No -14, Rajkishore Nagar Awasiya Yojna, Plot No. 40, Mouza- Lingiyadih, P.H. No. 20, R.L.C. Circle / Tahsil And District- Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh Bilaspur, Admeasuring An Area Of Plot Area 1500 Sq.ft., Built Up Area 750 Sq.ft. Open Area 750 Sq.ft.	05-10-2020 Rs. 460653.25/-	29/2/2020

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : December 12, 2020  
Place: Chattisgarh

Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**

**TENDER NOTICE FOR MISCELLANEOUS WORK**

Sr. No : 01 Tender No : RSO-BSP-2020-12 Date : 07.12.2020.

Work : "Cooking and Serving meals at Khongsara (KGS) Running Room, washing of Bedrolls, Cleaning, maintenance and up keep of running room building, lavatories, reading room/ reception cum yoga room, premises, corridors etc and providing newspaper & magazines for period of 02 (Two) years on contractual basis." Tender Value : ₹ 35,31,732.75/-, EMD: ₹ 70,600/-.

Submission of Tender: Upto 15:00 hrs. on dt. 28.12.2020. Opening of Tender: 15:30 hrs. dt. 29.12.2020.

For further details/ purchase of tender documents, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work, please contact Office of the Sr. D.E.E. (OP) BSP, South East Central Railway or refer/ download tender document which is available on our website: www.indianrailways.gov.in.

Sr. D.E.E./O.P. CPR/10/349 S.E.C. Railway, Bilaspur.

South East Central Railway @seccrail







# India in no way responsible for climate change: Javadekar

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 Asserting that climate change isn't an overnight phenomenon, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on Tuesday said India is in no way responsible for it still it is taking steps to cut down emissions as a responsible country. Javadekar was speaking on the eve of the fifth year of Paris Climate Agreement.  
 "Climate change isn't an overnight phenomenon, it takes 100 years for a change and India is in no way responsible for this climate change. Historically, the USA has 25 per cent of all emissions, Europe has 22 per cent whereas China has 13 per cent and India, only 3 per cent. We are in no way responsible for this climate change," said the Minister.  
 But as a responsible participant in world affairs, the country chose to take part in com-

bating climate change, he said.  
 "Our emission intensity was to be reduced by 33-35 per cent as per the Paris Climate Agreement. We achieved 21 per cent of this and aim to achieve the remainder in 10 years," said Javadekar while addressing the media here. On December 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the global climate summit on its fifth anniversary, Javadekar said adding that India was one of the few countries, which have complied to the Paris Accord. "Our Nationally Determined Contribution will lead to less than 2 degree rise in temperature," he added.  
 "According to the Climate Transparency Report 2020, India is the only Group of 20 country to meet its commitments," the minister claimed.  
 "The recent report by the United Nations Environment Plan also says that India's emis-

sions grew 1.4 per cent in 2019, much lower than average of 3.3 per cent per annum over last decade." The Paris Agreement aims to hold the rise in average global temperatures to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, and preferably 1.5C -- a threshold beyond which climate impacts are projected to sharply intensify.  
 For the implementation of the targets under the Paris pact on climate crisis, the Environment Ministry, a few days ago, set up a high-level ministerial panel. The purpose of AIPA [Apex Committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement] is to generate a coordinated response on climate change matters that ensures India is on track towards meeting its obligations under the Paris pact including its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), a senior official said.

# 'A race is on to have strategic bases in IOR'

Says Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat amid escalation of Chinese maritime presence in region

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 As China is flexing its military muscle in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat said on Friday a race is on among nations to have strategic bases in the region. Given the importance of the zone, more than 120 warships of extra-regional forces are now there to back various missions, he said.  
 His observations came in the backdrop of India playing a crucial role in the field of maritime domain in the strategically important Indian Ocean region. Moreover, it has bolstered relations with all the littoral states located on the rim of the region.  
 China started increasing its military prowess in the Indian Ocean region since 2008 by deploying its warships for anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of

Aden. As of now, there are three to four Chinese warships in the region.  
 In this background, Rawat said here in an online conference there has been a "race for strategic places and bases" in the Indian Ocean Region which is only going to gain momentum in times to come.  
 An increasing number of countries are focusing on the IOR considering its geo-strategic importance. "At present, there are over 120 warships of extra-regional forces deployed in the Indian Ocean region in support of various missions. Till now the region, by and large, remained peaceful," Rawat said at the Global Security Summit.  
 The Indian Ocean, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy, is critical for India's strategic interests. China has been making concerted efforts to increase its presence

in the region.  
 Referring to India's aspirations to become a major global power, he said the country will have to achieve it despite living in a "tough neighbourhood" and in an "increasingly contested" region.  
 "We are witnessing a race for strategic places and bases in the Indian Ocean Region which is only going to gain momentum in times to come. Based on challenges we face as a rising regional power, we require structured long-term planning for capability building and capability development of our defence forces.  
 "In our quest to build a stronger India, we need a peaceful and stable security environment. We need to maintain our strategic autonomy and cooperative relations underscored by strong regional linkages," he said.  
 Referring to the evolving

geo-political scenario, the CDS said China's "economic and military rise coupled with competition increased its influence and attracted a great deal of interest."  
 Rawat said the world appears to be on the brink of a new era as new centres of power and alliances based on geo-politics are emerging putting pressure on the Bretton Woods institutions.  
 He said the Indo-Pacific region in general and the Indian Ocean region in particular will remain vital for transit and world trade. "Today, we are facing increasing security challenges, and to my mind, the best guarantor of peace and stability is to have dissuasive deterrence. For a nation like India, the security of land borders remained our primary concern," he said.  
 "Therefore, there is a need to develop integrated structures

to ensure modernisation programmes to be undertaken by our armed forces based on careful assessment of the nature of threats and challenges," he added.  
 He also said most of the countries in the Indian Ocean region are seeking to reap the economic dividends through improved connectivity and harnessing blue economy for which infrastructure is a prerequisite.  
 Residents' powers and extra-regional power have shown a renewed interest in investing in infrastructure development in these countries to maintain and increase geopolitical influence, Rawat said.  
 He said governance and security are under constant threat of being undermined by non-state actors and also naval competition among the states.

# Pilot programme to be held for socio-economic profiling of PM SVANidhi scheme beneficiaries

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 In a move to prepare a profile data, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Friday launched a programme for socio-economic profiling of beneficiaries of PM Street Vendors' Aatmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme to extend benefits of other government plans to them.  
 According to the ministry, a pilot programme will be run in Gaya, Indore, Kakching, Nizamabad, Rajkot, and Varanasi. The Quality Council of India (QCI) has been appointed as implementing partner for the programme. The programme was launched by Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary of the ministry of housing and urban affairs on Friday.  
 A complete profile of PM SVANidhi beneficiaries and their family members will be

prepared and based on the data, benefits of the various central schemes would be extended to them. In the first phase, 125 cities have been selected for the programme. The profile will identify potential eligibility of beneficiaries and their family members for select Central Government schemes and facilitate linkages.  
 "Based on the profiled data, benefits of the various eligible central schemes would be extended to them for their holistic socio-economic upliftment," the ministry said.  
 PM SVANidhi Scheme provides micro loans to street vendors, was launched in June 2020 with an objective to provide affordable working capital loan up to Rs 10,000 to Street Vendors for facilitating resumption of their livelihoods adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Desi mRNA vaccine candidate approved for human clinical trials

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 The country's first indigenous mRNA vaccine candidate, developed by Gennova, Pune, has received approval from drug regulators to initiate Phase 1/2 human clinical trials, the Department of Biotechnology said on Friday.  
 The novel mRNA vaccine candidate, HGCO19, is supported with seed grant under the Ind-CEPI mission of the Department of Biotechnology.  
 The mRNA vaccines do not use the conventional model to produce immune response. Instead, they carry the molecular instructions to make the protein in the body through a synthetic RNA of the virus.  
 The host body uses this to produce the viral protein that is recognised, thereby, making the body mount an immune response against the disease.  
 "Such vaccines are expected to be highly efficacious because



of their inherent capability of being translatable into the protein structure inside the cell cytoplasm.  
 Additionally, mRNA vaccines are fully synthetic and do not require a host for growth, e.g., eggs or bacteria.  
 "Therefore, they can be quickly manufactured in an inexpensive manner under cGMP conditions to ensure their 'availability' and 'access-

ibility' for mass vaccination on a sustainable basis," said a statement by the DBT.  
 Gennova, in collaboration with HDT Biotech Corporation, Seattle, USA, has worked together to develop an mRNA vaccine candidate. HGCO19 has already demonstrated safety, immunogenicity, neutralization antibody activity in animals, said the statement.

# SC refuses to hear plea seeking Lokpal monitored investigation into criminal-political nexus

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a plea seeking a Lokpal-monitored investigation into the "criminal-political nexus" as flagged in the 1993 Vohra Committee report, saying the prayers "are all utopian".  
 The top court said that petition must serve the purpose and it does not encourage petitions which are for publicity.  
 A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy asked the petitioner advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay to withdraw his plea and granted liberty to make a representation to law commission.  
 At the outset, senior advocate Anupam Lal Das, appearing for Upadhyay, said that the petition relates to the issue of unholy nexus of criminal, politicians and bureaucrats.  
 The bench said that over two decades have gone by since



the report was filed.  
 Das replied that they have been taking baby steps and today, there is a Lokpal but it do not have the wherewithal and has no investigation wing.  
 The bench said, "Look at your prayers. They are all Utopian. It is like a utopian situation. It's like I hope our country will be at the top in the world. You should write a book on it, don't file a petition on this."

Justice Kaul said, "I don't encourage such petitions which are for publicity. The petition must serve the purpose".  
 Das then told the top court that he will withdraw the petition but liberty may be granted to approach law commission.  
 The bench allowed the petitioner to withdraw and granted the liberty to approach law commission.  
 Upadhyay through his PIL has prayed for appropriate direction for Lokpal Monitored Investigation of the criminal political nexus, as referred by the Vohra Committee.  
 Former Union Home Secretary N N Vohra headed the committee formed to study the problem of criminalisation of politics and the nexus between criminals, politicians and bureaucrats in India. The report was submitted in October 1993. **PTI**

# Scientists develop inhalation delivery system for vaccines curing respiratory diseases

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 In what could lead to new therapeutics for respiratory diseases like COVID-19, scientists have developed an inhalation delivery system for vaccines which generates potent immune responses in mice and non-human primates, without causing lung damage.  
 The findings, published in the journal Med, suggests that a safe and effective lung delivery system could be developed for vaccines and therapeutics against pathogens such as the novel coronavirus.  
 "This translational strategy potentially enables more effective delivery of therapeutics or vaccines while reducing the

chance of toxic side effects," said study co-author Wadiah Arap from Rutgers Cancer Institute in the US.  
 According to the researchers, this mode of vaccine delivery has many advantages over other routes, particularly for the development of vaccines against respiratory infections as the therapeutics arrive directly at the site of the infection.  
 Inhalation-based vaccination is needle free and mini-

mally invasive, they said adding that it is especially attractive for administering multiple doses.  
 The researchers said this method improves bioavailability and also reduces potential side effects by achieving a rapid onset of action.  
 The scientists believe lung delivery could protect against airborne pathogens that cause diseases such as tuberculosis, influenza, Ebola, measles, and COVID-19. However, they said this approach has not been adopted widely, partly because the underlying physiological mechanisms remain largely unknown. They said answering this question is critical for designing a general lung delivery system for widespread use.

# BMC to deploy 500 teams to administer Covid-19 vaccines in Maha Capital

**Mumbai:** At least 500 teams of five Trained personnel each will be deployed for administering the COVID-19 vaccine in the city, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said on Friday.  
 The first to get inoculated will be health workers followed by frontline workers, people above the age of 50 and those suffering from co-morbidities, it said in a release.  
 The announcement was made by additional municipal commissioner Suresh Kakani in the first meeting of the city task force for vaccine distribution at the BMC headquarters on Friday, the release said.  
 The Maharashtra govern-

ment last month formed a task force to manage the distribution and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine in the state. A task force was also set up at the city level.  
 The selected beneficiaries of the vaccine will receive a message on their registered mobile numbers, Kakani, who heads the task force, said.  
 The process of setting up committees at the regional level to oversee vaccination will also be completed soon, he said.  
 As of Thursday, the COVID-19 caseload in Mumbai stood at 2,88,689, which includes 10,948 deaths. **PTI**

# India pledges \$2 billion to strengthen care for women, children, adolescents

**New Delhi:** India on Friday pledged a commitment of USD 2 billion at the World Health Organisation's 'Lives in the Balance' summit to provide essential services to women, newborns, young children and adolescents across the world.  
 The summit organised by WHO's The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH), a global alliance of more than 1,000 organisations, registered a total commitment of USD 20.6 billion from a group of high income, low- and middle-income countries and charitable foundations across the world.  
 "USD 6.6 billion (32 per cent) of the total pledge is from money committed by low and middle-income countries themselves, including Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Liberia, and Nigeria. An additional USD 14 billion (68 per cent) is from official development assistance and grants given by Germany, Canada, Sweden, UK, USA and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation," the PMNCH said in a statement.  
 India's commitment of USD 2 billion will be used to

strengthen all levels of care in response to the pandemic and to ensure essential public health functions during the year 20-21.  
 "As important as this USD 20.6 billion is, it only will partially solve the problem of providing basic essential services for women, newborns, young children and adolescents," Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said.  
 "Comprehensive efforts and collective advocacy are needed to ensure availability of substantially enhanced financial resources for this noble cause," he said.  
 The recent WHO data from 105 countries shows that 90 per cent of countries have experienced disruptions to health services, with low- and middle-income countries reporting the greatest difficulties.  
 According to early estimates of the indirect impact of COVID-19 on child and maternal mortality, more than 2 million additional deaths are estimated over 12 months (2020-2021) above the pre-pandemic level because of disruptions to essential health and nutrition services. **PTI**

4 yrs imprisonment for Customs Superintendent, Havaladar in graft case  
**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 The CBI on Friday said it has secured from the Special Judge for CBI Cases, Bangalore four years imprisonment besides fines for the then Superintendent of Customs and a Havaladar of the department in a graft case.  
 While the then Superintendent of Customs Srinivas Prasad to undergo four years simple imprisonment with fine of Rs 30,000 and Havaladar Lourdu Prabhu then Havaladar to undergo a similar imprisonment with fine of Rs.15,000 in a bribery case.  
 The CBI had registered a case on October 13, 2015 against Prasad and Lourdu Prabhu, both posted in the office of Commissioner of Customs, Devanahalli, Bangalore.  
 It was alleged that both accused had demanded and accepted bribe of Rs 50,000 from a passenger for release of his baggage containing laptops brought by him from Singapore. Both the accused were arrested. After investigation, a charge sheet was filed on December 30, 2015 against them.

# Inspired by Bharathiyar, Centre keen to ensure women-led development: PM

**Chennai:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hailed national poet and freedom fighter Subramanya Bharathi's vision of independent and empowered women and said his government was inspired by it to ensure woman-led development.  
 He was virtually addressing the International Bharathi Festival to mark the 138th birth anniversary of the famous Tamil poet, hailed as Mahakavi, organised by Vanavil Cultural

Centre.  
 Tamil Nadu CM K Palaniswami also paid glowing tributes to Bharathi, reverentially addressed as Bharathiyar.  
 Heaping praise on Bharathi, Modi said it was very 'difficult' to describe him and that he "cannot be linked to any single profession or dimension." "He was a poet, writer, editor, journalist, social reformer, freedom fighter, humanist and much more. One

can only marvel at his works, his poems, his philosophy and his life," the Prime Minister said.  
 Modi recalled Bharathi had a 'close link with Varanasi, which he represents in the Lok Sabha. On Bharathi's vision on women empowerment, Modi said the poet's definition of progress had a central role for them.  
 "Mahakavi Bharathiyar's definition of progress had a central role for women. One of the most

important visions was that of independent and empowered women," Modi said.  
 He "wrote that women should walk with their heads held high while looking people in the eye. We are inspired by this vision and we are working to ensure woman-led development," the Prime Minister added.  
 In every sphere of his government's working, there has been importance given to the dignity of women. "Today over 15

crore women entrepreneurs are funded by Mudra yojana. They are walking with their heads held high, looking us in the eye and telling us how they are becoming self-reliant," he said.  
 "Today, women are becoming part of our armed forces, with permanent commissioning. They are walking with their heads held high and looking us in the eye and filling us with confidence that the country is in safe hands," he said. **PTI**

# War veteran Col Prithipal Singh Gill turns 100

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 The only officer to serve all the three Services on Friday celebrated his 100th birthday. Colonel Prithipal Singh Gill (retired) also fought in the India-Pakistan war as an Army officer.  
 Gill is the only officer to have served in the Royal Air Force (RAF), Royal India Navy and then the Indian Army. He started his career in the pre-World War II era as a young pilot in the RAF. He saw action as a naval officer in world war two.  
 Gill was born in 1920 in Patiala and studied at Government College, Lahore. He got married to Preminder Kaur in 1950. The couple

presently resides in Chandigarh with their children and grandchildren.  
 Gill joined the RAF in 1942 without the consent of his family. He was commissioned as a Pilot Officer and stationed at Karachi flying Howard aircraft. Flying was then considered unsafe and his family did not want their son to live the life of a Pilot. This is when a British General, known to the Gill family, General Savoy, came to his help and was able to have Pilot Officer Singh transferred to the Navy.  
 In the Navy, he served on a minesweeping ship and later on INS Teer which was a Navy escort ship for cargo ships during World War II. Gill was detailed to attend the Long



Gunnery Staff Course at School of Artillery, Deolali, and he qualified as an Instructor in Gunnery. He then sought a

transfer to the Army, which was approved, and he was posted to "Gwalior Mountain Battery" equipped with 5.4 inch Howitzers.  
 He later served with 34 Medium Regiment and later raised and commanded 71 Medium Regiment. During the 1965 Indo-Pak War when four guns of his regiment were cut off by enemy action, Gill personally led a successful mission to retrieve the four guns.  
 On promotion to the rank of Colonel, Singh commanded an Assam Rifles Sector in Ukhrul, Manipur. He took premature retirement in 1970 and went to farming the family lands at his native village Pakhi in Faridkot District.

