The Indian EXPRESS



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EXPRESS INVESTIGATION PART1

20 years on, where are the Board toppers? Over half are abroad, most in science and technology

Gender gap; students increasingly from outside metros; US most favoured destination, IIT popular route; minorities, SC/STs invisible: 86 CBSE, ICSE, ISC toppers 1996-2015 tell stories of change - and point to challenges as the new National Education Policy rolls out

RITIKA CHOPRA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

THEY ARE India's national school board toppers over 20 years. So it's no surprise that one's a cancer physician in New York; another is a PhD fellow at MIT; one is a Harvard professor; one a hedge fund manager in Singapore – and as many as 11 are working for Google.

Each is a story of individual talent and effort, excellence and achievement, outliers all. But taken together, as an investigation by The Indian Express reveals, the arcs of their different lives – and careers – tell significant stories of a generation coming of age after India opened up in the 1990s. Of how some aspirations endure, some don't; how some divides have crumbled, some remain as intractable as ever.

More than half the toppers live overseas today, the US being the destination of choice. Most are in science and technology with IITs their most favoured undergraduate pit-stop; more than half of them grew up outside metros, in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, and only one is a minority there's not one Dalit or tribal. And if you are a girl topper, you are much less likely to move overseas than if you were a boy.

These are among the key findings of the four-month investigation by The Indian Express that tracked down 86 men and women who stood first in India, between 1996 and 2015, in their Class 10 and 12 exams conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and



gave me phenomenal opportunities to do world-class research with the best people from all over the world

KARUNA GANESH, PHYSICIAN-SCIENTIST AT MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING CANCER CENTER IN NEW YORK; CLASS 10 ICSE TOPPER IN 1999

Over half the toppers live or work abroad

More than half the toppers between 21 and 42 years of age - are in foreign countries, most of them are employed, a quarter of them are pursuing advanced degrees. Three of every four who are abroad are in the United States. While the US remains the preferred destination, others are based in the UK, Australia, Singapore, China, Canada,



BIG PICTURE PAGES 8, 9



INDIA'S TOPPERS

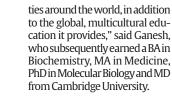
most in any one company. Karuna Ganesh, 37, left the country soon after topping her





During my PhD at MIT, we got a lot of hands-on experience, something I had never experienced during my undergraduation back home in India

RISHABH SINGH, RESEARCH SCIENTIST WITH GOOGLE X IN CALIFORNIA, CLASS 12 CBSE TOPPER IN 2004



Most went abroad to study citing better ecosystem

Higher education is the primary reason why toppers left the e living adr over 70% left India to pursue either their undergraduate or postgraduate studies - only a dozen of the 86 went to take up a job. For example, Somnath Bose, 40, left India in 2008 with an MBBS from Calcutta Medical College and an MD from AIIMS, to pursue training in critical care. Today, he is an assistant professor at Boston's Harvard Medical

School and staff anesthesiologist at its teaching hospital, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Bose says that when he left India, programmes in critical care were just starting to open up. "The US ... had well-established clinical training pathways in that field, plus afforded opportunities to mix clinical work with focus on research," he said.

Janaki Sheth, 28, who studied at a school in Thane and aced the Class 10 ICSE exams in 2008 with 98.6%, has a BTech in Engineering Physics from IIT Bombay. In 2014, she left for the US for a PhD in Physics at the University of California, Los Angeles. On why she decided to study abroad, Sheth, now a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, said, "Six to seven years ago, scientific research was not very well-funded in India. So while I had some invaluable experiences at IIT, it was not sufficient for a PhD. In the US, science gets a great policy thrust which means there are more places to do good work, and there is constant upgradation of

technology," she said. For Arkya Chatterjee, 24, who topped the Class 12 ISC exam in 2015 from a Kolkata school before graduating from IIT-Bombay in Engineering Physics, the move to the US revealed a different side to the teacher-student equation. "(There is) more honesty about collaborations - professors encourage students to talk to each other and work on homework together. This reduces the incentive for academic dishonesty. This kind of trust was mostly absent at my undergraduate institute back in India," said Chatterjee, who is now

DAY AFTER PM DREW LINE Farmer unions agree to return to table: Next round of talks Tuesday

Modalities for repeal, guarantees on MSP on their agenda; Ugrahan group says more farmers on way to join protest

AMIL BHATNAGAR & RAAKHI JAGGA NEW DELHI, CHANDIGARH,

DECEMBER 26

A DAY after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the government is ready to hold talks on "issues, logic and facts" with farmers protesting against the new farm laws, farmer unions announced resumption of talks on December 29.

