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Pilot scores against Gehlot in SC

Top court refuses to stop Raj HC from announcing decision on petition by Pilot, rebel MLAs challenging disqualification notices for defying Congress

PNS/AGENCIES ■
NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

With all eyes on the Rajasthan High Court on Friday over the Rajasthan political impasse, Congress rebel leader Sachin Pilot on Thursday scored a point in the Supreme Court in his fight against Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

The Supreme Court refused to stop the Rajasthan High Court from announcing its decision on a petition by Pilot and 18 other rebel MLAs challenging disqualification notices served to them for defying the Congress.

The Rajasthan Speaker, who served the notices last week, had argued that the rebels cannot petition the High Court at this stage. The Rajasthan High Court's ruling will, however, be subject to the final order of the Supreme Court, which will take up the case on Monday.

Gehlot who wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi complaining him about conspiracy to topple his Government, asserted that the alleged audio tapes that has surfaced with allegations of involvement of a Union Minister of payoffs to legislators is very much authentic and can be sent abroad for further authentication.

"It is the matter of just one

day. Why can't you wait," the Supreme Court asked the Speaker during arguments on blocking the Rajasthan High Court verdict. The judges also questioned why the Speaker, a neutral person, should approach the court at all.

"Assume a leader has lost the faith of persons. While remaining in party they cannot be disqualified. Then this will become a tool and no one can raise their voice. The voice of dissent in a democracy cannot be suppressed like this," said Justice AK Mishra, one of the three judges hearing the case, without referring to Rajasthan.

Justice Mishra was responding to the arguments of senior lawyer Kapil Sibal defending the Speaker's right to serve disqualification notices and ask the rebels why they skipped party meetings. "The High Court cannot give any protective order at this stage to the other camp. No court can intervene when the Speaker is deciding the case," Sibal said.

Speaker CP Joshi had served notices to 19 rebel MLAs, including Sachin Pilot, after they skipped two meetings of Congress MLAs called by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot last week. The rebels argued in court that they do not intend to quit the party; they only want a change in the leadership. But Sibal said their act of not joining the meetings amounted to

Assume a leader has lost the faith of persons. While remaining in party they cannot be disqualified. Then this will become a tool and no one can raise their voice. The voice of dissent in a democracy cannot be suppressed like this, said Justice AK Mishra



The Speaker had argued that the rebels cannot petition the High Court at this stage. It is the matter of just one day. Why can't you wait, the SC asked the Speaker during arguments. The Speaker's sudden move to seek the SC intervention reflects the Congress's worry that a legal victory for the rebels may endanger its Government. Gehlot Govt has a narrow lead in the Assembly

giving up their membership.

The Speaker's sudden move to seek the SC's intervention reflects the Congress's worry that a legal victory for the rebels may endanger its Government in Rajasthan.

Ashok Gehlot's Government has a narrow lead in the 200-member Assembly — just one MLA over the majority mark of 101. If the Rajasthan High Court decides the Speaker can continue the process of disqualifying team Pilot's 19 MLAs, Gehlot can win more easily as the majority mark will come down.

If the rebel MLAs win their case and get protection from disqualification, they can vote against the Congress Government and make it tough for Gehlot to retain power.

Continued on Page 4

Can send Shekhawat tape to US for test to clear doubts: Gehlot

Jaipur: Targeting Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday said the audio clips which indicate an alleged plot to topple his Government can be sent abroad for forensic tests. Without taking the minister's name, Gehlot questioned why he is not coming forward to give a voice sample. "We can send it for FSL testing to America if they have no trust in the Rajasthan government," the Rajasthan CM said, adding that the Congress also did not trust the Centre.

Credit society scam: Jaipur court directs probe into complaint against Shekhawat

Jaipur: A city court has directed that the Rajasthan Police should probe a complaint alleging the involvement of Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a credit society scam. The development comes amid allegations by the Congress that the Minister is involved in a bid to topple the Ashok Gehlot Government. The SOG has already sent a notice to the Minister in connection with a probe into audio clips which indicate efforts to lure away Congress MLAs.

India asks China to walk the talk on LAC disengagement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday categorically asked China to "sincerely" work for complete disengagement and de-escalation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

Officials of the two Foreign Ministries under the aegis of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Co-ordination on India-China border Affairs (WMCC) are likely to hold talks on Friday to break the logjam and pave the way for another round of Corps Commander-level parleys.

India's latest assertion came against the backdrop of the Chinese troops not honouring the agreements arrived at in the last round of talks between the two Commanders to withdraw additional troops from the front and "depth" areas.

China is yet to start the process to pull back its 40,000 troops leading to heightened tension on the LAC and India also forced ramp up its troop strength. Moreover, the Chinese side has also not removed its heavy guns and weapons as agreed upon, sources said.

This pact to thin out troops was projected as a major confidence building measure but the Chinese not withdrawing has raised alarm bells in the Indian security establishment, they said.

Given this actual scenario, the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday said in order to bring restore normalcy,

Talks likely today to break logjam, and pave way for another round of Corps Commander-level parleys



Army vehicles move towards Leh along the Manali-Leh highway amid the ongoing India-China border dispute, in Kullu district PTI

respecting and strictly abiding by the LAC is the basis of peace and tranquility in the border areas. Several agreements concluded by India and China since 1993 firmly acknowledge this, Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said.

Reiterating the point that China triggered the eight-week old stand offs, he said, "In my

statement of June 26, I had noted that the conduct of Chinese forces this year, including the deployment of large body of troops and changes in behaviour, accompanied by unjustified and untenable claims, has been in complete disregard of all the mutual agreements.

Continued on Page 4

Pak offer of consular access to Jadhav farcical: India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

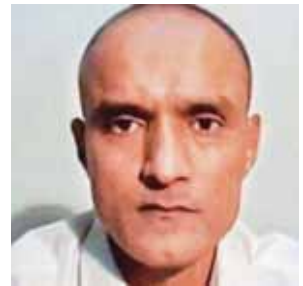
India on Thursday charged Pakistan with blocking all avenues for remedy in Kulbhushan Jadhav case and said it adopted a "farcical" approach in granting consular access.

This strong statement came after Jadhav was denied consular access and Islamabad said July 20 was the last date for filing review petition by Jadhav against death sentence given to him.

Making New Delhi's stand clear, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said India had requested Pakistan 12 times for consular access to Jadhav but Islamabad has not provided "unhindered and unimpeded access".

Srivastava also said Pakistan adopted a "farcical approach" in handling the case, adding India is exploring available options in the matter.

"Pakistan has blocked all avenues for effective remedy available to India. It stands in violation of International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment and



its own Ordinance. India reserves its position, including right to avail of further remedies," the Ministry said on the Pakistan Government moving Islamabad High Court to appoint lawyer for Kulbhushan Jadhav.

The MEA Spokesperson further said India tried to file a review petition on July 18 for Jadhav but the lawyer appointed by India was told he has no "power of attorney".

Pakistan had earlier this month said July 20 is the last date of filing a review petition by Jadhav against the death sentence awarded by a Pakistani military court.

The 50-year-old retired Indian Navy officer was sentenced to death by the Pakistani

military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017.

India approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence. The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay.

The Pakistan Government has claimed that Jadhav refused to file a review petition or an application to reconsider the verdict. Pakistan enacted the "International Court of Justice Review and Reconsideration Ordinance 2020" on May 20 under which a petition for the review of a military court's decision can be made to Islamabad High Court through an application within 60 days of its promulgation.

Srivastava said India already shared its concerns to Pakistan in June knowing the "inadequacies and shortcomings" in the Ordinance.

Community transmission in Telangana! It's official now

PNS ■ HYDERABAD/KOCHI

With Telangana recording a bigger spike everyday, the State health officials have admitted that the State was passing through the stage of community transmission of the outbreak.

Director of Public Health Dr G Srinivas Rao on Thursday said there were strong indications to show the presence of Covid-19 in the community across Telangana.



"The virus is in the community and all of us are doing our best to contain it. The State Government is pulling out all stops to prevent the virus from spreading. The general public must be very cautious in the next four to five weeks. Masks,

hand washing and physical distancing in every aspect of life are mandatory," Dr G Srinivas Rao said in Hyderabad.

Telangana has over 50,000 positive cases and nearly 450 deaths. The State faced huge criticism for not carrying out adequate number of test to track positive cases. Even now it is one of the worst States as far as testing numbers go.

Continued on Page 4

307 more test positive in Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow reported 307 more coronavirus positive cases on Thursday, taking the city's tally to 5,125 while the death toll climbed to 65 with four more fatalities.

The state also registered yet another largest single-day spike as 2,529 people tested positive for coronavirus infection while 36 persons fell prey to the deadly virus.

According to a senior official at Lucknow CMO's office, 18 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Indiranagar, 16 in Gontinagar, 15 in Chinhat, 12 each in Hazratganj and Rae Bareilly road, 11 each in Aminabad and Aliganj, 10 in Alambagh, nine at Kanpur road, seven in Mahanagar, six in Chowk, five in Cantonment, four each in Rajajipuram, Gontinagar

Continued on Page 4

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	3,47,502	12,854	1,94,253
Tamil Nadu	1,92,964	3,232	1,36,793
Delhi	1,27,364	3,745	1,09,065
Karnataka	80,863	1,616	29,310
Andhra Pradesh	72,711	884	37,555
Uttar Pradesh	58,104	1,298	35,803
Gujarat	52,563	2,256	38,059
West Bengal	51,757	1,255	31,656
Telangana	50,826	447	39,327
Rajasthan	33,220	594	23,815
Bihar	31,691	212	20,959
Haryana	28,975	378	22,249
Assam	27,745	66	19,351
Madhya Pradesh	25,474	780	17,359
Odisha	21,099	145	14,393
Jammu & Kashmir	16,429	282	8,709

CAPSULE

1ST CONTAINER CARGO VIA B'DESH ARRIVES

New Delhi: The first-ever container cargo from Kolkata via Bangladesh's Chattogram port has reached Agartala, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday, terming it a "historic milestone" in the Indo-Bangladesh connectivity and economic partnership.

1 MORE CONGRESS MLA QUILTS MP ASSEMBLY

Bhopal: The Congress in Madhya Pradesh suffered yet another setback on Thursday after one more party MLA resigned from the Legislative Assembly, becoming the third legislator from the grand old party in the State to do so in less than two weeks.

NO EMPLOYEE WILL BE LAID OFF: AIR INDIA

New Delhi: Unlike other airlines that have laid off a large number of workers, no employee of Air India will lose his job, the national carrier said.

MM Joshi deposes, claims Congress govt implicated him in Babri case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Veteran BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi on Thursday deposed before a special CBI court in the Babri mosque demolition trial and pleaded innocence and claimed that he was implicated in the case by the then Congress Government at the Centre. He dubbed the prosecution witnesses in the case as "liars".

While making his statement under section 313 of the CrPC through video conference to the court of Special Judge SK Yadav, the 86-year-old leader accused the then Congress-led Central Government of "falsely" implicating him in the case out of "political vendetta".

Former Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani, 92, too is slated to depose before the Lucknow court through video links from New Delhi

on Friday. "The entire investigation was conducted under the political influence and he was charged on the basis of false and fabricated evidence," Joshi told the court.

At this, the judge asked him why then the prosecution witnesses have deposed against him and Joshi retorted, "All the witnesses are liars. They have deposed due to political reasons and under the influence of police." During the court proceeding, the court posed as many as 1,050 questions to Joshi and he replied to each one of them. As the judge sought Joshi's comment over various pieces of evidence led by the CBI on the basis of different video clipping and newspaper cuttings, the former Union HRD minister said the entire evidence is "false and fabricated".

During the proceeding, Judge Yadav apprised Joshi of the

statement of a CBI witness, in which he had averred that Kalyan Singh was sworn in as UP chief minister on June 25, 1991 and went to the Ram Janmabhoomi site in Ayodhya the next day along with his Cabinet colleagues.

The judge told Joshi that, according to the CBI witness, at the Ram Janmabhoomi site in Ayodhya, Kalyan Singh had pledged for building the temple at the very place, chanting "Ram Lala Ham Ayenge, Mandir Yahi Banayenge (Lord Ram, we will come and make the temple here itself)".

The judge then asked Joshi to explain the statement of the CBI witness. Joshi replied that it was true that Kalyan Singh had gone to Ayodhya but, he said, the rest of the averment of the prosecution witness was false.

The judge also showed Joshi

a photograph taken on June 26, 1991 at the Ram Janmabhoomi premises, in which he is seen standing with the then Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh and asked the BJP leader to explain it.

Joshi dubbed the photograph as "fake", pointing out that there was no negative of the photograph on the CBI records. The photograph was handed over by one Swapna Das Gupta to the CBI during the investigation.

The judge also referred to many newspaper reports on alleged statements of former Dy PM Advani and Shiv Sena late chief Bala Saheb Thackeray on Ram Janmabhoomi issue and sought Joshi's response to them. Joshi asserted that the relevant news items were false and were made part of the investigation by the CBI due to "political malice and ideological differences".

Govt goes by SC, OK's permanent commission for women in Army

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Abiding by the Supreme Court judgment, the Defence Ministry on Thursday issued orders to grant permanent commission to women officers in the Army. This major move will benefit more than 300 women officers right away serving in 10 streams of the force.

The order comes after the apex court in February this year directed the Government that women officers in the Army be granted permanent commission and command postings in all services. However, women officers as of now cannot serve in the combat arms like the infantry, artillery and armored corps.

Following the judgment, Army Chief General MM Naravane had said it was an enabling one and gives a lot of

300 women officers serving in 10 streams of force to be benefited from this decision



clarity on how to move forward. He had stated that the same procedure for male Short Service Commission (SSC) officers will be followed for women to give permanent commission. The Defence Ministry order on Thursday also said, "In anticipation, the Army HQ had set in motion a series of preparatory actions for conduct of the permanent commission Selection Board for women officers. The Selection Board will be scheduled as soon as all affected SSC women officers exercise their option and complete requisite documentation."

Continued on Page 4

UP to ramp up Covid tests to one lakh/day

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After a Union government directive on ramping up COVID-19 testing, the UP government decided to increase testing further and fixed a target to carry out one lakh tests per day soon.

At present, around 55,000 tests per day are being carried out in government facilities.

Though the government has not fixed any date for achieving the target, a road map has been chalked out so that UP, which has the largest population in India, can boast of the highest number of COVID-19 tests.

Recently, the Centre asked 10 states, including Uttar Pradesh, to increase testing as it was far from the set World Health Organisation guideline of 142 tests per million per day.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said in Lucknow on Thursday that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had asked officials at a high-level meeting to increase the daily tests to one lakh per day. UP is in the second spot after Tamil Nadu in carrying out the maximum number of tests per day. On Wednesday, the state created a record of sorts by testing 54,897 samples in a day and with this the total tests in UP have gone up to 16.54 lakh.

Awasthi said that the chief minister directed district authorities to go for massive rapid antigen tests. Smaller districts will compulsorily have to do 50 such tests daily and the bigger ones need to double this figure.

"We are now doing 20,000 rapid antigen tests daily across the state and in a few days, it will be increased to 50,000 per day. Besides TrueNat and RT-PCR tests will also increase the

capacity of COVID-19 tests in the state," he said. Awasthi said that all districts had been asked to set up static testing booths where people could voluntarily go for COVID-19 tests.

"Those who have symptoms can go for rapid antigen tests and those without symptoms can give their samples for RT-PCR tests. Aligarh is among the first to commence a static testing booth," he said.

Admitting a steep spike in coronavirus positive cases, the additional chief secretary said that though increase in testing had increased the number of positive cases in the state but it was good as people would get cured with timely treatment and the death rate would fall.

He said that door-to-door survey would be done more strictly in containment zones and a mobile testing van would be introduced so that testing could be done at doorsteps.

Awasthi said the chief minister expressed satisfaction over the positive results of cleanliness and sanitation drives on Saturdays and Sundays. He said the drive was launched to contain COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

The state government has already ordered closure of all markets on weekends to make this drive successful. Awasthi further said that the chief minister also directed district nodal officers to submit their reports to the chief secretary daily, who in turn would apprise the chief minister of COVID-19 preventive activities and health services. "The chief minister asked the government officials to remain in constant touch with field officers too," he said.

"The chief minister said the rainy season required more attention for prevention of various diseases in

animals. He emphasised on regular checking and availability of green fodder in all cow shelters and asked the principal secretary (animal husbandry) to monitor these tasks," Awasthi said.

120 JHANSI JAIL INMATES TEST +VE FOR CORONA VIRUS

Even as Prison authorities did their best to take preventive measures after the first inmate was reported coronavirus positive in Jhansi district jail in the last week of April, a fresh sample test of inmates carried out recently showed 120 of them to be positive.

Subsequently, prison officials quarantined the other prisoners in separate barracks and converted one of the barracks as a Level-1 Covid hospital to provide medical care to the afflicted inmates. Officials also carried out sanitisation of the entire prison and were awaiting further directions from officials in Lucknow on other measures to be undertaken to check coronavirus spread.

On Thursday morning, the test reports of 120 inmates turned out to be positive. These inmates were immediately shifted to the makeshift hospital on the prison campus.

A team of health officials also visited the jail hospital to facilitate check-up and carry out complete sanitisation. DIG (Jails) Ved Prakash Tripathi also rushed to Jhansi from Lucknow to supervise the preventive steps undertaken and the treatment of the afflicted inmates. District Magistrate of Jhansi, Aandra Wamsi, told media persons that a total of 350 inmates were tested for coronavirus, out of which 127 were found to be positive but in the second test, seven of them turned out to be negative.

Aiming for investments, govt in reform mode ... plans 46 district-level reforms for EODB

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to attract investment and improve Ease of Doing Business (EODB) in the state, the UP government has targeted to implement 46 key district-level reforms across all 75 districts.

As an important factor of reforms, 46 services of 10 more departments are to be integrated into the state's single window portal Nivesh Mitra by October 31.

These services will be equipped with online application, fee submission and facility of downloading final clearance.

Departments included in the list are Agriculture, Medical Health & Family Welfare, Home, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Co-operative Societies, Groundwater, Geology & Mines, Transport and Food & Civil Supplies.

After integration, services like grant of licences for manufacturing, sale, storage of fertilisers, insecticide and pesticide; registration for clinical establishments and no-objection certificate (NOC) for water extraction, etc. will be provided through Nivesh Mitra. At present, 146 services of 20 departments are being provided through the portal.

Industrial Development Minister Satish Mahana said on Thursday, "The chief minister has been emphasising to bring transparency and best practices to business-to-

government (B2G) interactive procedures through use of technology. Our government has been successful in improving EODB by introducing various IT driven modules and Nivesh Mitra is one such successful tools."

On the EODB index, UP has been consistently performing well for the last four years and has got 'Achiever State' status in 2017-18.

Companies like Pepsico India Holdings Pvt. Ltd, Jubilant Life Science Ltd, Walmart India Pvt Ltd, SAM-SUNG India Electronics Pvt. Ltd and OPPO Mobiles India Pvt. Ltd have shared experience with Nivesh Mitra as 'Good Process', while LG Electronics India Pvt. Ltd. has termed Nivesh Mitra as 'efficient and simple'.

Between February, 2018 and July 20, 2020, Nivesh Mitra received 2.05 lakh applications, of which 1.63 lakh got clearances online at an approval rate of 79 per cent

Even during the pandemic between April 1, 2020 and July 20, 2020, a total of 28,248 clearances were granted through Nivesh Mitra with an approval rate of 82 per cent.

The upgraded single window portal Nivesh Mitra was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during UP Investors' Summit in 2018 at Lucknow. The initial 69 services of 20 departments have now been scaled up to 146 online services. Even during lockdown, 21 services related to land reforms were integrated with Nivesh Mitra on April 20, 2020.



NOTICE

I Uma Devi W/o Mahesh Mandal H.N. 60 Vijaynagar Manas Nagar Lucknow hereby solemnly affirm that Uma Devi and Uma Kumari Mandal is the name of one person, and in future I should be known as Uma Devi.

NOTICE

Be informed that Durga Subba and Durga Chhetri have been recorded in the educational and other records of my wife Durga Chhetri Subba daughter Krishna Bahadur Chhetri. While these three names are of the same person. My wife's name is Durga Subba registered on my service book. Which should be read Durga Chhetri Subba. Nabin Subba, Address DS Path, Bijanbari, Thana Pulbazar, District Darjeeling.

NOTICE

I changed my surname from Ghazala Iqbal to Ghazala Hamim after marriage. Now, I have changed my name again to Ghazala Iqbal. Therefore, I shall be known by my previous name Ghazala Iqbal. My address is given below.
Ghazala Iqbal
Address: C-323, Kareli Scheme, GTB Nagar, Prayagraj, U.P.-211016

Shankaracharya stirs a storm over bhoomi puja date

Lucknow (PNS): Shankaracharya Swaroopanand Saraswati stirred a controversy by claiming in Varanasi that the August 5 date for bhoomi puja for construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya was 'inauspicious'.

While the bhoomi puja ceremony will start from August 3, the foundation stone for the temple will be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 5. Incidentally, the date is the first anniversary of abrogation of Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir and its bifurcation of the state into two Union territories.

The Shankaracharya said that the date fell in Dakshinayan Bhadrpad month and was the second day of Krishna Paksha.

"In Hindu scriptures, construction of home or temple is prohibited during Bhadrpad," he said, referring to Vishnu Dharma Shastra and Naivagna Ballabh Granth to buttress his claim.

"We are Ram devotees. We will be happy if anyone builds the Ram temple, but the construction should be carried out as per Hindu calendar. The work should start on an auspicious time and date," he said.

The Shankaracharya also said that since the temple was being constructed with public money and donations, public opinion should be sought as well.

However, Kashi Vidhyat Parishad termed the Shankaracharya's claim as baseless and said that Lord Ram was a universal hero and hence no questions should be raised on the construction of His temple.

Chief priest of Ram Janmabhoomi temple, Acharya Satyendra Das challenged the claim of the Shankaracharya that Bhadrpad was not auspicious for bhoomi puja.

"The month of Chaitra is auspicious as it is the birth month of Lord Ram. Bhadrpad is also auspicious as it is the birth month of Lord Krishna. Hence any religious work can be started in both months," Das claimed.

Similar views were presented by Mahant Parhamans Das of Tapasvi Chhavi of Ayodhya. "I challenge the Shankaracharya to engage in a religious debate on the matter with me. It seems that the Shankaracharya is trying to obstruct the construction of the Ram temple," the Mahant said.

Mahant Nriyeta Gopal Das' successor and president of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust, Mahant Kamal Nayan Das, said that the Ram temple bhoomi puja would last for three days.

"The programme will begin on August 3 with Ganesh puja, followed by Ramcharan puja on August 4.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to lay the foundation stone of Ram temple at 12:15 pm on August 5. The puja will be performed by Vedic scholars and pundits from Kashi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya.

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust, formed after the Supreme Court's decision on the Ayodhya dispute on November 9, 2019, had expedited the preparations for temple construction on the premises of Ram Janmabhoomi.

Bank of Baroda, Erst. Vijaya Bank, Banjari Mod, Lucknow Road, Bahraich

Sale Notice For Immovable Properties "APPENDIX-IV-A [see Proviso Rule 6(2) & 8(6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6) of the Security Interest(Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s), Mortgagor (s)and Guarantor (s)that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s) /Mortgagor (s)/ Guarantor (s) /Secured Asset/s/Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below-

Date & Time of Auction: 14.08.2020 , 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM		Status of Possession- Constructive		
Sr/ No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers/ Guarantors & Date of Demand & Possession Notice/Amount of Debt	Description of the Property	Reserve Price (RP)/ Earnest Money (EM)(Rs.) Bid Increase Amount.	Date & Time of Property Inspection & Deposit of EMD
1.	Borrower: (1) Kamla Singh S/o Jhunai Singh (2) Amarej Bahadur Singh S/o Kamla Singh Address: 115, Village and Post Godwa Khas, Tahsil Mahsi, District Bahraich Guarantor: Arunendra Kumar Singh S/o Kamla Singh Address: 115, Village and Post Godwa Khas Tahsil Mahsi, District Bahraich Demand Date: 12.06.2018 Possession Date: 24.08.2018 Outstanding Amount: Rs.9,82,605.23/- + interest thereon & other charges w.e.f. 30.06.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	Equitable mortgage of property situated at Gata no 216 min/Area 10.00 dis in the name of Kamla Singh S/o Jhunai Singh at Village Bhogajot, Mohalla Akbarpura (Nai Basti), Pargana Phakarpur, Tehsil Mahsi District Bahraich. Bounded as under: East: House of HariRam Singh. West: Road Bahraich to Lucknow North: Plot/House Santosh Kumar Jain South: House and Shop of Parmesh Chand	Reserve Price Rs. 59,31,000/- EMD Rs. 5,93,100/- Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-	24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM 24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM
2.	Borrower: M/s Shukla General Suppliers Address: Mohalla Nawagarhi, Near J. P. Memorial School, Ghasiyarpura, Bahraich Through its proprietor Prakar Kumar Shukla S/o Devendra Nath Shukla Address: 672, Ghasiyarpura, Bahraich Guarantor: Devendra Nath Shukla S/o Raj Bahadur Shukla Address: 672, Ghasiyarpura, Bahraich Demand Date: 03.03.2018 Possession Date: 07.07.2018 Outstanding Amount: Rs.13,08,406.12/- + interest thereon & other charges w.e.f. 30.06.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	Equitable mortgage of property situated at Plot no 42 in the name of Devendra Nath Shukla S/o Raj Bahadur Shukla at Village Chawanisarkar, Nawagarhi, Pargana, Tehsil and District Bahraich. Total area 1960 sq.ft. Bounded as under: East: 2 Ft. Gali Baadahu Plot Ram Sharan and Ram Bahadur Singh . West: 14 ft wide Interlocking Road North: Plot of Amarnath Gupta South: Land of Nahesh and Vinod Singh	Reserve Price Rs. 27,02,000/- EMD Rs. 2,70,200/- Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-	24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM 24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM
3.	Borrower: Yadav Kirana Store Address: Village Kasijot, Post Payagpur, District Bahraich 271871 Through its proprietor Chhote S/o Gorakhnath Address: 120, Village Kasijot, Tehsil and Distt. Bahraich. Guarantor: Harshit S/o Vishvanath Address: Village and Post Kasijot, District Bahraich 271871 Demand Date: 11.06.2019 Possession Date: 05.11.2019 Outstanding Amount: Rs.2,68,580.44/- + interest thereon & other charges w.e.f. 30.06.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	All part and parcel of the property consisting of property situated at Gata No. 144 Mauja Kasijot, Pargana, Tehsil and District Bahraich in the name of Chote S/o Gorakhnath. Total Area 0.0967 hectare (750 sq. Ft) Bounded as under: East: Sesh Plot Mukir West: Sesh Plot Mukir North: Sesh Bhumi Mukir South: Pakki Sadak	Reserve Price Rs. 4,91,000/- EMD Rs. 49,100/- Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-	24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM 24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Bank of Baroda secured website i.e. www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm & <https://ibapi.in>. Also prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No:- 9554968021.