# ITBP trained archers in Naxal-affected Kondagaon bag 38 gold, 64 silver, 40 bronze medals

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 ITBP-trained local archers in Naxal affected Kondagaon District, Chhattisgarh have won 38 Gold, 64 Silver and 40 Bronze medals at the national level and other 178 state level medals.  
 ITBP trained local Archers in naxal affected Kondagaon District, Chhattisgarh are excelling. Head Constable Trilochan Mohanta, Archery Coach of 41st Battalion ITBP Kondagaon trained 75 local children since the year 2016 and in the past 5 years, these children have won 38 Gold, 64 Silver and 40 Bronze Medals and other 178 state level

**DHARMAPADAK KISKU ARE ALSO CREDITED FOR TRAINING THE STUDENTS OF THE AREA WHO BROUGHT LAURELS THROUGH THEIR ARCHERY SKILLS**  
 medals," ITBP spokesperson Vivek Pandey said in a statement.  
 The medalist since 2016

include 40 girls, 35 boys.  
 A total of 75 candidates were trained by the ITBP.  
 The candidates were selected from pre-matric boys hostel or Kasturba Gandhi girls hostel from Kondagaon.  
 The venue for training was practice ground at boys hostel ground and Gandhi ward ground in the district.  
 Besides Coach Head Constable/General Duty Trilochan Mohanta, Assistant Coach Constable/General Duty Dharmapadak Kisku are also credited for training the students of the area who brought laurels through their archery skills, officials added.

# West Godavari bears brunt of mystery illness

IANS ■ ELURU (ANDHRA PRADESH)

JP Colony in Andhra Pradesh's West Godavari district headquarters Eluru bore the brunt of the mysterious illness which shook the State, leaving the colony's residents in a scared state.

As many as 40 people in this working class neighbourhood collapsed due to the mysterious illness. In all, nearly 600 people suffered sudden convulsions from Saturday to Thursday morning, the majority of whom were treated at the government district hospital in Eluru and some at the government hospital in Vijayawada.

"There is a water tank in our colony. Water is supplied from it. The water comes here from Pampula Cheruvu and that gets supplied. We are wondering if that was the reason we

facied this problem," Manikyam, 40, a resident of the colony, told IANS. He complained that the municipal water used to look green in colour until four days ago but after this illness now it looks okay.

"I told my family members to boil the water, maybe that saved us, nobody in our family was struck by the illness, including children," he said.

Manikyam believes that it was water which caused this illness. He cited the cases of a few neighbours who just collapsed.

Sattibabu, 45, Manikyam's neighbour, said leaders and officials should come to check the quality of the water in canals and pipelines at regular intervals but it is never done.

"Will anybody do these things when a person like me asks? This problem has occurred because of municipal water," he complained.



Andhra Pradesh Health Minister Alla Kalia Krishna Srinivas (Alla Nani) meet patients, who fell ill suspectedly due to water contamination in Eluru town, at a hospital in Vijayawada, on Thursday

Sattibabu questioned the wisdom of attending to a problem after allowing it to crop up. "They should be saved before falling sick. Just imagine

how people are living amid the coronavirus. Even during coronavirus no leader came and spoke to us or asked us whether we had food," said Sattibabu.

Meanwhile, Suribabu, 40, who along with two other family members fell sick, said that he too collapsed.

"I just collapsed, what can I say why I fell down. On Saturday, I collapsed at the government hospital, my family members admitted me in the government hospital," said Suribabu. Suribabu said he suffered epileptic fits and didn't know what happened to him when the illness struck while visiting his daughters who had fallen prey to the same disease. Suribabu was not alone, two daughters, Lakshmi Pravallika (15) and Deepika (17), were also affected by the illness.

However, he expressed satisfaction at the treatment and medicines offered to them by the Government. He said blood samples and also the samples of what they had cooked at home were taken for tests.

According to Manikyam, JP Colony is a working class neighbourhood where people eke out a living as masons, jute mill workers, auto-rickshaw drivers and by doing other small jobs.

However, all of them are now afraid. "I don't know what will happen to me when I go back home after talking to you," he said. Because of the nature of the illness, Manikyam said they always have someone watching their children.

He said they are now even scared to step out for work. He said 40 people getting hit by the disease in a neighbourhood of about 300 houses is a big number to worry about.

Satyanandam, 45, another resident from the same colony, complained that a medical camp was held for only one day, which was not there on Wednesday as well as Thursday.

# Indo-Bangla train services to start in N Bengal after 55 yrs

**Kolkata:** After a 55-year gap the people of North Bengal will be able to take a train to Bangladesh, thanks to the decision taken by the two countries to reopen the Indo-Bangla rail route from December 17, Northeast Frontier Railway sources said adding initially a goods train will run between the two countries.

The railway route will connect Haldibari in Coochbehar district to Chilhati in Bangladesh. The route was closed in 1965 when Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan.

NF Railway CPRO Subhanan Chanda said that "Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate Haldibari-Chilhati

rail route on December 17. The distance between Haldibari railway station is 4.5 kilometres away from the international border Chilhati in Bangladesh is 7.5 kilometres away from the spot making the total distance between the two stations to 12 km, sources said.

Reports were confirmed by top officials of Katihar Division in North Bihar under which the Coochbehar-Jalpaiguri section falls. After the passenger trains start running the distance between Kolkata and northern Bangladesh would be reduced to a 7-hour journey sources said. Currently trains between India Bangladesh run between Sealdah and Bangladesh via the Gede route of Nadia district in South Bengal. **PNS**

# Jeans, T-shirts, slippers are now taboo for Maha Govt employees

**Uddhav Thackeray dispensation unveils new dress code for its employees, officers, contractual staff**

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking serious note of its "casual dress sense" of its employees, officers and also those on its contract, the Maharashtra Government has come out with a dress code for them — under which it has banned its staffers from wearing jeans, T-shirts and slippers.

Holding that dresses worn by some employees as "indecent", "unkempt" and "unclean", that they have an adverse impact on the work atmosphere in offices and that they also "sully" the image of its image in the minds of people, the Uddhav Thackeray dispensation restrained its staffers from wearing jeans, T-shirts and casual slippers at its offices.

Prefacing the decision to introduce a new dress code for its staffer and contractual employees, Principal Secretary (General Administration Department) Shrikant Deshpande stated in a circular: "It has been observed that several employees and contractual staff wear "indecent", "unkempt" and "unclean" dress that have an adverse impact on the work atmosphere in offices and that they also sully the image of the government's image in the minds of the people".

**AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT STATES THAT WOMEN EMPLOYEES CAN WEAR SAREES, SALWARS/CHUDIDARS KURTAS, TROUSER PANTS AND SHIRTS ALONGWITH DUPATTAS IF NECESSARY. THE MALE EMPLOYEES CAN WEAR SHIRTS AND 'PANTS OR TROUSER PANTS'**

Among other things, the Maharashtra Government states that women employees can wear sarees, salwars/chudidars kurtas, trouser pants and shirts alongwith dupattas if necessary. The male employees can wear shirts and "pants or trouser pants" and "Clothes with deep colours and strange embroidery patterns or pictures should not be worn. Besides, employees and staff should not wear jeans and t-shirts in offices," the circular stated.

In another diktat, the state government circular said that women employees should wear chappals, sandals or shoes while men should wear shoes or sandals.

In a welcome move aimed at encouraging use of hand-

spun cloth, the Maharashtra government stated that all employees must wear khadi clothes at least on Fridays.

Maharashtra is not the first state to have come out with a dress code for its government employees. Last year, the Bihar government had come out with a similar dress code for its employees. More than two years ago, the Rajasthan government had banned its employees from wearing jeans and T-shirts.

On its part, the Tamil Nadu government asked its employees to avoid casual attire and instead wear clothes that reflect Indian and Tamil culture. Among other things, the Tamil Nadu government mandated the women employees to wear sari/salwar kameez/churidar with dupatta while they were on duty and to shirts with formal pants/veshti (dhoti) or any other Indian traditional dress.

In August 2017, the Himachal Pradesh Government came out with a similar order prescribing a dress code for all its employees at work.

The Karnataka Government, which was among the first few states that introduced a dress code for its employees, had in 2013 barred its female employees from wearing skirts, T-shirts and pants while at work and asked its male employees not to wear T-shirts at work.

# Cops act on 'love jihad' complaint, stop wedding of Muslim couple

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

Police in neighbouring Kushinagar stopped a wedding function and took the couple to the police station for interrogation after a complaint that it was an interfaith marriage involving a minor girl.

The man and the woman turned out to be both Muslims and adults. The man told a newspaper later that he was thrashed with a leather belt at the station, an allegation denied by the police.

Kushinagar Superintendent of Police Vinod Kumar Singh said someone from Gurnia village had informed them on Tuesday that

a couple was getting "quietly" married there, and suspected it to be a case of "love jihad".

The term is used by right-wing activists to refer to marriages allegedly performed for the sake of religious conversion. A police team reached the spot and found a 'maulvi' and the couple there and brought them to police station for interrogation, the SP said.

He said police later established that both were adults and belonged to the same faith. The two eloped 13 days ago from Azamgarh and the woman's family had lodged a missing person's report at the police station, he said.



Doctors of Indian Medical Association (IMA) hold placards during a protest, demanding the withdrawal of CCIM notification, at IMA House in Kochi, on Friday

# Maha deaths reach 48,000 as 87 more die

4,268 test +ve, total infections mount to 18,72,440; total deaths climb to 48,059

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 deaths in Maharashtra breached a grim milestone of 48000 on Friday, as 87 more people died of Coronavirus, while 4268 people tested positive for the pandemic in various parts of the State.

With 87 new deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Maharashtra went up from 47,972 to 48,059. Similarly, with 4268 fresh infec-

tions, the total infected cases jumped from 18,68,172 to 18,72,440.

As 2774 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March this year rose to 17,49,973. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from 93.52 per cent to 93.46 per cent. Of the 87 deaths reported,

Mumbai accounted for a maximum of 13 deaths, 12 each in Pune and Nagpur, 6 in Solapur, 5 each in Nashik and Bhandara, 4 in Buldhana, 3 each in Thane, Sangli, Akola, Yavatmal and Wardha, 2 each in Ahmednagar, Satara, Sindhudurg, Osmanabad and Beed and one death each in Palghar, Dhule, Kolhapur, Aurangabad and Nanded.

With 13 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai climbed from 10,942 to 10,955, while the infected cases rose by 654 to trigger a jump in the infections from 288,696 to 289,350. Meanwhile, the health authorities pegged the "active cases" total cases in the state at 73,315. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.57 per cent. Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases

increase from 3,60,921 while the total number of deaths in Pune increased to 7608.

Thane district remained in the third spot — after Pune and Mumbai — after the total number of infections rose to 2,46,720, while the total deaths climbed to 5380.

Of the 1,15,70,137 samples sent to laboratories, 18,72,440 have tested positive (16.18 per cent) for COVID-19 until Friday.

# 5th phase of panch bypolls in J&K records 59.90% turnout

IANS ■ JAMMU

J&K Election Commissioner JKK Sharma informed on Friday that 59.90 per cent and 52.43 per cent voter turnout was recorded in the fifth phase of panch and sarpanch bypolls, respectively, which were held on Thursday.

While giving out the details, the SEC informed that bypolls for the vacant panch seats were held in 229 constituencies in the fifth phase. Out of a total 42,504 electors (including 22,140 males and 20,364 females), 25,460 voted in the fifth phase.

Sharma said that the Jammu division recorded 77.52 per cent turnout while the Kashmir division recorded 58.35 per cent turnout in fifth phase of panch bypolls.

Similarly, 52.43 per cent voting was registered in the sarpanch constituencies in the fifth phase in 125 constituencies.

Out of 88,078 electors (including 45,766 males and 42,312 females), 46,179 voted to choose their representatives, the SEC said.

He further said that 75.84 per cent polling was registered in Jammu division while 42.85 per cent polling was recorded in Kashmir division.

# Bodies of woman, 3 kids found hanging from a tree in Bhiwandi jungle

**Head of families tries to commit suicide, after learning about death of members**

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a shocking development, the decomposed bodies of a woman and her three children were found hanging from a tree in the jungles of Pachapur in Bhiwandi taluka of Thane district.

After learning about the death of his wife and three children, the head of the family one Sripat Bachchu Bangri tried to commit suicide by consuming poison. Bangri is undergoing treatment at the state-run Indira Gandhi hospital, where his condition is described as "critical".

The Bhiwandi police said on Friday that the incident came to light on Thursday. The brother of Sripat Bangri who had gone to the jungle to fetch firewood saw the four bodies hanging from a tree. He alerted the police.

"After receiving the information, we recovered the decomposed bodies from the

tree. We established their identities based on the clothes worn by them. After we established the identities of the four bodies, we informed Sripat Bangri about it. We have sent them for post-mortem," a senior police officer said.

Meanwhile, a forensic team from Bhiwandi visited the spot where the four bodies were recovered and did a panchnama of the spot.

Police identified the four bodies as that of Ranjana Bangri (30), her daughters Darshana (12), Rohini (6) and son Rohit (9).

According to the police, the four members of Bangri family had been reported missing for seven weeks. Sripat Bangri had lodged a complaint with the Bhiwandi police on October 21 about their disappearance.

Bhiwandi police are investigating to find out if it was a suicide or a murder.

This is the second incident of a similar kind that has taken place in Thane district. Last month, the bodies of three persons were found hanging from a tree near Khardi village in the neighbouring Sahapur taluka.

# 43 new corona cases in district, 31 recovered

**Aligarh:** In the district, 43 new corona cases have been discovered with 31 recovered and sent back home from Covid-19 hospital. 43 people found corona infected in JN Medical College, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, private lab and antigen test.

The health department is worried about the sudden rise in corona cases. District Magistrate Chandra Bhusan Singh told that infected are being admitted in Covid-19 hospitals. Family members and contact persons will be tested soon. Currently, 259 active cases in the district made a total of 10,857 total cases with 10598 recovered.

Even after the directives of the administration, Corona infected patients are putting in isolation into the city, not only that the data of these patients are not being recorded, even the administrative officer is completely unaware about this. **PNS**



Smog engulfs the highrise buildings in Mumbai on Friday

# Meghalaya CM tests positive for Covid

**Shillong:** Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Friday informed that he has tested positive for Covid-19 and asked all those who came in contact with him to get themselves tested.

Taking to Twitter, Sangma, 42, said: "I have tested positive for Covid-19. I am under home isolation and experiencing mild

symptoms. I request all those who came in contact with me in the past 5 days to kindly keep a watch on their health and if necessary get tested."

Sangma, who is also the President of the National People's Party (NPP), virtually attended several events on Friday. **IANS**

# Spiritual politics: DMK presses panic button

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Though the DMK leadership had said on December 3 that it would wait for more details about the spiritual politics to be launched in Tamil Nadu by Rajinikanth, in its first official reaction on Friday, the Dravidian major could not hide its disapproval of the new entity to be launched by the actor.

"It is not correct to bring spiritual politics to Tamil Nadu," said Kanimozhi MP, the step sister of party president M K Stalin while addressing public meetings in Tamil Nadu. She said this was an attempt to

divide the State and its people based in caste, creed and religion. But the DMK leader did not elaborate how Rajinikanth would divide the population in the State and which are the communities to be benefitted by the new political party.

Addressing party cadre across the south western districts of the State as part of her election campaign for the 2021 assembly election, Kanimozhi said that Rajinikanth's political party would impact the prospects of the AIADMK while the DMK and allies would not be impacted at all. But reports from Anna

Arivalayam, the DMK head quarters in Chennai, say that Stalin and other leaders have pressed the panic button following the announcement by Rajinikanth last Thursday. "Hectic parleys are on between the DMK and the Dr Ramadoss led PMK to rope in the Vanniyar caste votes," said sources in the DMK. The sudden agitation unleashed by the PMK last week demanding 20 per cent reservation for the Vanniyar community in government service and educational institutions is being seen as the prelude to the PMK's move to align with the DMK. "The PMK is known for its

game of flying trapeze and political acrobatics. The party has always jumped from one alliance to another in successive elections and is famous for its consistently inconsistent stances. What I understand is that the DMK leadership may even part with the post of deputy chief minister to the Vanniyar community as part of the deal," said Kolahala Srenivasan, author and political commentator.