Following deliberations on the government offer for talks, farmer unions, under the banner of Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, told the press at Singhu border Saturday - the protest at Delhi's gates is now a month old - that talks with the government will be held at 11 am Tuesday.



Sanyukt Kisan Morcha holding a press conference at Singhu border on Saturday. Gajendra Yadav CCTVs KEEP WATCH PAGE 3

According to the unions, the meeting agenda will be: modalities to be adopted to repeal the three central farm Acts; mechanisms to be adopted to make remunerative MSP, recommended by the National Commission on Farmers, a legally guaranteed en-





FAMILY TRIBUTE

The wife and daughters of cricketer Dean Jones, who passed away recently, pay tribute to him on Day 1 of the second india-Aust

Certificate Examinations.

Amid soaring cut-off marks based on Class 12 Board exams, as the government, in tune with its new National Education Policy, sets up a panel to explore a national test to rejig the college admission process, the findings from the investigation are pointers to the challenges ahead

sh and the U/ Of those employed abroad,

most work in the tech sector, followed by medicine and finance. Four out of 10 working in the US are in Silicon Valley. Like Biswanath Panda, who graduated from Little Flower School in Jamshedpur in 1999 and is now

Google in San Francisco. Indeed,

Google is home to 11 toppers, the

United World College (UWC), USA, an international boarding school that brings together 200 students from 80 countries. She is now a physician-scientist at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York "My parents were supportive senior director of engineering at

about my moving abroad since UWC has a strong track record of sending students to top universiCONTINUED ON PAGE 2

TOMORROW THE GENDER GAP: **TOPPERS ALL BUT WHY** IT'S ADVANTAGE MEN

GOVT STARTS WORK ON COMMON TEST FOR UG ADMISSIONS PAGE 11

DDC polls: PM invokes Vajpayee, says BJP ceded power for J-K democracy

Saradha: CBI plea in SC on Mamata govt 'links', says it is scuttling probe

ATRIMITRA & ANANTHAKRISHNANG KOLKATA, NEW DELHI,

DECEMBER 26 THE CBI has filed a contempt plea

in the Saradha chit fund scam before the Supreme Court, seeking to link Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with some of the accused and charging her government with showing "constant,

deliberate and wilful non-cooperation" in the probe and of "a concerted effort to evade, avoid and escape the process of law" and "scuttle the investigation". In an application filed on

December 23, the CBI said that examination of one of the accused in the case, former Rajya Sabha MP Kunal Kumar Ghosh, by the Enforcement Directorate had "revealed that the Chief

Killing of Rajouri youths: Police chargesheet Captain, 2 civilians

BASHAARAT MASOOD SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 26

MORE THAN FIVE months after three Rajouri youths were killed in Shopian in an Army operation on July 18, the J&K Police has filed a chargesheet, accusing an Army Captain and two civilians for their alleged abduction and murder.

The 300-page chargesheet states that a case of murder, abduction and destruction of evi-CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 dence is "prima facie" established

Singh and two civilians – Tabish Nazir, a resident of Shopian, and Bilal Ahmad Lone of Pulwama based on evidence collected during the investigation by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up to probe the alleged fake encounter. Filed before the Principal Sessions Judge, Shopian, the chargesheet states that the three Rajouri youths - Imtiyaz Ahmad (20) and Mohammad Abrar (16),

residents of Dharsakri village

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

against Captain Bhoopendra



OUTRAGE over killings had led Army and Police to investigate the July 18 operation, with both reaching the same conclusion. Action against accused will build trust in the administration.

ARUN SHARMA JAMMU, DECEMBER 26

DESCRIBING THE establishment of a three-tier Panchayati Raj system in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) as the ushering in of a new era and new leadership, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday said the recent District Development Council elections had strengthened democracy.