Date: 24.07.2020 : Place: Bahraich Authorised officer, Bank of Baroda

Bank of Baroda, Erst. Vijaya Bank, in front of Nagar Kotwali, Kutchehary Road, Gonda

Sale Notice For Immovable Properties "APPENDIX-IV-A [see Proviso Rule 6(2) & 8(6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6) of the Security Interest(Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s), Mortgagor (s)and Guarantor (s)that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s) /Mortgagor (s)/ Guarantor (s) /Secured Asset/s/Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below-

Date & Time of Auction: 14.08.2020 , 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM		Status of Possession- Constructive		
Sr/ No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers/ Guarantors & Date of Demand & Possession Notice/Amount of Debt	Description of the Property	Reserve Price (RP)/ Earnest Money (EM)(Rs.) Bid Increase Amount.	Date & Time of Property Inspection & Deposit of EMD
1.	Borrower: Jagannath Saini S/o Badri Prasad Address: Vill Bajpayee Purwa, khargupur, Gonda 271001 Guarantor: Geeta Saini W/o Jagannath Saini Address: Vill Bajpayee Purwa, khargupur, Gonda 271001 Demand Date: 03.06.2017 Possession Date: 16.08.2017 Outstanding Amount: Rs.13,76,041.08/- + interest thereon & other charges w.e.f. 13.07.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	All part and parcel of the property consisting of plot no. 1073 situated at Mauja Gird Gonda Nagariya Pargana Tahsil and District Gonda in the name of Geeta Saini W/o Jagannath Saini. Total Area 116.20 sq. mt. Bounded as under: East: House of Maya Shukla. West: House of Sudhir Kant North: 10 ft, Kachcha Rasta South: House of Ram Kumar	Reserve Price Rs. 9,46,000/- (EM) Rs. 94,600/- Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-	24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM 24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM
2.	Borrower: (1) Mangal Prasad S/o Lal Chandra Address: Vill Gird Gonda, Budhai Purwa, Gonda 271002 (2) Shivakant S/o Vishvanath Address: H.No. 24A, Gram Murawan Purwa Po. Pandari Kripal, Gonda 271002 Guarantor: Ram Kumar S/o Visheshwar Address: Vill Bhandaha, PO Pandari Krapaal, Gonda 271002 Demand Date: 03.06.2017 Possession Date: 16.08.2017 Outstanding Amount: Rs.12,93,462.29/- + interest thereon & other charges w.e.f. 13.07.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	All part and parcel of the property consisting of plot no. 269 situated at Mauja Gird Gonda Gramin, Pargana, Tahsil and District Gonda in the name of Mangal Prasad S/o Lal Chandra. Total Area 1340 sq. ft. Bounded as under: East: Land of seller mitthulal West: Land of seller mitthulal North: 12 feet Rasta South: Kachcha Rasta	Reserve Price Rs. 18,19,000/- (EM) Rs. 1,81,900/- Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-	24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM 24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM
3.	Borrower: Raj Kumar Verma S/o Late Ram Lagan Address: H. NO. 179, Mohalla Ranijot, Bargaon, Tehsil & District Gonda 271001 Guarantor: Mangal Prasad S/o Lal Chandra Address: 53, Babhani, New Indra Nagar Colony, Gonda Demand Date: 03.10.2017 Possession Date: 29.12.2017 Outstanding Amount: Rs.11,12,709.70/- + interest thereon & other charges w.e.f. 13.07.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	All part and parcel of the property consisting house no. 179 on plot no. 954 situated at Mohalla Ranijot, Bargaon, Tahsil and District Gonda in the name of Raj Kumar Verma S/o Late Ram Lagan. Total Area 3355 sq. ft. Bounded as under: East: House of Vinod Singh West: Chak Marg North: Kachcha Rasta South: Pari Land Other Gata	Reserve Price Rs. 16,48,000/- (EM) Rs. 1,64,800/- Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-	24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM 24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM
4.	Borrower: M/s Variety Shoe Maker Through its proprietor Sabir Ali S/o Late Akbar Ali Address: Maharanganj, Station Road, Gonda 271002 Guarantor: (1) Mohd. Mustaq Ahmad S/o Mohd Yaseen Address: H.No. 1056, Housing Colony, Near R.N. Pandey Hospital, Gonda 271001 (2) Mohd. Rizwan S/o Ali Sher Address: H.No. 487, Janaki Nagar, Gonda 271001 Demand Date: 13.04.2016 Possession Date: 20.08.2016 Outstanding Amount: Rs.6,84,779.63/- + interest thereon & other charges w.e.f. 13.07.2020 (minus amount if any paid after the demand Notice and Possession Notice)	All part and parcel of property consisting of house situated at Mohalla Maharanganj, Station Road, Pargana, Tahsil and District Gonda. Total Area 150 sq. ft. Bounded as under: East: Share of Sajjan @ Mohd Ali & others, West: Road Gonda to Balrampur North: Joint Way & Stair of Sabir Ali @MohdAli & others South: House of Babloo	Reserve Price Rs. 5,11,000/- (EM) Rs. 51,100/- Bid Increase Amount Rs.10,000/-	24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM 24.07.2020 to 13.08.2020 Between 10:00 AM from 4:00 PM

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Bank of Baroda secured website i.e. www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm & <https://ibapi.in>. Also prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer on Mobile No. 9554968032

Date: 24.07.2020 : Place: Gonda Authorised officer, Bank of Baroda

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Static teams formed at CHCs for Covid testing

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Static teams have been formed at community health centres (CHCs) and Bal Mahila Chikitsalaya in Lucknow to carry out Covid testing. Chief Medical Officer Dr Narendra Agarwal said they have made 23-26 teams for this purpose and people visiting CHCs and BMCs could get themselves tested for Covid-19. With the number of active cases in Lucknow having crossed the 3,000 mark, he said that under the new discharge policy (in which patients will be discharged on the tenth day from testing and seventh day from admission) the discharge rate will go up.

"Besides, nearly 200 asymptomatic patients have opted for home isolation, which has been allowed by the state government," he pointed out.

Spokesperson of RML Hospital Dr Sriresh Singh said the number of asymptomatic patients has reduced because of the new discharge policy. He said that being Level 3 Covid-19 hospital, they have many patients in the ICU with mild to moderate symptoms.

"Those with mild to moderate symptoms should be discharged on the 12th day from admission, as per the new policy," he pointed out.

About patients from other districts, he said there are 30 per cent patients in the ICU wards. The decision to transfer these patients to the hospitals of Lucknow was taken by the respective CMOs in view of their conditions, he said.

The spokesperson said that in case of patients dying of comorbidities, the manifestation of symptoms has been severe in some. "Others who have died were already in a critical condition and they would have died even if they tested negative for coronavirus," he claimed.

A senior official from the



DM Abhishek Prakash during an inspection at a PHC on Naval Kishore road on Thursday

Pioneer

CMO office said that fresh cases have been coming from all parts of the district. "The doctors and health workers have also tested positive in large numbers. Seven of those who tested positive are from the paediatric section of Civil Hospital," he said.

He pointed out that the weekend lockdown has not made a difference and cases have been increasing. "Weekend lockdown only results in overcrowding on Fridays and Mondays, which may cause more infection. If there has to be a lockdown, it should be for at least 15 days to effect some change and break the chain of transmission," he opined.

Additional CMO MK Singh pointed out that in the rapid antigen testing being carried out in the city, out of the 1,259 samples, 32 tested positive on July 22. As many as 1,065 samples were tested on July 21 and 21 came out positive. "We will increase the samples to 3,000 from July 23 onwards and the 600 teams made for this purpose will go to containment and

non-containment zones," he said. Media spokesperson of KGMU Dr Sudhir Singh said that one person tested positive in the Microbiology Lab of the medical university. "The patient has been shifted to the isolation ward and no one else has been found positive for coronavirus," he said. He categorically said that a viral video in which a huge crowd was seen moving towards KGMU was not real.

Meanwhile, District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash took stock of the situation in the containment zones. He took action against the grocery shops not adhering to guidelines. He also slapped a fine of Rs 10,000 on Yash Medical Store (Arawali Marg) for not following the guidelines.

Meanwhile, the Regional Passport Office organised a programme on prevention from coronavirus. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sumit Kumar Dubey said one should use 3-layer or 5-layer masks without any valves or filters. "While taking out the mask, do not touch its surface with your

hands and don't use loose masks," he said. He said it was also important to eat nutritious food and use tulsi. "Regular exercise and pranayam also helps. One should sanitise hands while bringing items from outside and one should soak clothes for five minutes and then wash them after coming from outside," he said. The session was also attended by regional passport officer Piyush Verma.

APPOINTED

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has appointed director of Lok Bandhu and Civil hospitals Dr DS Negi as the Director-General of Medical and Health Services, Uttar Pradesh. Dr Negi completed MBBS and MD from KGMU in 1976 and served in the army for five years under the Short Service Commission. He joined Provincial Medical Services and has served in Civil Hospital, Barabanki district hospital and Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. He specialises in anaesthesia.

Hounded by money lender, aides, man ends life

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hounded by a man and his aides over a monetary issue, a Hussainganj resident attempted suicide by consuming some poisonous substance at his house on Wednesday night. Police opted for a cover-up exercise until the news was highlighted on social media and brought to the notice of senior government officials. On Thursday, the police registered a case against the accused and around half-a-dozen of his aides. As per reports, Mohammed Anis Ansari of Udayganj locality had a money-related dispute with Mohammed Shahnawaz aka Munna Japani of the same locality.

On Monday night, Munna and his men reached the house of Anis and threatened him with dire consequences before leaving the scene. Soon after that, Anis consumed some poisonous substance. His wife Asma Khatoun rushed him to a hospital where doctors saved his life. Asma later lodged a case against Munna and his aides, alleging that Anis took the extreme step due to the harassment meted out to him. She said Anis had returned more than double of the money that he had borrowed from Munna, but the latter was forcing him to shell out more. She alleged that Munna used to lend money to the needy on high interest. "Munna and his men used to visit our house at odd hours. Their body language was always violent and they would threaten to kidnap me and children. Anis used to remain worried and gloomy of late," she said. The Hussainganj SHO said a case was lodged against Munna for the first time. "We did not know if Munna was into money-lending business. Further investigation is underway," the SHO said. ADPC (Central) CN Sinha also made similar remarks. He said the police had registered a case and investigation was on.



The main office of SBI closed after 11 employees tested positive for coronavirus

Pioneer

Fed up of harassment, Shiv temple caretaker hangs self

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 65-year-old caretaker of a Shiv temple in Kakori ended his life following alleged harassment by the husband of gram pradhan his sons and some government officials, including policemen, on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday. Bhagwandin of Bada Gaon locality in the area was found hanging at his house. His wife and son had gone out for some work. When they returned, they found Bhagwandin hanging from the ceiling with a rope tied around his neck. They called neighbours for help and later informed police. A police team reached the scene and sent the body for autopsy.

The bereaved family alleged that some persons, including the husband of gram pradhan and his son, were

pressuring Bhagwandin to get a toilet constructed on a land belonging to the temple of which he was the caretaker.

Deceased's daughter Sita alleged that he used to perform puja at the temple, a huge portion of which is lying unused.

"Some influential persons, including the BDO, ADO, lekhpal, policemen and gram pradhan's husband Deshraj Yadav and his two sons — Narendra and Sudhanshu — were harassing Bhagwandin over the issue. Deshraj was getting a toilet constructed close to the temple and Bhagwandin was opposed to that. He had even offered his parental land to the gram pradhan's husband to get the toilet constructed, but to no avail," she alleged.

Alleging that her father ended his life due to being bullied by the above-named persons, she asked senior government officials to initiate action

against those responsible for her father's death. The police recovered a suicide note in which Bhagwandin had held the husband of gram pradhan and government officials responsible for his death. He also requested the MP to help his family in getting justice after his death. The police said further probe was underway.

ATTACKED

A man accused his wife and their son of thrashing him without any provocation in Chinhat on Thursday. Reports said the man, identified as Gyan Babu of Dhawa village, was in the house when his wife Dayawati lost her cool and started abusing him. Later, their son Vinay attacked Gyan Babu with sticks, inflicting injuries on his head. The police registered a case in this connection and started further investigation.

Govt to hire consultants, partner with IIM-L

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Racing to fight the economic slowdown caused by coronavirus-induced lockdown, the Uttar Pradesh government has decided to hire consultants and partner with Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow for bolstering self-employment opportunities for the educated youth.

The premier institute will be roped in as a 'knowledge partner' of the state government for analytical studies and for offering knowledge-based inputs on bankable projects, feasibility studies and for creating prototype models of self-employment projects.

These job-oriented studies and projects will be undertaken under the government's flagship Chief Minister Yuva Entrepreneurship Development Programme (CM Yuva).

Presiding over a meeting in Lucknow, Chief Secretary

Rajendra Kumar Tiwari directed officials to bring IIM-Lucknow on board as a knowledge partner on 'CM Yuva'. Last year, the IIM-Lucknow had conducted special training sessions for senior UP ministers and top bureaucrats in methodologies of government project implementation, financial management, disposal of files and budgetary skills. The function was also attended by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on the IIM-L campus.

The chief secretary directed officials to take urgent steps to integrate the state's youth with CM Yuva programme by providing them all possible financial and institutional support and take their feedback.

The state will adopt the principles of 'business process re-engineering' for implementing ongoing projects and subjecting them to predetermined parameters. The government will also fortify single window

system for speeding up the setting up of new enterprises.

To provide a single window system for applying, disposal and real-time monitoring of schemes under CM Yuva, a web portal developed by the NIC, was earlier launched by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department. Under the scheme, a maximum loan for industrial and services sectors is Rs 25 lakh and Rs 10 lakh respectively.

Following the influx of more than 35 lakh migrant labourers and workers from other states during lockdown, the Yogi Adityanath government has been propelling employment and self-employment schemes in industrial and services sectors. Further, the state conducted skill mapping of these migrants and so far more than 35 lakh workers have been mapped. The process is expected to help them get jobs within and outside the state.

Liquor shops to open on weekends

Lucknow (PNS): The Excise department on Thursday exempted liquor shops located outside the containment zones from the weekend lockdown rule. The liquor shops outside containment zones will now remain open on Saturdays and Sundays.

Additional Chief Secretary Sanjay Bhoosreddy said the liquor shops were exempted from the order of closure from 10 am on Friday to 5 am on Monday every week. It was further said that all the shops (desi liquor, IMFL, beer and bhang) located outside the containment zones would open at 10 am and close at 9 pm. However, there will be a ban on consumption of liquor at public places.

General secretary, Liquor Sellers Welfare Association (LSWA), KL Maurya welcomed the decision and thanked the government for paying heed to their demands.

Goats available online this Eid-ul-Azha

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With little chances of goat markets due to the coronavirus pandemic, people have the option to purchase goats for Eid-ul-Azha. Many entrepreneurs who have come up with this option, making it an easy and practical approach.

Syed Ali, an accountant who has done MBA in Finance,

left his lucrative job in Dubai and returned to UP to start this venture. Ali is catering to Lucknow and Faizabad through this start-up.

"I have received over 30 orders, majorly from Lucknow where I will supply goats on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha or Bakrid. Looking into the current conditions where money is an issue, we have kept the



maximum limit of goats to Rs 16,000," he said. About how the idea of selling goats online struck him, he said he has a small goat farm and he saw that farmers living near his house had their goats tethered and were looking for customers.

"I approached these farmers and told them the idea of online sale of goats. Things were worked out along with the changes and we were finally able to come up with this start-up. Also, we kept the farmers loosely engaged not putting too much force on them and allowing them to sell their goats if they find a better buyer. This way, they are more comfortable and feel free," he said.

He pointed out that the goats are being sold weight-wise as has been the case traditionally. "We consider an

order confirmed only when 20 per cent of the amount of purchase comes into our account. We tell the farmer that his goat has been sold and give him that amount. A photo of a sample goat is sent earlier and that of the actual goat one week later," he said.

Ali said they have taken the orders and but not made the deliveries as yet because people face problems in keeping the goats in their houses. "We will use transport facilities to send the goats to buyers and the customers have to pay transportation charges," he said.

On problems that are likely to crop up regarding weight or colour of the goats, he said the same could be resolved on the spot. "The goats will be exchanged or the money refunded," he added.

On the murmurs of a lockdown in the run-up to Bakrid, he said in that case, the advanced sum would be refunded to the buyers.

Ali said they were also taking orders from people who give money for the sacrifice and the meat would be distributed among the poor in villages.

भारतीय खाद्य निगम **FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA**

T.C.-3V, Vibhuti Khand, Gomati Nagar, Lucknow-226 010 (U.P.)

REGIONAL OFFICE

Phone No.: 0522-2720063, 4109238, 2720063. E-mail: gmup.fci@gov.in, agmcontup.fci@gov.in

CONTRACT SECTION

E-TENDER NOTICE

On line tenders under two bid systems are invited from experienced / in-experienced/ Sole Proprietary concern or Registered Partnership Firm or a Private Limited Company or a Public Limited Company incorporated in India for appointment of HTC/RTC/IT/Cat various depots/Centres in UP Region. The terms and conditions and other details are available at <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> and FCI website <http://www.fci.gov.in>. Critical dates involving in the tender enquiry are illustrated below in tabular manner.

Bid Publishing Date	24.07.2020
Bid document Download and submission start date & time	24.07.2020, 09:00
Pre bid meeting Date & time	04.08.2020, 12:00
Bid Document Download End Date & Time	18.08.2020, 15:00
Bid Submission End Date & Time	18.08.2020, 15:00
Technical Bid Opening Date & Time	19.08.2020, 15:00

Further, any corrigendum in this regard will be published on CPP portal or on the FCI website <http://www.fci.gov.in>, if necessary.

General Manager (UP)

जन-जन को मिला सरकार का साथ

9 लाख 8 हजार 855 श्रमिकों/कामगारों को आर्थिक सहायता के दूसरे चरण में 90 करोड़ 88 लाख रुपये का

ऑनलाइन हस्तांतरण

आपदा पूर्व चेतावनी तथा राहत प्रबन्धन हेतु वेब बेस्ड एप्लीकेशन्स एवं आपदा प्रहरी एप का अनावरण

योगी आदित्यनाथ
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश द्वारा

दिनांक : 24 जुलाई, 2020 | समय : पूर्वाह्न 10:00 बजे | स्थान : 5, कालिदास मार्ग, लखनऊ

आपदा पूर्व चेतावनी तथा राहत प्रबन्धन हेतु वेब बेस्ड एप्लीकेशन्स एवं आपदा प्रहरी एप के लाभ

- ◆ खराब मौसम की पूर्व चेतावनियों को ऑटोमैटिक एस०एम०एस० अलर्ट एवं वॉचस मैसेज के माध्यम से लगभग 54 हजार ग्राम प्रधान, 24 हजार लेखपाल, 1 लाख 59 हजार आंगनवाड़ी वर्कर, 1 लाख 51 हजार आशा कार्यकर्ता, 35 हजार पुलिसकर्मियों को प्रेषित किया जाएगा।
- ◆ इस सिस्टम से प्रदेश में जन-हानि एवं अन्य नुकसानों को कम करने में सहायता मिलेगी।
- ◆ किसान तथा आम नागरिक किसी भी आपदा की प्राथमिक सूचना तथा फोटोग्राफ्स आपदा प्रहरी एप पर दर्ज कर सरकार तक पहुंचा सकेंगे।
- ◆ राहत वितरण की कार्यवाही को मॉनीटर किया जाएगा।
- ◆ इस मॉड्यूल से एक क्लिक पर जनपद में बाढ़ से संबंधित समस्त जानकारी मिलेगी।

आपदा राहत हेल्पलाइन नम्बर- 1070 | राहत आयुक्त कार्यालय, राजस्व विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

Govt brings transparency in cane supply system

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Sugarcane department, in a bid to introduce total transparency in sugarcane cultivation and supply to sugar mills, has decided to upload the entire data of cane survey and other details on the official website from the next crushing season beginning from November next.

Cane Commissioner Sanjay R Bhoosreddy said here on Thursday that to bring complete transparency in the data related to sugarcane supply for sugarcane farmers for the crushing season 2020-21, the data of sugarcane survey and cane reservation would be uploaded on the website 'www.caneup.in' and E-Ganna app. "Farmers can get all relevant information on their android smartphone or on computer. If a farmer finds any error in his data, he can get it corrected by contacting the sugarcane supervisor concerned or register his complaint

on the 'Grievance redressal' column of the website. This will help in preventing the spread of COVID-19, along with bringing full transparency in the cane supply system," Bhoosreddy said in a statement.

The cane commissioner said that the sugarcane survey work for crushing season 2020-21 was almost complete. He said 100 per cent of sugarcane survey had been done through GPS technology to avoid any kind of error.

For those sugarcane farmers who do not have android mobile phone or are unable to access the website on computer, village level survey demonstration will also be organised jointly by departmental cane supervisor and mill supervisor. If the sugarcane farmers detect any error in the data than they can get it corrected.

In view of COVID-19 pandemic, this year, a society-level survey and cane reservation demonstration fair will be organised circle-wise till

September 30. For each circle, one village per stall per day will be fixed for demonstration, so that the rules of social distancing can be followed.

It has also been directed that in view of the present situation arising due to COVID-19, it will be mandatory for all employees and sugarcane farmers to use face masks, sanitise their hands and follow the rules of social distancing at the village and society level survey.

The sugarcane commissioner said that this year, sugarcane slips would be sent to farmers through SMS only.

The sugarcane farmers can update their mobile phone number through the E-Ganna app. They are required to keep the inbox of the mobile empty and DND service deactivated so that there is no obstacle in getting the sugarcane slip.

UP is the largest producer of sugar and ethanol in the country and has the biggest area under cultivation for sugarcane.

French is the language of future: Envoy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Ambassador of France to India, Emmanuel Lenain, addressed a webinar on Wednesday sharing insights on the beauty of the French language and the employability potential of French speaking candidates in a post-corona crisis world. "French is the language of the future. By 2050, French is expected to be one of the most spoken languages in the world, counting over 750 million speakers," he said.

The Ambassador said the 14 Alliances Francaises in India along with the French institute in Jaipur, have taken their classrooms online during the lockdown to enable their students to learn French through the comfort of their homes and turn a crisis into a promising opportunity. In the Alliance Francaise and French institute networks, students learn through communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, that is, French to French. Thus, students are not required to know any other language to learn French.

Govt hiding failures, says PGV

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After pillorying the Uttar Pradesh government over deterioration in law and order in the past few weeks, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi cornered the Bharatiya Janata Party regime over poor health care in the state.

She charged that the chief minister was more interested in hiding his failures rather than improving the condition of hospitals.

On Thursday, uploading a

video of a waterlogged hospital on her twitter handle, Priyanka posted, "Health facilities should have been improved at a time when coronavirus is spreading fast. But this is the condition of Mahoba's women's hospital. You must have seen the chaotic conditions in hospitals of Bareilly, Gorakhpur and Lucknow. The CM, who is boasting of good health facilities, is interested in hiding these conditions, not improving them." Till Thursday

evening, there was no response from the BJP on Priyanka's tweet. Due to heavy rainfall on Tuesday, district hospital of Mahoba was converted into an island as it was flooded.

Posted at the district hospital in Mahoba, Dr Rohit Sonkar said in a statement that due to waterlogging in the hospital, numerous problems were faced. However, the water was immediately pumped out after the rain stopped and the hospital campus was sanitised.

Hardened criminal nabbed by police

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A joint team of Alambagh police and crime branch claimed to have nabbed a hardened criminal after an encounter on Thursday evening. According to a police spokesman, the accused, identified as Vishal Sharma, is a native of Ambala in Haryana and was presently staying on IIM road in Madiagon. He said Vishal had seven cases of crime registered against him.

The police were tipped off about his presence near Langda Phatak locality in Alambagh and a team started laid a trap. The cops cornered him near Langda Phatak and asked him to surrender, but he opened fire. The cops returned fire and overpowered him. A country-made pistol was recovered from his possession. Commissioner of Police Sajeet Pandey announced a cash award of Rs 25,000 for the team. In another success, the Sarojinagar police and a team of cyber cell nabbed three cyber thugs for duping innocents. Those arrested were identified as Mohammed Saddam of Pratapgarh, Deshraj Yadav of Rae Bareilly and Vjay Dwivedi of Alhabad.

Bachelor sacrifices man to appease deity

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a bizarre incident of human sacrifice in Gonda, a youth severed the head of an elderly man to appease a deity and get rid of the curse of his siblings remaining unmarried. After being nabbed by the police, the assailant claimed that the human sacrifice was made so that entire village remained healthy.

As per reports, Uday Shukla

of Chakrabort Bazaar area of Colonganj (Gonda) was upset at not getting married despite making efforts. Uday lives with his mother and six brothers, all of whom are bachelors. Of the siblings, four are said to be of unsound mental health. An acquaintance suggested to Uday that his family was struck by a curse and hence no one was able to get married. He advised that Uday sacrifice a human life to appease the deity to get free from that curse.

Convinced with the advice, Uday went to a neighbouring house early Thursday morning and zeroed in on Baburam (60) sleeping outside his house. He chopped off to old man's neck with a knife and rushed with his head to offer it to the deity in the village temple. In the meantime, the victim's relatives raised an alarm after which the villagers converged

on the temple and nabbed Uday. They later called the police and handed him over in their custody.

A case was registered and the accused was sent to jail.

Meanwhile in Pratapgarh, a Dalit woman was gang-raped by two persons on the pretext of showing her a house for rent. A Dalit woman (32) was living with her children in a rented house at Fatampur area and her husband was away in Mumbai where he worked. Aiming to shift to another house, the woman, Sangamlal alias Lala, and Dinesh and the two assured to help her in this pursuit. Later in the name of showing her the new house, they took her to a secluded place and took turns with her. Before leaving the scene the duo threatened her with dire consequences if she complained to the police in this regard.