Vanathi Srinivasan, BJP leader, said the DMK may have to pay high price for its anti-Hindutva stance and appeasement of minorities. "Let them appease the minorities and we do

not have any issues. But they should not insult and humiliate the Hindus to keep the minorities in good humour," said Srinivasan.

S Gurumurthy, editor, Tughlaq, said that the coming weeks would see tempers rising in the State as the DMK is upset over the announcement made by Rajinikanth. "History proves that the DMK and the Congress were the losers when the AIADMK was formed by MGR in 1972. We will see the same phenomenon now as the Tamils are waiting for a change from the worn out and rusted Dravidian politics," said Gurumurthy.



## Mission Bengal

The pre-poll discourse in the State is rarely ideological but about intimidatory heft. Both the TMC and BJP can't ignore it



The BJP's desperation to succeed in Mission Bengal by toppling its arch-enemy and Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee and the latter's spirited fight to hold on to her turf, if only to challenge the BJP's formulaic invasion of Opposition-ruled States, will inevitably spill over into clashes and violence. The latest flashpoint was around an attack on the convoy of party president JP Nadda, with the BJP blaming TMC cadres and the latter claiming it was staged to implicate them. In the process, both camps are caught in issuing threats and counter-threats that in no way tests the capability of each in ensuring good governance or the

promised land. While the BJP's hunger to chase its electoral goal and the concomitant rhetoric and war cry are understandable, does it have to plummet to the depths of threatening counter-violence? Or is it a ruse to build a case for total breakdown of law and order and ensure a high-security election for the Assembly, which would be, by implication, one conducted under Central scrutiny? That's what is apparent with Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankar sending a report to the Centre, saying the security arrangement was inadequate for Nadda's convoy and asking Mamata to watch out as the State was not her fiefdom. That's what State BJP chief Dilip Ghosh recklessly seemed to suggest a few days ago with his crass remark that those opposing a fair verdict or intimidating voters would find themselves either with broken bones or at the crematorium. As for the TMC, it has been hardened by the politics of violence and agitations. Coercion, violence or booth management, which the Left parties in Bengal had perfected into what is called "scientific rigging", became part of a machinery that no party in Bengal has been immune to but that in no way could effect a tidal change. One must remember that Mamata uprooted the Left giants operating within that hostile system. She stood up to them but having arrived, built her political stock on her personal charisma, cause-based activism and grassroots connect. The BJP itself, while promising change, has been charged with getting men from Bihar and Jharkhand into Bengal for "electoral management."

Each political party has institutionalised muscle power and mischief-making recruits have been changing camps according to the trade winds. Crossovers in Bengal politics are rarely ideological but solely about intimidatory heft. Sadly, that has set the terms of the discourse instead of issues, becoming an obnoxious scare tactic for every voter, decided or undecided, that they should weigh in with the strongest side. Little wonder then that the BJP has allowed rabble-rousing ways of its State leaders to negate Mamata's stature, considering she still has an emotional hold on the people. This is why BJP is having to work the ground despite a favourable tide in the Lok Sabha polls. And by claiming victimhood in a "reign of terror" early on in the campaign, it is justifying the need for violence as defence as part of its propaganda. For its house is not quite in order. That's why Home Minister Amit Shah has made Bengal his focus. He has to take care of internal dissension between the original BJP cadres and TMC rebel imports over the quantum of importance that each should get. While the original party workers are gung-ho about a Centrist push to the campaign, the turncoats are wary of Bengal's anti-Right ethos and are not being able to commit to the party's hegemonic planks. The BJP is pitching its campaign on the TMC's "politicisation of institutions", particularly the police, but that is yet to cut ice given the record of its own autocratic methods in States it already governs. Its minority appeasement plank against Mamata or her COVID management have been blunted by the Bengal leader's new-found maturity in matters religious, her smooth conduct of the Durga puja and arresting the pandemic spiral better than the projected scenarios. Besides, after years of nurturing and solidifying its vote base in North Bengal, and investing its lot with the Gorkhaland movement, the BJP's key man and Gorkha Janukti Morcha (GJM) leader Bimal Gurung jumped ship and declared support to Mamata. With such hurdles cropping up just six months before the elections, Shah, therefore, has come down to mathematical certainty like working on consolidating the tribal and Dalit vote in the State. And he is chipping away the Trinamool's strengths, like weaning away Suvendu Adhikari and other disgruntled leaders who are not happy with Mamata's blind reliance on her nephew Abhishek Banerjee and election strategy advisor Prashant Kishor. Shah had poached Mukul Roy, closest to Mamata at one time, to get a sense of her winning strategy. Now he has Adhikari, a popular grassroots leader, an organiser and mobiliser for issues like Nandigram. Both are not exactly clean, with ED cases against them, but the BJP is willing to manipulate their weakness to its own strength. The party is desperate about Bengal for more than one reason. First, it sees it as a liberal and intellectual outpost that has been its ideological polarity, and having made inroads in the last Lok Sabha election, it now wants the glory of a conquest. Second, along with Odisha, Bengal has been a vanguard of the East that has held out against its juggernaut. Third, the BJP wants to prove that poll arithmetic can override cultural opposition to it. Of course, Mamata is used to taking several punches and emerging stronger in the end. And instead of getting increasingly caught up in a reactive game with the BJP, she is now focussing on her "doorstep" appeal, launching new and highlighting existing welfarist schemes. In fact, only she can break the vicious cycle of violence, drive home the message of development and hold the BJP to account on its real specific plans for "poriborton." As for the BJP, it needs an equally charismatic face. Will cricket icon Sourav Ganguly agree to be Shah's man for the job?

## Year of the pandemic

2020 is that in more ways than one, it appears, as dictionaries unanimously vote for word of the year



While there might be some lingering doubts about Time magazine's selection of US President-elect Joseph R Biden and his Vice-President Kamala Harris as "Persons of the Year," we, along with many others, feel that the "people of the year" are the front-line medical workers risking their lives for the sake of others. But there is little doubt about the "word of the year," which both Dictionary.Com and Merriam-Webster have awarded to the "pandemic." And that is appropriate because how many people used or knew of that term unless they were Hollywood screen writers until the Coronavirus upended everyone's lives in 2020? Even as the news of advancement in the trial of vaccines brings

some cheer across the world, we are still far away from vanquishing the virus that has permanently changed the lives of us all. And there is no guarantee that "vaccination" will be the word of the year in 2021. We are still a long way from having a significant number of people being vaccinated against the virus for it to be effective among a large population and the world has learnt a lesson about the need for hygiene in all our lives.

But how else will 2020 be remembered decades from today? Will we talk about this being the year where "social distancing" became the norm and online education really took off? Or will we remember 2020 as the year that several social constructs broke down once and for all and set the ball rolling on the path to revolution across many nations? Will 2020 be the year where we reset everything altogether, everything becomes "Before Pandemic" (BP) and "After Pandemic" (AP)? We will have to wait and watch but make no mistake, 2020 will be the most memorable year of our lives even if it was a year in which we all did almost nothing. Of course, it allowed us buffer time to re-orient ourselves, evolve and survive in new contexts and circumstances. Maybe 2021 will offer us some hope and we can break out of the thesaurus and learn some new words for hope and expectations. It can't be this bad again next year? Or can it?

# Combat climate change

The long haul ahead to bridging the emissions gap doesn't present a rosy picture but there are encouraging signs, too



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Every year, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) releases an *Emissions Gap Report* showing the difference between estimated current greenhouse gas emission levels and the target prescribed by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change signed on December 12, 2015. The latter calls for holding the increase in global average temperature in this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial-revolution level, and for trying to limit it to 1.5 degree Celsius above it.

Each report not only dwells on the gap but provides a comprehensive account of the situation and developments on the environment front during the year, what needs to be done to combat climate change, and the prospects ahead for the world. The current report, 11th in the series titled *Emissions Gap Report 2020*, released on December 9, 2020, presents, like its predecessors, an alarming picture. It says that the year 2020 is likely to be the warmest on record, with wildfires, droughts, storms and glacier-melting intensifying.

If one were to identify its most terrifying prognosis, it would be that the world is hurtling towards a temperature increase of over 3 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. And this would be despite a predicted fall of 7 per cent in carbon dioxide emissions as a result of the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline, however, would translate to only 0.01 degree reduction in global warming by 2050, because the emissions would rise again — and become even higher — as economies bounce back.

What all this means begins to become clear on recalling that according to the *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C* (The Special Report), released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on October 7, 2018, the adverse effects of climate change would not be reduced even if the increase is limited to 1.5 degree Celsius. Sea levels will continue to rise beyond 2100, threatening coastal ecosystems and infrastructure. Flooding, drought and extreme weather events will wreak havoc around the world. Many species will continue to be driven towards extinction and marine ecosystems could face "irreversible loss." What is particularly alarming, this level, according to the report, is likely to be reached sometime between 2030



and 2052. Fourteen per cent of the world's population would be exposed to severe heat waves at least once in five years at the 1.5 degree Celsius warming level. The percentage would rise to 37 if the level rises to 2 degrees Celsius. Christopher Flavelle's report, titled *Climate Change Threatens the World's Food Supply, United Nations Warns*, in the *New York Times* of August 8, 2019, quotes Edouard Davin, a researcher at ETH Zurich and an author of the report, as saying by email, "Above 2 degrees of global warming, there could be an increase of 100 million or more of the population at risk of hunger," and adding, "We need to act quickly." A three-degree Celsius increase in temperature, according to a report by Louise Boyle, datelined December 9, 2020, in the *Independent* of the UK, would cause mass extinctions and leave "swaths of planet uninhabitable." It cites the non-profit organisation, Climate Central, as saying that 275 million people would be at risk in areas flooded by sea-level rise.

It is a grim scenario almost every front. A 65-page "Summary for Policymakers" of another IPCC special report of 2019 stated that a food crisis loomed large, especially in tropical and sub-tropical regions, if carbon dioxide emissions continued unchecked. It added that besides significantly reducing crop yields, rising temperatures may also bring down the nutritional value of crops. Floods, droughts, storms and other forms of extreme weather conditions threatened to disrupt and, over time, reduce the world's food supply.

According to Stephen Leahy's report, "World food crisis looms if carbon emissions go unchecked, UN says" in the

“  
**ABOVE 2 DEGREES OF GLOBAL WARMING, THERE COULD BE AN INCREASE OF 100 MILLION OR MORE OF THE POPULATION AT RISK OF HUNGER... WE NEED TO ACT QUICKLY**  
 ”

*National Geographic* of August 8, 2019, already, more than 10 per cent of the world's population remained undernourished. It quoted Cynthia Rozenzweig, Coordinating Lead Author of the IPCC's *Special Report on Climate Change and Land*, and a climatologist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, as saying that extreme weather events had already increased in size and intensity, and are playing a role in food price spikes.

It cited the examples of extensive spring floods in the US Midwest in 2019 leading to very late planting of corn and soy crops, reducing their potential yields. It also mentioned drought playing havoc with rice crops in Thailand and Indonesia and sugarcane and oilseeds produces in India in 2019 when record-breaking heat waves in Europe were feared to be causing a 13 per cent decline in French wine production. Apart from under-nourishment and hunger, food short-

ages could lead to an increase in cross-border migration, which is having an unfortunate impact on politics in North America and Europe.

The question arises: What are the chances of averting the dismal future that seems to face the world? There are some glimmers of hope. The *Emissions Gap Report 2020* says that the predicted emission rates could be reduced by around 25 per cent if Governments commit to a path of "green recovery" from the pandemic's disaster. This would give the world a fighting chance to keep global warming down to 2 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. Treading this path would require the provision or direct support to zero-emissions technologies and infrastructure, reducing fossil fuel subsidies, promoting measures like afforestation and avoiding deforestation. Trees are most important as they reduce the presence of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by absorbing it.

Agricultural practices and global food supply systems account for one-third of the global carbon emissions. It is, therefore, important to orient them towards reducing carbon emissions. For example, steps like the draining of wetlands to make room for cultivation - as has happened in Indonesia and Malaysia to create palm oil plantations - should be avoided as that would release into the air the huge amounts of carbon dioxide gas trapped in these water bodies. Further, the *Special Report on Climate Change and Land* calls for institutional changes like providing farmers with better access to credit in developing countries and giving them stronger property rights. It further advocated utilisation of the skills and knowledge of indigenous and local peo-

ple to devise agricultural practices aimed at promoting biodiversity conservation and combating desertification and land degradation.

Along with agriculture, the *Emissions Gap Report 2020* emphasises the need for shipping and aviation industries, which account for five per cent of global emissions, to combine energy efficiency with a rapid transition away from fossil fuels.

Around two-thirds of global emissions being linked to private households, changes in consumption and behaviour patterns are required. Cycling, car-sharing, and more energy-efficient housing needs to be promoted. Travel by rail rather than air is recommended for short journeys. The wealthy, particularly, need to make significant changes in their lifestyles as the richest 1 per cent of the world's population accounts for more than twice the combined share of the poorest 50 per cent. There is a special need to avoid food loss and wastage.

There are some encouraging signs. While President Donald Trump of the US walked out of the Paris Agreement and derided the idea of climate change, President-elect Joe Biden has not only decided to rejoin but has set a target for net-zero emissions no later than 2050. According to the *Emissions Gap Report 2020*, some 126 countries, covering 51 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, have so far, adopted, announced or are considering, a net zero pledge by 2050.

Nevertheless, optimism needs to be kept on a tight leash. Between promise and performance, and resolve and result, falls more than a shadow. In this case, the shadow will darken the future of the entire world.

(The author is Consulting Editor, *The Pioneer*)

## SOUNDBITE

This distinguished group of public servants will bring the highest level of experience, compassion, and integrity to bear.



US President-elect —Joe Biden

They are alleging lawlessness in Bengal. I want to ask whether you are unable to go out in the streets.



West Bengal CM —Mamata Banerjee

If we say the Holocaust happened with Jews in World War II, I don't think that (battle of Bhima Koregaon) was anything less.



Actor —Arjun Rampal

During the lockdown, when we were stuck at home, we used to meet daily over video conferencing and do our physical training activities.



India U-16 head coach —Bibiano Fernandes

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### NPPA quiet on profits

Sir — Generic medicines are considered an economical substitute for branded drugs. But I was shocked to notice heavy trade margins in generic medicines at the wholesale market in Delhi's Bhagirath Palace.

A box of 20 strips of 10 tablets each of Vogliboz-0.3, marketed by Knoll Healthcare Pvt Ltd, with the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of ₹100 each (box MRP ₹2,000), was available with the distributor at ₹300. It means a whopping 567 per cent profit for the retailer.

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) should immediately direct generic drug marketers to reduce the printed MRP to not above the net total trade margins of 20-25 per cent. The high trade margins create room for bribery since governments are the biggest purchasers of generic medicines for their hospitals and dispensaries.

Madhu Agrawal  
 Delhi

### Never give up

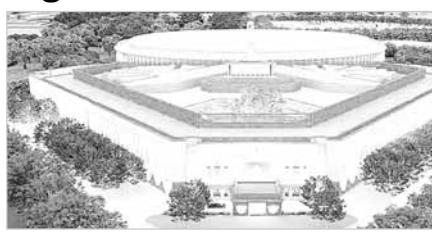
Sir — Before Independence, six major famines from 1870 to 1943 ravaged the country and completely crippled its health and economy. But India showed courage and pos-

### New Parliament building: What's the need?

The "ground-breaking ceremony" for an imposing new Parliament building seemed incongruous when the country is going through an unprecedented difficult patch mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn. The occasion was cheerless in the face of farmers intensifying their agitation for repealing the new farm laws.

The *dhooni puja* with chants from Hindu scriptures seemed a display of the predominance of one religion. The multi-faith prayer that followed was consolatory and there was no reading from the Constitution. President Ram Nath Kovind was conspicuous by his absence which was perhaps just what the Prime Minister needed to enjoy the limelight. The Central Vista Project (CVP), sprawling along the heart of the city and costing a few thousands of crores, validates the proposition that politics is too often concerned only with the personal vanities of politicians.

There is no justification for giving precedence to a sprawl of structures to house Parliament rather than providing housing for all the homeless, especially when the 93-year-old existing structure has not yet outlived its usefulness. A city where the destitute sleep on pavements can-



not boast of a four-storey triangular-shaped building — however much its grandeur — in good conscience. The "Temple of democracy" should sit easy with the reality of life for most citizens.

What the Supreme Court's red light to any construction or demolition and felling of trees in the demarcated plot of land will translate into is far from clear. Cutting down trees for erecting a plethora of concrete structures does not advance the causes of conservation or curbing pollution.

G. David Milton  
 Maruthancode

Government should build bridges with our farmers for continued food security.

Sunil Chilwal  
 Haldwani

### Get back on track

Sir — The farmers agitating for two weeks against the new agricultural laws have threatened to block railway tracks and highways to the

benefitting corporates close to the Government by weakening the *mandi* system. As the situation turns increasingly explosive, the Centre will be responsible for any incidents that take place over the coming days.

Bhagwan Thadani  
 Mumbai

### Middle order mess

Sir — Even though India won the T-20 series against Australia by 2-1, the middle-order problem continues to cast a shadow over the team. Since the openers are a bit shaky, we need to depend on the middle order to prop up the scoring.