"In a way, these elections fulfil Mahatma Gandhi's dream of 'Gram Swaraj'... We have worked day and night to strengthen grassroots democracy and democratic institutions," he said during the launch of the Ayushman Bharat Yojana Sehat Scheme that provides cashless health cover of up to Rs



PM launching Ayushman Bharat for J-K, Saturday. PTI

5 lakh to every family in the Union Territory of J&K. Modi also took a swipe at

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

PUDUCHERRY: CM VS LG PAGE 6

plans higher penalties (jail terms and fines going up to 10 years and Rs 1 lakh), as compared to the law in Uttar Pradesh, as well as maintenance to the woman concerned and the right to father's property for a child born to a couple whose marriage has been declared null and void under its provisions.

Briefing the media after a Cabinet meeting, Home Minister **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

My **ISOLATION**



'I'm at Singhu, Tikri daily, in mask, sanitised car... I unwind to Kishore songs' SANJAY SINGH

WORLD

TRUMP HOLDS BACK BILL, MILLIONS LOSE JOBLESS BENEFITS **PAGE 13**

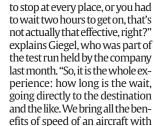
Is it a car? Is it a plane? Is it a train? In road to hyperloop, a leap

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

NANDAGOPAL RAJAN NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

"WE ARE not all about speed... We don't sell speed, we sell time." This may seem surprising coming from the co-founder of

American firm Virgin Hyperloop. However, Josh Giegel, now one of the first people in the world to take the transport system involving levitating test pods travelling at high speeds, knows what he is talking about.



"If hyperloop went at a mil-

lion kilometres an hour, but had

efits of speed of an aircraft with the comfort of rail experience, without having to wait, and at the same time reduce energy usage."

Another passenger on the first set of test rides held by Virgin Hyperloop, which Giegel first envisaged six years ago, was



Pune-origin Tanay Manjrekar was one of the first people ever to travel in the levitating pod, at a test run last month

Tanay Manjrekar. Originally from Pune, Manjrekar is a power electronics specialist who has been with the company since 2016. "I was going to try to get into the pod any way I could," Manjrekar says. "I have always dreamt about creating a hyperloop, but riding on it was beyond dreams. When that opportunity kind of presents itself, it would have been stupid not to take it."

A new form of transport currently being developed by a number of companies, hyperloop envisages passengers travelling at high speeds in floating pods located inside giant low-pressure tubes, either above or below

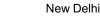
ground. The system is not in commercial use anywhere in the world, and Virgin Hyperloop it-

self is still running tests in the US. Last month, NITI Aayog formed a panel to study hyperloop in depth, including Member V K Saraswat, the Chairman, Railway Board, and the Secretaries of Housing and Urban Affairs, Road Transport and Highways. The panel will draw on the expertise of Delhi Metro and IIT among others. On Saturday, Chairman, Railway Board, V K Yadav said: "Hyperloop is a technology that is still evolving across the world. The government is studying it as

a transport technology, that's all I can say right now.'

As part of the first leg in India, Virgin Hyperloop plans to connect Pune and Mumbai, covering the 150-km distance at 1,200 kmph speeds in about 35 minutes, a tenth of the time taken by road currently. Giegel says it is just the start, and at least 7,000 km of hyperloop is possible in India.

Virgin Hyperloop has also signed an MoU to conduct a feasibility test regarding a link between the Bengaluru city centre and Kempegowda International Airport, and is working with the Punjab government for a **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



MP 'love jihad'

but limits who

Bill tougher,



THE MADHYA PRADESH government claimed to have set into motion "the most stringent" law in the country against 'love jihad', clearing a Religion to Freedom Bill on Saturday that

THE SECOND PAGE

The Indian EXPRESS



FROM PAGE ONE DDC polls have been accused of putting

pointing out that municipal and panchayat elections have not yet been held in Congress-ruled Puducherry despite Supreme Court orders

Without naming anybody, he said, "I want to express my anguish before the nation that some people in Delhi keep cursing me daily...They give me new lessons on democracy every day. I want to show them the mirror.'