Pilot scores against Gehlot in SC

From Page 1

Gehlot a day earlier wrote to Modi alleging attempts to dislodge his Government by the BJP and named Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat along with "over-ambitious" members of his own party.

Gehlot on Thursday said the audio tapes that proved the alleged BJP conspiracy to topple his Government will be tested in the US for authenticity. The leaked tapes that were

widely circulated on social media allegedly had Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat conspiring against the Rajasthan Government with two rebel MLAs. The rebel leaders and the BJP have alleged that tapes are not genuine and have been made to malign them.

"They don't trust the Special Operations Group. We don't trust their CBI. Best to send it to US for tests in forensic labs," Gehlot told reporters

in Jaipur.

Congress has already suspended Banwar Lal Sharma and another MLA, Vishwendra Singh, who were allegedly among those discussing cash transactions with Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

Claiming that the tapes were fake and he was ready to face investigation, the Union Minister said, "The audio doesn't have my voice. If I am called for questioning, I will definitely go".

307 more test positive

From Page 1

Extension, Sushant Golf City, Gudamba, Thakurganj, Jankipuram and Ayodhya road, two each in Balaganj and Talkatora, and one in Kakori. There are 3,196 active cases undergoing treatment in the city.

Among the fatalities, a 60-year-old COVID-19 patient from Gosainganj died at KGMU hospital of acute respiratory failure on Thursday.

An 85-year-old coronavirus positive man from Rajajipuram also died at KGMU hospital of respiratory failure. The old man suffering from cardiac disease and high blood pressure was admitted to hospital on July 13 and died on Thursday.

A 52-year-old COVID-19 patient with high blood pressure also died at the medical college hospital of acute respiratory failure. He was brought

Govt goes by SC, OK's permanent Commission for women in Army

From Page 1

The order specifies grant of Permanent Commission to SSC women officers in all 10 streams of the Indian Army in which they presently serve - Army Air Defence (AAD), Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME), Army Service Corps (ASC), Army Ordnance Corps (AOC), and Intelligence Corps in addition to the existing streams of Judge and Advocate General (JAG) and Army Educational Corps (AEC). The Army also said it is committed to provide equal opportunities to all personnel including women officers to serve the nation.

However, with 2,303 COVID-19 patients being discharged from hospitals after recovery, 35,803 infected persons have been completely cured in the state. At present 21,126 active cases are under treatment across the state.

With 36 COVID-19 patients dying in the past 24 hours, the state's death toll climbed to 1,298.

India asks China to walk the talk on LAC disengagement

From Page 1

"We have also made it clear that India is fully committed to observing and respecting the LAC and that we will not accept any unilateral attempts to change the status quo along the LAC."

Referring to important talks between National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on July 5, he said both the sides then agreed to work towards complete disengagement of the troops along the LAC and desecration from India-China

Community transmission in Telangana

From Page 1

The State has made it mandatory for Post Graduate (PG) medical students of 2018-18 batch to accept one-year compulsory Government services in Government medical colleges in Telangana.

Meanwhile, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) State president Dr Abraham Varghese has said a complete lockdown in Kerala under the current circumstances will not be effective.

"All signs indicate that community transmission has taken place in Kerala. This is evident in all regions including Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode."

"The number of patients whose source could not be identified are on the rise in the State," he said.

Govt bans public procurement from China, other neighbours

From Page 1

Relaxation has been provided in certain limited cases, including for procurement of medical supplies for containment of Covid-19 global pandemic till December 31, 2020.

By a separate order, countries to which the Government of India extends lines of credit or provides development assistance have been exempted from the requirement of prior registration, it said.

"The new provisions will apply to all new tenders. In respect of tenders already invited, if the first stage of evaluation of qualifications has not been completed, bidders who are not registered under the new Order will be treated as not qualified," it said.

If this stage has been crossed, ordinarily the tenders will be cancelled and the process started de novo, it said, adding the order will also apply to other forms of public procurement.

It does not apply to procurement by the private sector.

Govt bans public procurement from China, other neighbours

From Page 1

The order takes into its ambit public sector banks and financial institutions, autonomous bodies, Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and public private partnership projects receiving financial support from the Government or its undertakings, it added.

Observing that State Governments also play a vital role in national security and defence of India, it said, "the Government of India has written to the Chief Secretaries of the State Governments invoking the provisions of Article 257(1) of the Constitution of India for the implementation of this Order in procurement by State Governments and state undertakings etc."

For State Government procurement, it said, the Competent Authority will be constituted by the States, but political and security clearance will remain necessary.

Govt bans public procurement from China, other neighbours

From Page 1

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कानपुर विद्युत आपूर्ति कम्पनी लिमिटेड 14/7/21, सिविल लाइन्स 'केसा हाउस' कानपुर, ई-निविदा सूचना

अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा अनुमोदी केन्दरारी/कमी से निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु अलग अलग सीलबन्ध निविदाओं के मागों में आमंत्रित की जाती है जो निविदा खुलने की तिथि तक 15.00 बजे तक प्राप्त की जायेगी तथा उसी तिथि को उपस्थित निविदादाताओं/उनके प्रतिनिधियों के समक्ष 16.00 बजे खोली जायेगी। निविदा के प्रथम भाग में निविदा प्रपत्र क्रम मूल्य, धरोहर धनराशि व वैज्ञानिक, तकनीकी एवं अनुभव सम्बन्धित प्रपत्र, व्यावसायिक व अन्य शर्तें आदि एवं दूसरे भाग में दरे बन्द होगी। प्रथम भाग में वांछित निविदा प्रपत्र क्रम मूल्य तथा धरोहर धनराशि की मूल प्रति एवं अन्य प्रपत्र पूर्ण तथा उचित/स्वीकार्य योग्य न होने पर द्वितीय भाग को नहीं खोला जायेगा। निविदा का विवरण - निविदा सं०, कार्य का नाम, खुलने की तिथि, निविदा प्रपत्र क्रम तथा धरोहर धनराशि क्रमः निम्नानुसार है :-

(1) 38-वि.पा.म.(प्र.ज.)/2020-21, अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड - द्वितीय, लखनऊ के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड अधिकाारी, विद्युत पारेषण उपखण्ड-द्वितीय, लखनऊ के प्रयोगार्थ चालक सहित एक नगरीय जीलक वाहिन टैक्सी कोटे का हल्का वाहन 09 माह की अवधि के लिए किराये पर लिये जाने हेतु खुलने की तिथि 28.08.2020, निविदा प्रपत्र क्रम मूल्य रु. 236/- धनराशि (रु. 200.00+G.S.T. @ 18% अतिरिक्त) एवं धरोहर धनराशि रु. 2000/- (2) 39-वि.पा.म.(प्र.ज.)/2020-21, अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड - तृतीय, लखनऊ के प्रयोगार्थ चालक सहित एक नगरीय जीलक वाहिन टैक्सी कोटे का हल्का वाहन 09 माह की अवधि के लिए किराये पर लिये जाने हेतु खुलने की तिथि 28.08.2020, निविदा प्रपत्र क्रम मूल्य रु. 236/- धनराशि (रु. 200.00+G.S.T. @ 18% अतिरिक्त) एवं धरोहर धनराशि रु. 2000/- (3) 40-वि.पा.म.(प्र.ज.)/2020-21, अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड - तृतीय, लखनऊ के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड अधिकाारी, विद्युत पारेषण उपखण्ड-द्वितीय, रामनगरीहोस्टल के प्रयोगार्थ चालक सहित एक नगरीय जीलक वाहिन टैक्सी कोटे का हल्का वाहन 09 माह की अवधि के लिए किराये पर लिये 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67 COVID-19 patients found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The district has crossed the 1600-mark as 67 new corona patients have been detected on Thursday. With this, the total number of patients has increased to 1,643. The day also saw one more death, increasing the toll of 37. The only relief is that during the day, the follow-up reports of 73 patients were found negative and later on, they have been discharged from the hospitals. With this, the total number of patients who have been recovered has increased to 763, leaving 843 active patients.



Security at hotspot Augustya Kund (Dashaswamedh) in Varanasi on Thursday

According to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh, in the first report received by 11 am during the day as many as 20 new corona patients were found out of 166 reports received from Microbiology department of (BHU). Till then, the total test results received were 25,887 and the results of 3,582 excluding 893 RTPCR samples col-

lected a day ago are awaited. Out of these, 24,291 were negative reports while 1,596 positive. The total number of samples collected was 30,362. Earlier, as many as 18 prisoners of a temporary jail were found corona positive.

During the day, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amit Pathak inspected several areas from Maldahia to

Lahurabir and then went upto Benia Bagh to see the condition of traffic jams. He also walked to Dalmandi areas and warned the shop-keepers encroached roadsides for selling their articles. He said that if they are found involved in encroaching the roadsides in the future, legal action would be taken against them. He also asked the cops to ensure compliance of COVID-

19 guidelines and take action against those moving in the markets without wearing masks. The police also made an intensive checking of vehicles in the circulating areas of Varanasi Junction (Cantt) railway station.

Meanwhile, there is no let up detection of a large number of corona positive cases in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) comprising 10 districts of three divisions.

As many as 87 new cases have been detected in Ballia and with this the district has inched further close to touch 1K-mark. Varanasi and Jaunpur had already crossed the mark.

The total number of cases in Ballia has increased to 939 with 376 active patients while 523 have been recovered and nine have died.

In Jaunpur, as many as 19 new corona positive cases have been found increasing the total number of the district to 1198 with 16 deaths

94 more test positive in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

No let up in the spike of the coronavirus cases as the Sangam city once again reported a record 94 new patients inflicted with COVID-19 late on Wednesday night. The number of patients infected with the coronavirus in the district is continuously increasing.

The patients were admitted to the Covid Care Centre. Simultaneously, people coming in contact with these people are also being traced. On Wednesday, 94 new infected patients with the coronavirus have come up in the city, a Nodal official said, adding that 29 patients have been discharged from hospital after recovery.

Meanwhile, how serious is the Health department in terms of treatment of corona patients, perhaps no one can tell better than the corona patients is self admitted to the Covid Care Centre of Unani Medical College. This centre has been started in a hurry, but the preparation is incomplete.

Even hydroxychloroquine and other medicines given to corona patients have not yet arrived. Unani Medical College, Himmatganj has been made a Covid Care Centre. That is, here, corona infected patients without symptoms are being admitted here. When the number of patients started increasing, corona patients started being sent here on Wednesday night. Doctors were posted in this 30-bed Covid Care Centre, but the medicine was not sent here.

Food and 'kaadha' are being given to the patients, medicines which reduce the risk of viruses and increase immunity have not been sent from the department yet. Patients are asking doctors the same question if they will be given some medicines? Doctors are saying that the medicine is



not yet received here.

Nodal Officer for COVID Care Centre Dr Rahul Singh said that patients having no symptoms are currently admitted here and they do not need much medicine. However, medicines will be dispatched here by Thursday late evening, added Dr Singh.

Meanwhile, the corona cases are also increasing rapidly in the Pratapgarh district. On Wednesday evening, all the records were broken as a total of 25 corona positive patients including nine police personnel were found in a single day. This caused a stir in the administration and Health department. Patients were admitted to Covid Hospital. Earlier, 21 patients were found together in the district in a single day.

A police constable from

Fatanpur police station was found infected 10 days ago. After this, samples of 43 police personnel of the police station concerned and 11 staff of Suwansa police outpost were taken for testing as a precautionary move. When the report came nine of them were found infected with COVID-19.

Of them a female police constable, two followers and another constable. Due to the large number of cases being found infected in one place, the Health department as well as the policemen were in a tizzy. The policemen have been isolated in their rooms. Sampling of the remaining 32 personnel will also be done.

Apart from this, siblings of Shyam Bahari Lane of the city have also been found infected. A young man from the Chowk

has been found infected. Coronavirus infection has been found in two girls of Baracha Chhibla and one of their brothers. A male nurse from a women's hospital is infected. This has caused panic among the hospital personnel.

Meanwhile, an employee posted at the Roadways Bus Depot office is also found to be corona positive. He is mainly a resident of Karanpur. The husband of an ANM living in Jogapur near the city has been found infected while a young man from the Gadwara region is a field worker at HDFC Bank. His report has also come positive.

The contract worker posted at Raniganj CHC was found infected when he was tested with an antigen kit. He has been sent to Prayagraj district. An employee of Lalganj Nagar Panchayat has also come under the grip of corona. He hails from Govindpur in the same area. Not only this, a village head of Laxmanpur block area has also been infected by corona.

He had fever and cough problems for a few days. When he was found infected, panic of infection in the entire village was further aggravated. In the meantime, the people who have met him are in a tizzy. A young man running a mobile shop in Katra town has also become infected. The people who took mobiles from him have become restless. The driver of Sukhpal Nagar PHC, who lives in the same town, has also been found infected. The youth of Nawabganj of Kunda tehsil is also in the grip of infection.

Thus, the number of corona cases found in the Pratapgarh district has so far been 206. Nine of them have died, while 115 patients have become healthy and the rest is undergoing treatment at Covid hospitals here.

VNN stirs Hornet's nest over registration of pandas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Varanasi Nagar Nigam of this holy city has stirred up a Hornet's nest when it has notified that the pandas (brahmins) performing religious rituals at ghats of river Ganga will have to get themselves registered with the municipal corporation and the organisations conducting religious, social and cultural events at different ghats will have to pay fees. After facing strong criticisms from all the corners, UP Minister of State for Religious Affairs (Independent Charge) Dr Neelkanth Tiwari came forward assuring the panda samaj of 'no need to worry for those who traditionally conduct puja, religious work and other ritu-

als on the Ganga ghats as no fee will be charged.'

Dr Tiwari, local MLA from City South whose major parts of assembly constituency covers localities situated near the river Ganga, also specifically emphasised that the Pandas should register as they wish, otherwise, there will be no compulsion.

Dr Tiwari also talked to Divisional Commissioner Deepak Agarwal and Municipal Commissioner Gaurang Rathi in this direction and termed the decision as 'impractical' and asked them to withdraw it immediately, saying 'as Kashi is a religious city and the people from across the world come here and offer prayer and religious rituals on

the river Ganga so it is not practical to charge the pandas.'

Earlier, the notification of local municipal commissioner has created a lot of controversies though many provisions were not very new ones like a fine of ₹500 on those bathing with soap in the sacred water of river Ganga. According to Nagar Nigam, a fee of ₹100 per year has been fixed for registration for the priests engaged in conducting various religious rituals on the ghats.

Besides, a fee of ₹4,000 per day would be charged for organising cultural programmes by any institution or individual, ₹5,000 per day for religious work and ₹2,000 per day for social work.

However, the organisations conducting cultural and social events from 15 days to one year will have to pay an annual fee of ₹5,000.

The notice was issued by the incharge of the Revenue department (Nagar Nigam) in which it is said that the new arrangements will be implemented right from July 22. It is also said that the fees are being levied for the maintenance and cleanliness of the ghats.

Apart from several opposition party corporators and leaders, the decision was also strongly opposed by secretary of Akhil Bhartiya Tirth Purohit Mahasabha Pt Kanhaiya Tripathi terming it as 'impractical'.

Coronavirus cases tripled in 22 days in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The continuous spike in the number of corona cases not only in the city but also in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) has turned the situation alarming. In just 22 days, the number of cases has tripled in Varanasi rising from 525 to 1576 between July 1 and 22. This rise was much faster in some districts like Ballia and Chandauli where first cases came into the light very late whereas in Varanasi, it was reported on March 21 when a youth from Phoolpur area who returned from Dubai (UAE) through Delhi on March 15 was found corona positive. Just two days later, a second case of the region was found in Jaunpur and the young patient was returned home from Saudi Arabia.

This showed that there were just two cases in this region prior to nationwide lockdown 1.0 was imposed on March 25 because the third case of the region was found in Varanasi on March 28 when a youth from Shivpur was found corona positive. He returned from Sharjah (UAE). Later, after the episode of Tablighi Jamaat Markaz, several cases were detected in April in Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Azamgarh,

Mirzapur, Mau and Varanasi. However, till the beginning of Unlock 1.0, the situation was well under control not only in Varanasi but in the entire region. There were just 182 cases in the district and out of them, 117 were discharged from the hospitals, leaving 61 active patients and just four deaths.

The number has increased to 1596 by 11 am on Thursday, with 870 active patients and 36 deaths as the recovery rate sharply declined with 690 patients discharged from the hospitals. There was a nine-fold increase in mortality rate while since the start of the Unlock period the recovery rate has declined from 64.28 per cent to 43.23 per cent, sending an alarming signal to the Health department.

Besides, the rising trend also shows how the situation has turned from bad to worse day after day in this holy city where till April end, there were just 60 cases which were almost doubled adding 122 more by May last and more than double by adding 314 more in next month.

Since the beginning of this month, in the first two weeks there were 483 cases found while in the eight days 640 highlighted the deteriorating

situation. The entire region had seen a sharp rise in cases since the process of arrival of migrant workers began. Now, though the authorities are continuously denying any community transmission, the findings of a large number of patients with no contact history have raised the eyebrows of many.

The same is the story of almost all the districts because at the end of the lockdown period there were 768 corona patients in the region comprising 10 districts of three divisions which has increased to 6,640 after the end of 52 days. By the end of Lockdown 1.0 in mid-April, there were no cases in three districts including Ballia, Chandauli and Sonbhadra as they were in green zones but now the situation has become different. The worst affected district is Ballia which separates UP from Bihar through Saran district where during a very short duration, the cases jumped up to 852 with nine deaths and 326 active patients whereas 517 have been recovered.

The same is the situation of the trans-Ganga district of Chandauli which also separates UP from Bihar through Kaimur district. It was a part of Varanasi till mid-1990 where

there were 574 cases by Thursday with 309 active patients and five deaths while 260 have been recovered. Another district of the region which remained safe till very late was Sonbhadra which saw continuous spike during the last few days, increasing the number to 352 with 273 active patients while only 79 were recovered.

After Varanasi, the maximum cases were found in Jaunpur and by July 22, there were 1,114 cases with 318 active patients while 781 have recovered and 15 died. In Ghazipur, there were 655 cases with only 202 active patients (444 recovered, nine deaths) while in Azamgarh 499 cases (146 active, 343 recovered and 10 deaths); in Mau 354 cases (132 active, 218 recovered and four deaths); in Mirzapur 353 cases (99 active, 242 recovered and 10 deaths) and in Bhadohi 313 cases (112 active, 192 recovered and nine deaths). The overall recovery rate in the region has fallen gradually from around 75 per cent a month weeks ago to 55.51 per cent as out of 6,640 patients, 3,686 have been discharged. However, the only relief is low mortality rate comparatively which is just 1.61 per cent (107 deaths).

DM issues notices to many officers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma has on Thursday issued show cause notices to the ARTO (Administration), ACMO and Nodal Officer (COVID-19 Hospital), CMS (Pt Deendayal Upadhyay Government Hospital), Superintendent (Misirpur PHC) and ACMO for dereliction of their duty in connection with the COVID-19 guidelines. Meanwhile, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr VB Singh has also issued notices to the owners of 10 private hospitals warning them to cancel their registrations for not cooperating in the fight against COVID-19.

DM issued notice to ARTO (Administration) AK Rai for his failure to make arrange-

ments of ambulances by taking their acquisition from the private hospitals and nursing homes. Even 10 per cent of requirements made by the district administration could not be fulfilled by such hospitals. Sharma has also sought clarification and cautioned the officer of issuing a charge-sheet against him if he fails in furnishing his reply at the earliest. Meanwhile, according to information, the said ARTO has replied to his clarification to the DM.

Sharma also issued show-cause notice to ACMO and Nodal Officer Dr AK Maurya for his failure to make arrangements of pure drinking water and foods at COVID-19 hospitals while he issued show-cause notice to CMS of Pt Deendayal Upadhyay Government Hospital Dr V Shukla, Superintendent of

Misirpur PHC Dr OP Shukla and ACMO Dr AK Gupta for showing laxity in their duty.

Meanwhile, the CMO also issued notices to the owners of 10 private hospitals including Global Hospital (Awaleshpur), Kashi Hospital (Bhikharipur), Apex Hospital (near DLW), Nandini Hospital (Bachhaw), Subham Medicare (Chandrika Nagar), Popular Medicare (Kakarmutta), Nova Hospital (Babatpur Airport), Sunrise Hospital (Ghousabad), Shree Shyama Hospital (Shivpur) and Max Hospital (Kakarmutta) for showing non-cooperation and failure to ambulances available to the Health department. The CMO warned these private hospitals that their registrations would be cancelled if they failed in furnishing their reply at the earliest.

Earlier, taking the matter of non-cooperation seriously, the

ARTO lodged an FIR against the owners of 10 ambulances for not making their vehicles available to the administration and defying the guidelines of Disaster Management Act. As the cases of COVID-19 cases have sharply increased in the district, both the district administration and health department were criticized for their failure to make ambulances available for the positive patients in time. Both the divisional commissioner and district magistrate had directed the CMO to increase the number of ambulances by asking the private nursing homes to make the same available but the district administration got information that some private nursing home owners were not showing cooperation. DC had directed the CMO to identify such nursing homes in view to cancel their licenses.

Consignment of Remdesivir injection arrives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Considered to be somewhat effective in the treatment of coronavirus infection, a consignment of Remdesivir injection has come to the Prayagraj city on Thursday. Actemra injection is also now available in the city. Patients who need them will be able to get them cheaper and easily from the print rate.

Both these injections will be given only after showing an Aadhaar card, corona positive report and doctor's prescription. The president of the Allahabad Chemist and Druggists Association, Anil Dubey said that these aforesaid injections are available at a discount to patients in only one shop right now in the Civil Lines area. Companies should ensure availability according to demand further.

Drug Inspector Govind Gupta said that these injections will be given only to the family of the patients, which is being provided at a discount. By next week, two more companies are coming to the market with their injections..

SS Traders' proprietor Shadab Siddiq said that the expiry date of these injections is very less and also very expensive. Therefore injections have been ordered in limited quantities, he added.

Special things with these injections are that the print rate of Remdesivir is Rs 4,000 but the injection will be given for Rs 3,600 only. Actemra injection is worth Rs 40,545 while it is available in the market only

Prone position becoming a 'Sanjivani' in treatment

ALLAHABAD (PNS): Prone position is becoming a 'Sanjivani' in the treatment of corona patients admitted to L3 Covid Hospital Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital. In this technique, such patients are made to lie on their stomach side in which oxygen supply is disturbed.

More than a dozen patients admitted to Covid ICU have also benefited from this technique. The SGPGI of Lucknow and Ram Manohar Lohia Institute are already using this particular technique on corona patients.

Most of the corona patients at the SRN L3 Covid Hospital have more breathing problems. The coronavirus is first attacking the respiratory system, especially the lungs, suffering from acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). This causes the supply of oxygen to deteriorate. These patients need a ventilator.

Dr Kamlesh Sonkar, Associate Professor and Neuro Physician of Motilal Nehru Medical College has used this technique positively on corona patients admitted to ICU of SRN Hospital. Dr Kamlesh has used this technique four years ago at SGPGI, Lucknow. Recently, he was posted here in the Covid ward of SRN, then he used it here too which brought relief to the patients.

Dr Kamlesh Sonkar said that patients are made to lie down on their stomachs for several hours in a prone position so that they can move fluids stored in their lungs. Most of the corona patients do not get enough oxygen to their lungs, this further aggravates the problem. In such a situation, they lie on their stomach, the patient's face remains down and this increases their lungs. The huge part of the human lung is towards the back, so when one lies on the back and looks in front, there is less chance of getting more oxygen in the lungs, added Dr Sonkar.

for Rs 30,870.

Status of patients in the district; 1165 people have been infected so far while 484 patients are currently admitted in Covid hospitals and undergoing treatment. A total 612 people have gone home after being discharged from hospital and the city has witnessed a total of 40 deaths due to deadly virus.

NUMBER OF COVID CARE CENTRES BEING

INCREASED: In view of corona's increasing infection, the Health department has stepped up its preparations. The number of Covid care centres is also being increased after the corona patients have crossed the 1000-mark. The 500-bed Covid Care Centre at Kalindipuram opened on Wednesday. From noon onwards, corona infected patients started being admitted here. By late evening, about two dozen corona patients

were admitted there.

Nodal Officer for Covid Care Centre, Dr Rahul Singh said that Unani Medical College Hospital at Himmatganj has also been made Covid Care Centre. Here 100 beds have been reserved for corona patients. It became operational from Wednesday evening. Apart from this, the Agricultural Institute at Naini and the United Institute located at Naini itself have been taken up for the Covid Care Centre. Around 1,500 beds have been reserved in these two institutions.

These will also be operational in two days. These Covid Care Centres have arrangements to admit to those corona patients who have no symptoms. Till now, corona patients are admitted to Kotwa CHC, Beli, SRN and Railway Hospitals.

On Thursday, COVID-19 testing camp was organised at Indira Bhawan on Civil Lines in collaboration with the district administration and Health department. The camp was organised under the leadership of Civil Lines Vyapar Mandal president Sushil Kharbanda and general secretary Shivshankar Singh.

Ashish Arora, the incharge and vice-president of the Indira Bhawan Vyapar Mandal got his corona test first. After this, 50 traders of Indira Bhawan also got corona checked. Ajay Mehrotra, Rachit Seth, Ankit, Vishal Jaishwal, Nagendra Agarwal, Saif, Shobhit, Rituraj Pandey etc also extended their support in the camp.

NCR conquers many challenges during pandemic

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

North Central Railway is continuing its efforts against Covid-19 pandemic on all fronts.

Country is passing through such an unprecedented and challenging phase that no words, no analogy, no parallel seem apt enough to capture the enormity of the crisis due to COVID-19. However, with relentless and dedicated efforts of close to 60,000 Railway corona warriors North Central Railway has adapted itself to current needs and is serving the great nation with the same fervour and with our hallmark mobility.

Since start of lockdown North Central Railway conquered many adversities and challenges through notable

efforts.

Special Trains: Of total 230 special trains started by Indian railways, 126 have stoppage over NCR including two originating specials. Punctuality in July is 98 per cent plus and 100 per cent punctuality achieved on six days in July-20.

Freight and Parcel: 35.5 Lakh tones freight loaded by NCR which includes 19.9 Lakh tonnes petroleum & bitumen, 3.8 Lakh tonnes foodgrains and 4.9 Lakh tonnes cement. Average speed of 45.72 Kms achieved during July-2020.