Trustworthy players like Manish Pandey and Shreyas Iyer, in terrific form in IPL, failed to do justice to the job at hand. With many all-rounders, the Indian team could try the pinch hitter policy in the middle order. Even an attacking Rishabh Pant capitulated and the team was depending on Pandya in the end. When he failed, we lost the final match and the series. This mess has to be sorted before the T-20 World Cup.

C.K. Ramanath Iyer  
 Ghaziabad

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)



## FIRST COLUMN

## Reap the gains of a downtrend

Investors who want to build a good portfolio over the long term, should use opportunities like the present one, to invest in the financial markets



PREM PRAKASH

The Coronavirus pandemic has stalled international trade and created heightened volatility in the financial markets. It has impacted many businesses and the finances of individuals. People are revisiting their financial plans in order to sustain their savings for as long as possible. Those who have been playing the financial markets for long, know that such downturns are a great opportunity to rebalance their investment portfolios. Many research houses have come up with data points on how the recovery of the markets has been, post a catastrophic event that has sent the markets into a tailspin. In most of the cases it has been found that after a downward trend, the markets get back to their original level within two years. Hence, investors who are not looking to time the market and want to build a good portfolio over the long term, should use opportunities like the present one, to invest in the financial markets and reap benefits.

Many investment firms have gone the extra mile to support their stakeholders during these uncertain times. Webinars were conducted on financial health that focussed on effective fiscal management during the lockdown and the turbulent phase that the economy is going through. These firms facilitated a goal-based approach, risk profile analysis and rebalancing of strategies which helped the millennials with their future investment plans by tailoring them to their specific requirements.

A plunge in March, followed by a gradual recovery, has created a volatile situation in the financial markets that has lured many people to dabble in the stock market. At the same time, many existing investors who barely traded, have now started doing so. Retail participation saw a record high, while many inactive clients re-entered the market and there was a sharp rise in the number of new clients in the industry. Despite volatility, many investors were able to generate good returns with the help of financial advisors who adopted various strategies, the most popular being buying at the dip and multi-asset class investing. Buying at the dip is a market timing strategy and more often than not, investors do not get the timing right. The potential problem with this approach is that you may end up catching a falling knife. Investors should choose companies that fundamentally have good businesses and sufficient cash flows to withstand a potential downturn. It is beneficial to create a well-diversified portfolio by investing in multiple asset classes that give a balanced risk exposure over various macroeconomic conditions.

For investors focussed on companies with sustainable competitive advantages and long-term secular trends, it's important to prioritise a far-horizon investment outlook over knee-jerk modifications. While investors who focus on short-term stock market momentum may have rebalanced portfolios during the period, staying the course can potentially be beneficial. Sticking to a long-term investing strategy can serve as a guiding principle through swings on a monthly or quarterly basis. Research companies guide investors with rebalancing techniques as they tend to improve risk-adjusted returns over time, as long as it doesn't generate excessive tax and transaction costs by reducing portfolio sensitivity to the timing of volatile markets. It also goes with the markets' natural tendency to revert to the mean. Many a time, people do not understand and focus on rebalancing, however, this is one of the most important steps to get a consistent return. Rebalancing the portfolio normalises it for one's age, revised objectives, current market conditions and so on. For instance, if one has invested ₹1 crore with 70 per cent in equity and 30 per cent in debt and after a sudden fall in the market, the portfolio composition changes to 60 per cent equity and 40 per cent debt, it is the right time to shift some amount from debt to equity, which will bring the portfolio composition back to 70:30. This way, one will always benefit from any market condition and the portfolio, too, will be aligned with long-term objectives.

Investors have been encouraged by improvements in manufacturing and metals, better-than-expected second-quarter earnings, hopes of a potential vaccine and extremely low interest rates. Mostly, investors seem to be looking past the pandemic to the recovery expected in 2021. Due to the expectations of an additional US Government stimulus, the ongoing global recovery and an expected rebound in cyclical sectors, the world is likely to see a V-shaped economic rebound. If the RBI continues the low interest rate regime for the next one year or so, the yields on Fixed Deposits and other fixed income instruments are going to be very low. Plus, if we include the impact of income tax the returns from these instruments are not going to beat inflation and one is going to get a negative real rate of return. All these put together, provide a great opportunity for investors to participate in the markets and build a portfolio with a long-term objective.

As the overall structure of the market remains positive, participation by retail investors will increase consistently. With economic activity recovering fast, more upgrades in earnings cannot be ruled out. Strong global markets in the future can keep the liquidity abundant in the system, thus providing support to the overall market.

(The writer is CEO, CapitalVia Global Research Limited.)

WHAT CAN BE MORE BEAUTIFUL, SACRED THAN HAVING A NEW PARLIAMENT INSPIRE US WHEN INDIA CELEBRATES 75TH YEAR OF FREEDOM.

—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

## POINT COUNTERPOINT



WHAT WILL BE EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL (THAN THE NEW PARLIAMENT) WILL BE AN INDIA WITH NO HUNGRY STOMACHS.

—AIMIM CHIEF ASADUDDIN OWAIISI

## Checks and balances needed

There is a requirement to have a re-look into the provisions of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance



CHITTARVU RAGHU

The Governor of Uttar Pradesh (UP) recently promulgated an Ordinance called the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020. It has been promulgated to provide for prohibition of unlawful conversions from one religion to another by misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement, by any fraudulent means or by marriage. The emphasis in the Ordinance is on the prohibition of "unlawful conversion." A conversion is considered unlawful if it is due to allurement, coercion and so on and also by marriage. An "unlawful conversion" is defined as one that is not in accordance with the law of the land.

According to the new law, a wo/man intending to convert to another religion needs to inform the District Magistrate or Additional District Magistrate at least 60 days in advance and give a declaration that the decision is free from any pressure or allurement and is being done by one's free choice. Yet, another declaration needs to be submitted within 60 days once the conversion takes place. Only then will the person be able to attain a confirmation certificate that the conversion is lawful. The District Magistrate's Office has to exhibit a copy of the declarations on the notice board of the office till the date of confirmation of conversion.

However, the UP Ordinance is silent with regard to the nature of the law governing conversions. It does not provide any explanation and contemplates that whoever is involved in the said unlawful conversion shall be punished with an imprisonment of not less than one year, which may extend to five years. The accused person is also liable to pay a fine. Though the punishment is one year to five years, the Ordinance makes the offence cognisable and non-bailable and triable by the court of sessions.

Generally, in criminal cases the burden of proof lies with the prosecution but the Ordinance imposes this burden upon the person who allegedly caused the conversion. And wherever the conversion has been facilitated by any other person, the burden of proof is on them too. It also contemplates that any marriage, which was entered into for the sole purpose of unlawful conversion by a man of one religion with a woman of another religion or vice-versa, either by converting himself/herself before or after marriage or by converting the wo/man before or after marriage, shall be declared void by the family court.

In case, the couple is in an area where the family court is not established, the civil court having jurisdiction in the area can try the case and declare the marriage null and void. There need not be any independent adjudication with regard to a declaration of any marriage as void as per any other law. However, the fact remains that unless a nexus is established between a marriage and unlawful conversion, Section six of the Ordinance, which contemplates marriage to be declared as void by the courts, is not applicable.

The meaning of conversion by marriage is also not explained in the Ordinance and it contemplates conversion by marriage per-se unlawful. Generally two persons belonging to different faiths can get married under the provisions of Special Marriage Act. However, in some cases unless there is a conversion and both, the bride and the bridegroom belong to the same faith, the marriage would not be performed. Conversion would be a prerequi-

“ THE ORDINANCE COMES INTO PLAY WHEN A CONVERSION OCCURS DUE TO THE FACTORS LIKE ALLUREMENT, COERCION AND SO ON. IT IS INOPERATIVE WHILE EXERCISING FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE POLICE ARE EQUIPPED SUFFICIENTLY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY INTO THESE ASPECTS OR NOT SO AS TO COME TO A CONCLUSION THAT THE CHOICE OF CONVERSION HAS BEEN MADE FREELY WITHOUT ANY OTHER FACTORS ”



site in such cases. It cannot be said that it is a conversion by marriage. The Ordinance also contemplates that once the person who intends to change his/her religion has made the declaration before the District Magistrate, an inquiry would be conducted by the police with regard to "such an intention of a person to convert." The report of the police would be a major factor in deciding whether a person can change their religion or not. It would also be instrumental in concluding whether the conversion is illegal and thus, void.

The Ordinance also contemplates a post-conversion procedure. It states that a converted individual shall send a declaration to the District Magistrate and appear for 21 days thereafter before him/her till the objections, if any, received are decided by the District Magistrate. It also contemplates that if the procedure is not followed the conversion becomes illegal and void.

Though the Ordinance protects people from getting converted due to allurement, coercion and so on, there is a scope for abusing the provisions by relying upon the police enquiry report. The Ordinance is silent with regard to the action of the District Magistrate vis-a-vis the police enquiry report. There is a requirement to have a re-look into the provisions of the Ordinance for the purpose of incorporating necessary checks and balances instead of placing more reliance upon a police enquiry report.

However, the UP Government's anti-conversion move is not unique. In the past too, several States in the country have passed what are referred to as Freedom of Religion Acts or "anti-conversion laws". These are mostly State-level laws that are aimed to regulate involuntary religious conversions. Odisha was the first State to pass such a law in 1967

and the most recent legislation was passed in Jharkhand and Uttarakhand in 2017. Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh passed their "Freedom of Religion Act" in 2000, 2003 and 2006 respectively. Taking a cue from the others, Rajasthan too passed a similar Bill in 2006. Arunachal Pradesh had already enacted one in 1979 and in 2002 Tamil Nadu passed the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Forceful Conversion Act. The Supreme Court in the Reverend. Stainislaus Vs. State of Madhya Pradesh case upheld the provisions of the Madhya Pradesh and Orissa Act. Significantly, Madhya Pradesh enacted the Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantraya Adhinayam Act way back in 1968 and Odisha enacted the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act in 1967.

The provisions of both the Acts relating to prohibition of forcible conversion and punishment were challenged before the respective High Courts and were carried to the Apex Court. The Supreme Court had held that the freedom of religion enshrined in Article 25 of the Constitution is not guaranteed in respect of one religion only but covers all religions alike and it can be properly enjoyed by a person if s/he exercises her/his right in a manner commensurate with freedom of persons following other religions. It was further held that freedom for one is freedom for the other, in equal measure, and there can therefore be no such thing as a fundamental right to convert any person to one's own religion. The Apex Court upheld the provisions which prohibit forcible conversion in the background of maintenance of "public order." The Supreme Court also held that if an attempt is made to raise communal passions, e.g. on the ground that someone has been "forcibly" converted to another religion, it would

in all probability, give rise to apprehension of breach of public order, affecting the community at large. However, the present Ordinance incorporates a new concept of conversion by marriage. It presumes that every religious conversion is illegal unless the procedure that has been laid down is followed. The term "love jihad" has not been referred to in the Ordinance and its perusal shows that the same is applicable to all religions. The word "allurement" has been defined widely, which may ultimately be a playing field for the police during its enquiry.

Article 25 of the Constitution of India contemplates that all people are equally entitled to freedom of conscience, the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion. It means that the Constitution guarantees the right to practice, propagate a religion and in the process a person may impress upon the other to get converted or herself/himself change their religion.

The Ordinance comes into play when such a conversion occurs due to the factors like allurement, coercion and so on. It is inoperative while exercising freedom of conscience. The question is whether the police are equipped sufficiently to conduct an enquiry into these aspects or not, so as to come to a conclusion that the choice of conversion has been made freely without any other factors. There would be a possibility of abuse of processes and filing of criminal cases against those persons who propagate their faith, on the ground that they have instigated the thought of conversion in a person. However, a mere thought of conversion to another religion cannot be made an offence unless it manifests into action.

(The writer is an Advocate in the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana High Courts)

## The return of strongmen in politics

Like the authoritarians of the Cold War, the current leaders are thought to provide assertive leadership that is protecting their nations from malevolent forces



NADEEM PARACHA

man, which they never had," he chuckled. "But why would they want one when democratically-elected men and women in your country have done rather well compared to all the strongmen that have ruled Pakistan?" I asked.

He replied by saying that India's new middle-classes feel that their country's political system is corrupt and weak and unable to defend its Hindu majority from brazen attacks from Pakistan. This left me scratching my head: "But India's economy has been outperforming that of Pakistan's for years now, and India has a much better image abroad," I smiled. "No, boss," he replied, "what is the use of a good economy or image if they can't stop attacks on our pride and people." He almost sounded melancholic.

Three years later, India elected the unabashed nationalist, Narendra Modi as its Prime Minister. India's own "strongman." The term "strongmen" (in politics) is rooted in the largely mythical exploits of ancient monarchs who "ruled like benevolent kings but with an iron fist." It's

an expression of a political masculinity driven by fearlessness, fairness, ambition and mental and physical strength. However, the more immediate roots of the term lie in the ways certain authoritarian rulers and dictators came to power and conducted matters of the State and Government during the Cold War (1945-1990).

In a March 11, 2019 essay in *Foreign Policy*, the American political scientist Erica Frantz writes that the size of autocratic regimes peaked in the 1970s, when 75 per cent of the governments in the world were authoritarian. They were said to be ruled by "strongmen." The term had a negative connotation when used by political scientists, but it was actually celebrated by those for whom it was being used. Some of these "strongmen" were romanticised through State propaganda as men who were boldly protecting their societies from malevolent forces that were out to usurp a country's resources, progress, pride and existence.

After the collapse of the Cold War in 1990, it was widely believed

that in the defeat and absence of the Soviet Union and because of the triumph of capitalism, a liberal democracy would rapidly proliferate in former dictatorships. The era of "strongmen" was understood to be over. Nevertheless, after 1990, the term "strongmen" did recede, and many countries adopted democracy, in one form or the other. But the term returned with a bang after 2010, mainly on the wings of two democracies gradually sliding into autocracies.

Russia was a "hybrid democracy" and like most post-Cold War hybrid regimes, never fully developed into the kind of liberal democracy that most analysts believed it would eventually evolve into. More striking was the case of Turkey which, after decades of military interventions, did manage to make a successful transition with the 2003 election of Recep Erdogan as the Prime Minister and the rapid erosion of the political influence of Turkey's military. However, Russia's Vladimir Putin and Turkey's Erdogan soon discovered that an authoritarian set-up can last longer

behind a facade of liberal democracy, compared to the bygone nature of dictatorship, which was openly antagonistic towards democracy. Their "success" in this respect did not go unnoticed. After 2014, a wave began to sweep across various regions in which democratically-elected men started to use similar tactics, putting themselves at the centre of an authoritarian set-up but giving it a veneer of democracy. They all became the new "strongmen."

More alarmingly, this not only happened in hybrid set-ups in former dictatorships (such as Pakistan, for example) but also in developed democracies in various European countries and in India and the US.

According to a detailed study on the "new strongmen" published in the journal, *Political Research Exchange*, the current breed of "strongmen" share similar characteristics with the authoritarians of the Cold War. The only difference is, unlike their Cold War contemporaries, the new ones come to power through a democratic process. But they mould, turn and twist demo-

cratic institutions and tools to formulate an autocratic set-up.

The study defines the personalities of authoritarians as dark traits which include, "narcissism (grandiosity, ego-reinforcement behaviour, tendency to seek attention and admiration), subclinical psychopathy (lack of remorse, insensitivity, impulsivity) and Machiavellianism (tendency to use manipulation and strategic behaviours)." They embody a push for a centralisation of executive power, hierarchical governance, muscular treatment of opponents and the media, and the promotion of nationalism. The study further states that the electoral attraction for the new authoritarians is because of disillusionment with established democratic models. However, a May 10, 2018 report by the *International Association for Political Science Studies* (IAPSS) posits that "a combination of uncertainty with the false perception of an escalating threat has led to an increase in calls for strong leaders." It adds that societies are now more vulnerable and under the influence of authoritarians that

provide simple answers — often fallacies — to the complex issues of today's world. The report argues that, psychologically, new autocratic regimes use old authoritarian tactics of inducing anxiety in the polity about fears that may be exaggerated, or non-existent. For example, returning to my conversation with the Indian journalist in London, the Modi regime's "manly" anti-Pakistan bent and actions against ideas such as "love jihad" may be a carry-over from a decades-old Hindu middle-class anxiety. According to the German historian Markus Daechsel, in the early 20th century, there was a feeling among Hindu nationalists that the Hindus lacked militant virtues. Daechsel writes that it was widely believed by the Hindu middle-classes that "Muslims had a higher birth rate than Hindus because of their unrestrained sexuality."

Is it possible then that those middle-class Indians who were looking for a "strongman" had also this embedded in their psyches? Perhaps.

(Courtesy: Dawn)

# Hundreds of GOP members sign onto Texas-led election lawsuit

**Houston:** The Texas lawsuit asking the US Supreme Court to invalidate President-elect Joe Biden's victory has quickly become a conservative litmus test, as 106 members of Congress and multiple state attorneys general signed onto the case even as some have predicted it will fail.



The last-gasp bid to subvert the results of the Nov 3 election is demonstrating President Donald Trump's enduring political power even as his term is set to end. And even though most of the signatories are far-right conservatives who come from deep red districts, the filing meant that roughly one-quarter of the US House believes the Supreme Court should set aside election results.