Parcel: 875 tonnes parcel loaded from 40 notified parcel stations on North Central Railway including 176 tonnes medical goods.

Isolation Coaches: 130 already converted (Prayagraj-40, Jhansi -20, Agra-20 &

Coach Midlife Rehabilitation workshop Jhansi-50) and additional 150 are targeted for conversion based on availability of coaches. Covid Hospital and Quarantine centers: 100 Beds each Prayagraj and Jhansi level one Covid hospitals are operational now. As on 22.07.20 74 Covid positive patients at Central hospital Prayagraj and 51 at Railway hospital are under treatment. For quarantine 651 beds have been made available at different locations over NCR of which 138 beds have been used.

Overall, face cover and sanitiser inhouse production: 8000 Coverall, 1.8 lakh reusable face covers and 10200 litres sanitiser produced through inhouse efforts.

DEVELOPED: When doctors, nurses and the police are

rendering their valuable services in this corona period, engineers are not at all behind. They too are contributing to society but from behind the curtain. Two young engineers from the Institute of Engineering and Rural Technology (IERT) Prayagraj have developed a sensor operated automatic sanitising machine which dispenses sanitiser without any touch. Just out your hand under the nozzle and drops of sanitiser will be wetting your hand. Sridalay Yadav and Ashish Kumar, the electronic engineering diploma holders from the IERT have developed this automatic sanitiser dispenser at very low cost which can be installed at offices, railway stations and many other public places to give a contactless sanitisation.

KDA set to give possession of Signature Greens flats

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) is all set to hand over possession of flats to the allottees in its ambitious Signature Greens City apartments from August.

KDA Superintending Engineer SK Nagar said they were preparing flat-wise site plan to be attached with the documents for registry of sale deeds.

Allottees interested in taking over possession of their flats have been advised to contact the superintending engineer.

Nagar said if any allottee had not deposited the full cost of the flat, he/she could apply for ascertaining the final costing for registry.

Those who have paid the entire cost of the flat, are entitled for the registry of their property, detailed procedure of which can be ascertained from the Help Desk on the ground floor of KDA.

Nagar said the construction work was almost over.

Till the installation of a 33 KV power transformer, alternative arrangements to provide electricity to residents have been made. The work for



KDA Signature Greens City Apartments ready for possession of flats to buyers

Pioneer

connecting the pipeline from the main road is also on.

It may be recalled that the process of handing over possession of flats gathered momentum on the directives of Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (UPRE-RA) which had already extended the deadline for the work on KDA's request.

Besides, KDA would soon start the allotment of 1,700 houses built under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana.

Nagar said as the verification of beneficiaries of the under-construction houses in Sakrapur, Bhagirathi and Jahni schemes had been done by the District Urban Development Agency (DUDA), lottery for allotment of remaining PM Awas houses would be drawn soon.

DUDA has sent the list of beneficiaries after one year on the directives of Principal Secretary (Housing and Urban Planning).

The superintending engineer said KDA had also urged the state administration to release the next instalment for construction of PM Awas.

It may be recalled that KDA has to construct 10,000 houses under the PM Awas Yojana in Mahavir Nagar Extension, Sakrapur, Bhagirathi and Jahni. Of these, the construction of 2,000 houses in Sakrapur, Bhagirathi and Jahni has already been completed.

235 more test +ve in Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar reported 235 more coronavirus cases on Thursday.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Anil K Mishra said 235 more people tested positive for coronavirus in the past 24 hours, pushing the tally to 3,250 cases.

He said 1,332 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals and with this, 1,587 infected persons had been cured in the city so far.

The CMO said at present, 1,507 COVID-19 patients were undergoing treatment in the city.

Dr Mishra said with the death of seven more COVID-19 patients, the death toll stood at 156 on Thursday evening.

He said 1,332 samples were taken for testing, 829 of them from surveillance areas

Woman killed

KANPUR (PNS): An elderly woman was battered to death in her house in Sagarpuri village under Vidhnu police station.

According to reports, on seeing 55-year-old Indrani's 4-year-old granddaughter Mohi weeping at the doors on Thursday morning, the villagers entered the house and were shocked to see the profusely bleeding body of the woman lying on a cot near the stairs. She had been battered to death with a brick and belan (rolling pin). Police recovered the blood-stained brick and broken belan along with a blood-stained pillow from the spot. It is suspected that after strangling her with the pillow, she was battered with the brick and belan.

Mohi told the police that her mama (maternal uncle) and mami (aunt) had visited the house on Wednesday evening. Police have taken both of them into custody for interrogation.

The sniffer dog, after going to the backside room where Mohi was sleeping, went out of the main gate and up to a road intersection about 200 metres away from the house. Ghatampur Circle Officer Ravi Kumar Singh said evidences suggested the hand of somebody close to the deceased in the murder.

He said the case would be worked out soon. Indrani, wife of Satish Chandra Tewari of Tikra village of Narval (Kanpur), was living with her younger son Hari Om in Sagarpuri (Vidhnu) for the past 10 years. Two months ago, Hari Om had gone to Delhi to work in a factory and Indrani was living here with daughter-in-law Poonam alias Nitu and three granddaughters — Mohi (4), Mahi (2) and Chhoti (1). About a week back, Poonam, along with Mahi and Chhoti, had gone to Delhi to live with husband Hari Om and since then, Indrani was living here with Mohi.

DM inspects Integrated Covid Command & Control Centre

CORRESPONDENT ■ BANDA

District Magistrate Amit Singh Bansal inspected Integrated Covid Command and Control Centre in Vikas Bhawan on Wednesday. DM directed the CDO to make available sanitisers and drinking water to the employees there. DM directed the DPRO to get the Covid Command and Control Centre sanitised on a daily basis. DM asked him to ensure the sanitisation of the landline phone twice on daily basis. Later DM Amit Singh Bansal conducted a meeting with the nodal officer of Command and Control Centre/CDO Banda. DM directed him to conduct a meeting with the



officials at 5 pm daily and fix the work plan for the next day. DM directed CMO Dr Santosh Kumar to obtain the survey report of surveillance team and samples reports of Covid-19 tests. DM also asked CMO to ensure facilities to Covid-19 patients.

Bansal directed CDO to make available all relevant information related to Covid Command and Control Centre to him by 5 pm on a daily basis in order to send it to the state level nodal officer. DM directed the officials to make a WhatsApp group in order to exchange quality information. He added that all authorities/subordinates should be connected with this WhatsApp group.

Officials pay surprise visit to dist jail

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Susheel Kumar Patel and Superintendent of Police Dr Dharmveer Singh paid a surprise visit to the district jail on

that social distancing was maintained in view of Covid-19. He said that mask was mandatory for the jail staff, prisoners as well as the visitors who came there.

TWO BOYS DROWN: In a tragic incident two boys drowned in a pit dug at a brick kiln in Gursandi village under the Dehat Kotwali police station on Wednesday. As per the reports, Dev Narain (12), son of Kripa Shankar Yadav, and Satish (8), son of Shyam Lal Yadav, had gone to graze their buffaloes in the field. On seeing a pit filled with water the children went to bathe there and met a watery grave. Their bodies were fished out from the pit and taken to the district

hospital where the doctor on duty declared them as brought dead.

MEETING: A peace committee meeting was held at City Kotwali on Wednesday. In view of forthcoming festivals of Bakrid and Rakshabandan ASP City Sanjay Kumar and City Magistrate Jagadamba Singh addressed a meeting of respectable persons of the society. On the occasion they appealed to the people to celebrate the festivals by following the norms of social distancing in the larger interest of the society. They asked the people to inform the administration about any problem related to civic amenities during the festival and stay at home.



Wednesday. During their visit the officers inspected the barracks, hospital as well as the kitchen. The DM directed the jail superintendent to ensure

Automatic thermal scanning system installed

PNS ■ VARANASI

An automatic thermal scanning system has been installed at Manduadh railway station here helping the railway employees check the health of passengers without making any direct contact. Earlier the manual scanning process not only consumed a lot of time but also posed high risk to the railway employees in view of coronavirus pandemic as recently several of them were also found infected with the virus. The automatic system will also make it easy for the Railways to examine the health of a large number of passengers when the running of all regular trains will restart. Divisional rail manager (DRM) of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) Vijay Kumar Panjari said that the installation of automatic system would help in speeding up the process of examining the health of passengers without any risks of being infected with coronavirus. Earlier DRM inspected Nandganj and Aunrihar railway station areas to see the prospects of increasing goods train movement in the area as

it is mainly known as a passenger-oriented division of NER. During his inspection Panjari also reviewed the punctuality of goods trains, improvement in basic arrangements of goods shed and condition of approach roads. DRM reached Nandganj goods shed conducting the window-trailing inspection of the Aunrihar



Nandganj railway section. He inspected the shed with the aim of increasing freight transportation and during his visit there he instructed the concerned officers to strengthen the surface of the ramp designed for loading and unloading goods, construction of rest rooms for traders and workers apart from making all other proper arrangements. Later Panjari inspected Nandganj railway station and reviewed the operation activi-

ties by ensuring effective compliance with Covid-19 regulations. He also gave some instructions to the officers concerned. On the occasion he also spoke to local traders and heard their problems. Panjari had assured the traders of providing concessions to them as much as possible. Subsequently, the DRM reached the Aunrihar railway station on his inspection vehicle and took stock of the development work regarding passenger facilities. He also inquired about the basic changes related to station building, extended platforms, foot over-bridge, water booths, passenger's waiting room, station master's chamber, progress in ongoing work of doubling the tracks and electrification. He was accompanied by deputy chief engineer (Construction)-I Rakesh Ranjan, deputy chief engineer (Construction)-II Gaurav Gupta, senior divisional engineer (Coordination) Rajeev Agrawal, senior divisional operations manager Rohit Gupta, senior divisional commercial manager Sanjeev Sharma, senior divisional electrical engineer Satyendra Yadav and some senior supervisors.

Agricultural packaging to get a boost

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur District Magistrate BR Tiwari said the government had decided to set up a direct link between farmers and industries for the benefit of farmers, industrialists and consumers.

He said the district administration would act as a bridge between farmers and industries. He said the government would also develop small markets to facilitate the farmers as well.

District Agriculture Officer Manish Singh said that in the agricultural sector, between harvesting and consumption, there was 54 per cent loss of food. He said there were several points between these two main sessions where things could go wrong in handling, stacking, and transporting of agri products. He said thus agricultural packaging was

essential in this sector to prevent food from being ruined or spoiled before reaching the consumers.

He said emphasis was also to be laid on eco-friendly raw materials, process, and practices which would be gradually adopted in agricultural packaging.

Singh said as the population of the country rose, there was an increase in the demand for food production and so there was need to prevent high amount of food from being wasted. He said agricultural packaging helped farmers and manufacturers to deliver food in most effective way without any loss.

He said packaging eliminated unnecessary wastage of food during post-harvest treat-

ment procedures, production process, storage, and transportation. He added that high preservation and protection of food enhanced the importance of agricultural packaging. He said this would ensure short and long-term stability between the farmers, industries and the consumers.

Singh said that in agricultural packaging, different products required different types of packaging, including storage, bulk shipments and retail packaging. He said it had also to be taken care that packaging should be easy to handle, safe to transport, and resistant to injuries and punctures.

CDO, SK Singh and several other officials were present in the meeting.

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Experts discuss virtual faculty development

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Prof HC Verma of Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur addressing the on-going virtual faculty development programme on the topic 'Current Trends in Physics' at Christ Church College said this would go a long way in the promotion of teachers.

He said current times were that of on-line education and with new courses being started online there was bound to be teething troubles initially. He emphasised upon a strategy to benefit maximum number of students.

Prof Verma said the objective was to connect physics with society. He said it was true with COVID-19 would change the lifestyles of many and education was one important area.

Discussing challenges of online academics, he said in the current times the world had come to realise that the economic success of the states was directly determined by their education systems and it was nation's strength.

Prof Verma said a developed nation was inevitably an edu-

cated nation. He said there were many challenges to higher education system of India but equally a lot of opportunities as well to overcome these challenges and to make higher education system much better. He said today the country needed need well skilled and highly educated people who could drive economy forward. Prof Verma said online education changed all components of teaching and learning in higher education. He said the three major categories of findings were issues related to online learners, instructors, and content development. He said to address these challenges in online education, higher education institutions need to provide professional development for instructors, training for learners and technical support for content development. He said in India the digitisation initiatives were encountered problems such as lack of national policy, lack of preservation policy, no intellectual property rights policy for content development of digital information, rigidity in the publishers' policies and data formats, lack of multiple Indian language OCR facilities etc.

Prof Verma further stated that quality in higher education was a multidimensional, multi-level and a dynamic concept. He said ensuring quality in higher education was amongst the foremost challenges being faced in India today. He said the government was continuously focusing on the quality education. He said another factor was poor infrastructure and added that particularly the institutes run by the public sector suffered from poor physical facilities and infrastructure.

He said another major problem was faculty crisis and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well qualified teachers and transparent selection system which alone could improve quality of education. The programme was compered by Dr SP Singh and the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Aparna Dixit.

Dr Anita Shukla Dr Ramesh Sharma (FGIET) also took part. **TREE PLANTATION:** As part of the ongoing tree plantation drive in Kanpur division, the Lions Club and Kanpur Ekta Vishal jointly planted around 100 saplings of orna-

mental and fruit bearing trees at Ganga Barrage Colony in Vinayak Nagar. Secretary of the Club, Sushma Srivastava, said it was the duty of every individual to support the government in the tree plantation drive. She said the club would continue to plant saplings in other areas of the city and also motivate others to do the same.

Women set a trend with Unnati masks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In an initiative of IIT-Kanpur and Kanpur Parivartan Forum, dozens of women are making high quality masks. These masks are sanitised and packaged on IIT-K campus. For the last three months, thousands of masks have been made and sold.

According to Rita Singh from IIT-Kanpur Unnati masks are made under the guidance of a team from IIT Kanpur. Buyers like them because of their high quality, superior design and comfort.

The feature that differentiates these masks in the market is that they are 4-ply and have an inner shield provided by E-Spin, that prevents entry of virus. The masks are washable, trendy and have contour fit that prevents air leakage and properly covers nose and mouth.

Prof Sandeep Sangal, coordinator of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, said the IIT-K students conducted resource mapping of these villages last year and identified several products

that were unique to the region.

He said Brand Unnati was created so that these products made by rural women and artisans could reach the end users directly.

Aranyaani, led by Sandeep Saxena, an alumnus of IIT-Kanpur, joined hands and hosted masks on its e-commerce site. Renu Shah of Parivartan said, "It is a great learning experience for these women and we are very hopeful to see many rural products making into the market."

With more and more women taking onto tailoring, a training cum production centre is planned in Ishwariganj village. Donors have started coming forward to support the cause.

The IIT-Kanpur director said that Unnati masks adhered to safety norms.

Renu Shah, Renu Gupta, Faiz Khalid and Hitendra Gupta of Parivartan have given their active support to the project. The masks are designed by designer Surbhi Saxena.

Application for contactless checking of reserved tickets

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

For contactless checking of reserved tickets the Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) has developed an application for all zonal Railways with which through QR code all details of PRS ticket will be available on mobile. This system of checking reserved tickets is extremely modern as well as a very effective way to avoid coronavirus at present. Under the said arrangement after the booking of reserved ticket the URL (link) of the QR code will be sent through SMS on the

mobile number of passengers, said Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh. At the time of entering the station or during ticket checking the passengers will have to click on the URL of QR code made available to them through SMS. By doing it the QR code will be displayed on the mobile browser of the passenger concerned. The travelling ticket examiner (TTE) can scan the code being displayed on the mobile phone of the passenger with a cell phone in which QR code scanning facility was available. The QR code scanner can be downloaded

from the free app, Google Play Store or iOS play store. Hand-held terminal (HHT) are also capable of scanning QR code through which all details of passenger's PNR becomes available before the TTE for further action. In the near future this method of ticket checking will be very convenient both for passengers as well as the TTE and the quality of services provided by the railways to the passengers will improve. At Gorakhpur Junction of Lucknow division the work for installing a separate scanner for scanning of QR code of reserved tickets is under process.

Three thieves held

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The Jhangha police arrested three thieves from Banjari Tola of Motiram Adda on Wednesday morning. Police claimed to have recovered three stolen bikes and an LED TV from their possession. Jhangha police station incharge Anil Kumar Singh said that on being tipped off by an informer he along with constables Motiram Adda, Suraj Singh, head constables Lavkush Pandey and Dharmendra Singh and constables Kuldeep Kumar and Manoj Kumar surrounded the area and arrested the three accused. They disclosed their names as Pappu, son of late Ram Dayal Kewat, Panna Lal, son of late Hari Kewat, residents of Motiram Adda Banjari Tola under the Jhangaha police station,

and Govind, son of late Dilip, a resident of Bangsoda under Barideh police station in Bokaro district of Jharkhand. Police registered a case under Sections 457, 380, 411 and 41/411 of the IPC and presented them in court from where they were sent to jail.

Meanwhile on being tipped off by an informer three more accused were arrested by a police team on Wednesday in connection with the murder of Arvind Maurya following a land dispute in an area under the Uruva police station on July 17. The police produced all the three accused in the court from where they were sent to jail. They were identified as Rajesh Maurya, Surendra Maurya and Sadanand, residents of Sheikh Bhiura village under Bangsoda police station.

Mishap death

CORRESPONDENT ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI

A motorcyclist was killed in a road accident here recently. Rizwan (40), a resident of Lalapura village in Jagnapur Majra under the Dhaurahra Kotwali was seriously injured when his motorcycle was hit by a tractor trolley in an area between Sisaiya and Isanagar. The accident took place when he was going to Isanagar through Sisaiya crossing. On getting information UP 112 police reached the spot, informed the family members for the victim and rushed the injured to the district hospital where he died after a brief treatment later. Eyewitnesses said that the motorcyclist was not wearing a helmet. However inspector incharge Sunil Kumar Singh said that after the post-mortem examination the body of the deceased had been handed over to his family members. He said that no application had been received yet. After getting it a report would be registered and necessary action would be taken, he added.



Congressmen pay homage to Bal Ganga Tilak and Chandra Shekhar Azad on their birth anniversaries at Tilak Hall on Thursday

Pioneer

Paramilitary forces log 9,700 Covid-19 cases

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Central paramilitary forces have clocked over 9,700 Covid-19 cases with 4,300 of them being active ones even as the test reports of about 600 personnel are awaited. As many as 41 personnel have so far succumbed to the infection.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has breached the 3,000-mark in terms of number of infected personnel and tops the list with 3,241 personnel testing positive for the novel Coronavirus infection till now. Of this, as many as 220 cases of infection were reported during the last 24 hours. Currently, there are 1,583 active cases and 1,643 patients have recovered and 15 have died due to the pandemic.

The Border Security Force (BSF) is just short of 49 cases in touching the 3,000 mark in terms of Covid-19 infection with a total of 2,941 personnel being infected by the viral diseases. Out of 2,941 positive

cases reported so far in the BSF ranks, 1,512 are active and 1,429 have recovered besides 10 casualties including patients with comorbidities and a road accident victim who later tested positive for the viral disease.

Likewise, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has a total case count of 1,524 including 413 active cases and 1,101 recovered patients besides 10 casualties.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has reported 1,038 Covid-19 positive cases till so far of which 606 continue to be active cases and 429 have recovered and three have died.

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has reported 474 cases of Covid-19 infection in its ranks of which 257 are active cases and 214 have recovered. The Force has reported three casualties due to the viral disease.

The National Security Guards has reported 91 cases of Covid-19 infection of which only seven are active and 84 patients have recovered. The Force has not reported a single

casualty due to the disease.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has reported 384 Covid-19 cases in its ranks of which 80 are active and 304 patients have recovered. Like the NSG, NDRF too has not reported any loss of life due to the pandemic.

As many as 9,703 cases of Covid-19 have been reported across the seven Forces till now of which 4,458 continue to be active and 5,204 have recovered from the disease.

Covid-19 test reports of suspected cases of infection of 596 personnel are awaited as on date.

During the last 24 hours, 495 cases of infection have been reported across the Forces with the CRPF alone reporting 220 new cases during the period. The BSF and ITBP reported 62 and 61 new cases respectively during the last 24 hours followed by 25 cases in CISF and 15 cases in SSB. The NSG reported one new case and the NDRF tested six positive cases during the period.

'Reducing dependency on Chinese API import not easy'

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of India's bid to become 'atmanirbhar' (self-reliant), one of the Government's own bodies has maintained that reducing dependency on the import of the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) from China is not going to be an easy affair. API is a chemical compound that is the most important raw material to produce a finished medicine. At present, 68 per cent of India's API need is fulfilled by China.

It pointed out that indigenously-manufactured drugs would be 20 per cent costlier than those available from the neighbouring country.

The Technology, Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), an autonomous body under the Union Science and Technology Ministry, in its report has now called for preparing a national stockpile of generic medicines for critical illness and ensure API security in view of changed global norms due to Covid-19 pandemic and border tiff with China.

The report also suggested that while India has the technology for production of many APIs, the production cost needs to be optimised to match the global norms largely by scaling up of operations.

"Towards this, common facilities such as solvent recovery plant, distillation plant, power and steam units etc. should be established in bulk drug parks," said the report "Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients: Status, Issues, Technology "Readiness and Challenges" as it dwelt in detail on the strength and limitation as well as emerging market scenario in the sector.

In 2019, India imported APIs worth ₹249 billion of which around ₹169 billion were from China itself, with the imports increasing steadily from just 0.3 per cent in 1991 to the current 68 per cent.

"Two-thirds of the total imports of APIs and drug Intermediates were from China. Out of the 373 drugs in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), around 200 are imported as APIs, that too mostly from China. The import value of bulk drugs and

drug intermediates from China to India increased around 23 per cent from 2016-17 to 2018-19," said the report.

Despite a very strong base, due to low-profit margins and non-lucrative industry, domestic pharmaceutical firms gradually stopped manufacturing APIs and started importing, finding it a cheaper option with increased profit margins on drugs.

Dependence of India on China for the imports of critical key starting materials KSMs, intermediates and APIs has increased over the period. India also imports common raw materials, solvents etc, required for the production of drugs, said the report.

All the drug Intermediates are imported to India, of which 58 molecules are exclusively imported from China.

The global pharmaceutical market is USD 12 trillion with API market of USD 1,822 billion.

The pharmaceutical industry in India is third largest in the world, in terms of volume, behind China and Italy and fourteenth largest in terms of value.

The Indian industry has a

network of 3,000 drug companies and about 10,500 manufacturing units with Indian domestic turnover reaching ₹1.4 lakh crore (USD 20.03 billion in 2019, with exports to more than 200 countries in the world:

Identifying a list of APIs which need to be taken up for prioritized manufacturing, the report compiled by scientists and pharma experts said that India needs a Mission mode Chemical Engineering with defined targets for uninterrupted synthesis of molecules and to create mega drug manufacturing clusters with common infrastructure.

"For those few APIs, for which we don't have technology, early stage research and development support should be provided for pilot development of APIs.

"At the same time, issues related to land acquisition, ease of doing business, environmental clearance, taxation, and R&D need to be resolved while a single window clearance system and priority license renewal system for companies manufacturing APIs need to be established," said the report.

PM Modi is 100% focused on building his own image: Rahul



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday once again targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi by alleging that the latter was "100 percent focused on building his own image" and did not have a vision for the country that had allowed China to take advantage.

"India's captured institutions are all busy doing this task. One man's image is not a substitute for a national vision," he tweeted along with his two-minute video as part of his ongoing series on different issues.

Former Union Minister Ajay Maken at a Press conference said since last one week, PLA is not withdrawing from the 'depth areas' as agreed in four rounds meeting of corps-commanders of India and China.

NIT/CFTIs admission criteria relaxed in view of rising corona cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant development, the HRD Ministry on Thursday announced a relaxation in the admission criteria for NITs and Centrally-funded technical institutions (CFTI) in view of the Covid-19 pandemic by doing away with the requirement of minimum 75 per cent marks in Class 12 board exams.

"Due to prevailing circumstances, Central Seat Allocation Board (CSAB) has decided to relax the eligibility criterion for admissions to NITs and other centrally-funded technical institutions," Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' tweeted.

"JEE Main 2020 qualified candidates will now only need to obtain a passing certificate in class XII examination irrespective of the marks obtained," he further said.

For admissions in NITs and other CFTIs, apart from qualifying the JEE-Main, the eligibility was to secure a minimum of 75 per cent marks in Class 12 board exams or rank among the top 20 percentile in their qualifying examinations.

Ministry holds maiden Ind-SAT Test 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union HRD Ministry has conducted the first-ever Indian Scholastic Assessment (Ind-SAT) Test 2020 under its 'Study in India' programme. Nearly 5,000 candidates from Nepal, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Sri-Lanka, Kenya, Zambia, Indonesia and Mauritius appeared for the exam conducted in the proc-

tored internet mode by the National Testing Agency.

EdCIL (India) Limited, a PSU under the MHRD and the implementing agency of SII, handled the registrations and other aspects of the examination.

Ind-SAT is an exam for grant of scholarships and admissions to foreign students for studying in select Indian universities under the Study in India programme.

The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Mains, which has been postponed twice, will now be held from September 1-6.

Nishank had earlier announced that the eligibility criterion for JEE (Advanced) 2020 qualified candidates are being relaxed and a decision has been taken in this regard by the Joint Admission Board (JAB). Several State Boards have had to partially cancel

class 12 exams.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exams could not be held as per the schedule and the boards had to release the result on the basis of a new assessment scheme wherein the average marks secured by the students in the papers for which the exam was held were taken into consideration. Students who wish to improve their scores will be given a chance later.

North-East regions have immense potential to spur India's growth: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India's north eastern region has immense potential to become the growth engine of the country. He talked about the potential of the tourism industry in the region and its development as a bamboo industry hub.

Regarding the massive development works taken up in Manipur, the Prime Minister said that the Imphal - Jiribam railways work is going on with an allocation of ₹14,000 crore while ₹3,000 crore has been sanctioned for the development of Imphal International Airport.

Laying the foundation stone of Manipur water supply project via video conferencing, the Prime Minister said that it has been designed to provide safe drinking water to every household of the State for the next 20-22 years



and lakhs of people will get access to clean drinking water and thousands of people will get employment.

Modi said that the mantra of peace, progress and prosperity is echoing in the Northeast, and day by day my faith is getting deeper because peace is now being established in the entire region. "While blockades in Manipur have become a part of history and Assam has not witnessed any violence for decades.

In Tripura and Mizoram too, youth have abandoned the path of violence. Now Bru-Reang refugees are moving towards a better life," he said.

EC defers 8 bypolls as Covid, flood unabated

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Due to a huge surge in transmission of coronavirus infections and deteriorating flood situation in several States, the Election Commission (EC) on Thursday announced the deferment of by-polls to one Parliamentary constituency and seven Assembly seats that were scheduled to be held by September 7. By-elections are due in 56 Assembly constituencies and one parliamentary seat. The remaining 49 bypolls are due after September 7.

The seats where the bypolls have been put on hold till September 7 are Valmiki Nagar in Bihar, Sibsagar in Assam, Thiruvottiyur and Gudiyattam in Tamil Nadu, Agar in Madhya Pradesh, Bulandshahr and Tundla in Uttar Pradesh and Chavara in Kerala. The EC has clarified that in any case, the deferring of eight by polls is only up to September 7, 2020. Seven of the bypolls had been necessitated by the deaths of the sitting legislators, while in Tundla constituency in Uttar

Pradesh, the MLA was elected to Parliament.

As per the electoral law, EC has to hold bye-elections within 180 days (six months) of a seat falling vacant, another official pointed out. The six-month deadline to hold by-elections in these eight seats was ending on different dates in July, August and September respectively. When the EC assessed the situation, it found that it is difficult to adhere to the six-month deadline in these seats, and approached the Union law ministry to defer the polls, EC officials said.

The EC said that the Commission has already taken a decision to hold all bye-elections as per provisions of Section 151A of the Representation of People Act, 1951.

The Commission will be taking up for discussion the matter of timing of the bypolls at its meeting to be held on Friday.

Sources said that flood situation in Assam has deteriorated due to incessant rainfall. Over 56.22 lakh population in over 6,000 villages have been affected in the state. Similarly,

Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh where the bypolls were due, witnessed huge surge in the coronavirus infections, making it difficult for authorities to engage poll duties and conduct of election procedures.

The continuing coronavirus situation has cast a shadow on the upcoming Assembly polls in Bihar, widely considered the most important electoral event in the country this year.

Political parties had been calling for deferment of the polls in Bihar as many of the opposition leaders in the state have said that having elections during the outbreak will put the lives of people at risk. NDA ally Chirag Paswan also in favour of deferring the assembly polls in the state due to coronavirus infections that will be on peak during elections in November-December.

Apart from these seats, 24 seats in Madhya Pradesh are up for by-elections due to Scindia's rebellion. As per Section 151-A of the Representation of the People's Act, 1951, ECI will conduct by-polls to 22 seats by September 10.

Major reshuffle in TMC organisational posts

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Within 48 hours of blowing the poll bugle Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday effected a major reshuffle in the ruling Trinamool Congress by infusing a mix of experience, youth, clean image and loyalty at the organisational level.

North Bengal and Jangalmahal in south-western part of the State where the TMC fared miserably — conceding a large bulk of seats to an emerging BJP in 2019 General elections — have found special focus in the new scheme of things.

Much in the line of the BJP's 'Marg Darshan Mandli' a good number of TMC old guards who were functioning as district presidents' have been "elevated" as 'chairpersons' of the respective district units — a new designation with unspecified political potency.

The rejig exercise was conducted via a virtual meeting of

senior leaders from the State and district, sources said.

Among the young leaders are former India cricketer and Bengal captain, Laxmi Ratan Shukla the present Sports Minister of Bengal. He has been appointed the president of Howrah city president removing powerful leader and Minister Arup Roy.

MP and senior leader Sudip Bandopadhyay who have been elevated as the chairperson of the North Kolkata district committee has also been asked to continue as the party president of the district until a new appointee takes over.

While in South Kolkata Debashis Kumar continues to remain the party president Nadia finds a new district chief in vocal MP Mohua Moitra.

The BJP has come up in a big way in Nadia which like North Bengal and Jangalmahal has seen the entire former Left leadership switching over to the saffron ranks.

In North Bengal, prominent civil society member and former MP Arpita Ghosh has been removed as the president of South Dinajpur district which went into the hands of BJP in the parliamentary elections.

Further north Coochbehar has seen a new face in Partho Pratim Mitra replacing seasoned leader and Minister Rabintra Nath Ghosh as the district president. Similarly Shyamal Santra, Swapan Debnath and Jiten Tewari have been made the district presidents of Bankura, East and West Burdwan districts while Ajit Maity has been given the charge in West Midnapore.

The rejig has also seen the creation of a 7-member core committee comprising powerful leaders Firhad Hakim, Subhendu Adhikary and Gautam Deb ministers, Kalyan Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee MPs and Subroto Bakshi a former MP and close aide of the Chief Minister.

1,078 more test positive in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

For the second day in succession, Kerala diagnosed more than 1,000 persons afflicted with Covid-19. "Today also we have tested higher number of patients with covid-19. On Thursday, 1,078 persons were diagnosed with Covid pandemic. The disease claimed five lives across the State during the last 24 hours," said Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in his media briefing on Thursday.

On Wednesday, 1,038 persons were found to be affected with Covid-19. Out of the 1,078 persons tested positive for Covid-19 on Thursday, 798 were infected through contacts, said Vijayan. He also said that Thiruvananthapuram (222), Kollam (106) and Ernakulam (100) were the districts which tested higher number of patients.

The State has 16,110 Covid patients. Hospitals in the State have 9,408 patients undergoing treatment for the pandemic. The day also saw 432 persons getting discharged from the hospitals after they were found to be fully recovered.

The Chief Minister said that the Council of Ministers which met on Thursday morning had asked the Governor to cancel the one-day session of the Legislative Assembly called for next week. "This is because of the unusual situation prevailing in the State and also due to the advanced age of some members of the legislative assembly.

EP Jayarajan, the Minister for industries and the second-in-command to the Chief Minister who briefed the media after the cabinet meeting in the morning blamed the media for spreading fake and false news about the Covid-19 situation in the State.

New Delhi: In an effort to jointly combat the novel coronavirus, Israel Thursday said it will send to India on board a special flight a research team which has been working with the Indian side to develop a rapid testing kit for COVID-19 which can give a result within 30 seconds.

In the coming weeks, Israel's ministries of foreign affairs, defence and health will lead an unprecedented anti-COVID-19 cooperation operation between India and Israel, an Israel Embassy statement said.

A special planned flight from Tel Aviv to New Delhi is set to carry a high ranking Israeli defence ministry research and development team which has been working with India's chief scientist K VijayRaghavan and Defence Research and Development Organisation to develop rapid testing for COVID-19 in under 30 seconds, it said.

Merging Israeli technology with Indian development and production capabilities aims to allow a swift resumption of normal life alongside the virus, the Israeli Embassy said.

The flight will also bring breakthrough emerging Israeli technologies for combating COVID-19, which have been donated by Israel's foreign ministry and private sector meant to bolster India's response to the outbreak.

"Finally, the plane will deliver mechanical ventilators which were given special permission by the Government of Israel for export to India," the statement said.

The past few years have cemented the strategic relations between India and Israel and have included two historical visits of the prime ministers in Israel and in India, the Embassy said.

Since the outbreak of the global pandemic, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have held three telephonic conversations in which they promised mutual assistance in dealing with the virus and committed to joint technological and scientific research between the countries, the statement said.

Noting that India is currently facing over one million COVID-19 positive cases, the Israeli side said India seeks to integrate advanced technologies in its hospitals as they prepare to treat massive waves of COVID-19 patients on an Indian scale.

The Israeli companies chosen by the three ministries to be sent to India are potentially given unique access to one of the largest economies in the world to provide monitoring and treatment technologies while significantly reducing contact between patients and medical staff, the statement said. **PTI**

Crucial time for Vijayan as NIA begins questioning ex-Secy

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The National Investigating Agency, probing the gold smuggling through diplomatic route in Thiruvananthapuram airport, on Thursday started questioning M Sivsankar, the suspended principal secretary of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Sivsankar reached the Police Club in capital city where a team of NIA sleuths were waiting for him. The session between the IAS officer and the

NIA officials were progressing even at the time of going to Press.

It is after ten days of meticulous planning that the NIA team summoned Sivsankar. Last week saw Sivsankar, an official close to Vijayan being subjected to a marathon grilling by the Customs officials at Thiruvananthapuram which lasted for more than nine hours.

The NIA had interrogated Sarith, Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair for many days

before they took the decision to summon Sivsankar. Though the Customs and NIA officials remained incommunicado till date about the entire case, it is reported that they got valuable information linking the IAS officer with the trio in the smuggling operation.

The day began with news that Mohammed Yousuf, the Commissioner of Customs, issued an order transferring six superintendents and two inspectors probing the case.

Virus claims 88 lives in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Hopes of any kind of respite from the coronavirus pandemic remained elusive in Tamil Nadu as 88 persons succumbed to Covid-19 in the last 24 hours while 6,472 new persons tested positive on Thursday.

A release by the Government of Tamil Nadu said the number of active patients in the city reached 52,939 by Thursday evening while the total number of covid-19 cases diagnosed till date crossed the 1.92 lakh.

With Thursday's 88 death, the fatalities in the State reached 3,232. The only news that offered some relief was in the number of patients getting cured and discharged from hospitals-5,210.

What was Thursday's cause of concern was the hike in the number of persons diagnosed with the pandemic in Chennai and the three neighbouring districts. Despite the claims by the Government officials that the number of patients in Chennai were coming down, the Metropolis tested 1,336 Covid cases on Thursday.

Pak Army shells areas along LoC in Baramulla

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Pakistan Army on Thursday activated several sectors along the line of control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir and targeted civilian pockets in Poonch and Naugam sector of Baramulla district.

In response, the Indian Army hit back strongly and gave them a befitting reply.

Official sources on ground zero claimed, "for the last couple

of days the Pakistan Army is aiming at upping the ante and desperately trying to push small batches of infiltrators inside the Indian territory". These sources claimed, "the handlers of various terror outfits sitting across the LoC are desperate to send fresh batches of terrorists to execute their sinister plot of targeting security forces and vital installations during the first anniversary of Abrogation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the erst-

while state of Jammu & Kashmir on August 5".

To foil their nefarious designs the foot soldiers of the Indian army are maintaining a tight vigil.

Official sources said, "In the Poonch sector, the Pakistan Army is repeatedly targeting several civilian pockets to disturb peace in the region and trigger unrest among the local population". Five civilians have lost their lives in two recent incidents of ceasefire violations in Poonch.

This round to Pilot

SC says disqualification can't be based on dissent, asks why Speaker approached court when he should be neutral



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot may have been a tad too offensive in seeking the court's intervention to deter his one-time deputy Sachin Pilot from challenging the disqualification notice sent to him and his loyalist MLAs under the anti-defection law. But the Supreme Court firmly underlined what democracy is, the kind Gehlot has been claiming to defend, and what constitutional processes are. "Assume a leader has lost the faith of persons. While remaining in the party, they cannot be disqualified. Then this will become a tool and no one can raise their voice. The voice of dissent in a democracy cannot be suppressed like this," said Justice AK Mishra as the top court refused to stop a High Court verdict on a petition by 19 rebel Congress MLAs, challenging their disqualification notices. Clearly, the court laid down the thin line between the democratic right to dissent, that is healthy for building participatory dialogue and one which deserves a listen, and an ego-driven revolt. And it went with Pilot's defence that the notices were an attempt to curb "freedom of speech." For the last few days, the Pilot camp has been challenging the showcause saying the House was not in session and they hadn't done or said anything to indicate they were parting ways with the Congress. Both Gehlot and Pilot camps have been seeking refuge in the interpretation of clause 2(1)(a) of the 10th Schedule of the Constitution. Going by the several Supreme Court judgments in the matter, it could be said that any anti-party activity was tantamount to voluntarily giving up the membership of the party. Gehlot has been building evidence of Pilot's breakaway moves since, like parading MLAs claiming bribery offers and releasing alleged tapes of senior BJP leaders coaxing rebels, to justify this argument. But Team Pilot argues that the clause cannot be overextended to disallow the right to express one's opinion. Rajasthan Speaker CP Joshi, who served the notices last week, had argued that the rebels cannot petition the High Court before he took action. And that as a constitutional authority, he had the right to do so even when the House was not in session as the rebels had skipped two meetings of the legislature party. In fact, anticipating an adverse verdict, Joshi moved the Supreme Court even before the High Court could declare its ruling on the Pilot camp's plea. The Supreme Court even took note of this impatience to latch on to power. The court asked, "It is the matter of just one day. Why can't you wait?" And reminding the Speaker of his constitutional role, the judges asked why he, as a neutral person, should approach the court at all in a pre-emptive manner or appear partisan? The Supreme Court can anyway hear appeals against High Court rulings but why did the Speaker assume that the latter would be favourable to the rebels? This presumptive tactic might just impact all the other moves of Gehlot. So far, in a bid to save his Government, he has been aggressively taking on the BJP for another version of "Operation Lotus" and poaching a discontented and maladjusted Pilot. He even wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging the BJP's attempts to dislodge his Government, naming Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat and making Modi himself complicit in the goings-on in his party. But his adventurism on the rule of law has betrayed the maturity and astuteness with which he acted before the BJP could move in, herding legislators, furnishing numbers to the Governor and gathering evidence against Pilot. Getting the Speaker to defend the disqualification notices has clearly backfired and exposed his anxieties. Gehlot claims he has 106 MLAs on his side, still a narrow lead in a 200-member Assembly. If the High Court disqualifies Pilot and his 18 MLAs, the majority mark of 101 will come down and Gehlot will be safely home. If not, the rebel MLAs can vote against his Government and narrow the margins.

As Gehlot continues to prepare a back-up plan and publicly deride Pilot, it would have been better if he had accommodated him as shrewdly and continued his chief ministership. Now, it looks like he is the one impatient instead of Pilot. The younger Congressman and once an acolyte of the Gandhi scions cannot look back either as he has waded deep into the contest. He is drawing political sustenance from the grass-roots where he has worked for the last six years or so. The Gujjars of three States — Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh — has amassed behind him just like they did for his father Rajesh Pilot. This means a sizeable votebank that could make Pilot attractive to the BJP. The fact that he changed his plea in the High Court and made the Centre a party to it is some indication that he will gravitate to the other polarity. That's the sad part, the assumption that Congress' breakaways, most of them talented with fresh ideas, will do better in the BJP than in the party that they had volunteered for. The example of Himanta Biswa Sarma in the Northeast shows that the BJP is consolidating with ex-Congress talent. Old Congresswallahs may say the young are pesky and impatient but the crossovers have meant that the Congress has lost Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Arunachal, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Is Gehlot's ego turf worth it?

The Rafale arrives

India's long tradition of French fighter jets continues. The game-changer aircraft will boost our capabilities



In 1953, newly independent and democratic India placed a large order for fighter jets. The contract didn't go to the British. Instead, India ordered 70 Dassault Ouragan aircraft from France and a strange love affair developed between Indian fighter jocks and French jets. Over 140 Ouragans served the Indian Air Force (IAF) before they were replaced by Dassault Mystere IV aircraft of which India operated over 100. The latter distinguished itself admirably in the 1965 war with our unfriendly western neighbour. While India did not operate the legendary Dassault Mirage III and Mirage 5, which acquitted themselves with distinction over the skies of the Sinai peninsula during the two Arab-Israeli conflicts, we did order a small number of the Mirage 2000 aircraft. It quickly became a frontline fighter for us and played a critical role during the Kargil war. It even delivered the weaponry that destroyed a terrorist hideout in Balakot early last year. And now, India will start receiving the next generation of French fighting prowess, the Rafale.

The Rafale is a dramatic step up for the IAF. With its supreme weaponry and electronic warfare capabilities, it is far superior to anything that either of the troublesome twosome on India's eastern and western border have. It is an expensive plane and an initial planned order for 126 aircraft has been peeled back to 36. It is but certain that a follow-up order will be placed soon. However, India would do well to remember the acquisition problems it has faced in the past. With the Mirage 2000 and the Boeing C-17 Globemaster, a heavy lift logistics aircraft, India dithered with making its follow-up orders. Both aircraft had seen their production lines close and India was left twiddling its thumbs. We cannot afford to vacillate like this with acquisitions again as the previous UPA administration hesitated for years over military hardware acquisition. As a result, it left gaping holes in India's security apparatus, which are only being patched up today. The Rafale is a great new addition to the IAF and will give India an edge both in weapons delivery and air-to-air combat. But they cannot come fast enough. However, India must not give in to knee-jerk reactions. Instead, we must plan out a thorough acquisition strategy with more domestic manufacturing, which will not only help the local economy but also develop India's military-industrial potential. The events of the past few months have taught us that we cannot trust the Chinese, particularly its President. We have to be prepared for the worst. The Rafales will help.

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Farewell, my Queen

The Boeing 747 is being withdrawn from passenger service. It changed aircraft design, made flying affordable and pushed airports to improve their facilities



KUSHAN MITRA

The British Airways' announcement that it is going to retire its fleet of Boeing 747s from commercial passenger services hit many aviation fans pretty hard. I have probably flown more passenger miles in the British Airways' 747 aircraft than on any other airline. In the past few months, two other iconic operators of the Boeing 747, Australian airline Qantas and Dutch airline KLM, also announced that they flew their last jumbo flights. In the last couple of years — thanks to the emergence of more point-to-point flying, higher frequency and the sheer efficiency of modern twin-jet aircraft like the Boeing 787 and Airbus A350 — more and more 747s are being retired across the world.

Air India withdrew the jumbo flight's operations a couple of years ago but has been using it for some Haj and Ummah-related duties. Most other American, Asian and European operators have retired the plane from service. However, there are exceptions like Air China, Lufthansa and Korean Air, which operate the newer 747-8 variant, and a couple of other airlines such as Thai Airways that operates the older 747-400. In fact, my last 747 flight was unexpectedly on the Thai Airways from New Delhi to Bangkok and back last year in October.

The global aviation industry is in a meltdown after the Wuhan virus laid waste to the global economy. Global aviation was a primary vector in the spread of the virus and many nations sealed their land borders. Others like India banned all flight operations though limited repatriation flights are still being carried out.

Many airlines have read the writing on the wall and they understand that even if a solution, such as a vaccine to this accursed pestilence is found, traffic will not recover for months, may be even years. The Boeing 747 is too large an aircraft for reduced traffic. This means higher operating costs. As for Airbus A380, airlines are quickly retiring these aircraft, too. Air France, the airline of the nation where the A380 is put together, just retired all of its Airbus A380 fleet, the youngest being a decade-old. Airlines will tell you that it is cheaper to fly two Boeing 787 Dreamliners than a single 747 or Airbus A380.

While cargo variants of the 747 are still flying in great numbers, both those built at the Boeing factory outside Seattle, Washington, and those planes converted from passenger operations to freight, have halted operations. After all, the 747 was initially conceived as a cargo plane and the iconic "hump" on the air-



craft was there to allow the nose to be lifted up for the cargo to be loaded. Cargo operations with the 747 are likely to continue for many, many years because there is no direct replacement for it. In fact, most international air cargo operators still follow a "hub and spoke" model for cargo travelling between major airports.

The last convoy carrying fuselage and wing sections of the A380 has reached the final assembly line in Toulouse and the aircraft will be completed in a couple of months. Even then, the single largest operator of the A380 aircraft, the Dubai-based Emirates Airline, is retiring its oldest twin-deck behemoths. But it is ironic that the Boeing 747, which undertook its maiden flight in 1969, would have significantly outlived the Airbus A380, a plane built with typical European arrogance to one-up the US. The A380 is undoubtedly an amazing engineering and technological achievement unlike the Boeing plane, but is an unmitigated commercial disaster.

The Airbus A380 line will close soon as the last nine planes are prepared for delivery. In the 15 years since the factory opened its doors, a mere 251 entered commercial service. Boeing is expected to close its 747 lines in 2022, with 16 aircraft (all cargo variants) remaining to be delivered. Around 1,558 planes have already been delivered since 1970. And while the current options such as the 747-8 have lit-

tle in common with the earliest model — 100 and 200 variants — just one look, and you know that it is 747. I think (I do not believe that I am alone here) this is the single most important reason that the 747 is seared into our memories; it looked unique when it was first flown and it still does with the hump at the front and its sharply swept wings.

There was an aesthetic beauty in the 747, which the A380 simply does not have. The latter is functional but not pretty. Truth be told, I rarely got to fly in 747s of late, the move to withdraw it from service across the world having begun in the early 2010s. Of course, those two flights to Thailand were a pleasant surprise, a couple of British Airways flights across the "pond" stuck in a middle seat less enjoyable. But I did experience that ultimate joy of an aviation fan. I have flown on the upper deck of a 747, which is one of the single most fun things one can do.

The last time I did that was on a British Airways evening service from Chicago O'Hare to London Heathrow. As far as my memory goes, I think I just slept throughout that flight. I never knew it was going to be the last time. Even as global air travel boomed during the past decade, a lot of that was due to the rise of low-cost airlines, hopping and skipping around the world with their gigantic fleets of Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 aircraft. While it will be interesting to

see what happens to these airlines, even Indian ones, in the aftermath of the Chinese contagion, international air travel, too, has changed. In no small part, thanks to the emergence of more point-to-point flying and ultra-long-haul flights.

A decade ago, a non-stop flight to and fro from India to the US was just about possible with a load of penalties. Today's Boeing 777 and 787s and Airbus' A350 can make the crossing with a full load in just 16 hours. Imagine travelling from New Delhi to San Francisco in the 1970s and 1980s when the 747 had just begun service. An Air India or Pan American 747 would have taken you to New York's JFK after stopping at least two-three times. You would have to change planes at JFK and then make the cross-country hop across the US, may be with another stop or two. Travel time with stop-overs may have been around two days.

Before the pandemic started, both Air India and United Airlines had non-stop services between the two cities, 15 hours from take-off to touchdown. Sure, that might seem like a lot of time without any "fresh air" but there was no need to walk bleary-eyed with screaming children across a strange airport, dealing with security and waiting for hours through weather delays and the risk of lost baggage, thanks to the multiple connections. But without the Boeing

747, none of this would have happened. The 747 made large-scale international commercial travel viable; it democratised travel in a way that was previously unimaginable. It is because of the Boeing 747 that there was a huge wave of migration of engineers and doctors out of India in the 1970s and 1980s.

The 747 made flying affordable; it made global airports improve their facilities, jetbridges that connect planes to the terminal became a standard feature at airports as did massive automated baggage handling. Airports built bigger runways and larger infrastructure to cater to the masses that a single jumbo jet brought in. The 747 changed aircraft design; the high-bypass turbofan engines developed for it transformed aviation. It led to the development of the trijets Douglas DC-10 and Lockheed L-1011 TriStar by rival companies.

It is the development of the high bypass turbofan, which literally sips fuel compared to older engines, that led to the creation of all modern planes such as the Boeing 777, which has the largest engine in commercial service. The 747 was the "Queen" and the world of aviation comprised its subjects. Even though fewer and fewer 747s remain in the skies ferrying passengers, the legacy of the Boeing 747 is one that will continue for a long time to come.

(The writer is Managing Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

PM Modi is 100 per cent focussed on building his image. India's captured institutions are busy doing this task. One man's image is not a substitute for a national vision.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

There's the knowing smile. Not because I know things for sure...but mostly because I am at peace with the idea of not knowing...what's important will reveal itself at the right time...



Actor —Sushmita Sen

The Trump administration has maintained close contact and tremendous cooperation with India on the latest Chinese border aggression.



US Ambassador to India —Ken Juster

If you take racism and discrimination in the world, one of the most important things is to teach your children history as it should be and not the sanitised version of it.



Former Sri Lanka captain —Kumar Sangakkara

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some succour

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "A glimmer of hope" (July 22). The news that early stage clinical trials of the Oxford University COVID-19 vaccine have proved that it is safe and induces an immune response gives the world hope at a time when we are facing one of the deadliest pandemics in history.

Though more tests have to be done before it is made available for the public, there is hope for mankind even as the pandemic has already claimed more than six lakh lives and infected millions of people around the globe. Many other nations, including India, are also on the path of developing a vaccine. There is something to rejoice as the Serum Institute of India, one of the premium immunobiological drugs manufacturers of the country, has entered into a manufacturing partnership with AstraZeneca once the vaccine trial is successful.

The human trials will be done in August and a confirmed analysis will be possible by October/November, according to the firm. If everything

Oxford vaccine promising but let's be real

This refers to the editorial, "A glimmer of hope" (July 22). With 15 million cases and six lakh deaths globally, biomedical companies are under tremendous pressure to deliver a safe and effective vaccine for Coronavirus. While the outbreak is peaking by the day, a silver lining on the horizon is also flashing. A new vaccine development technology — RNA vaccine, also known as mRNA — is emerging as the front-runner to alleviate mankind's COVID-19-inflicted miseries. The three leading vaccines by Oxford — AstraZeneca, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna — are mRNA based and are also in the final phase of trials. The technology, capable of faster rollout at affordable prices, is versatile and promising. It is known to produce safe and long-lasting immune response in addition to better management of a class of white blood cells called T-cells. White cells, as we all know, help the body get rid of infected cells. That two dozen of the 150 vaccinations are mRNA driven is not surprising. All the three front-running vaccines score high on "dual immune response" comprising antibodies and T-cells.

Though some euphoria is justified, yet we must understand that vaccine development is a lengthy and painful process. Even the vast amount of data from clin-



ical trials is unable to justify the hypothesis the biomedical community has set out to prove. The durability of the immune response system as also the longevity of the regenerated T-cells together are concern areas. The universal safety of vaccines across age groups remains worrisome as representation of the vulnerable groups in the clinical trials is said to be limited. While the need for a safe and effective vaccine is given, expediency cannot override quality. Being optimistic is good but being one with caution is better.

SK Prabhakar Gurugram

Futile exercise

Sir — This refers to the article, "Leave Lutyens alone" (July 21) by Yashovardhan Azad. The writer is right to raise alarm over the Government's plan to

restructure the Lutyens' zone. Parts of this area have maintained a distinctive architectural heritage and urban character. The razing of buildings from the Rashtrapati Bhawan to India Gate will rob the Lutyens area of its beauty.

Instead of getting a facelift, the large open spaces may get obliterated. Many beautiful buildings in the Lutyens' zone add grace and charm to the city. One finds it difficult to understand as to why such a restructuring is required at places which are brimming with charm and beauty. The Government should instead focus its energy on redeveloping and beautifying the old city of Delhi and also perking up the economy.