Seventeen Republican attorneys general are backing the unprecedented case that Trump is calling "the big one" despite the fact that the president and his allies have lost dozens of times in courts across

the country and have no evidence of widespread fraud. And in a filing Thursday, the Congressional Republicans claimed "unconstitutional irregularities" have "cast doubt" on the 2020 outcome and "the integrity of the American system of elections."

To be clear, there has been no evidence of widespread fraud and Trump has been seeking to subvert the will of the voters. Election law experts think the lawsuit will never last. "The Supreme Court is not going to overturn the election in the Texas case, as the President has told them to do," tweeted Rick Hasen, a law professor at the University of California, Irvine. "But we are in bad shape as a country that 17 states could support this shameful, anti-American filing" by Texas and its attorney general, Ken Paxton, he said.

The lawsuit filed against Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin repeats false, disproven, and unsubstantiated accusations about the voting in four states that went for Trump's Democratic challenger.

Still, some of the top state Republican prosecutors urging the Supreme Court to hear the case have acknowledged that the effort is a long shot and are seeking to distance themselves from Trump's baseless allegations of fraud.

North Dakota's Wayne Stenehjem, among the 17 attorneys general supporting the case, said North Dakota is not alleging voter fraud in the four states at issue.

"We're careful on that," said Stenehjem, who noted that his office has received thousands of calls and emails from constituents asking the state to support the suit. "But it's worth it for the Supreme Court to weigh in and settle it once and for all," he said. AP

Hours later, Trump held a meeting at the White House, scheduled before the suit was filed, with a dozen Republican attorneys general, including Paxton and several others who are backing the effort.

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# Obama reunion? Biden fills Cabinet with former White House leaders

**Washington:** President-elect Joe Biden is getting the old gang back together.

Increasingly deep into the process of selecting Cabinet members and other senior staff, the incoming Biden administration has a distinctly Obama feel.

There's Denis McDonough, former President Barack Obama's chief of staff who Biden announced on Thursday would be nominated as the secretary of veterans affairs.

Susan Rice, Obama's former national security adviser, was named the director of Biden's White House Domestic Policy Council.

That's on top of Biden already tapping Obama's agriculture secretary, Tom Vilsack, to head the department once

again, former Secretary of State John Kerry to serve as special envoy on climate and Kerry's Obama-era deputy Antony Blinken to lead the State Department.

Jeff Zients, who did stints as acting Office of Management and Budget director and a top economic adviser in the Obama White House, will return as Biden's coronavirus response coordinator.

With the exception of President Donald Trump, a political outsider when he was elected in 2016, recent new presidents have relied heavily on pools of talent that had cut their teeth in their parties' previous administrations to fill out their own government.

But Biden, who is assuming the presidency in the midst of

the worst public health crisis in a century and a flagging economy, is putting a greater premium on past experience and, as a result, has gone frequently back to the Obama well as he fills out his government.

"Many of the folks who are returning are returning because they believe in public service and know that after four turbulent and destructive years and a brutal pandemic, this is a particularly important time to serve," said David Axelrod, who served as a senior adviser to Obama.

"Their experience is valuable. Their values and outlooks are consonant with (Biden's). The challenge is to look forward and not back and innovate beyond what's simply been broken." AP

# US carries out rare execution during presidential transition

**Terre Haute (US):** The Trump administration Thursday carried out its ninth federal execution of the year in what has been a first series of executions during a presidential lame-duck period in 130 years, putting to death a Texas street-gang member in the slayings of a religious couple from Iowa more than two decades ago.



Bernard was pronounced dead at 9:27 pm Eastern time.

He directed his last words to the family of the couple he played a role in killing, speaking with striking calm for someone who knew he was about to die.

"I'm sorry," he said, lifting his head and looking at witness-room windows.

"That's the only words that I can say that completely capture how I feel now and how I felt that day."

As he spoke, he showed no outward signs of fear or distress, speaking lucidly and naturally.

He spoke for more than three minutes, saying he had been waiting for this chance to say he was sorry — not only to the victims' family, but also for the pain he caused his own family. AP

# Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai charged under national security law

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong pro-democracy activist and media tycoon Jimmy Lai has been charged under the city's national security law, amid a widening crackdown on dissent, according to local media reports.

Lai, who founded the Apple Daily tabloid, was charged on suspicion of colluding with foreign forces and endangering national security, local broadcaster TVB reported Friday.

He is the most high-profile person to be charged under the law since it was implemented in June.

Police said in a statement that they arrested a 73-year-old



man under the national security law, but did not name him.

Lai was arrested under the national security law in August.

He and two executives of Next Digital, the company that operates the Apple Daily newspaper, were later charged for fraud over accusations that they violated lease terms on office space the company. He was denied bail earlier this month. AP

# UN backs Afghan peace talks in resolution, Russia votes no

**United Nations:** The UN General Assembly approved a resolution over Russian objections Thursday commending progress in peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban while urging stepped-up efforts to tackle terrorist attacks by the Taliban, al-Qaida, the Islamic State extremist group and their affiliates.

The vote in the 193-member world body was 130 in favour, Russia against, and China, Pakistan and Belarus abstaining.

Fifty-nine countries did not vote.

The 15-page resolution titled "The Situation in Afghanistan" covers a wide range of issues including peace

and reconciliation, democracy, the rule of law, good governance, human rights, counter-narcotics, social and economic development and regional cooperation.

While welcoming progress in the intra-Afghan talks, including the December 2 agreement on rules of procedure for negotiations, the resolution "condemns the high rate of continued violence."

It says this "is contributing to an unacceptable number of casualties" and calls for an immediate cessation of violence and strongly encourages the Afghan government and the Taliban "to pursue confidence-building measures and to reduce violence."

There is a clear benefit, and all we have on the other side is theoretical risks," said committee member Paul Offit, a vaccine expert with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The vaccine's potential benefits outweigh its risks, he said. PTI

The resolution reiterates the General Assembly's "serious concern" about the security situation in Afghanistan and stresses the need to continue to address the threat to the country's stability from violence committed by the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, as well as al-Qaida, Islamic State, their affiliates "and other terrorist and criminal groups."

Afghanistan's UN ambassador, Adela Raz, expressed regret that despite her government's strong support for the resolution it wasn't adopted by consensus, saying the measure reflects "developments that are taking place on the ground and particularly the progress in the peace process." AP

# Around the Globe

**Juba (South Sudan):** One county in South Sudan is likely in famine and tens of thousands of people in five other counties are on the brink of starvation, according to a new report by international food security experts. Nowhere in the world has been in famine since one was declared nearly four years ago in South Sudan's Unity state as civil war raged. Now western Pibor county is feared to have reached that crisis level, the result of massive flooding and deadly violence that has prevented access to aid.

**Kabul:** Optimism among Afghans regarding the country's peace process has decreased significantly in the past few months amid a spike in violence, according to a survey released Friday. The Institute of War and Peace Studies found optimism had dropped to 57 per cent when the survey was conducted from September 29 to October 18. That's down from 86 per cent of those surveyed according to the previous assessment conducted over the summer and released in August.

**Buffalo:** Convicted former movie producer Harvey Weinstein is expected to appear briefly via video from a New York prison Friday as part of legal efforts to send him to California to face sexual assault charges. Authorities say the extradition proceeding, originally scheduled for August, likely will be postponed again, this time until April 9.

# Turkey rejects EU decision to widen sanctions

**Ankara:** Turkey on Friday called on the European Union to act as an "honest mediator" in its dispute with EU members Greece and Cyprus over the exploration of gas reserves in the Mediterranean, after European leaders approved expanding sanctions against Ankara.

The leaders said early Friday that Turkey — which is a candidate to join although its membership talks are blocked — has "engaged in unilateral actions and provocations and escalated its rhetoric against the EU." This was despite the fact that they had offered trade and other incentives to Turkey to

halt its activities during their last summit in October, they said.

The leaders tasked EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell with drawing up a report on the state of EU-Turkey political, economic and trade relations and to suggest how to proceed, including on widening sanctions. Borrell was asked to submit the report to the leaders by the time they hold a summit in March.

Turkey's Foreign Ministry slammed the EU decision, saying Ankara rejects the 27-member group's "biased and unlawful attitude." A ministry statement said the decision to

# US panel recommend Pfizer vaccine's emergency use

**Washington:** A special US government advisory panel has recommended emergency use authorisation for Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine, in a major step towards its widespread use in the country, worst-hit by the pandemic.

After an eight-hour public hearing on Thursday, the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) voted 17 to 4 with 1 abstention to recommend the vaccine developed by American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech to combat the disease that has killed over 292,000 people in the US.

An emergency use authorisation (EUA) is short of a full

approval. Pfizer would have to file a separate application for full FDA approval for its vaccine. Thursday's vote does not mean the vaccine will be authorised immediately, US media reported.

"There is a clear benefit, and all we have on the other side is theoretical risks," said committee member Paul Offit, a vaccine expert with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The vaccine's potential benefits outweigh its risks, he said. PTI

**Melbourne:** Australia on Friday stopped the further development of a Covid-19 vaccine candidate as several participants in the early-stage trials generated antibodies for HIV after receiving the potential therapeutic.

There were no serious adverse events or safety concerns reported in the 216 participants of the phase 1 trial of the v451 COVID-19 vaccine candidate being developed by the University of Queensland (UQ) in collaboration with biotech company CSL, according to a statement.

However, data showed that some patients developed antibodies towards fragments of a HIV protein (gp41), which was used to stabilise the vaccine, it said. PTI

# Aus ends Covid vaccine trials due to HIV antibody +ves

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**World:** An iceberg larger than Rhode Island that broke off an Antarctic ice shelf in 2017 is closing in on South Georgia Island, a British territory in the South Atlantic Ocean. The iceberg, designated A68a by the National Ice Centre, is being steered by ocean currents to a position closer to the island, which is home to large colonies of penguins, seals and other unique wildlife.

**WESTERN RAILWAY STORES DEPARTMENT**

**E-AUCTION SALE DURING JANUARY, 2021 FOR P-WAY & OTHER VARIOUS SCRAP**

**Special Attention : All Steel Purchasers & Re-Rollers**

Public e-Auction for disposal of P. way scrap, Rail scrap & other various scrap material will be held in January, 2021 as per program given below :-

1st Round	2nd Round	Depot	Depot officer in Charge	Contact No.
04.01.2021	18.01.2021	Sabarmati	Deputy Chief Materials Manager-Sabarmati	07927500080 09724093774
05.01.2021	20.01.2021	Ahmedabad	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager-Ahmedabad	07922205888 09724093750
06.01.2021	21.01.2021	Vadodara	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager-Vadodara	02652641592 09724091750
07.01.2021	22.01.2021	Ratlam	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager-Ratlam	07412230080 09752492750
08.01.2021	19.01.2021	Rajkot	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager-Rajkot	02812476943 09724094770
09.01.2021	23.01.2021	Pratapnagar	Deputy Chief Materials Manager-Dahod	02673241295 09724090455
11.01.2021	25.01.2021	Bhavnagar Para	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager-Bhavnagar Para	02782444360 09724097750
12.01.2021	27.01.2021	Mumbai Mahalakshmi	Deputy Chief Materials Manager-Mumbai Mahalakshmi	022-24929571 09004495750
13.01.2021	28.01.2021	Mumbai Central	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager-Mumbai Central	022-23094142 09004499006
16.01.2021	29.01.2021	Dahod	Deputy Chief Materials Manager-Dahod	02673241295 09724090455

For detailed information, please contact the concerned Depot Officers.

**Note:** 1. Railway reserves the right to withdraw any lot from e-Auction. 2. e-Auction will start at as per scheduled time. 3. e-Auction catalogues will be available on site [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) e-Auction portal. 4. In case of any assistance required regarding e-Auction, Digital Signatures, Registration procedure and participation, please contact above mentioned Depot Officer.

0490 For Principal Chief Materials Manager

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**M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN COMPANY LIMITED**  
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)

Nishtha Pariser, Bijalee Nagar, Govindpura, Bhopal-23  
Phone : 0755-262033-36, Fax : 2589821, 2586636  
No. MD/MK/04/2620 Bhopal, Dated : 11.12.2020

**TENDER NOTICE**

MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites online bids from Manufacturers only through e-tendering for procurement of following item :-

Tender Specification Number	Particulars of Material for Procurement	Approx Value (Rs. Lakh)	Tender Fee (incl. GST) (In Rs.)	Date of Pre Bid Conference	Date of Opening of Tender
MD/MK/04/693	11 KV, 1500 KVAR Automatic Switched Capacitor Banks with associated equipments & mounting structures	1325.67	118000-	22.12.20 3:00 PM	05.01.21 3:00 PM

Other details and full tender document would be available on our Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. website <https://mptenders.gov.in> shortly.

M.P. Madhyam/99201/2020 **CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)**  
दो गज की दूरी, मास्क है जरूरी।

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**Open Tender Notice (E-Tender)**

Sr. Divisional Engineer-I/Northern Railway, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India invites e-tender on the prescribed form for the under noted work.

Name of Work with location, cost of work and Earnest money	Annual zone for maintenance & repair of Bridge including desilting of riverbed under Br. No. 225 in the jurisdiction of SEEW/KUN & SSEW/KKDE under ADEN/KUN. <b>Approx. Cost: 49,99,965.48/-</b> <b>Earnest Money: Rs. 84,500/-</b> <b>Completion Period: 12 Months</b>
<b>Earnest Money should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only.</b> <b>Note:</b> FDR or Demand Draft will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Boards letter No. 2015/CE-1/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016.	
Date and time of submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 15.00 hrs on 05.01.2021 opening of e-tender at 15.00 hrs on 05.01.2021.
Website particulars, published-tender, notice location etc complete details of tender can be seen and web site where the tender form can be downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>

**Note:** All attachments must be self attested by the tenderers and the affidavit should be submitted in the new format attached with tender conditions as per Annexure-XXIII is compulsory.

No.: 128-W/280/Tender Notice/20-21/W-I/NIT-16 Dated: 10.12.2020 2768/20

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY**

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Mohd. Huzaifa S/o Fareed Ahmad R/o H. No. 1476, F/F Basti Chote Ram, Kalan Mahal, Darya Ganj, New Delhi Aged- 18 Years 5 Months has been reported missing since 06.12.2020 from his house vide DD No. 63A Dated 07.12.2017 lodged at Police Station Jama Masjid, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

**Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 5'4", **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Medium, **ID:** Old scar mark on right eye, **Wearing:** Black coloured jacket, blue coloured jeans and blue coloured slipper in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing boy, may inform SHO, Jama Masjid, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Tele No.: 011-23014046(Direct), 011-3015229 & 23015218 extn. 210  
FAX No.: 011-230111334  
DP/540/CD/2020

SHO, Jama Masjid, Delhi  
Tel.: 011-23241625, 23269777

**SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY**

General public is here by informed that one boy Name: Bunty, S/o Phulan Paswan, R/o H. No. 445, H-Block, JJ Colony, Bakkarwal, Delhi, Age: 17 Years, Height: 5'1", Face: Long, Complexion: Shallow, Wearing : Blue T-shirt-Black jeans and white sports shoes in feet, has been missing/ kidnapped since 25.09.2020 from the area of P.S. Mundka, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 448/20 U/s 363 IPC, dated 28.09.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Mundka, Delhi.

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

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

E-Mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) **SHO**  
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> **P.S. Mundka, Delhi**  
FAX: 011-24368639 **Ph. 011-28352010, 28352011**  
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 **DP/462/OD/2020**

**UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY**

General Public is hereby informed that one person Namely: Unknown S/o: Unknown, Address: Unknown was found dead at Mithai Pul, near Avanti Bai Chowk, Delhi on 06.12.2020 in the area of P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi. In this regard a case has been lodged vide DD No. 35A dated 06.12.2020 at P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi. The description of the dead person is as under:- **Age:** Approx 45-50 years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5'5", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing:** Brown colour shirt, sky blue colour sweater and steel grey colour pant. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.

**SHO**  
**P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi**  
DP/781/N/2020 **Ph.: 011-23953776, 8750870122**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE**

**Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement System)**

NIT No.	31-2020-21-W-V
1 Name of Work	Provision of C&W examination infrastructure facilities required at Farukh Nagar for the examination of BCACBM (Automobile Loading) Rakes under ADEN/DDE. Similar nature of work: Any civil work other than track work.
2 Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 6673412.98
3 Earnest Money	(It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only. Note: FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Boards letter no. 201025/CE-1/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016) Rs. 133500.00
4 Completion period of the work	4 Months
5 Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 15.00 hrs on 08.01.2021 Opening of tender at 15:00 hrs on 08.01.2021
6 Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>

No. 128-W/280/OET/2020-21/W-V/NIT-31 Dated : 10.12.2020 2767/20

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**



# India's Oct industrial production grows by 3.5%



**IANAS ■ NEW DELHI**  
India's industrial activity accelerated in October with a rise of over 3.5 per cent in factory output on a year-on-year basis, official data showed on Thursday.

As per the Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production (IIP), the factory output grew by 3.6 per cent in October 2020 from 0.49 per cent in September and (-) 6.6 per cent during the corresponding month of the previous year.