Devendra Khurana Bhopal

Adapt to changes

Sir — The pandemic has led to several changes. But the judicial system has found it difficult to adapt to changing times. In fact, the pandemic has only made matters worse for our courts. Piled up cases, outdated laws, lengthy legal proceedings and the lack of legal reforms are some of the things that demand immediate attention.

Rati Jain Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

India can exit fiscal tight spot

For this to happen, GDP growth and the economy have to be treated and run like a corporate house, hungry and lean



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top Cabinet Ministers have spent the last fortnight talking to numerous stakeholders and potential investors across the globe and at various fora, trying to convince them that India has lifted the shutters and is ready for business. Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs, has talked about potential opportunities for investors on the Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Meerut highway corridors, the linked and now commercially-available waterways and has gone on record to promise daily, weekly and monthly returns from investments in India's infrastructure. Similarly, Minister of Communications, Electronics and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad has announced an ambitious production-linked incentive scheme for large-scale electronics manufacturing firms, with potential financial incentives and sharp focus on high-value, globally-produced components of mobile phones and air conditioners.

Modi himself, at multiple fora and one-on-one conversations with top CEOs, has made a strong pitch for refuelling India with upgraded, long-term investments for a brighter future for enterprises and the global world order. Much of this effort has been made to keep the money coming in for Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who has been trying to find alternate sources of revenue during one of the biggest economic slowdowns India has seen in recent memory and to ensure that the State fulfils its commitment of providing basic amenities like food and medical care to a large section of the population. These efforts are the need of the hour for India, which is faced with the dual challenges of a raging pandemic and military/economic ambush from an aggressive neighbour, China. And there is still a large track left to be covered to become a larger than \$5 trillion economy in a very short period.

So, what can be done? To begin with, GDP growth and the economy have to be treated and run like a corporate house, hungry and lean. Some may argue that it could lead to overlooking the welfare of a vast majority of the population. In a democracy, this could lead to uncomfortable questions in Parliament at a time when elections in some States are around the corner. While I won't comment on the latter part of the argument regarding the politics behind stalling growth projects, the fact remains that there are many enterprises and cooperatives around the world where sustainable development of employees has gone hand in hand with healthy business growth.

To take an example, the Government has access to a vast amount of cash. It can very well enter into minority shareholding or profit-sharing arrangements with private fund managers and sovereign wealth creators, who can be tasked with bringing in high-value returns in a relatively short span of time. Of course, the challenge would be to put the perfect agreement papers in place, as too tight controls on managerial capacity could lead to efficient fund managers losing interest. On the other hand, too less control and the Government could be pulled up for corruption and collusion with wrong parties.

Second, the Government can again, by strategic choice, pick up a bunch of real estate and infrastructure projects stalled across the country due to lack of funds or slowing demand (even before the COVID-19 crisis began). The Government's track record of taking up construction has been much below market standards but it can make a fresh start by bringing world-class builders and infrastructure specialists on board. A leading example of bringing efficiency by smart partnering and teamwork is Delhi Metro, where both the Central and State Governments have an equal ownership but the money to build the 489-kilometre suburban railway network has come from Japan. The corporation thus formed runs with 10 nominees from the State and Central Government and eight (including the Managing Director) full-time Directors. What it ensures is equal say for most stakeholders and also brings the necessary momentum behind the wheels to tunnel through the toughest and most congested lanes of Delhi.

In a similar approach, Smart City, a pet project of the Government that is in tune with Digital India, can be broken into smaller self-sustaining, futuristic enterprises with an independent Board of Directors, equal nominees from the Union and State Government-concerned and a full time professional CEO (with a competitive salary to begin with). This team of approximately 20 people will have the task of converting an available chunk of land and its civic amenities into a global, high-tech piece of excellence, while empowered to raise funds for itself.

Modi has often been praised for his respect for the bureaucracy and bringing in the right talent for implementing projects on a mission mode. If he and his talented team put their mind to converting Smart City projects into globally-marketed profitable ventures in a relatively short span of time, it could be a game changer. It could help the country to come out of the current economic crisis and turn it into one of the biggest opportunities for the nation. *(The writer is a policy analyst)*

ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE TO DESTABILISE ELECTED GOVERNMENTS. I DON'T KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT YOU ARE AWARE OF ALL THIS OR YOU ARE BEING MISLED.

—RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER
ASHOK GEHLOT

POINT COUNTERPOINT



IT IS CLEAR FROM THE LETTER OF THE CM TO THE PM THAT HE HAS LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF HIS MLAs AND HIS GOVERNMENT IS IN MINORITY.

—RAJASTHAN BJP CHIEF
SATISH POONIA

FDI through front door

The Govt must allow 100 per cent FDI in retail as this will level the playing field for all, eliminate discretion of bureaucrats whose writ is all-pervasive and help small traders



UTTAM GUPTA

On April 22, the California-based US internet giant, Facebook, announced its decision to buy 9.99 per cent stake in Jio Platforms Limited (JPL) paying more than ₹43,450 crore. JPL is a 100 per cent subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and has in its fold a wide spectrum of businesses such as wireless broadband, home broadband, enterprise broadband, narrowband, internet-of-things businesses, a bouquet of digital applications, e-commerce and so on.

This was followed by a flurry of investments with big names such as General Atlantic, Silver Lake, Qualcomm, Intel, Vista, Google and so on, bringing in cumulative investment of over ₹1,00,000 crore, taking the total to ₹1,50,000 crore. In lieu of this capital, they get aggregate shareholding of 30 per cent or ₹5,000 crore for every one per cent, thus valuing the company at a whopping ₹5,00,000 crore.

Even as foreign investors see value in every segment of the business on this platform, at the centre stage is e-commerce, which is being powered by JioMart commerce platform — a unit of JPL. In fact, Facebook has come in primarily with an eye on tapping opportunities in this area and signed a comprehensive agreement with JPL to exploit synergies between the two conglomerates.

The duo intend to offer technology-enabled wherewithal to enable consumers access neighbourhood stores and have products delivered at their doorsteps. About 30 million of these stores will be empowered to digitally transact with every customer in their neighbourhood (over 400 million-strong Indian database of WhatsApp — a 100 per cent subsidiary of Facebook — will come in handy). JioMoney — RIL's payment platform — will be integrated into the JioMart venture to facilitate hassle-free seamless payment for transactions. The model operated by Reliance under JioMart is a combination of online and offline retail. Apart from Reliance Retail Limited (RRL), which has thousands of retail stores spread all over India and gets hooked on to the Jio platform, it will be serving tens of millions of neighbourhood stores in a variety of ways viz. handling, procurement, storage, payment, delivery and so on. Since all of this will be powered by a digital eco-system, the model is a hybrid of online and offline.

Two things are abundantly clear: Reliance Industries is deeply entrenched in Indian retail — already through RRL and now increasing its footprint exponentially through the Jio Platform. It is getting a massive injection of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with Facebook alone having pumped ₹43,450 crore into JioMart. But this is out of sync with the extant policy in regard to FDI in retail. For the purpose of FDI, unlike the international practice where retail is treated as a single homogenous sector without any distinction, the Indian Government has divided retail into several classes. In India, we have Single-Brand Retail (SBR) and Multi-Brand Retail (MBR) and there are sub-categories within each. Here, we deal with MBR or retail — as it is known in common parlance.

Within MBR, there is the "physical" format or offline, which takes two forms: The euphoric mom-and-pop stores, also nicknamed neighbourhood stores, and organised retail. Then, we have the online format, which has two sub-categories, the marketplace model and the inventory-based model.

In the physical format, as per a policy approved by the then UPA dispensation in 2012, as much as 51 per cent FDI is allowed but with a plethora of riders such as 30 per cent local sourcing, minimum investment of \$100 million and prior approval of the State where the retail shop is to be set up. In 2016-

LOOKING AT WHAT IS HAPPENING ON GROUND ZERO, IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THE MODI GOVERNMENT HAS NO OBJECTION TO PERMITTING FDI IN ONLINE RETAIL AND EVEN IN OFFLINE RETAIL (ALBEIT WITHOUT ANY RIDERS) AS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED BY THE TREATMENT METED OUT TO AMAZON/FLIPKART EARLIER AND NOW TO FACEBOOK RIDING PIGGYBACK ON RIL. WHY SHOULD IT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN IN A VAGUE AND CONVOLUTED MANNER? WHY SHOULD THE POLICY NOT BE CLEAR-CUT AND TRANSPARENT?



17, an unprecedented 100 per cent FDI in food retail was allowed, subject to the foreign retailer selling items which are sourced only from Indian farmers and processed locally. Besides, 25 per cent of investment should be in agri-infrastructure like irrigation, farm machinery/impliments and so on. In the online format, as per guidelines issued in early 2016, (Press Note 3) 100 per cent FDI is allowed under the so-called marketplace model. The marketplace is a platform where vendors sell their products to consumers even as its owner merely acts as a facilitator. The marketplace owner provides services such as booking orders, raising invoices, arranging delivery, accepting payments, handling rejections, warehousing and so on. But, s/he can't hold inventory and undertake direct selling.

The permission for 100 per cent FDI in the marketplace is subject to two main riders, that is "the entity cannot permit more than 25 per cent of total sales on its platform from one vendor or its group companies. Further, it can't directly or indirectly influence the sale price." Sans any specification as to "who the vendor is", a firm linked to the marketplace (either its subsidiary or a Joint Venture with an Indian company) is eligible.

Thus, contrary to the real intent of the policy, which disallowed the marketplace owner from direct selling to individual consumers, the fine print permitted them to do so — albeit by its subsidiary or JV. This is precisely what e-commerce majors such as Amazon and Flipkart/Walmart have been doing even though they came in as marketplace operators. They are operating as direct sellers, controlling inventory, giving discounts and so on.

A clarification to Press Note 3 issued on December 26, 2018 has not materially altered the position on ground zero. It says "the owner of the marketplace or its subsidiary or its JV with Indian compa-

ny can't have ownership of the seller." Further, "a seller/firm on the platform can't source more than 25 per cent of its inventory from a firm connected with the latter." The marketplace owner can get around both. First, by having less than 50 per cent shareholding in the seller firm and argue, he has no control (albeit majority) over the latter and second through the wholesale arm continuing supplies to the seller but within the 25 per cent threshold.

The clarification has not deterred their hold over Indian retail; they are dominant sellers themselves, giving little space to millions of small vendors for whose benefit this unique policy dispensation of the marketplace was designed. Disingenuous bureaucrats allowed them to do so by crafting policy architecture to suit them.

The small vendors, through their umbrella organisations such as All India Online Vendors Association (AIOVA), Retailers Association of India (RAI), Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh (DVM) and so on, have petitioned judicial authorities at various levels seeking action against Amazon/Flipkart for violation of FDI norms and indulging in unfair practices but have not got any relief. The sole reason is that the courts go by the fine print which suits these giants.

Unlike the marketplaces of foreign e-commerce majors, JioMart commerce platform floated by RIL holds the potential of giving a boost to the small vendors, but even this may not gel with the extant policy framework. Even as the main thrust of the policy is on "complete prohibition of FDI in direct selling to individual consumers", JioMart, which is deeply entrenched in direct sales, has received investment from Facebook — a foreign company.

Like Amazon et al, Reliance/Facebook may get around by citing that foreign shareholding in the seller firm is less than 50 per cent or a wholesaler linked to

JioMart owner Reliance/Facebook will keep its supplies to the vendor within the 25 per cent threshold. Or they may carve out a separate entity entirely for food retail where 100 per cent FDI is allowed. This way, the two would be able to demonstrate that they are not violating the rule book. But this is not the way to go.

Looking at what is happening on ground zero, it is abundantly clear that the Modi Government has no objection to permitting FDI in online retail and even in offline retail (albeit without any riders) as amply demonstrated by the treatment meted out to Amazon/Flipkart earlier and now to Facebook riding piggyback on RIL. If that be so, then why allow it to happen in a vague and convoluted manner? Why should the policy not be clear-cut and transparent? Why should FDI not be allowed through the front door?

The Government should shun the marketplace model. It should allow 100 per cent FDI in retail in both online and offline without any riders (the special categories such as 100 per cent FDI in food retail should go). This will level the playing field for all, online vs offline, food retail vs non-food, marketplace vs inventory and so on and eliminate discretion of bureaucrats whose writ is all-pervasive when it comes to grant of approvals.

It will help small traders by leading to all-round development of infrastructure and offering a wide range of choice for sourcing products. They can and will co-exist with big players — both foreign and Indian. It will be pro-consumer in the long-run with many players catering to their needs at competitive/affordable price. Sans these policy changes, under business as usual scenario, the consumers will pay a heavy price in the medium to long-term as Indian retail will be cartelised by a few players viz. Amazon, Walmart and Facebook/RIL.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

A flood of urban woes during the rains

Traffic snarls, waterlogging and the loss of lives show that a manageable issue has been allowed to deteriorate



KOTA SRIRAJ

Amid the pall of gloom cast by COVID-19 and the oppressive heat, India was earnestly looking forward to the arrival of the monsoon. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had forecast surplus rainfall in various parts of the country and sure enough, metropolises such as Mumbai and Delhi have received a healthy share of showers.

Mumbai, for instance, received 26 per cent more rainfall as compared to last year, while Delhi received 70 mm of rain on July 19 alone, which is the highest in the last five years. But no matter how heartening the rains

might be, every passing year they bring in their wake the ever-growing problem of urban flooding.

This has been experienced for decades in India but sufficient attention has not been given to specific efforts to deal with it. In the past, any strategy on flood disaster management largely focussed on riverine floods affecting large extents of rural areas. Urban flooding is significantly different from rural flooding as urbanisation leads to developed catchments and in the event of heavy/high intensity rainfall, there is higher run-off, which increases the flood peaks from 1.8 to eight times and flood volumes up to six times. Consequently, flooding occurs very quickly due to faster flow times, sometimes in a matter of minutes.

The recent death of a mini-truck driver after his vehicle got submerged under the Minto Bridge after a spell of rain in Central Delhi underlines the growing threat of urban flooding. While most of the time urban India patiently endures huge volumes of



flooding and the resultant traffic snarls, when people start losing lives, it is time for the citizens and the authorities to consider the problem seriously and deal with it effectively.

Though large cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai go through urban flooding annually, the recurrence of the problem suggests that no lessons are learnt and no infrastructure is built or improved to prevent it. Just a few hours of hard rain in metropolitan cities can present a very embarrassing spectacle as daily life is thrown out of gear and the cities become unwitting

examples for the developed world to learn from. Another concerning aspect is that urban flooding increases the chances of contagious diseases like typhoid, cholera, leptospirosis, hepatitis and even COVID-19 spreading far more easily. For instance, floodwaters in Assam spread discarded medical waste and used PPE from hospitals and COVID-19 care centres, raising fears of infection among people in inundated areas.

One of the major reasons for urban waterlogging are the archaic sewer systems in our cities that are heavily choked with silt and garbage. Indian metros not only need regular cleaning of sewers and storm water drains, particularly before the onset of the rainy season, they also require an advanced system that is based on the latest technology and satellite data that can calculate the quantities of water run-off every monsoon and accordingly estimate the load factor on the sewerage and storm water system.

Another reason for flooding of cities is excessive concretisation and

paved areas in the urban landscape. This has not only resulted in exacerbating the heat island effect and causing a sharp spike in ambient temperatures but preventing rainwater absorption into the ground and recharging of the water table. This, too, increases the rainwater run-off, putting undue pressure on the drainage network.

The efforts to prevent urban flooding will be incomplete unless the ground water absorption rate of rainwater as compared to the run-off rate is balanced. Another issue pertaining to urban flooding is the role played by illegal construction and how it is impacting the storm water drainage system across India's major cities. As urban sprawls increase rapidly, unauthorised construction and unplanned digging by civic agencies are becoming two major issues that are further impacting our already overburdened drainage systems adversely. Flooding will continue to trouble urban citizens unless these impediments are addressed and removed.

We often marvel at infrastructure planning of ancient India, especially the drainage system of the Mohenjodaro and Harappa cultures that date back to 2400 BC. Sadly we are unable to replicate the excellence and success of the bygone era in today's time. Urban flooding is avoidable and in order to ensure safety of lives and property, it is essential for the Government to rapidly develop strategies that draw from the best of the world's benchmarking practices in urban rainwater management. We need city-wise protocols that cater to the typicality of the demographics and geography and automatically kick in when the area receives a certain quantum of rainfall.

Traffic snarls, waterlogging and the loss of lives due to urban flooding are a painful indication that a manageable issue has been allowed to deteriorate and get out of hand. It is time authorities around the country wake up.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



WE ARE NOTHING WITHOUT HISTORY

In an age of tweets and electronic messaging, handwritten letters are as fashionable as wooden spinning wheels. Incidentally, MK Gandhi's collected writings and letters span 98 volumes. Such letters provide historians with a flashlight into the times in which they were written. Bereft of them, historians look at their shoelaces for inspiration. *(Dawn editorial)*

Sensex reclaims 38,000-mark

RELIANCE RALLIES TO LIFETIME HIGH

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks returned to winning ways on Thursday after a day's breather, propelled by market heavyweight Reliance Industries which soared to its lifetime high.

After a subdued start, the

30-share BSE Sensex gained momentum in afternoon trade before finally closing at 38,140.47, up 268.95 points, or 0.71 per cent.

The benchmark ended above the 38,000-mark for the first time since March 5 this year. The wider NSE Nifty advanced 82.85 points, or 0.74 per cent, to finish at 11,215.45.

Reliance Industries accounted for the lion's share of the Sensex's gains, spurting 2.82 per cent to its record closing high of ₹2,060.65, following reports that Amazon was eyeing a stake in the conglomerate's retail arm.

SBI, ICICI Bank, Tech Mahindra, ITC and Kotak Bank were among the other winners, advancing as much as 3.28 per cent.

On the other hand, Axis Bank, HUL, Infosys, TCS, UltraTech Cement and L&T tumbled up to 3.80 per cent.

"Benchmark indices ended the day with gains, following positivity in the global markets. Global markets set aside the rising US-China tensions and focused on potential vaccine developments and better-than-expected earnings numbers. Domestically, except for

IT, most major indices were in the gains. Liquidity seems to be driving the markets. Any dip looks like it will be bought into and is likely to be short-lived, especially in the current mood of the markets when the negatives are being overlooked," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

BSE energy, healthcare, realty, auto, oil and gas, bankex and metal indices ended up to 2.36 per cent higher, while IT, tech and telecom closed with losses. Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices surged up to 0.98 per cent.

Global markets were mixed as investors digested corporate earnings amid the overhang of mounting COVID-19 cases and US-China tensions.

Bourses in Shanghai, Seoul and Tokyo ended in the red, while Hong Kong closed higher. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a positive note in early deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 0.93 per cent to USD 44.70 per barrel. In the forex market, the rupee settled on a flat note at 74.75 against the US dollar.

'No employee of Air India will be laid off'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After strong reactions from pilots, Air India on Thursday said that no employee of Air India will be laid off. "The meeting reiterated that unlike other carriers which have laid off large number of their employees, no employee of Air India will be laid off," the national carrier said on Twitter. It further added that there has been no reduction in the basic pay, dearness allowance and house rent allowance of any employee. "Allowances had to be rationalised owing to the airline's difficult financial situation already exacerbated by the novel coronavirus pandemic, the statement added.

Air India further clarified that its flying crew will be paid as per the actual number of hours flown and the Board's measures regarding allowances will be reviewed as domestic and international flight operations expand gradually.

Earlier this month, India's national carrier approved a scheme enabling its Chairperson and Managing Director Rajiv Bansal to place employees on compulsory leave without pay for six months or a period of two years, extendable up to five years. The scheme was approved during the 102nd meeting of Air India's Board of Directors.

GST, I-T mop up in Q1 very encouraging, indicates economic recovery: Finance Secy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tax mop up in first quarter of the current fiscal is "very encouraging" and indicates that the economy is recovering sooner than what was anticipated at the time of imposition of lockdown, Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey said on Thursday.

He said the Revenue Department wants to bring in self-compliance among taxpayers by making available data of all financial transactions via Form 26AS at the time of filing income tax (I-T) return.

Pandey, who is also the Revenue Secretary, said about 70 per cent of the ₹ 91,000 crore Goods and Services Tax (GST) collected in June is on account of transactions in May.

"For the month of June, going by the current trends, we have certain trend about how many people have made payment so far, and also the e-way bill... Truck movement... All these things are giving encouraging signals that the economy is coming back to the realm sooner than what was being anticipated when the lockdown was started in March," he said while addressing a Fici event here.

Besides, income tax collection, by way of advance tax and TDS, in the April-June

quarter was about 80 per cent of what was collected in the same period last year. "These two numbers - GST and income tax - are encouraging numbers and also gives us some hope that wherever possible businesses are finding ways to get started. But there were certain sectors like hospitality, education, tourism, which are facing difficulty," Pandey added.

The Government had in May notified revised Form 26AS which would have additional details on taxpayers' high-value financial transactions like cash deposit/withdrawal, property purchases undertaken during a financial year, and would facilitate voluntary compliance and ease of e-filing of I-T returns.

Pandey said if a person sees all his transaction at one place, it makes return filing easy and helps honest taxpayers. It also sends a message to those persons who are on the borderline, and they would also try to be on the right side of law.

"What we want to promote is self-compliance instead of somebody being sent a notice and then somebody going through some kind of harassment or difficulty, we are making all those information available," he added.

Indian economy set for post-Covid-19 rebound as FDI remains buoyant, says IHS Markit

New Delhi: The Indian economy is likely to rebound in the second half of 2020 as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic recedes, and is projected to grow by 6.7 per cent in the next financial year, IHS Markit said on Thursday.

The pandemic resulted in severe disruptions in industrial production and consumption spending in India during April and May.

"The severe negative impact is expected to result in a significant contraction in GDP in the April-June quarter of 2020, resulting in a recession

in the 2020-21 financial year with GDP expected to contract by 6.3 per cent year-on-year," it said in its outlook on the Indian economy.

However, as lockdown conditions have been progressively eased, early signs of recovery were evident in the most recent economic data.

The IHS Markit Purchasing Managers' survey for India showed that economic momentum improved in June, reflecting the easing of COVID-19 related restrictions during May and June. India imposed a total

lockdown beginning March 25 and restrictions were eased from May. "IHS Markit forecast that the Indian economy will rebound as the impact of the pandemic recedes, with improving economic growth momentum in the second half of 2020 and positive GDP growth of 6.7 per cent in the 2021-22 financial year," said Rajiv Biswas, Asia Pacific Chief Economist at IHS Markit.

Despite the negative short-term shocks from the pandemic, total foreign direct investment into India has remained buoyant.

Jio tops Trai's 4G chart with 16.5 mbps download speed in June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Jio topped 4G speed chart with an average download speed of 16.5 megabits per second (mbps) in June, while Vodafone and Idea led in terms of upload speed, according to Trai data. Idea followed Jio in download speed chart with 8 mbps speed, the latest data published on Trai's Myspeed portal showed.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) recorded average download speed of 7.5 mbps and 7.2 mbps on 4G network of Vodafone and Bharti Airtel in June.

For upload speed, Vodafone and Idea led the chart with speed of 6.2 mbps each. Jio and Airtel recorded average upload speed of 3.4 mbps each. Download speed helps in accessing messages, pictures, videos, etc., sent by others, while upload speed helps subscribers in sending messages, pictures, etc., to their contacts.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11135.00	11239.80	11103.15	11215.45	82.85
EICHERMOT	19880.00	21045.35	19760.15	20860.00	969.45
RELIANCE	2003.95	2079.70	1991.35	2076.00	72.00
ICICIBANK	382.55	395.65	378.85	394.80	13.70
TECHM	612.95	634.60	607.00	634.20	21.25
SBIN	192.40	199.10	191.15	198.25	6.25
IOC	91.75	95.45	91.20	94.25	2.25
ITC	197.65	201.50	196.80	201.20	4.65
KOTAKBANK	1340.00	1379.85	1335.30	1372.10	29.75
ASIANPAINT	1690.00	1740.00	1687.00	1729.50	35.25
BAJAJ-AUTO	2965.00	3030.00	2936.65	3037.30	51.90
M&M	590.95	609.00	584.50	602.25	10.25
CPIA	663.95	674.00	662.20	672.55	10.85
DREDDY	4090.90	4140.00	4062.00	4127.30	65.70
VEDL	112.80	115.10	111.90	113.75	1.65
ZEE	161.00	167.75	157.70	159.30	2.30
BAJFINANCE	3253.00	3320.00	3216.05	3296.05	43.05
HINDALCO	160.70	162.45	159.70	161.95	2.05
POWERGRID	178.00	182.55	177.45	181.95	2.30
TTAN	1067.95	1083.00	1051.10	1069.45	11.75
BIPUL	446.00	477.40	443.05	455.00	4.40
JSWSTEEL	206.90	210.50	205.45	208.80	1.80
TATAMOTORS	105.45	106.45	104.70	106.00	0.85
BAJAJFINSV	6359.95	6454.95	6313.15	6394.90	47.50
MARUTI	601.90	609.00	596.75	607.35	43.95
NESTLEIND	17120.00	17298.95	17050.00	17265.00	113.15
ADANIPORTS	313.40	315.95	311.60	314.00	2.00
UPL	461.00	478.00	459.00	462.80	2.55
BRITANNIA	3825.00	3879.75	3820.00	3825.00	19.95
TATASTEEL	350.10	356.40	347.65	351.75	1.70
GAIL	102.00	105.00	101.65	102.40	0.45
HOMOTOCO	2775.00	2792.95	2745.35	2779.90	11.90
HCLTECH	650.00	666.95	643.55	659.95	2.80
SUNPHARMA	477.95	485.85	474.05	476.25	1.95
WIPRO	268.30	268.45	262.55	267.00	1.00
HDFCBANK	1125.00	1143.90	1116.25	1129.80	3.45
NTPC	90.90	91.60	90.25	90.60	0.25
INDUSINDBK	515.50	521.00	510.10	513.70	0.15
INFRATEL	201.95	201.95	198.50	200.50	0.00
ONGC	82.50	83.85	82.05	82.50	-0.10
BHARTIARTL	570.00	575.75	564.00	567.60	-1.55
ULTRACEMCO	3862.65	3890.00	3826.05	3851.00	-11.65
COALINDIA	134.90	135.95	133.20	133.50	-0.60
HDFC	1881.05	1910.00	1871.60	1872.25	-8.80
GRASIM	605.30	611.90	597.00	598.50	-3.30
INFY	915.65	915.80	900.65	911.25	-6.65
TCS	2190.95	2190.95	2163.00	2174.20	-16.75
HINDUNILVR	2200.00	2267.15	2205.55	2216.40	-32.10
SHREECEM	2202.00	2212.45	2150.00	2150.00	-419.45
AXISBANK	472.95	474.75	459.20	460.90	-18.05

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	2695.10	2667.60	2645.10	2664.20	21.45
DIVISLAB	2285.00	2408.85	2274.65	2398.00	126.25
HINDZINC	198.90	210.65	198.30	206.15	8.90
HAVELLS	585.00	612.00	583.55	607.50	22.85
NAUKRINDIA	14975.00	15622.50	14975.00	15499.00	561.55
ABOTRI	3190.00	3294.00	3171.00	3282.00	93.55
PAGEIND	19105.00	19875.00	18925.00	19655.00	498.25
MCDOWELL-N	599.25	614.30	595.00	610.95	15.15
SBILIFE	861.80	880.00	859.20	872.59	19.05
IGL	407.45	415.90	406.00	414.50	8.60
HDFCLIFE	610.95	623.70	610.65	622.00	12.35
ICICIPRULI	443.65	452.60	443.05	450.65	8.45
BANDHANBANK	345.00	351.00	342.35	350.00	6.10
NMDC	85.00	87.00	84.70	86.40	1.50
SRTRANSFIN	697.60	713.90	692.95	706.75	11.65
GICRE	154.80	157.50	154.25	155.70	2.05
LUPIN	852.15	864.90	851.30	861.95	11.20
HINDPETRO	227.50	232.60	225.65	230.90	2.70
BOSCHTL	13290.00	13540.00	13163.00	13415.00	150.30
BANKBARODA	48.90	49.65	48.50	49.25	0.55
MOTHERSUMI	95.60	97.20	94.80	96.70	1.05
UBL	996.00	1006.50	989.90	1000.60	10.80
CADILAC	367.10	371.85	365.30	369.85	3.20
BERGEPAINT	521.00	531.00	517.25	523.05	3.60
TORNTPHARM	2350.00	2368.45	2336.05	2354.00	16.10
BAJAJHLING	2665.00	2690.00	2651.20	2669.70	9.55
BIDCON	433.25	438.50	423.05	431.90	1.20
PEL	1491.20	1514.85	1475.00	1494.10	3.85
PGHJ	10620.00	10844.75	10620.00	10733.00	19.25
MARICO	351.05	354.40	348.00	351.45	0.55
DABUR	482.95	486.85	476.65	481.50	0.45
PNB	34.10	34.70	34.05	34.25	0.00
INDIGO	969.90	982.00	961.10	965.50	-0.15
DLF	142.70	144.35	141.50	142.60	-0.10
PIDILITIND	1386.00	1403.40	1374.00	1382.00	-1.95
COLPAL	1397.00	1403.50	1383.15	1390.00	-2.15
PEC	85.00	85.60	84.40	84.80	-0.15
ICIGI	1298.80	1313.85	1275.10	1290.00	-4.35
CONCOR	452.40	458.05	448.25	450.00	-1.65
HDFCAMC	2510.00	2527.00	2475.30	2495.00	-10.20
NHPC	20.30	20.30	20.05	20.05	-0.10
DMART	2107.70	2148.00	2095.00	2098.95	-11.05
MUTHOOTFIN	1317.00	1328.80	1277.65	1308.10	-7.50
AUROPHARMA	829.95	834.30	809.10	820.00	-4.90
ACC	1375.00	1387.60	1357.00	1363.60	-8.70
SIEMENS	1174.90	1181.40	1162.00	1167.00	-7.90
OFSS	308.95	310.25	301.65	303.95	-2.65
AMBUJACEM	201.50	202.25	197.25	198.20	-1.60
PETRONET	255.00	259.15	251.05	252.00	-2.70
ADANTRANS	242.00	244.05	238.10	238.20	-3.20
GODREJCP	697.10	698.75	668.40	681.00	-12.20

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP
Security Name	Open	High	Low	LTP
RELIANCE	2004.10	2078.90	1991.10	2060.65
INDIAMART	2263.50	2489.00	2263.50	2450.00
ICICIBANK	382.70	395.50	378.85	392.30
BAJFINANCE	3253.00	3319.85	3220.00	3298.25
AXISBANK	469.10	474.50	459.25	460.85
INFY	916.00	916.55	905.00	908.85
ZEE	160.00	167.00	157.75	159.00
SBIN	193.00	199.00	191.25	198.30
BPCL	446.00	477.25	443.10	457.20
ITC	198.00	201.		

Closure of more Chinese missions possible: Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US does not rule out the possibility of closing more Chinese diplomatic missions in the country, President Donald Trump has said, hours after Washington ordered the closure of Beijing's consulate in Houston to "protect American intellectual property and private information."

The US move came amid a growing number of disputes between the two countries over Beijing's increasingly aggressive actions that have led Washington to take strong actions, including closing the consulate in Houston, according to senior Trump administration officials.

The consulate in Houston, Texas, is one of five Chinese diplomatic missions in the US, not counting the embassy in Washington DC.

The US move came after the Justice Department said that hackers working with the

Biden, Obama pair in socially distanced video to decry Trump

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and former President Barack Obama stepped up their attacks on President Donald Trump and defended their time in the White House in a new video showing their first in-person meeting since the coronavirus outbreak began.

The 15-minute video, posted online Thursday, is the latest maneuver to get the former president involved in the 2020 campaign for his former vice president, as Biden tries to rebuild Obama's winning coalition in November.

The former president and vice president used the interview-style conversation to amplify Biden's arguments against Trump, with Obama emphasizing Biden's experience and personal attributes. They pointed to their administration's signature health care law and blamed Trump for stoking division and animosity among Americans from the moment he entered the 2016 presidential race.

China launches ambitious attempt to land rover on Mars

AP ■ BEIJING

China launched its most ambitious Mars mission yet on Thursday in a bold attempt to join the United States in successfully landing a spacecraft on the red planet.

Engines blazing orange, a Long March-5 rocket took off under clear skies from Hainan Island, south of China's mainland, as space enthusiasts gathered on a beach across the bay from the launch site.

"This is a kind of hope, a kind of strength," said Li Dapeng, co-founder of the China branch

Chinese Government targeted firms developing vaccines for the coronavirus and stole hundreds of millions of dollars worth of intellectual property and trade secrets from companies across the world.

"As far as closing additional embassies, it's always possible," Trump told reporters on Wednesday during a daily press briefing at the White House when asked if he is looking at closing more Chinese diplo-

China cites 'malicious slander' as Houston consulate closes

Beijing: China said "malicious slander" is behind an order by the US government to close its consulate in Houston, Texas, and maintained on Thursday that its officials have never operated outside ordinary diplomatic norms.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the order to close the consulate "violates international law and basic norms governing international relations," and "seriously undermines China-US relations."

"This is breaking down the bridge of friendship between the Chinese and American people," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

The order this week to close the consulate, one of China's six missions in the United States, is seen as escalating tensions between the world's two largest economies while President Donald Trump steers blame and punitive measures against China ahead of the November US election.

AP

Jow Biden calls Trump country's 'first' racist Prez

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Joe Biden said on Wednesday that President Donald Trump was the country's "first" racist president.

The presumptive Democratic presidential nominee's comments came during a virtual town hall organised by the Service Employees International Union.

When a questioner complained of racism surrounding the coronavirus outbreak and mentioned the president referring to it as the "China virus," Biden responded by blasting Trump and "his spread of racism."

"The way he deals with people based on the colour of their skin, their national origin, where they're from, is absolute-

ly sickening," the former vice president said. "No sitting president has ever done this. Never, never, never. No Republican president has done this. No Democratic president. We've had racists, and they've existed. They've tried to get elected president. He's the first one that has."

Biden also suggested that Trump is using race "as a wedge" to distract from his mishandling of the pandemic.

Many presidents — including the nation's first, George Washington — owned slaves.

President Woodrow Wilson, the country's 28th president, is having his name removed from Princeton University's public policy school after recent protests against institutional racism and police brutality.

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President Donald Trump said hours after Washington ordered closure of Beijing's consulate in Houston to protect American intellectual property and private information

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

US labs buckle amid testing surge; world virus cases top 15M

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Laboratories across the US are buckling under a surge of coronavirus tests, creating long processing delays that experts say are undercutting the pandemic response.

With the US tally of confirmed infections at nearly 4 million Wednesday and new cases surging, the bottlenecks are creating problems for workers kept off the job while awaiting results, nursing homes struggling to keep the virus out and for the labs themselves as they deal with a crushing workload. Some labs are taking weeks to return Covid-19 results, exacerbating fears that people without symptoms could be spreading the virus if they don't isolate while they wait.

"There's been this obsession with, 'How many tests are we doing per day?'" said Dr Tom Frieden, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "The question is how many tests are being done with results coming back within a day, where the individual tested is promptly isolated and their contacts are promptly warned."

Frieden and other public health experts have called on states to publicly report testing turnaround times, calling it an essential metric to measure progress against the virus.

The testing lags in the US come as the number of people confirmed to be infected worldwide passed a staggering 15 million, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. The US leads the world in cases as well as deaths, which have exceeded 1,42,000.

New York, once by far the US leader in infections, has been surpassed by California, though that is partly due to robust testing in a state with more than twice the population of New York. Guidelines issued by the CDC recommend that states lifting virus restrictions have a testing turnaround time of under four days. The agency recently issued new recommendations against retesting most Covid-19 patients to con-

firm they have recovered. "It's clogging up the system," Adm. Brett Giroir, assistant health secretary, told reporters last week. Zachrey Warner knows it all too well.

The 30-year-old waiter from Columbus, Ohio, was sent home from work on July 5 with a high fever a few days after he began feeling ill. He went for a test five days later at the request of his employer.

Almost two weeks and one missed pay period later, he finally got his answer Wednesday: negative. Though Warner said most symptoms — including fever, diarrhea, chest tightness and body aches — stopped a few days after he was tested, he wasn't allowed to return to work without the result.

It was "frustrating that I've missed so much work due to testing taking forever," Warner said. "It is what it is... (but) I'm glad I'm negative and happy to be able to get back to work this week." Beyond the economic hurt the testing lags can cause, they pose major health risks, too. In Florida, which reported 9,785 new cases and a rise in the death toll to nearly 5,500, nurs-

ing homes have been under an order to test all employees every two weeks. But long delays for results have some questioning the point.

Jay Solomon, CEO of Aviva in Sarasota, a senior community with a nursing home and assisted living facility, said results were taking up to 10 days to come back. "It's almost like, what are we accomplishing in that time?" Solomon said. "If that person is not quarantined in that 7-10 days, are they spreading without realising it?"

Test results that come back after two or three days are nearly worthless, many health experts say, because by then the window for tracing the person's contacts to prevent additional infections has essentially closed. "The turnaround times, particularly across the South are too long," Dr. Deborah Bix of the White House coronavirus task force said on Fox.

Bix said the US had short-

er turnaround times in April, May and early June, but that "this surge and this degree of cases is so widespread compared to previously," she said. Dr. Leana Wen, a public health professor at George Washington University said it's reasonable to tell people awaiting test results to isolate for 24 hours, but the delays have been unacceptable.

"Imagine you tell a parent with young children to self-isolate for 10 days or more without knowing they actually have Covid? I mean, that's ridiculous. That's actually absurd," Wen said. US officials have recently called for ramping up screening to include seemingly healthy Americans who may be unknowingly spreading the disease in their communities. But Quest Diagnostics, one of the nation's largest testing chains, said it can't keep up with demand and most patients will face waits of a week or longer for results.

Scientists develop safe, rapid Covid-19 antibody test

SINGAPORE: Scientists have developed a rapid test to detect antibodies in COVID-19 patients that specifically block the novel coronavirus, an advance that may lead to faster methods for estimating the population level infection rate of the disease.

According to the study, published in the journal Nature Biotechnology, a rapid test to detect neutralising antibodies — capable of blocking the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 — is urgently needed to facilitate monitoring of infection rates, as well as to determine vaccine efficacy during clinical trials.

In order to facilitate these, researchers, including those from Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore, developed a new assay which is much faster than conventional tests for neutralising antibodies, taking only one or two hours to complete. PTI

Trump points at race protests, bar-goers, Mexico travellers for surge in Covid cases

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump is casting wide blame for a nationwide surge in coronavirus cases, pointing to racial justice protests, travelers from Mexico and young bar-goers. Holding his second briefing on the virus in as many days after a three-month hiatus, Trump sought on Wednesday to explain the rise in confirmed cases across the nation's South, Southwest and West.

Trump says cases among young Americans first started to rise "shortly after demonstrations." He says the protests following the death of George Floyd "presumably triggered a broader relaxation of mitigation efforts nationwide." He also says a "substantial increase in travel" around Memorial Day and summer vacations was also a driver of new cases. AP

India, US and Brazil can 'deal with' this pandemic: WHO

GENEVA: The World Health Organization said on Thursday that the United States, Brazil and India, which are all suffering fast rises in coronavirus cases, can still get on top of the pandemic.

They are "powerful, able, democratic countries who have tremendous internal capacities to deal with this disease", Dr Mike Ryan, head of the WHO emergencies programme, told a Geneva briefing.

US coronavirus cases exceeded 4 million on Thursday, with over 2,600 new cases recorded every hour on average, the highest rate in the world, according to a Reuters tally. Agencies

India needs further economic reforms to attract more investment: IMF

Washington (PTI): Concerted efforts by India to strengthen the business climate and encourage investment in the trade have helped to attract investment, but the country needs further economic reforms to ensure sustainable and more inclusive growth, the IMF said on Thursday.

The remarks by the International Monetary Fund's Chief Spokesperson Gerry Rice came in response to a question on the recent FDI announcements made by companies like Facebook and Google in India.

In recent weeks, several international companies have pledged USD 20 billion FDI in India, and a whopping USD 40 billion this year so far.

"Concerted efforts have been made in recent years, in India, to strengthen the business climate and encourage investment in trade, and these have helped to attract investment and improve the current account financing mix and

"Relevant reforms have included the new bankruptcy code, the National Goods and Services Tax. These have helped to gain in India's doing business ranking, moving up rapidly in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, up to 63 in 2020, from 100 in 2018, significant progress there, indeed"

also help to contain external vulnerabilities," Rice told reporters at a news conference here.

"Relevant reforms have included the new bankruptcy code, the National Goods and Services Tax. These have helped to gain in India's doing business ranking, moving up rapidly in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, up to 63 in 2020, from 100 in 2018, significant progress there, indeed," Rice said.

then six per cent recovery, for the fiscal year 2020-21 and fiscal year 2020-22, respectively, he said.

"Our projection for fiscal year '20-21 was revised down, as was the case for most countries driven by the impact of the pandemic," Rice added.

"On balance, I think we would say the risks to the economic outlook remain," he said.

Despite gradual recovery in activities and a solid agricultural performance, the downside risks remain.

"The main downside risk is, of course, the continued spread of the pandemic," he noted, referring to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Further outbreaks could require additional lockdowns, and concerns about the virus could also dampen consumer confidence and delay the economic recovery. Again, this is the case not just in India, but in many countries, Rice said.

Recently, the IMF in its update to the World Economic Outlook projected India's growth rate at -4.5 per cent, and

8th Nizam of Hyderabad waives right to residue funds in UK

London (PTI): The titular eighth Nizam of Hyderabad, Prince Mukarram Jah, on Thursday decided to waive his right to some residue funds from a long-drawn legal dispute in the High Court in England.

Following a failed attempt by members of his extended family to stake claim over nearly 35 million pounds lying in a London bank account during a hearing in the High Court in London on Wednesday, the prince declared that he wishes to have a "clean break" from the case. "This litigation has lasted almost the entire lifetime of our client, HEH VIII Nizam of Hyderabad. He wishes to have a clean break," said Paul Hewitt of Withers LLP, who have acted for the eighth Nizam since proceedings were issued in the case in 2013.

"Thus, he proposes that whatever remains of the 400,000 pounds can be dis-

tributed to the wider members of the family, waiving his right to claim that money as well on the basis of the customary law which dictates that the seventh Nizam's estate passed to his heir HEH eighth Nizam," he said.

On Wednesday, Justice Marcus Smith had dismissed attempts by Najaf Ali Khan, president of the Nizam Family Welfare Association, and Himayat Ali Mirza to challenge an October 2019 judgment in favour of India and Prince Mukarram Jah and his brother in a 70-year-old legal dispute with Pakistan over an estimated 35 million pounds belonging to the late seventh Nizam of Hyderabad at the time of Partition in 1947.

The two princes and India had reached a confidential agreement, which meant that the funds have been divided between them based on Justice Smith's order from last year. They also reached a confi-

dential agreement with Christopher Lintott, the court appointed administrator of the late seventh Nizam's English estate, by which an additional sum passed to the estate and of which an estimated 400,000 pounds remain.

At the end of a two-day ruling this week, Justice Smith approved Lintott's application to appoint a trust company to be the new personal representative of the remaining funds.

The new representative will now establish who is entitled to what remains after legal costs of the 400,000 pounds, to which Prince Mukarram Jah has agreed not to lay any claim. It is now for the PennTrust to conduct an inquiry and allocate what remains of the 400,000 pounds in light of the eighth Nizam's offer to the wider family.

The titular eighth Nizam's relatives, claiming to be among the 117 heirs of the late seventh

Nizam, had targeted Lintott for entering into the confidential agreement with India and the princes, saying that he should have secured more money for the estate of the erstwhile seventh Nizam.

The judge pointed out that confidential agreement was approved by another High Court judge, which makes the prospect of a claim against Lintott succeeding remote.

The historic dispute revolves around 1,007,940 pounds and nine shillings transferred in 1948 from the then Nizam of Hyderabad to the high commissioner in Britain of the newly-formed state of Pakistan.

That amount had since grown in a London bank account into 35 million pounds as the Nizam's descendants, supported by India, claimed it belonged to them and Pakistan counter-claimed that it was rightfully theirs.

WHO chief upbraids Pompeo over 'unacceptable' allegations

AP ■ GENEVA

The chief of the World Health Organization (WHO) has upbraided US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for "untrue and unacceptable" comments, responding to reported allegations that included the health agency chief having been "bought" by China.

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus insisted WHO is focusing on "saving lives" as he lashed out Thursday at the comments British media have reported that Pompeo made at a closed-door event earlier this week in London.

Tedros' response to Pompeo represented some of his most defensive and full-throated statements yet in the wake of the Trump administration's repeated criticism of the UN health agency in recent months.

Violence, protests put Chicago on edge

Chicago (AP): Amid a surge in gun violence and protests sparked by the death of George Floyd, the nation's third-largest city is on edge, awaiting possible greater tension in the form of a plan by President Donald Trump to dispatch dozens of federal agents to Chicago.

The White House plan emerged days after a downtown protest over a statue of Christopher Columbus devolved into a chaotic scene of police swinging batons and demonstrators hurling frozen water bottles, fireworks and other projectiles at officers. Then, on Tuesday in another neighborhood, a spray of bullets from a car passing a gang member's funeral wounded 15 people and sent dozens running for their lives.

Tension in the city has climbed to a level that, if not unprecedented, has not been felt in a long time.

"I've never seen things worse in this city than they are right now," said the Rev. Michael Pfleger, a Roman Catholic priest and longtime

activist on the city's South Side.

Much of the strain stems from the fact that it remains unclear exactly what the federal officers will do here. The plan seems to be a repeat of what happened in Kansas City, Missouri, where the administration sent officers to help quell violence after the shooting death of a young boy.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot sought to tamp down fear that the surge will resemble the kind of scene that unfolded in Portland, Oregon, where unidentified agents in camouflage have beaten unarmed protesters and stuffed some of them into unmarked vehicles.

Lightfoot said she has been told the U.S. Attorney's Office will supervise the additional agents supporting the Chicago offices of the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

But given the longstanding animosity between city officials and Trump, leaders from the mayor on down worry that

those promises will not hold up.

City officials will be on guard for any "steps out of line," particularly from agents with the Homeland Security Department, and they will not hesitate "to take the president to court," Lightfoot said.

Trump announced the plan Wednesday, saying he would send agents to Chicago and Albuquerque to help combat rising crime. Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf and Attorney General Bill Barr both said the mission in Portland — to protect federal property — differs from the focus in Kansas City, Chicago and Albuquerque.

Barr said the number of agents being deployed to Chicago is "comparable" to the Kansas City surge of more than 200.

Trump painted Democrat-led cities as out of control and lashed out at the "radical left." Criminal justice experts say the increase in violence in some cities defies easy explanation.

Trend
Slazer

Priyanka imparts words of wisdom

Actor **PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS** shared a motivational post on Instagram for her fans.

"Don't let the challenges of today stop us from achieving our dreams of a better tomorrow. She captioned the post as, 'You got this!'," Priyanka wrote.

It seems several fans were waiting for such motivation to inspire them.

"Your journey has always inspired me. You are an idol for so many people," a user wrote.

Priyanka will soon complete 20 years in showbusiness. A few days ago, she shared a video in which she spoke about her plans of sharing "20 monumental moments" of her career in the coming days to celebrate 20 years in the entertainment business.



'Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior is a film that every Indian should watch. It is significant because it's the story of an unsung hero who played an important part in Indian history. I know Tanaji's bravery and his dedication to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj will resonate. He was a warrior who must be celebrated even today.

—Ajay Devgn

AMITABH BACHCHAN has shared a message on religious harmony. He, who is undergoing COVID treatment in a hospital, took to Twitter to post the message.



Big B shared two photographs of himself, one with folded hands and the other where he stretches his palms in prayer.

"Mazhab toh yeh do hatheliyaan batati hain, jude to 'puja' khule toh 'dua' kehlaati hain. (The two hands describe religion. Whenever they are folded it is called puja and when they are stretched it is called dua)," he wrote.

Motherhood is heaven: Cameron

Actor **CAMERON DIAZ** says daughter Raddix is the best thing that has ever happened to her.

"My daughter is growing so fast that I now understand why friends who have children told me to cherish this time. Literally every single day, there's just leaps and bounds... and she's not the same baby that she was yesterday. Where was yesterday? Yesterday is literally gone," Diaz said.

"But it's so gratifying to actually get to see that growth and to be a part of it. It's just amazing. It's the best thing that ever happened to both (husband) Benj (Madden) and I. We're just so happy," she added.



TOUCHLESS BEAUTY

While beauticians are taking necessary steps to ensure safety at their parlours, many cosmetic companies are modifying their products to empower salons to be touch-free

Perhaps a visit to the salon for some self-grooming was the only thing one never felt lazy about in the pre-COVID era. However, over the past few months, with a pandemic at hand, the touch therapy involved was enough to scare many of us into depending on household hacks. But they have not been salon-perfect.

With salons getting back to business post an ease in lockdown restrictions, many have been waiting to return. However, risk-averse as we are, there is certainly a great feeling of anxiety. So salons too are responding to the changed mindset and bringing in a major transition in their set-ups and functioning to assure that their services are safe. New hygiene protocols have been developed to ensure safety of the customer as well as that of the technician's. New tools and accessories are being used for contact therapies. Here are a few ways how salons have gone for a makeover themselves before throwing the door open.

THE ZERO-TOUCH FACIAL

The don't-touch-me policy has become the new normal in public spaces and is here to stay. Which brings many to the question — how will salons do their usual chores without touching the customer? For instance, while combing the hair or a facial clean-up.

Experts suggest that a new safety protocol — zero-touch facial — can ensure that the beautician doesn't touch your skin with bare hands. Rather, the beautician needs to be enabled to deliver the same kind of service with the same efficiency by using certain professional tools and techniques. Many

brands are coming up with specially customised products like disposable applicators, gloves and a mask, which can ensure that skin problems are attended to in a hygienic manner. The sanitised tools also allow for advanced exfoliation and radiant skin.

Vaijayanti Bhalchandra, co-founder, CTO Head HR YLG Salons, YLG @ Home, talks about her use of new zero-touch products. She says, "The past few months have been extremely tough for the business and we have missed work. The Cheryl's cosmeceuticals have helped us adapt to the new normal with its zero-touch facial kit. Since gaining confidence of customers for facial treatments is a major necessity in these times, we also make sure the beautician maintains a certain distance from the customer while working and minimise talking at all times. It has been only a few weeks since we have re-opened and now, we are increasingly getting responses for clean-ups and exfoliation facials."

NEW WAY FOR HAIR COLOUR

DP Sharma, director, Professional Products Division at L'Oréal India, says, "Our network of salons is key to



What is up with car design?

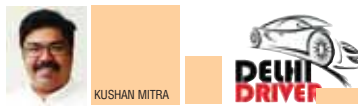
Aesthetics are a very personal thing but what is with car designers and big wide grilles?



Can you spot the similarity?

When I look at some modern cars, I get reminded of sharks. If you, like me, are an amateur shark scientist and loved Discovery Channel's *Shark Week* shows, you would know that there are over a thousand species of them. When you think of sharks, you tend to think of the Great White, leaping into the air a seal tightly grasped inside its jaw. Isn't it? The fact is that the 'agape' look on so many car grilles that I see today, reminds me of the Whale, the largest fish in the world. An impressive one, of course, but thoroughly harmless with a massive mouth at the tip of its head, not below like predatory sharks, but at the tip.

When you see a picture of a whale shark feeding and then look at what Hyundai has been giving us of late — the new Elantra coming in 2021 — will be interesting to say the least. Even Maruti, the facelift on the Dzire, makes things bigger. The MG Hector and Kia's 'tiger nose' on the Seltos and Sonet as well. Heck, Honda might stick a chrome slab through its mouth like braces on teeth, but they also have big mouths. And of course, there are the Germans. BMW's signature 'kidney grilles' have gotten a bit out of hand. Have you seen the BMW 4-series concept? I actually don't mind it on the 7-series and X7 because of their huge size, so there is a bit of proportionality. And then



KUSHAN MITRA

you know what? When that one market accounts for a third of your global sales, making those changes is perfectly logical for a carmaker.

There are friends of mine in automotive journalism who like the big kidney grilles on BMW. At the end of the day, we all have different aesthetic sensibilities. One lesson that I have learnt is that in India, we seek 'value' from a car rather than looks. The first-generation Santro, particularly early builds of that car were, for lack of any other word to describe it, ugly. The first generation WagonR seemed as if the design team was only given a ruler and a brief to avoid any sort of curve. These cars were not at all aesthetically pleasing. The Daewoo Matiz on the other hand, was quite cute. But you know the story, the Santro launched Hyundai allowing them to dazzle our eyes with the next-generation Elantra that you will see next year. Don't get me wrong, I love the product, but the next Elantra just like the facelift on the Verna looks like a Whale shark out of water.