"For the month of October 2020, the Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production (IIP) with base 2011-12 stands at 128.5," the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said.  
"The Indices of Industrial Production for the Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity sectors for the month of October 2020 stand at 98, 130.7 and 162.2 respectively."  
The IIP had been in the negative territory from April to August FY21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown to curb its spread. Among major segments, manufacturing production grew by 3.5 per cent from (-) 5.7 per cent reported for the corresponding month of

## Govt cautiously optimistic on economy; will continue to take steps to push growth: DEA Secy

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The Government is cautiously optimistic on the economic front and will continue to take measures to push growth, Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj said on Friday. Addressing Ficci's Annual Convention, he said the second quarter GDP number was much better than market expectations and it will further improve in the second half of the current fiscal. The economy contracted by 7.5 per cent in the second quarter, as against 23.9 per cent degrowth in the first quarter of this fiscal on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. "So we are positive. We are cautiously optimistic on the economic front. And we are hoping that our third and fourth quarter will be far better than the second quarter."

Furthermore, the data on a YoY basis showed that manufacturing of primary goods de-grew by (-) 3.3 per cent, whereas capital goods production rose by 3.3 per cent, and intermediate goods inched higher by 0.8 per cent.

On the other hand, the production of infrastructure or construction goods grew by 7.8 per cent and consumer durables by 17.6 per cent. The sub-segment of consumer non-durables showed a growth of 7.5 per cent.

## 'The recovery from the pandemic will take some time'

**KUSHAN MITRAN ■ NEW DELHI**

"We are being very careful in forecasting sales for 2021", Tae-Jin Park, Executive Director and Chief Sales Officer, Kia Motors says quite honestly. One might find that surprising as the Korean company has made a big splash in the Indian market, their Seltos and Sonet SUV's and Carnival MPV all are best-sellers. Data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) showed that Kia's sales more than doubled in India to 89,010 units between April and November 2020, despite the first few months of the financial year being lost thanks to the pandemic.

**Kia Motors has made a splash in the Indian market, but they feel that growth is not guaranteed in 2021**  
Park's cautiousness however has some merit, "The festive season has been good, but we have to see how the rest of the economy is doing before forecasting for 2021."  
That said, Park said that Kia is not slowing down or postponing any plans for 2021. "The Indian market is very important for Kia Motors. We believe we have changed the expectations of Indian customers with more happiness and enjoyment from our products and we are offering Indian motorists a new experience." Asked about trends for future products, Park said that consumers wanted "more connectivity, more high-end features as well as more safety from their cars." He also expects market changes as more people choose personal transportation options.  
Kia Motors which is a leading sponsor of global sporting events, Kia sponsors FIFA, the Europa League and Australian Open tennis and has Rafael Nadal among their brand ambassadors is also looking at good opportunities for Sports Marketing in India, Park told The Pioneer.

## Markets perch near all-time highs; bank, FMCG stocks shine

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Equity indices resumed their climb on Friday after a day's pause as bank, energy and FMCG stocks saw robust buying amid persistent foreign fund inflows. Subdued global markets and a flat rupee capped the gains, analysts said.  
After touching its all-time intra-day high of 46,309.63, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped into the negative zone in late-afternoon trade. However, it staged a comeback to end 139.13 points or 0.30% higher at 46,099.01, just shy of its closing record. On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty rose 35.55 points or 0.26% to 13,513.85. It hit a lifetime high of 13,579.35

during the session. ONGC topped the Sensex gainers' chart, rallying 5.68%, followed by NTPC, Tata Steel, ITC, ICICI Bank, Titan, Bajaj Auto and SBI. On the other hand, Axis Bank, M&M, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finserv and Infosys were among the laggards, skidding up to 2.19%. During the week, the Sensex vaulted 1,019.46 points or 2.26%, while the Nifty surged 255.30 points or 1.92%. World stocks wobbled as prospects of a no-deal Brexit and uncertainty over US stimulus talks sapped risk appetite. "Market opened well, but in

between it lost all the gains and turned negative, fortunately in the last trading minutes, it made a good attempt to bounce back and closed marginally above. Gains made in sectors like energy, FMCG and metals were countered by selling in Pharma and IT stocks. "This muted momentum was due to a weak global trend. Despite European Central Bank announcing an increase in the stimulus package, European markets fell as it was weighed by increasing chance of a no-deal Brexit, rising virus cases and moderate usages of the announced stimulus plan."

## Forex reserves surge by USD 4.525 bn to record USD 579.346 bn

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by USD 4.525 billion to touch a record high of USD 579.346 billion in the week ended December 4, the RBI data showed.  
In the previous week ended November 27, the reserves had declined by USD 469 million to USD 574.821 billion.  
In the reporting week, the increase in reserves was on account of a rise in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves.  
FCA rose by USD 3.932 billion to USD 537.386 billion, the Reserve Bank of India's

(RBI) weekly data showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.  
The gold reserves increased by USD 535 million in the reporting week to USD 35.728 billion in the week ended December 4, the data showed.  
The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose by USD 12 million to USD 1.506 billion. The country's reserve position with the IMF increased by USD 46 million to USD 4.725 billion.

## Amazon now biggest corporate buyer of renewable energy: Bezos

**IANAS ■ SAN FRANCISCO**

Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos has said that his company has become the largest-ever corporate purchaser of renewable energy after it added 26 new wind and solar energy projects totaling 3.4 gigawatts (GW) of electricity production capacity.  
The addition of 26 new wind and solar projects in Australia, France, Germany, Italy, South Africa, Sweden, the UK, and the US brings Amazon's total number of renewable energy projects to 127, the company said on Thursday.  
The company's total renewable energy investments to date will supply 6.5 GW of electricity production capacity



-- enough to power 1.7 million US homes for one year.  
That surpasses 5.5 GW of renewable energy projects under contract that Google claimed to have till last year.  
"With a total of 127 solar and wind projects, Amazon is now the biggest corporate buyer of renewable energy ever," Bezos said in a statement.

## ₹ ends nearly flat at 73.64 against \$

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

The Indian rupee ended almost flat at 73.64, up 2 paise, against the American currency on Friday as dollar buying by banks weighed on the domestic currency.  
At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 73.65 against the US dollar and witnessed an intraday high of 73.56 and a low of 73.71.  
The local unit finally closed at 73.64 against the American currency, registering a rise of 2 paise over its previous close. On a weekly basis, the rupee has gained 16 paise. "The Indian rupee ended flat this Friday as persistent dollar purchases from RBI offset gains from foreign equity inflows into the domestic markets," said Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities.

## Gold declines ₹102; silver marginally lower

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Gold prices declined ₹102 to ₹48,594 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to HDFC Securities.  
The precious metal had closed at ₹48,696 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver dipped marginally by ₹16 to ₹62,734 per kg, from ₹62,750 per kg in the previous trade. In the international market, both gold and silver were trading flat at USD 1,836 per ounce and USD 23.92 per ounce.  
"Gold prices witnessed range-bound trading on mixed global cues as investors are awaiting the US stimulus," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

## INBRIEF

**LIC INTRODUCES ADVANCED CUSTOMER CENTRIC INITIATIVES**  
LIC OF INDIA, the country's largest life insurer is devising better methods to provide services to its esteemed policyholders in pandemic times. LIC policyholders can now avail of its improved customer centric initiatives. Online facility for Switching of Funds under ULIP policies has been introduced through LIC's Customer Portal for policyholders registered for Premier Services, on policies on their own life and on the lives of their minor child/children w.e.f. 07.12.2020. This facility is available for LIC's New Endowment Plus (Plan 935), LIC's Nivesh Plus (Plan 849) and LIC's SIIP (Plan 852), the three plans currently being sold. This facility of Online Switching of funds is free of Cost and no charges are required to be paid for availing this facility. One switch is allowed per day per policy through an OTP based Authentication system. All rules applicable to offline requests are applicable on the Online system also.

**KOLKATA METRO TO RUN ADDITIONAL SERVICES ON SUNDAY**  
Kolkata: Metro Railway will run 74 services instead of 68 services on 13.12.2020 (Sunday) for the aspirants of the ICDS Supervisor (Female Only) Recruitment Examination (Main) 2019. The first service will start from both ends i.e. from Dum Dum and Kavi Subhash at 09.00 hrs instead of 10.00 hrs and from Noapara at 09.13 hrs instead of 10.13 hrs. The last service will leave Kavi Subhash and Dum Dum at 21.00 hrs and Noapara at 20.53 hrs. E-passes will not be required for examinees. They only have to show their admit cards at the entry gates.

**COST-EFFECTIVE FLAT FEE SOLUTION FOR ALL TRANSACTIONS**  
Mumbai: Paysharp, a leading B2B virtual account and payment solution provider in India, has offered a flat charge of Rs 12 for all transactions beyond Rs 2,000 in order to increase its footprints in India. This is aimed at providing an alternative model in the cashless economy for the enterprises that are holding back their digital leap due to worrying percentage models. Being one of the first payment solutions to provide a flat-fee model, Paysharp is trying to empower businesses while keeping their digital-adaptation cost low.

**HUMAN RIGHTS DAY CELEBRATION AT VIT-AP**  
Amaravathi: VIT-AP School of Law (VSL) conducted an outreach programme at Zilla Parishad High School at Mandadam on the Wednesday of their two-days celebrations of Human Rights Day. The theme of the event is Stand Up for Rights: Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. On Thursday, 10th Dec. 2020 afternoon Human Rights Day celebrated at VIT-AP School of Law to commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly in 10 December 1948. The program was co-hosted by the Centre for Human Security Studies a Think Tank on Human Security in India, which is situated at Hyderabad.



## L&T emerges as lowest bidder in multiple projects

New Delhi: Larsen and Toubro (L&T) has emerged as the lowest bidder in multiple infrastructure projects, including ONGC, Nuclear Power Corporation and Chennai Metro Rail. On the ONGC NLRNC project, sources said L&T Hydrocarbon Engineering (LTHE), a wholly owned subsidiary of Larsen & Toubro Limited has emerged as the lowest bidder for ONGC's New Living Quarters & Revamp at NQ Complex Project (NLRNC Project) after the state controlled Indian oil giant opened the financial bids submitted by the 2 bidders. The scope involves the engineering, procurement, and construction of a living quarters platform for 120 people which will be required to be installed on a separate jacket and bridge-linked with the nearby NQO platform.

## Govt buys 368.7 lakh tonne paddy so far at MSP for ₹69,612 cr

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Paddy procurement in the ongoing kharif marketing season at MSP has so far increased by 22.5 per cent to 368.7 lakh tonnes, valued at Rs 69,612 crore.  
In the ongoing kharif marketing season (KMS) 2020-21, the government continues to procure kharif 2020-21 crops at its MSP (minimum support price) from farmers, an official statement said on Friday. The marketing season starts from October.  
Paddy procurement for kharif 2020-21 is continuing smoothly in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Gujarat,

Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar.  
The Food Corporation of India and state agencies have purchased 368.7 lakh tonnes of paddy up to December 10 as against purchase of 300.97 lakh tonnes in the corresponding period last year. "About 39.92 lakh farmers have already been benefited from the ongoing KMS procurement operations with MSP value of Rs 69,611.81 crore," the statement said.  
Out of the total purchase of 368.70 lakh tonnes, Punjab alone has contributed 202.77 lakh tonnes, which is 54.99 per cent of total procurement.  
Procurement operations of seed cotton (Kapas) under MSP is going on smoothly across various states.

**BSES** BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi  
**TENDER NOTICE** Date: 12.12.2020  
Sealed tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) is invited for following job from all bidders.

NIT No.	Brief Tender Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/20-21/SV/AR/AN/869	CONSUMER BILL PRINTING SERVICES IN BRPL FOR TWO YEARS.	Rs13.69Cr (for 02 years)	13,69,000/-	04.01.2021 1500 HRS.	04.01.2021 1600 HRS.
CMC/BR/20-21/SV/AR/AN/883	"BID FOR SPACES FOR TELECOM TOWER (CELL ON WHEEL TOWER) FOR ENHANCEMENT OF MOBILE (CELLULAR) NETWORK AT SELECTED LOCATIONS IN BRPL"	6.19 Crs	6,19,000/-	04.01.2021 1530 HRS.	04.01.2021 1630 HRS.

Cost of each Tender Document except for Insurance: ₹1180/- (Non Refundable)  
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc. please visit our website [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)  
Head (Contracts & Materials)  
Regd. Off. : BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No. : U40109DL2001PLC11527  
Telephone No. : +91 11 4920 9744 | E-mail : [hrp@esconline.bsesrajdhani.com](mailto:hrp@esconline.bsesrajdhani.com) | Website : [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)

**THE MEHAM CO-OPERATIVE SUGAR MILLS LTD. MEHAM (ROHTAK)**  
**E-Tender Notice**  
Original manufacturer/ Distributors/ Authorized Dealers/ Reputed & Experienced suppliers/ Contractors are required to submit their rates by e-tendering for the following items. The detailed tender form can be downloaded from e-tendering portal <http://etenders.hry.nic.in> as mentioned below related items:-

01. CS Crown pinion & Sq. Bar Coupling.
02. Trash plate & Scrapper.
03. Sale of press mud.
04. Sale of steel tank molasses 25000 Qtls of season 2020-21.
05. Purchase & AMC of 25 Mbps Internet Lease line for various internet points.

These tender should reach online on or before 17.12.2020 at 18:00 Hrs. through e-tendering portal <http://etenders.hry.nic.in>. The technical bids will be opened on 18.12.2020 at 10:00 AM and commercial bids will be open on 19.12.2020 at 10:00 AM. Negotiation will be held on 21.12.2020 at 11:00 AM as per purchase/ Sale policy. The mill management reserves the right to accept/ reject any/ all tenders/ items without assigning any reason.  
It is also informed that the above cited e-tenders mentioned at Sr. No. 1 was published on dated 16.09.2020, but same was not finalized because sufficient e-tenders not received. So that the e-tenders which submitted the same tenders against above cited tender will also be considered and negotiation for the same will be held on dated- 21.12.2020 at 11:00AM.  
**Managing Director**

**CORRIGENDUM**  
Please read the last date of Document Downloading and Bidding & date of bid opening as on "15-12-2020" in place of "09-12-2020" of press notice inviting e-tender No:- 09/NIT/EE/PWD/AMP/2020-21. Dated, 13-11-2020, Circulated vide Memo No F.TC-(P-I)/EE/PWD/AMP/6346-418 dated 13-11-2020, published in the e-procurement System of Government of Tripura.  
<<https://tripuratenders.gov.in/nicgpp/app>>  
All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.  
Sd/-  
**Executive Engineer**  
Amarpur Division, PWD(R&B)  
ICA/C-2414/2020-21  
Amarpur Gomati Tripura

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, RUHS COLLEGE OF MEDICAL, SCIENCES**  
Sector - 11, Kumbha Marg, Pratap Nagar, Jaipur - 302033  
Ph. 0141-2795624, 634, E-mail : [principal@ruhs.ac.in](mailto:principal@ruhs.ac.in)  
No. RUHS CMS/Store/2020-21/25821 Date: 04.12.2020  
**अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना**  
राज.स्वा.वि.वि. आर्युविज्ञान महाविद्यालय में COVID-19 कोरोना वायरस जीव प्रयोगशाला में कार्य करने हेतु कार्य की प्रकृति के आधार पर मानव संसाधन सेवाओं के उपायन हेतु निविदा निविदा प्रपत्र में ऑनलाईन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है। (कुल अनुमानित लागत राशि रु. 120.00 लाख) (UBN:CMS2021SL0B00056)  
• Other Particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<https://eproc.rajashtan.gov.in>, <https://sppp.rajashtan.gov.in>) of the state; and on RUHS CMS website: [www.ruhs.ac.in](http://www.ruhs.ac.in)  
Principal  
Raj.Samwad/C/207648  
RUHS College of Medical Sciences, Jaipur

**BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - II, DELHI.**  
4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001  
OA No 719/2019 DATE: 13.11.2020  
**CANARA BANK** VS **MR. RAHUL DAS & ORS.**  
Applicant VS Respondent  
**To, DEFENDANT**  
1. Anusha Engineering Consultant & Construction Pvt. Ltd.  
7042, Ghasmandi Panahdiraj Delhi - 110006  
Whereas the above named applicant (s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 33,64,295/- (Rupees Thirty Three Lakh Sixty Four Thousand Two Hundred And Ninety Five Only) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the tribunal on **15.03.2021 At 10.30 A.M.**  
Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.  
By Order Of The Tribunal  
For Registrar, DRT-II, NEW DELHI.

**DELHI JAL BOARD: DELHI SARKAR**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SOUTH)-II**  
**JAL SADAN: LAJPAT NAGAR: NEW DELHI-110024**  
"STOP CORONA; Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"  
NIT No. 33/S-I/2020-21  
Press Tender

S. No.	Name of Work	Reserve price	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date and time for download & RTGS through e-procurement solution
1.	Improvement of sewerage system by replacement of old damaged peripheral sewer line by using pipe bursting technology in front of D-Block Jangpura Extension along Railway line under EE(S) II (AC-42 Kasturba Nagar)	Item rate	2020, DUB, 197374_3 10.12.2020	24.12.2020 upto 2.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at [govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in](http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in)  
ISSUED BY P.R.O (WATER)  
Advt. No. J.S.V. 252/2020-21  
Sd/-  
(S.Ghuam Sajjad)  
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NW)-II





**SANYA MALHOTRA**

I think dance is really a good exercise but at the same time it's very important to do some sort of strength training with that because dance is just cardio. At the end of the day you also want to build muscles and not lose out on them. Also, it's very important to eat right, so that everything goes hand-in-hand when it comes to fitness.