Here is the funny thing, large grilles made sense when you had large naturally aspirated engines, big steel blocks with eight cylinders inside them. Those engines needed air and also a lot of cooling. But thanks to emissions norms, those engines are dying out in all but

some supercars. And BMW themselves have the F90 5-series which is by far and away the best looking car they make because it doesn't look like it went through rhinoplasty to get a boxer's nose. It is an aesthetically pleasing car. At a level this is a bit like planes, the Airbus A380 is a tremendous piece of engineering, but it isn't pretty. The Boeing 747 just has something about it, which is why it is called the 'Queen' of the skies and the A380, well, that is a whale (nothing against cetaceans by the way). When electric cars come along, what will happen to all these large grilles? Just look at Tesla's — a clean, proportionate design, no frills or huge kidney grilles. I mean, even BMW's electric warrior the i3 is not overdone on the nose front. So why on god's green earth did BMW give us the Concept 4-series?

Being passionate about cars and writing about them will necessarily make you ardent about car design. I do not like the way many cars look these days. I'm not saying that there are not some pretty cars out there but the attack of the large grilles is upon us. While I'm sure I will be pummelled into acceptance, as we all accepted the first-generation Santro, I'm not going down without a fight. Or in my case, without writing such columns.

For a better tomorrow

Actor **RANDEEP HOODA** says we all need to play our part to ensure a healthy planet because if everyone does small things right, then the overall impact on the environment will be huge

Actor Randeep Hooda hopes people will restart responsibly after the COVID-19 lockdown, and feels everyone has a part to play in making the planet healthy. Discovery India has brought him on board to urge India to exit the lockdown in a responsible manner with a unique campaign titled *Restart Responsibly*. The campaign video has Randeep taking daily routine, but important actions, including placing water for birds, riding a bicycle, taking care of his pet and much more while enlightening citizens about the impact that human action has had on environment.

"This campaign is close to my heart as we are not asking people to take a pledge without any specific outcomes. The campaign aims to inspire people to take thoughtful steps which can easily be added to their daily routines in a more thoughtful way because if everyone does small things right, then the overall impact on the environment will be huge," said Randeep.

"We all need to, and I can't emphasize this enough, play our part to ensure that we create less pollution to ensure better quality air and water. An important observation we all need to make is that humans are not centre of the universe, we are all a part of it, along with all flora and fauna. If we all just respect this fact and get on with life, I am sure tomorrow will be better," added he.

"We wanted to present a powerful platform to tell critical stories, elevate cultural discourse and do the right thing. Through this campaign, we aim to bring the importance of individual behaviour in shaping our environment. Often, we look at others for solutions, lets do our part — simple yet thoughtful steps — is our key message," said Vednarayan Sirdeshpande, Head of Marketing, South Asia, Discovery.



FROM CASK TO GLASS

ANGAD SINGH GANDHI talks about the evolution of single malt whisky, what makes it relevant and Glenfiddich's journey

People nowadays don't want to just clink glasses with their friends and family over an evening get together, rather they want to know more about the dram, the whisky notes, food pairings and so much more. Here is the history, evolution of single malt whisky, its relevance and Glenfiddich's journey in the making.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Popularly referred to as 'water of life', whisky has a long and adventurous story to tell. Whisky became an innate part of Scottish life and was even used for medicinal purposes during the long cold harsh Scottish winters, apart from being there in the everyday social life of Scotland.

Gradually with the rise of whisky production, five groups of single malts emerged from Scotland, including Highland, Lowland, Speyside, Islay and Campbeltown. The banks of the River Spey on the eastern side of the Highlands became home to around 50 distilleries with many of them offering guided tours and the chance, of course, to sample their produce. The malts of Speyside were loved for their elegance and complexity whilst the malts from the most beautiful Isle of Islay are described in terms of their peaty quality.

It was in the late eighteens, a single malt brand known today, was born from one man's dream, William Grant. In 1886 with the help of his nine children, Grant put the first brick in Glenfiddich distillery. Water, air and malted barley, a trinity expertly crafted to make a Glenfiddich whisky, created in a radical design of the time, the triangular bottle. Up until 1960s, the world was consuming blended whisky and cognac while single malt was a Scottish secret. In 1963, the single malt whisky was taken outside Scotland.

The malt whisky was first called 'Pure malt' and then 'Straight malt'. Eventually the term 'Single malt' was coined which has stuck with us ever since then in our hearts (and glasses, of course).

HOW DID THE WHISKY GET ITS FLAVOUR?

Where a whisky is born, what it's matured in and how old it is, all affects the flavour of the final product. With age comes character and complexity. To qualify as a Scotch whisky, it must be aged in an Oak barrel in Scotland for minimum of three years.

Water also plays a significant role in the making of the whisky. The William Grant & Sons family have owned the lands around the Robbie Dhu spring for a very long time, safeguarding the water for all its whiskies including the The Balvenie, Monkey Shoulder and others. Whisky is made entirely from barley. Barley from our specialist maltsters is ground into rough flour and mixed with heated Robbie Dhu springwater.

The key is in the cask. With a lot of flavour coming from the cask, the quality of the whisky depends on the quality of the wood it's matured in. A single malt may see several casks. It's a common misconception that single malt whisky is the product of one cask. In fact, two thirds of the flavour in a single malt comes from casks its matured in and is the product of a single distillery and may come from several casks within the same distillery.



A lesser-known thing about single malts is the angels' share. Angels' share is that portion of whisky which evaporates during the maturation process. The name comes from a tongue-in-cheek belief that those 'greedy angels' must be blamed for the dimin-

ishing level of tightly sealed whisky barrels. The approximate rate of loss of whisky due to evaporation is two per cent per annum in Scotland and nine to 10 per cent in India because of the warm weather conditions. This means one can age a single malt in

Scotland for 50-60 years while in India they can be aged for only 10-12 years.

Skills, craftsmanship, specialist knowledge and wisdom, all go into the making of a whisky.

Today, even in the twenty-first century, single malts continue to be a preferred spirit and are growing year-on-year. But the way the spirit is perceived and approached has changed radically. While the single malt drinker continues to be one who enjoys the finer things in life, they are no longer restricted to an older audience. Women are becoming an integral part of the category not just as consumers but also as distillers, enthusiasts, brand ambassadors and bartenders. The love for whisky is rising in younger people as well, they are replacing other spirits with whiskies. We see a growing curiosity and interest among the younger drinkers in knowing more about their spirit. This is due to the increased relevance being created by brands promoting cocktails and serves that make it intriguing and aspirational for the younger generation to opt for whiskies.

Innovation within the single malt category has been one of the key reasons for it to remain relevant through decades. Innovation across distilling, manufacturing, packaging and marketing have together played a crucial role. Experimental single malt variants have gained high prominence with the new age whisky drinkers that are willing to play with their single malts. Distillers too have kept up with this demand by introducing unique cask finishes such as beer, ice wine, tequila, mezal and French cuvée casks, that add to the varied notes of the single malt.

The brands new experiments' which have been done keeping in mind India's rich culture, have brought to life a special India specific initiative that refined the rules of traditional single malt serve by exploring and handpicking unique and exotic Indian ingredients.

It is great to be on the lookout to create out-of-the-ordinary experiences that challenge people's perception and enthrall consumers to try something different.

SAVOURING THE DRINK

While, the art of truly enjoying your single malt is a beautiful experience, it differs for everyone. Experiential tastings and pairings have helped in continuous consumer awareness and interest in the single malt category. Consuming your single malt with food opens a world of aroma and flavour opportunities. The goal is to pair with ingredients and spices that enhance the flavour of the single malt rather than overpowering it. Single malts surprisingly work well with desserts and fine teas. The varied styles of enjoying your single malts today are endless, be it through food or unique serves, that have kept the spirit from being enjoyed by both whisky and non-whisky drinkers alike.

Neat or Not? It's entirely up to you! Going neat may be the 'purest' way to enjoy a single malt, but it's not the only way.

I strongly believe, "To each its own!" Therefore, whatever you like is the best one for you. However, the best dram is the one enjoyed with friends and family over lots of banter and fun.

(The writer is Glenfiddich India brand ambassador.)

R E C I P E S

CHICKEN KRAPOW

WHAT YOU NEED

- Chicken boneless: 130 gm
- Ginger (chopped): 4 gm
- Garlic (chopped): 5 gm
- Lemon grass : 3 gm
- Celery (chopped): 3 gm
- Onion (chopped): 8 gm
- Fresh red chillies: 3
- Boiled rice: 150 gm
- Salt: 3 gm
- Five spice powder: 2 gm
- Degi mirch powder: 3 gm
- Spichi stir fry sauce: 40 gm

- Basil leaves: 10 gm
- Refined oil: 10 ml
- Vinegar: 3 ml
- Chilli paste: 4 gm
- Cornflour: 5 gm
- Egg: 1

METHOD

- Marinate chicken in five spice powder, salt, sugar and degi mirch.
- Heat oil in wok.
- Add chopped garlic sautee, ginger, celery, lemon grass and onion.
- Then add chicken and

sautee.

- Add little water and allow chicken to cook.
- Add chilli paste and spichi sauce.
- Adjust seasoning.
- Adjust consistency with corn flour.
- Served topped on above boiled rice.
- Garnish with fresh basil leaves, fresh sliced red chillies and fried single egg.

Courtesy: Tanuj Nayyar, Executive Chef, Jaypee Residency Manor, Mussorie.



EGGLESS CARROT CAKE

WHAT YOU NEED

For cake:

- Oil: 75 ml
- Milk: 50 ml

- Flour: 70 gm
- Brown sugar: 85 gm
- Baking soda: 2 gm
- Salt: 1 gm
- Cinnamon: 2 gm

- Carrots (grated): 90 gm

- Walnuts: 25 gm

For cream cheese filling:

- Cream cheese: 62 gm

- Vanilla essence: 7 gm
- Sugar: 22 gm
- Whipping cream: 20 gm
- Butter: 25 gm
- Lemon zest
- Lemon juice

METHOD

For cake:

- Mix together all ingredients except carrots and walnuts.
- Then add in the grated carrots and walnuts.
- Pour into the mould and bake at 160 degree celsius for 45 minutes.

For cream cheese filling:

- Cream together all the ingredients except whipping cream.
- Whip the cream separately and fold into the cream cheese mixture.
- Pipe into the centre of the cake.
- Serve chilled.

Courtesy: Kanak Soneja (Alumni Gurgaon), Academy of Pastry & Culinary Arts.



SWEET BANANA FRAPPE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Chilled coffee: 2 cups
- Chocolate ice cream: 1 cup
- Banana (ripped): 1
- Chocolate shavings (for garnishing)

METHOD

- Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
- Pour into a glass and garnish with chocolate shavings.

Courtesy: Sherri John, Coffee specialist and Head Judge at Araku Coffee.

SWEETCORN CORIANDER FRITTERS WITH A LEMON MAYO DIP

WHAT YOU NEED

- Cake flour: 300 ml
- Baking powder: ½ tsp
- Full-cream milk: 150 ml
- Eggs (large, lightly beaten): 2
- Frozen sweetcorn kernels (thawed and drained): 400 gm
- Spring onions (finely

- sliced): 3
- Red chilli (seeded and finely chopped): 1
- Fresh coriander (chopped): 2 tbsp
- Cheddar cheese (finely grated): 1 cup
- Ground black pepper (Salt and fresh)
- Sunflower oil: 1 tbsp
- Mayonnaise: 150 ml
- Fresh parsley (chopped): 1 tsp
- Lemon juice



METHOD

- Sift the flour and baking powder into a large bowl. Make space in the centre and add the milk and eggs.
- Gradually, drawing in the flour from around the edges, beat together to form a smooth and thick batter.
- Add the sweetcorn, spring onions, chilli, coriander and cheese to the batter and season with salt and black

- pepper. Mix well.
- Heat a large, heavy-based frying pan and brush with oil.
- Drop large spoons full of the batter into the pan, making about four fritters at a time.
- Cook over medium heat for two minutes or until golden and firm on the underside. Flip the fritters over and cook for further two minutes until golden brown. Remove the cooked fritters from the

- pan, drain on paper towels and keep warm.
 - Repeat until all the batter has been fried off.
 - Mix the mayonnaise, chopped parsley and a little lemon juice, and adjust the seasoning to taste.
 - Arrange the warm fritters on a platter and serve with the mayonnaise dressing plus extra lemon wedges (optional).
- Courtesy: Le Creuset.

On Klopp of the world!

Dreams turn into reality as Jurgen's Liverpool lift Premier League trophy at the Kop

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said having the opportunity to lift the Premier League trophy at Anfield meant the world to him despite having to do so in an empty stadium with fans shut out due to coronavirus.

The Reds sealed a first top-flight title for 30 years last month, but had to wait until after a thrilling 5-3 win over Chelsea in their final home game of the season to lift the Premier League trophy for the first time.

"You make the best of what you can," Klopp told *Sky Sports*. "Today our families are allowed to be there which is incredible. It means the world to me. Everything would be better with fans but for months we knew that would be impossible. A few months ago I thought it was impossible that we play football."

"I couldn't be happier to be honest, it would be perfect if the stadium would be full but we cannot change it. What we tried to do is make it clear to the people that we really do it for them. It's an absolutely great moment."

Despite pleas for fans to stay away on the night Liverpool finally got their hands on the trophy, supporters crowded around the stadium even prior to kick-off, while the second half was accompanied by the



Liverpool players celebrate with the Premier League trophy after they beat Chelsea 5-3 in the final home game of the 2019-2020 season

constant crackling of fireworks lit by fans outside the ground.

On the field, Klopp's men ensured a memorable night was accompanied by a positive result after just two wins in five previous games since they clinched the title. And the German again promised the fans a proper party with a parade planned through the city once restrictions are lifted.

"You have to prepare for a party," he added. "When I don't know, when this virus is gone then we will have a party all together."

The result had far bigger consequences for Chelsea as they slip to fourth and leaves Frank Lampard's men still needing a point at home to Wolves at Stamford Bridge on Sunday to secure a place in the Champions League.

'IN OUR HANDS'
"It's huge, we know the situation," said Lampard. "It's in our hands to get a result against a very good Wolves team."

Chelsea have already bolstered their attacking options for next season with the signings of Timo Werner and Hakim Ziyech, while they are reportedly closing in on a deal for the 90-million euro (\$103

million, £81 million) rated Kai Havertz of Bayer Leverkusen.

But it is at the other end Lampard clearly has to find solutions as they completed an entire league season with just one clean sheet away from home and have now conceded 54 times in the Premier League this season.

Liverpool were 3-0 up inside 43 minutes as sweet strikes from Naby Keita, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Georginio Wijnaldum gave Chelsea a mountain to climb.

They nearly did so even after Roberto Firmino scored his first league goal at Anfield all season restored Liverpool's three-goal cushion to cancel out Olivier Giroud's strike just before half-time for the visitors.

Christian Pulisic was surprisingly left on the bench by Lampard from the start and he changed the game after he was introduced alongside Tammy Abraham and Callum Hudson-Odoi.

The American skipped past four challenges before squaring for Abraham and then fired powerfully into the roof of the net with the Liverpool defence all over the place.

But Chelsea were undone again at the other end as a blistering break from inside their own box saw Liverpool surge forward and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain smashed home Andy Robertson's cross at the back post.

We should not stop because others will not sleep: Klopp

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp believes his side will need to keep improving to hold off the chasing pack next season after lifting the Premier League trophy.

Chelsea have already strengthened ahead of next season with the signings of a long-term Liverpool target Timo Werner and Hakim Ziyech.

Klopp also expects Manchester City and Manchester United to bolster their squads. But the German believes there is still improvement for his players to make despite becoming English, European and world champions over the past 14 months.

"We should not stop, we have internal challenges to improve," said Klopp. "We have the chance to make another step, but we have to because the others will not sleep. Chelsea is such a talented team, we had to bring everything on the pitch tonight. Man Utd, Man City (will contend), there are no guarantees for anything, but we will try."

Liverpool also beat Chelsea to lift the Uefa Super Cup at the start of the season to go with the Premier League, Champions League and Club World Cup and Klopp admitted he will take time for a special moment after an incredible run of success.

"We are champions of England, Europe and the world. We won four trophies, really big ones, so I couldn't be more proud,"



he added. "I'm usually not a person who needs pictures but I will have a picture with all four trophies because it doesn't happen often, so we should."

Jordan Henderson had the honour of becoming the first Liverpool player to lift the Premier League trophy and the Reds' captain believes the manner of victory over a Chelsea side, who needed a result to confirm their place in the Champions League next season, bodes well for what can be achieved next season.

"It's been a journey and to finish it off like this is really special," said Henderson. "After this, next season is going to be a big challenge for us. But I thought tonight we showed the mentality to come and perform again and get the result we did."

Lampard tells Liverpool not to get 'too arrogant'

Liverpool: Chelsea manager Frank Lampard has said Premier League champions Liverpool should not become too arrogant after being left unimpressed with the behaviour of their bench during Wednesday's 5-3 defeat.

Lampard was involved in an exchange with Liverpool's bench after a free kick was awarded against Chelsea's Mateo Kovacic. Trent Alexander-Arnold found the net from the free kick to make it 2-0.

"For me it wasn't a foul

from Kovacic," Lampard told *Sky Sports*. "There were a lot of things that were ongoing and on the bench ... I've got no problem with Jurgen Klopp, he's managed this team and it's fantastic."

"Some of the bench, it's a fine line between when you are winning — and they've won the league, fair play to Liverpool Football Club — but also don't get too arrogant with it."

"That was my thing, but (it's) done. In match play you get emotional and that was it." AP

Man Utd just a point away from CL

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer urged stars to seize a "fantastic opportunity" to qualify for the Champions League after Mason Greenwood rescued a 1-1 draw against West Ham on Wednesday.

Solskjaer's side fell behind to Michael Antonio's penalty in the first half at Old Trafford. But teenage forward Greenwood struck after the interval to lift United into third place in the Premier League.

They are ahead of fourth-



placed Chelsea on goal difference after the Blues lost 5-3 later at champions Liverpool. United will finish in the top four if they draw or win in their decisive showdown with fifth-placed Leicester on Sunday.

West Brom promoted as Brentford blow chance

Manchester: West Bromwich Albion won promotion back to the Premier League after a two-year absence, joining Leeds United in the top flight next season after a 2-2 home draw with Queens Park Rangers in a dramatic finale to the Championship season on Wednesday.

The point for Slaven Bilic's side was enough to ensure second place in England's second tier after Brentford blew their chance by losing 2-1 at home to lowly Barnsley.

A win for Brentford would have sent them into the top division for the first time since 1947.



Brentford will go into the playoffs along with Fulham and Cardiff City but in a huge swing in fortunes, Nottingham Forest missed out on goal difference with Swansea City grabbing the last slot in astonishing fashion. At the bottom, Hull City and Charlton were relegated along with Wigan Athletic.

SINGLES

B'DESH TO RESCHEDULE SL TEST TOUR

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh is planning to tour Sri Lanka in October for their rescheduled three-Test series, following the postponement of this year's T20 World Cup. According to a report in *ESPNCricinfo*, BCB are currently in talks with its Sri Lankan counterparts (SLC) and if everything falls into place "Bangladesh men's pending three-Test series against hosts Sri Lanka could be rescheduled to October."

CARLSEN BEAT ANAND IN LEGENDS OF CHESS

CHENNAI: India's Viswanathan Anand suffered his second consecutive loss, going down to world No 1 Magnus Carlsen in the second round of the \$150,000 chess24 Legends of Chess online tournament. The former world champion had kept the Norwegian ace in check in three games of the best-of-four contest before slipping 1.5-2.5 by in the final game late on Wednesday.

EMERY TO COACH VILLARREAL FOR 3 SEASONS

VILLARREAL: Spanish club Villarreal on Thursday announced Unai Emery as manager for the next three seasons. Emery was sacked as Arsenal's coach in November 2019 after 18 months at helm. Emery, who has coached Almeria, Valencia and Sevilla in the Spanish top-flight before, will be presented as Villarreal manager at the their home ground on Monday.

HALEP SIGNS UP FOR PRAGUE EVENT

PRAGUE: World No 2 Simona Halep on Wednesday said that she will play the WTA Prague clay court tournament in August, adding further doubt to her participation in the US Open. "Hi everyone. I can't wait to take part in the tournament in the magnificent city of Prague. See you in August," the reigning Wimbledon champ said in a video message. The Prague tourney runs from August 10-16.

ICC POSTPONES TWO QUALIFYING EVENTS

DUBAI: The Covid-19 pandemic continued to take a toll on the sporting calendar with ICC on Thursday postponing this year's qualifying events for two separate tournaments due to the global health crisis. The ICC has postponed September's Men's World Cup League 2 series to be hosted in Namibia and the U19 World Cup Regional Qualifier Division 2 due to take place in August in Tanzania.

FIDE ONLINE CHESS OLYMPIAD FROM JULY 25

CHENNAI: The FIDE Online Chess Olympiad, which will feature top players like world No 3 Ding Liren and Viswanathan Anand among others, will be held from July 25 to August 30. Teams from 163 countries will take part in the first-ever online Olympiad. Russia is the top-ranked team, followed by China, USA, Armenia and Ukraine. The India team, captained by Vidit Santosh Gujrati, is the seventh-seed in the prestigious competition.

MANANGOI SUSPENDED IN DOPING CASE

MONACO: Former 1,500-meter world champion Elijah Manangoi was provisionally suspended on Thursday for missing doping tests. The Athletics Integrity Unit said the Kenyan runner has been charged with "whereabouts failures." No timetable for his disciplinary case was given.

MÁRQUEZ DECLARED FIT TO RACE

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA: Six-time defending MotoGP champion Marc Márquez will race at the Andalucía Grand Prix this weekend despite a broken arm. Team Honda said on Thursday that Márquez passed a physical and was declared fit to race despite undergoing surgery to fix a broken right humerus on Tuesday. Agencies

Archer, Anderson, Wood return for series decider



PTI ■ MANCHESTER

Fast bowler Jofra Archer has returned to the 14-member England squad alongside James Anderson and Mark Wood for the series-deciding third and final Test

against the West Indies starting at the Old Trafford here on Friday.

The 25-year-old Archer was dropped from the second Test for breaching the Covid-19 bio-secure protocol and slapped with a financial penalty of an undisclosed amount.

While Archer was dropped from the series-levelling second Test, Anderson and Wood were rested from the game.

Archer, Anderson and Wood will compete with the pace trio of Stuart Broad, Chris Woakes and Sam Curran for places in England's playing XI.

It will be interesting to see England's pace attack for the third Test as the trio of Broad, Curran and Woakes has performed well in the second Test.

Amir cleared to join side in Eng

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir on Thursday was cleared to join the national side in England after his second test also returned negative for coronavirus.

"The PCB will now be making arrangements to send Amir and masseur, Mohammad Imran to England as soon as possible so that they can join the training camp in Derbyshire," the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a release.

Amir, 28, left many people disappointed including the national team's head coach and chief selector, Misbah-ul-Haq when he announced his sudden retirement from Test cricket last year.

Former players are of the opinion that if Amir is available and fit, then he should also be considered for the Test series against England.

Amir in a recent interview had said that he had made a mistake playing all three formats after his comeback after a five-year ban for spot-fixing. "I should have first played one or two formats and checked to see how my body is doing and whether I could take the strain."

Erred in playing immediately in all three formats and it led to injury and fitness problems. "At least now I am confident that I can now carry on playing for another four to six years if I take care of myself," he had said.

NZC leave decision to join IPL on players

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) will issue No Objection Certificates (NOCs) to all its six internationalists set to compete in the IPL but said the "due diligence" on health safety protocols will have to be done by the players themselves.

The six New Zealand players who are set to play in the IPL are Jimmy Neesham (Kings XI Punjab), Lockie Ferguson (Kolkata Knight Riders),

McClenaghan and Trent Boult (Mumbai Indians), Kane Williamson (Sunrisers Hyderabad) and Mitchell Santner (Chennai Super Kings).
"Regarding the IPL, NZC will be issuing NOCs to the relevant players and it's up to them to decide," NZC spokesperson Richard Boock said.
While the NZC will be updating its players about the health safety protocols and latest Covid-19 related developments, the

Akhtar blames BCCI for T20 WC postponement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lahore: Former Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar has slammed the BCCI, alleging that the Indian cricket board played a role in the ICC postponing the T20 World Cup later this year to make room for the Indian Premier League.

Akhtar also felt that the Asia Cup could have taken place. "Asia Cup could have definitely happened, it would have been a great chance for

Inter draw clears title way for Juve

AFP ■ MILAN



the Premier League and FA Cup with Chelsea.

"I understand that there are those who are satisfied with this, but for me it is meaningless. When you leave points, it means that there are shortcomings." A Romelu Lukaku header

Inter's place in the Champions League next season is assured but they could now finish fourth, with Lazio four points back ahead of their match with 13th-placed Cagliari on Thursday.

Roma, meanwhile, move back fifth ahead of AC Milan, who beat Sassuolo on Tuesday, after routing already-relegated SPAL 6-1.

Bruno Peres scored a second-half brace with Carles Perez scoring his first Serie A goal for the visitors with Nikola Kalinic and Nicolo Zaniolo also on target.

Roma are two points ahead of Milan, with the two teams already assured of Europa League football next season.

Indian mixed relay team's Asiad Silver upgraded to Gold

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian 4x400m mixed relay team's Silver medal in the 2018 Asian Games has been upgraded to Gold following the disqualification of original winners Bahrain on account of a doping ban handed to one of its runners.

Bahrain, which had topped the 4x400 mixed relay final, was disqualified after Kemi Adekoya was handed a four-year ban by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) for failing



Japanese swimmer Ikee Rikako holding the lantern containing Olympic flame poses during a photo session at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo

Bronze medal after the AIU annulled the results of Adekoya, who originally won the race.

The Indian quartet of Mohammed Anas, MR Poovamma, Hima Das and Arokia Rajiv had clocked 3:15:71 behind Bahrain (3:11:89). Raghavan had clocked 56.92 to finish fourth in the final race in Jakarta.

"The additional medal takes our tally to 20, including eight Gold and nine Silver," said AFI President Adille J Sumariwalla.