**ANKIT TIWARI**

As a creative person, I need to get inspired. With so much negativity around, it was difficult to do so and I was hardly able to work on music. But it's not like I won't be able to compose songs ever. I wish this month passes by soon and I don't get to hear any bad news. I want to focus on myself, positive things, my music and studio.



**POOJA GOR**

Last year when we were shooting for the virus sequence, we did not see COVID coming. We never thought that we'd live our real life in real and shoot our last sequence in such times. Well, it was definitely a challenge to shoot amidst the pandemic, but I am happy that the health and safety protocols were strictly followed.



**ATUL KULKARNI**

My best memory of the film *Gul Makai* was when I actually met Malala Yousafzai's father in London. When we saw the film, he was sitting right next to me. Those were some of the precious couple of hours for me because I portrayed the person sitting next to me. He loved it and invited me to his house.

**CHRIS EVANS**

Working with Pixar is a dream come true. I've been a massive fan of their films since the very beginning. My team could barely contain their excitement when they told me that Pixar had a pitch for me.



SHORT CIRCUITS

ENCOUNTER 45 MINUTES

Narrator **CHRIS PACKMAN** says that the series, *Primates*, revolving around the species, captures the intimate moments of animal life, which are otherwise inaccessible to common people.

By **TEAM VIVA**



Primates are social animals. They can be fearsome but they can be equally emotional, thoughtful and caring. Focussing on this group of animals, which fascinates and captivates us more than any other — Gavin Boyland's *Primates* is his next step in natural history storytelling. Narrator Chris Packman shares his anecdotes and tales between the species. Excerpts:

**What made you say yes to the series?**

I've known Gavin Boyland, the series producer, for some time. He has made some really intelligent, imaginative series and pushing the boat out to make them as creative as possible. He made a previous series about big cats and I stayed in touch with him whilst he was doing that. I loved the series so when he told me he was doing *Primates*, I was interested.

*Primates*, I feel, is beautifully shot. Often, when we're watching blue-chip TV, we use our technology to follow those intimate moments of animal life, which otherwise would be inaccessible but we're driven principally by our interest in the behaviour, the ecology, the physiology. But here, they've found a collection of camera people who have shot it so that we can immerse ourselves in the animals' environment with beautiful photography as well as learning all those new and exciting aspects of their ecology and so forth.

The second reason was that I like to learn new things. If I'm watching a TV pro-

gramme and I find myself already knowing 50-60 per cent of it, it's boring. I don't want to just see new things, I want to learn new things, and I've learned a lot watching this programme because the science is up-to-date, and that's hard work getting up-to-date science.

Lastly, if you ask people about primates, they'll talk about apes and monkeys. They'll talk particularly about gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans and so on — the big flashy 't-shirt' animals as I call them — are things that people easily engage with. I like the way the series covers the whole breadth of the primate family. They've got everything including the lemurs, the slow loris, the bush babies, spider monkeys and the gibbons to mention a few. There's a great breadth there that I think will open people's eyes to this real-

ly important group of animals which are, as programme three tells us, critically endangered in many cases.

**What are the most surprising stories in the series?**

There are a number of surprising stories and the first one pops up in our first programme. I think we've all grown up with the idea that male silverback gorillas are all about being big and immensely strong and it's that that would give them their fitness in their social groups. But what we've learnt through new observations and science is that male gorillas' fitness, in terms of how often they can reproduce successfully, has nothing to do directly with their size but with how they respond to the need of their youth, effectively how cuddly they are. It's fantastic!



I love it when we turn stories on their head and we completely transpose what we think about something into something new. And we can do it with authority because the science says it's true and is therefore trustworthy.

The other things I've enjoyed are the intimacies and the subtle bits of animal behaviour. The tool use is always interesting. I suppose we empathise with the cognitive abilities of these animals. A lot of the time when we're watching them, we realise through their actions that they are really really smart.

The last story that I really liked was the one of the orangutans up the trees where they were learning to climb, and the cars were learning to climb because here you have got two species learning at the same time. The humans have learned that their

previous practices weren't massively efficient and now the primates are learning through their changes. This sort of cooperation is fantastic.

**Why do you think a series like *Primates* is important?**

I think that we can use animals we engage with instantaneously and easily as a medium to getting people to engage with things which they don't perhaps necessarily have the ability for.

Gorillas, chimps and orangutans are easy-ins. Everyone loves them and knows that they are endangered and threatened. We all know that they are intelligent and humans share a lot of genes with them and a lot of similarities in terms of our species. Once you get people watching them, we can take them somewhere new and that's what we do with the series. It's not just about those big 't-shirt' animals but it's about the entire breadth of the primate group, including some small species, that people may not have even heard of. And yet we can show people how important, smart and fascinating they are.

**What do you think will be viewers' takeaways from the series?**

A deepened affection for this group of animals, which is easy to love. I think people need to see that they are valuable not just because they are interesting but also because they play important roles in the ecosystem that we're highly dependent upon. It is a pretty forthright plea for people to assist the conservation of these animals. Without that, we'll lose a lot of them very quickly. And when we start losing species in masses, we're making ourselves vulnerable.

We are still part of the ecosystem on planet Earth and if it collapses due to inappropriate human actions, unfortunately, we will collapse too. It is in our best interest to do that. I'm really hoping that people will love primates even more and contribute in some way to wildlife conservation.

**A last thought on primates in the wild and their future...**

I'd say they are a remarkable group of animals. I'm still learning more things each day. They are a very beautiful species, which is so similar to us and hence, makes it easier to engage with them.

But the big trouble from their point of view is down to us. I think this is a series which has to leave us with one or two questions about ourselves. We are a primate and a part of this group of species. The way we behave at this point in time will determine all of our collective future.

(The series premieres on December 14 at 9 pm on Sony BBC Earth.)

JUKEBOX 30 MINUTES

A timeless rhythm

On the 12th anniversary of *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi*, music composers **SALIM-SULAIMAN** recall what went into the making of its album



Actors Shah Rukh Khan and Anushka Sharma starrer *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi*, directed by Aditya Chopra, was a blockbuster. The film celebrated the individuality of a man and a woman, hailing from different circumstances, who end up falling in love with each other after their sudden arranged marriage.

It had a music album, composed by composers Salim and Sulaiman Merchant. On the 12th anniversary of the film, the duo

reveals how SRK made the songs timeless and how the *mukhda* of a song was actually an Aditya's tune.

On the creative vision for the song, Sulaiman says, "The film was well written, conceived with exact places and spots for songs and the brief was very simple. Raj and Suri (both played by SRK) were to have their own distinct identities through music. Suri being the traditional husband and Raj, the urban hero. The music had to be simple

melodies that even the most basic person would be able to sing and get the feeling of comfort and love when you hear them."

Salim adds, "Composing music for the film was a huge opportunity. We had worked with Adi as a producer on *Chak De India* and *Aaja Nachley* but working with him as a director was special. We wanted this album to be most memorable for us and the audience but more importantly, I wanted the music to work for the film."

Speaking about the USP of the music album, Salim says, "Even though the songs were made for different situations in the story, they had a common thread. They belonged to the same world and were very reflective of the characters. The importance of the Golden Temple in the story and the song added quality."

Sulaiman adds, "I think the simplicity of the songs with traditional melodies and production of music to have cutting edge, yet familiar sound, was the USP."

A lesser known fact is that the *mukhda* of the song *Haule Haule Ho Jayega Pyaar* was apparently Aditya's tune. Sulaiman reveals, "The song's lyrics actually came from the scene that Adi had written and it ended with the dialogue *Taani partner, haule haule ho jayega pyaar*. Adi kept humming a kind of rough tune to these lyrics and it sounded good, even in its rough basic form. So we decided to develop it further with Jaideep (Sahni). We decided to keep the melody as simple as possible."

Shah Rukh is considered the king of romance and Salim says the superstar's lip-synching to the songs made them even more special. "SRK brings joy to every song. *RNB* was special because all the songs are chartbusters and SRK is a big reason for that. He truly celebrates every song on screen and makes them timeless," he adds.

CELEB TALK 15 MINUTES

Mountains are calling: Amit

On International Mountain Day recently, actor Amit Sadh revealed that he has always been a child of the rugged heights.

The actor shared a photograph on his verified Instagram account where he is seen sitting in front of a mountain. "I've always been a child of the mountains. There's an instant connect which is difficult to express in words. No matter where I'm, working or shooting, the mountains keep calling me and every time I go back to them, it's never enough. I can't even explain about the people I've met in the mountains. They're just glorious. You'll seldom meet people who're so humble, welcoming and make you feel at home all the time," Amit wrote.

He added, "Whenever I have been low and lost in life, I go to the mountains and like a mother puts a child in a cradle, they replenish, renew and give me a new purpose and I come back stronger. It might be #InternationalMountainDay one day but the desire to be in the lap of nature, to protect its pristine environment is always deeply ingrained in my heart. Let us all become a child of the mountains."

A closer look into the actor's Instagram account reveals deeply that the actor is extremely fond of mountains. He had shared a photograph from the same mountain on October 13 this year and wrote: "Home. Peace. In sync with thought and action."



**'Whenever I have been low and lost in life, I go to the mountains and like a mother puts a child in a cradle, they replenish, renew and give me a purpose to be stronger'**

Another photograph shared on August 24 has the caption: "The mountains are calling. That time of the year when my heart wishes to be in Ladakh. Somewhere in Spiti, near Losar."

Amit is gearing up for the release of his forthcoming web-series *Zidd*. The series casts Amit as Major Deependra Singh Sengar, a Special Forces Officer who was a Kargil hero.

Directed by Vishal Mangalorkar, the film also features Amrita Puri and Sushant Singh. It is slated to release on January 22, 2021.



**ARTS & CULTURE 60 MINUTES**

# PAGES OF RESONANCE

The English translation of *Akkitham: A Pictorial Autobiography*, based on Jnanpith award-winning poet and philosopher ACHUTHAN NAMBOOTHIRI, by BHASKARAMENON KRISHNAKUMAR, retells his poems and sheds light on his life with a remarkable sensitivity, says UMA NAIR

**M**ahakavi Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri, Jnanpith Award-winning poet and philosopher from Kerala is the subject of the hard cover book — *Akkitham: A Pictorial Autobiography* by Akkitham. The book has been culled and created entirely from the author's writings, interviews and private conversations and is a wellspring of wit, words and worth. The text has been constructed and translated into English by Bhaskaramenon Krishnakumar, alias Atmaraman, who has been associated with poet Akkitham Namboothiri for over four decades.

Well, to sit and savour the book's verbal and visual islands of thought, poetry and prose is akin to a few hours of reverie through some rivetting pages of resonance.

From scribbling on temple walls to becoming the Nation's poet

To unravel the power of a passionate poet's palette is no easy task but the translated tomb of poet Namboothiri's life is a journey that threads the tendrils of tide and time.

One recalls artist Akkitham Narayanan (Paris dweller), stating that his elder brother Namboothiri started dabbling in poetry very early in life by scribbling on temple walls. He studied Sanskrit, music and astrology in school and never finished college but became the founding father of modernist poetry in Malayalam in Kerala. Namboothiri has nearly four dozen works to his credit. Among them are anthologies of poems, stories, dramas, and essays and this book delves into his life with zest and reverence.

The narrative in this book flows like the river Pamba. It tells the vers-



es and small stories with a remarkable sensitivity. The English translation shows how his poems are a spatial, immersive experience, in which we glimpse waves of permanence and impermanence. His awards — the Jnanpith (2019), Kendra Sahitya Akademi (1973), Vayalar (1972), Ezhuthachan (2016) and Kerala Sahitya Akademi (1972) — are a legion of the power and strength of the vernacular. They touch the tip of the iceberg of his intellectual integrity. In the many stories, we sense the examples of subjugation and release, of celebration and solitude, the fabric of fear and freedom — that can skim the depths of a visual narrative, at once stretching it sideways and pulling it together into a vortex of coherent emotions distilled in the essence of minimalist moods. His number of awards tell us about his love for literature and the lexicon of language.

Drawings by son Vasudevan In an entwined history of penmanship of verse and verve, it is

Namboothiri's son and former professor Vasudevan Akkitham who creates the illustrations for the book as pen and ink vignettes. Vasudevan creates idyllic landscapes of the backwaters of Kerala with canoes and coconut palms as well as lush portraits of his father and the feminine pillars in his family.

If an old lamp is a whisper of ritual and the relic of the past, it is the stealth of combining lithe strokes of hatching, stippling and languorous lines of depth that make a winsome coupling. He strengthens and corrects some of the finer lines with brusquer penwork so as to recreate the Mallapuram magic while giving hints of a subtle state of being one with nature like his esteemed father. Vasudevan says he kept his reflections simple and realistic, nostalgic in tone as he created compositions and narratives that had lucid expressionistic forms.

Expressive & emotive Akkitham's life story is also the story of the Namboothiri renaissance, at which he was a major play-

er. Writers, social activists and politicians abound in this book. While Akkitham wanted the feudal social order to go, he was also disenchanted with communism and his youthful dalliance came to an end. The book narrates the deep philosophical objections and the intensely personal reasons of his disenchantment.

One of Akkitham's deeply philosophical poems has been illustrated by Narayanan. Several translations of Akkitham's Malayalam poems have been included—in part or full. One recalls the famed lines of one of his poems — *Ninne Konnavar Konnu Poove! Thannude Thanne Mokshathe* (Those who killed you, flower! Killed their own salvation) — as a shining example.

For Namboothiri, even the most abstract happenings retained expressive, emotive content. For him, nature embodied an active and deeply unfinished expression. And in the paradoxes of life's enigmas, he wove peace and calm and fine-tuned his poetic cadences into the circle of life through the silent slivers of notations that sprang from the penumbra of spiritual and cosmic realms.

"A poet of rare integrity, a creator of many works, all considered as classics, Akkitham's poetry reflects unfathomable compassion, imprints of Indian philosophical and moral values. They are a bridge between traditionality and modernity, delves deep into human emotions in a fast changing social space," read a statement by the Jnanpith jury board last year.

For all those who love poetry and the art of the written word, this book must find a place on your shelf, for art is long and life is short. Photo: Vasudevan Akkitham Studio

**CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES**



**A**ctor Ranveer Singh is the first young star to register a 300-crore blockbuster *Padmaavat* to his credit. In spite of being an outsider has made his place in the Indian cinema. Recently, the actor marked a decade in films as his debut film *Band Baaja Baraat* celebrated its 10th anniversary.

The actor has showcased his talent through a diverse range of genres and characters. Be it the lovable rake Bittoo Sharma from *Band Baaja Baraat*, the intensely brooding thief with a golden heart in *Lootera*, the fiery Romeo who takes on the world in *Goliyon Ki Raseela Ram-Leela*, the valiant and majestic Peshwa Bajirao in the magnum opus *Bajirao Mastani*, the cool, suave but complicated Kabir Mehta of *Dil Dhadakne Do*, the eccentric and menacing evil king Alauddin Khilji in *Padmaavat*, the corrupt cop who pledges redemption in *Simmba* and Murad, the vulnerable yet powerful voice of the streets of India in *Gully Boy*, Ranveer has set himself apart with his performative range. On the 10th year of his journey, the actor opens up about his most memorable milestones, his dreams and aspirations, the rejections he faced for years before his explosive debut and the legacy that he wants to leave behind.

December 10 marked your 10 years. Looking back, which moments from these years would you consider the biggest career milestone and why? Well, the biggest milestone

## Dare to dream

Actor RANVEER SINGH completes a decade in the film industry. He recalls his memorable milestones, dreams, aspirations and the rejections he faced before his debut, and talks about the kind of work he wants to be known for

is when I got selected for my first film — a moment truly unforgettable. I get goosebumps when I think about it even now. To get such a big break for somebody from my kind of background was beyond my wildest imagination. The stuff dreams are made of, really. After that one incredible twist of fate it's been a journey of learning, growing and evolving as a creative person, a performer and a public figure. With every passing year and film I have learnt something more about the craft, more about myself and tried to improve myself and my set of skills. With every film and through every character, I hope to explore my own being a little more. Hopefully, somewhere along the way, in the course of becoming other people I'll be able to understand myself better. Every experience and every film has left me enriched a little bit more so I'm extremely grateful for every opportunity.

You have faced rejections before you landed your first film as recounted recently by Anurag Kashyap, Nikhil

**'For three to four years, I was just groping in the dark, attempting various avenues, trying to get a break and not knowing whether it will ever happen at all'**

Advani, to name a few. Tell us about the uncertain times and how you kept your eyes on the prize.

My period of struggle was not easy at all. There was recession going on at that time, the film business was not very prolific, people were making fewer films. Therefore, opportunities for actors were far less than what it is today. We didn't have these web and OTT platforms. Hence, good opportunities were hard to come by. For three to four years, I was just groping in the dark, attempting various avenues, trying to get a break, trying to get a foot in the door, doing the rounds of various offices with my portfolio looking for work and not knowing whether it will ever happen at all. It was

very farfetched for someone in my position to think that I'd get a premier opportunity as a performer to act as a lead in Hindi films. It was a million to one shot but I took it. With the love, blessings, sacrifices and support of my amazing parents, I mustered up the fortitude to keep going. I was hungry and sometimes foolish but also very persistent. I was 21 when I started trying and at 24 it happened for me in spectacular fashion. Those tales are memoir-worthy for sure. I almost debuted in a side role in *Patiala House*. I did some small budget films that Anurag (Kashyap) was directly/indirectly affiliated with. Anurag Sir and Nikhil Sir are probably as astounded as I am about how things started and how they are going.

Looking back, did you ever think you will achieve this level of success in a decade?

Not at all. Right from the very Friday of my debut, the kind of things that have happened to me, the beats of my career, it is all beyond my wildest imagination. I could not even dream of the things

that have happened to me, with me and around me. I can't claim to have had the vision to dream up something like this. *Maine socha tha ki kuch na kuch ho jayega, lekin aisa hoga, yeh kabhi nahi socha tha*. They say you should dare to dream big but I couldn't have dreamt this big myself. So, if I stop to think and take stock of how things have transpired and where am I today, it feels absolutely unreal to me.

Are you someone who thinks too much about your legacy? If so, what do you want Ranveer's legacy to be in the history of Indian cinema?

Yes, every day I am working towards leaving behind a legacy, a filmography that I can be proud of. I want to make a significant contribution to the arts and inspire other artists, the way my senior artists have inspired me. We all wish to be remembered in history. I want to be remembered as a thorough entertainer, a versatile actor, someone whose body of work constitutes some of the best cinema of our country. These are tall ambitions but I am putting in work every single day to hopefully have a fulfilling run at the films and make my country proud in my field. If I distill my ambitions further, I would say that I just want to entertain people, that's all. I would like to alleviate the agony of existence by offering people some cathartic relief. My calling is to be an entertainer and I believe that god is guiding me as I fulfill my destiny and answer my calling.

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED**

See Section 82 Cr.PC  
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Vikram Gupta S/o Naresh Gupta R/o B-553, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Sudarshan Park, Basai Darapur, Delhi** has committed (or suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 821/2015 U/s 420/467/468/471/474/120-B IPC PS Moti Nagar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Vikram Gupta** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Vikram Gupta** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).  
Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Vikram Gupta** accused of **FIR No. 821/2015 U/s 420/467/468/471/474/120-B IPC PS Moti Nagar, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **16.01.2021**.  
By Order  
**Shri Abhinav Pandey**  
Metropolitan Magistrate -04 (West)  
Room No. 268, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**

See Section 82 Cr. P. C.  
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Ved Pal S/o Chote Lal R/o Village Guswari, Post - Tilhar, PS-Tilhar, District Sahajahanpur, UP** has committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence under case **FIR No. 533/2019, U/s 377 IPC & 11 PCA Act** has been registered at **P.S. Bawana, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said **Ved Pal S/o Chote Lal** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **Ved Pal S/o Chote Lal** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).  
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Ved Pal S/o Chote Lal** **FIR No. 533/2019, U/s 377 IPC & 11 PCA Act**, required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **25.01.2021**.  
By Order,  
**Vaibhav Mehta,**  
Metropolitan Magistrate,  
**Rohini Court, Delhi**

**CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
F-tenders are invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work: **Tender No. : SFE-64-Rewinding motor; Name of the Work : Running contact of Rewinding of Burnt motor at SSE/ERS/SF-64 as per requirement ; Tender Value: Rupees 5,14,528.00; Cost of Tender Document: Rupees 2,000.00; Earnest Money: Rupees 10,300.00; Period of Completion: 24 months; Date of Closing: 11.01.2021 at 15:00 Hrs. NOTE: (i) Complete Details can be seen in the Railways website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) (ii) Contact No: 9163340405. Dy. CME/PR/SF Siddh-189 CLW/Chittaranjan**  
Like us on: [www.facebook.com/clwrailways](http://www.facebook.com/clwrailways)

**PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE**  
**ICICI Bank** Branch office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, Shal Tower, New Rostak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005  
Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.  
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.  
The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.  
Date : 12-12-2020  
Place: Delhi NCR  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Rajvinder Singh Bedi, Anu Sharma, A/c No-LBDEL00002422645	Flat No- D- 504, 5th Floor Tower- D, Chintels Paradise, Sector- 109 Gurgaon, Haryana/ 09- December- 2020	August 31, 2019 Rs. 75,81,377/-	Gurgaon Haryana
2.	Ram Narayan, Suman Devi, Loan No-LBDEL00001421168	Flat No- B- 5/57 Sector- 8 Rohini Delhi 09- December- 2020	March 29, 2011 Rs. 27,60,149.45/-	Delhi



# Bumrah puts India ahead after batting collapse

## Jasprit hits maiden FC fifty as India's bowling was in a fine form on day 1 of D/N warm-up game against Australia A but the same can't be said about their batting

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah headlined the opening day's play with a maiden first-class fifty and a couple of wickets in an impressive all-round effort to put India in the driver's seat against Australia A in the pink ball warm-up game on Friday.

With his unbeaten 55 off 57 balls, Bumrah was the top-scorer for the visitors, who folded for a disappointing 194 in 48.3 overs at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The Indians, however, came back strongly with the ball to bundle out Australia for 108 at stumps as 20 wickets fell on a curtailed day on which almost an hour was lost due to heavy rain.

India's four-pronged pace attack did well to intimidate Australian youngsters with short-pitched stuff as Mohammed Shami and Navdeep Saini got three wickets apiece.

On a day when the recognised batsmen struggled to put runs on the board, Bumrah, who came into the game with a Test batting average of 2.9, produced a stellar performance with the willow, smashing the ball six times to the fence and twice over it.

The 27-year-old, known for his wily bowling, reached his half-century in style, hooking a bouncer by all-rounder Will Sutherland for a huge six over the deep square-leg fence.

Bumrah and fellow pacer Mohammed Siraj stitched a valuable 71-run partnership for the 10th wicket before the Indian innings ended with a semblance of respectability.

Pleasantly surprised with his batting heroics, Bumrah's teammates got up, clapped and gave him a guard of honour when he walked back into the dressing room.

Earlier, after skipper Ajinkya Rahane opted to bat, Prithvi Shaw (40) and Shubman Gill (43) — both 21-year-old batsmen with bright futures — showed enough



Jasprit Bumrah plays shot during his unbeaten 55-run innings against Australia A on first day of pink ball warm-up game at Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. BCCI/Twitter

Australia A vs India  
Live from 9:00am IST  
SONY SIX NETWORK

glimpses of why they are rated so highly by almost everyone in the Indian cricket fraternity.

However, the rest of the teammates including the seasoned Rahane, failed to impress on the first day of their final tune-up before the four-match Test series

beginning December 17 with a day-nighter in Adelaide.

The two specialist wicket-keepers — Wriddhiman Saha (0) and Rishabh Pant (5) — fell cheaply with the former failing to open his account after the likes of Mayank Agarwal and Hanuma

## Green substituted after nasty blow on head

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia Test hopeful all-rounder Cameron Green suffered a concussion while bowling after a rasping straight drive from Jasprit Bumrah struck him on the head during the warm-up game against India on Friday.

Bowling his second spell of the day, the 21-year-old was unable to react in time when Bumrah's full blooded drive slipped through his palms and struck on the right side of the head.

The all-rounder immediately went down and non-striker Mohammed Siraj rushed to check on him.

After being examined for a couple of minutes by the medical team, the all-rounder was back on his feet as he walked off the field for further assessment. Batsman Patrick Rowe was named his concussion substitute.

"Cameron sustained a mild concussion while bowling for Australia A. This is Cameron's first

Vihari were also dismissed early. But the most distraught will be the duo of Shaw and Gill, both getting out after promising so much with their dazzling strokes and positive approach.

The Australians bowled out India for a low score but they wouldn't be too happy with the way their batting panned out during the day's play.

While Joe Burns was sent back by a fine Bumrah delivery that moved away just enough to take the beleaguered opener's edge, what will worry them most is the injury to Test hopeful Cameron Green. All-rounder Green, who had scored a hundred in the first warm-up game, suffered a concussion while bowling after a rasping straight drive from Bumrah struck him on the head.

Bumrah (2/33) and Shami (3/29) bowled a terrific opening



Australia A bowler Cameron Green reacts after he was hit on head during day 1 of India's pink ball warm-up game at Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. cricket.com.au/Twitter

spell and beat the outside edge of Marcus Harris and Nic Maddinson a number of times before rain intervened. On resumption, Harris hit a boundary straightaway after he found the gap between cover and point.

Shami was rewarded for his perseverance as he picked up the wickets of Harris and Ben McDermott, a hint swing and seam movement aiding him. Siraj (1/26) then had Maddinson to leave the home team reeling at 52 for four. Shami made it 56 for five when he had Sean Abbott caught behind.

Jack Wildermuth went for a cut against Bumrah but ended up getting an outside before Navdeep Saini (3/19) sent back Will Sutherland, Alex Carey and Mitchel Swepson, coming in as second change.

Green is primed for a Test debut after scoring an unbeaten 125 for Australia A in their first practice match, which ended in a draw on Tuesday.

In the second game he returned with figures of 1/20 in the 6.1 overs, taking the crucial wicket of Shubman Gill.

## Rohit clears fitness test

NEW DELHI: Senior India batsman Rohit Sharma on Friday cleared an eagerly-watched fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and will leave for Australia on December 14, three days before the start of the marquee Test series against the world's number one team. Rohit had sustained a hamstring injury during the IPL, which led to him missing the white-ball leg of the ongoing tour. He is also out of reckoning for the first two Tests but can now be there for the last two games. "Rohit has cleared the fitness Test and will soon be flying out to Australia," a senior BCCI official told PTI. PTI

## SINGLES

**STOKES OPTS OUT, ARCHER RESTED FOR SL TESTS**  
LONDON: Star all-rounder Ben Stokes, who is currently grieving the loss of his father, and pacer Jofra Archer were left out of the 16-member England squad for the upcoming two-Test series against Sri Lanka. However, both Stokes and Archer are expected to be back for the high-octane series against India beginning in February. Veteran keeper-batsman Jonny Bairstow also features in the squad which also has Jos Buttler and Ben Foakes in its ranks. Essex youngster Dan Lawrence is the only rookie face in the squad and has been included after he garnered the experience of playing 74 first-class games.

**DE KOCK TO LEAD SA AGAINST SRI LANKA**  
JOHANNESBURG: Wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock was named South African Test team captain for the upcoming two-match series against Sri Lanka. The 16-member squad includes rookie opener Sarel Erwee, wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne and medium-pacer Glenton Stuurman, the trio receiving their maiden call-ups. Eight months after South Africa's director of cricket, Graeme Smith had ruled him out, limited over skipper De Kock was handed the reins of the Test squad for the 2020-21 season on a temporary basis with a permanent captain to be announced in the coming months.

**NICHOLLS 117 STEADIES NZ ON DAY 1**  
WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Henry Nicholls rode his luck to post a crucial century as the hosts, weakened by the loss of Kane Williamson, survived a shaky start to reach 294/6 on day one of the second Test against the West Indies on Friday. 29-year-old Nicholls survived multiple dropped catches at Basin Reserve as he snapped a 21-month string of low scores with his sixth Test century. At stumps, he was 117 not out with Kyle Jamieson on one. From being on the ropes at 78/3, Nicholls said Kiwis now considered 400 would be "a good result".

**CLARKE BACKS CUMMINS TO SUCCEED PAINE**  
SYDNEY: Former Aussie skipper Michael Clarke is hopeful of pace spearhead Pat Cummins succeeding Tim Paine as the country's Test leader when the veteran's reign comes to an end. With the 36-year-old Paine reaching the fag end of his career, a fresh captaincy discussion has started. While there have been calls to reinstate Steve Smith as skipper, Clarke believes Cummins, who was recently appointed the sole vice-captain after previously sharing the role with Travis Head, should be handed the top job when it is time. "Patty's ready for it. I love that they've given him the full-time vice-captaincy," Clarke told AAP. "Hopefully he gets an opportunity along the way to captain in certain games, whether it be Australia A or whether it be a tour game, whatever it is, which I'm sure he will," he added.

**SOCIEDAD SQUEEZE THROUGH EUROPA K/O**  
NAPLES: Real Sociedad snatched qualification for the last 32 of the Europa League in the final seconds on Thursday after Willian Jose's late leveller in a 1-1 draw at Napoli and AZ Alkmaar's shock 2-1 defeat at Rijeka allowed the Spanish side to progress. Young Boys, Molde, Wolfsberg and Maccabi Tel-Aviv rounded off the group stage by making Monday's draw in Nyon, where they join the 18 already-qualified teams and will be met by eight drop-outs from the Champions League. Napoli finish top of the group on 11 points, two ahead of Sociedad in second who end the group stage a further point ahead of Alkmaar. Agencies

# BORN TO BE A MUSICIAN

NILADRI CHAKRAVARTY might sing for his supper, but he is pretty good at it



I've been surrounded with music all my life," says Niladri Chakravarty, frontman of the Delhi-based band 'The Limited Experience' and adds that he has actually been listening to music since the time he was in his mother's womb. But even after he came into this world, he credits his family for ensuring that music ran in his blood as he was introduced to a vast array from traditional Rabindra Sangeet to funk.

"My list of musical influences is very large. I've heard music from the 1930s right up to today's music from a multitude of genres all of which have inspired me and developed my ear," Chakravarty says. He writes his own lyrics and composes his own songs today as he certainly takes his role as a frontman seriously.

He promptly starts playing some classic tracks by The Beatles on the Sonet's BOSE audio system. "I love the Fab Four. Even today the music they wrote is so inspirational," he says adding, "Song writing in the 1960's was special." A lot of other classic musicians continue to be an inspiration for this 20-something. Not just acts like The Police, Eric Clapton, Pink Floyd, John Mayer, The Doors, Fleetwood Mac but also more modern acts like Canadian band Tame Impala hold his interest.

Currently the lead vocalist for Delhi-based band, The Limited Experience, Chakravarty has been singing for years. He started his first band while he was still in school at the age of 16. Yet, he has no formal training, "I am a self-taught guitar and



IT IS AMAZING FUN TEACHING CHILDREN MUSIC BECAUSE IF THEY LIKE IT, YOU GET TO OPEN UP THEIR WORLD WITH AMAZING NEW SOUNDS AND YOU ALSO GET TO LEARN FROM THEM. BEING A MUSICIAN IS ALWAYS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

piano player." He began playing the piano at the age of nine and the guitar at 15. Yet, today he finds himself teaching young children both guitar and vocals at a couple of music schools in Delhi and Gurugram. "It is amazing fun teaching children music because if they like it, you get to open up their world with amazing new sounds and you also get to learn from them. Being a musician is always a learning experience," he says.

While 2020 has been a rather grim year for many, musicians like Chakravarty have been particularly hard hit thanks to the lack of concerts (or 'gigs' as they like to call them). "That has been a bummer, but I've been busy going to the gym, after all one has to stay fit, and also been improving my musical abilities. I am really hoping that we start to play at concerts again soon. The experience of playing at college concerts is really something else for an up-and-coming musician but I also like playing at small, intimate gigs at some bars where you can



really get close to the audience." But he, like many other musicians, is hoping that the news of an impending vaccine

means that The Limited Experience and other bands can perform in front of large audiences soon enough.

Chakravarty may not sound like it but he is a bundle of energy literally bouncing off the walls and very excited about driving the Sonet. "This is an amazing car," he says while accelerating the turbocharged 120PS engine down Gurugram's Sunset Boulevard. "This is a fun car to drive and what an amazing audio this BOSE system is. I'm in the market for a car, and this Sonet, I think, ticks all the boxes. Honestly, for a vehicle in its class, I'm simply amazed at the features it offers. I mean ventilated seats? Wow!"

The class-leading BOSE audio system, available on the top-specification variants of the Kia Sonet, features seven speakers, one each on every door, two tweeters on the A-pillar and a subwoofer in the boot, giving a proper surround sound feeling. The Sonet's 10.26-inch infotainment system screen is also class leading and thanks to multiple inputs allows drivers and passengers to play music from Apple CarPlay and Android Auto as well as over

Bluetooth and directly from the USB. If the car is stationary you can also play videos on the screen.

And why wouldn't it? The Kia Sonet comes with a choice of engines, unlike vehicles from most other carmakers. You have the Smartstream 1.2 litre petrol with 83PS as well as the 1.0 litre turbocharged petrol engine that Chakravarty drove with 120PS. There is also a diesel option, a refined 1.5 CRDi engine that produces 100PS in the manual and a first-in-segment diesel automatic variant with 115PS. Just like Chakravarty listens to music from a variety of genres to improve his musical abilities, the Sonet offers its customers a host of options to ensure that they can choose what is best for them.

And while 2020 has been a difficult time for many folks, the Kia Sonet ensures that if you are a musician or just a music fan, you can listen to top-quality music through a top-quality sound system in India's best-selling subcompact Sports Utility Vehicle. ■