"Main un logo se poochna chahta hoon ki yeh Jammu Kashmir ko dekhive ki, itne kam samav mein unhoney tree-stariya panchayati raj vyavastha ko swikaar karkey kam kar diya. Lekin dusari aur vidambana dekhive ki Pondicherry mein Supreme Court ke adesh ke babjood, panchayat aur municipal elections nahi ho rahe. Aur mujhe jo yahan loktantra ke paath pada rahe hain, unki party wahan raj kar rahi hai (I want to ask these people ... the three-tier Panchayati Raj system has been established in Jammu and Kashmir within a short period of its becoming a UT, but panchayat and municipal elections are not being held in Pondicherry where their party is in power despite Supreme Court orders)," he said

The Prime Minister said the Supreme Court had issued orders for holding local body polls in Puducherry in 2018, but the government there was dillydallying in the matter since it had "no faith in democracy". Local body polls were last held in Puducherry in 2006 after many decades and the term of those elected ended in 2011, he pointed out. This, he said, showed the difference in the speed and deeds of some parties and also how serious they were about democracy.

The delay in holding these elections in Puducherry has been primarily because the delimitapressure on families to register complaints.

Once an FIR has been registered, in both MP and UP, the burden to prove one's innocence lies on the accused. Those identified as frequent offenders can face jail terms of five to 10 years.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan tweeted, "We will not allow anyone to carry out religious conversion using force, threat or allurement in Madhya Pradesh. For this we have made our law of 1968 more effective to ensure none of the perpetrators go free.'

Claiming to curb religious conversions using misrepresentation, allurement, force, threat, undue influence, coercion, marriage or any other "fraudulent means", the MPBill stipulates jail terms of one to five years, with a fine of Rs 25,000, in such cases. The penalty in case of a person using "misrepresentation" or "impersonation" for religious conversion will be higher, including a jail term of three-10 years and a fine of Rs 50.000.

In contrast, the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, passed last month, stipulates that religious conversion using any of the above means, including misrepresentation and impersonation, would entail a jail term of one to five years and a fine of Rs 15,000.

The other big departure between the MP Bill and UP law is the provision for maintenance to women and right to property to children in the marriage under question, in the legislation planned by the Chouhan government. The matter of maintenance will be dealt as per Section 125 of the CrPC

In both states, marriages proved to have been undertaken for the sole purpose of religious conversion or conducted without appropriate notice to the district administration can be declared null and void by family courts. Return to one's original religion -- the religion one is born into or that practised by one's father -- will not be counted as conversion under the MP Bill. This is the same as in the UP legislation. While both the UP law and MP Bill envisage a jail term of two to 10 years in case a person being converted is a minor, or belongs to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, the MP legislation talks of a penalty of Rs 50,000, against Rs 25,000 in UP. Both the legislation talk of three-to five-year prison terms for religious organisations or individuals seen as carrying out mass conversions, but again the penalty in MP is higher (Rs 1 lakh) than UP (Rs 50,000). In both states, organisations or priests carrying out conversions have to inform the district administration about 60 days before the date of conversion, failing which the organisation can have its registration cancelled and the priest or facilitator face a jail term. But the MP Bill stipulates a higher penalty (of Rs 50,000, and threefive years' jail term) in such cases, compared to one to five years and

Over half the toppers from Tier 2, 3 cities; no Dalit or tribal in list of 86

Six of 10 toppers chose engineering

More than half the toppers (48 out of 86) chose engineering as their undergraduate degree – only 12 did medicine. Among those who studied engineering, six out of 10 did so at an IIT.

Many, however, confessed that an interest in engineering wasn't always the motivation behind the decision.

Sundaresh Nageswaran, 32, who topped the CBSE Class 10 exam in 2004 before studying Mechanical Engineering at IIT-Roorkee, said it was the "societal norm" for those who did well in school to study engineering. "Engineering, or more specifically IIT, was the rule ... I later realised I wasn't interested in engineering and moved out to other fields," he said.

Sundresh later pursued an MBA from the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, and until September, was general manager(business development)at Sea6 Energy, a platform that harnesses the potential of oceans. In his role there, he admits, there was no direct use for his mechanical engineering know-how. He is now working on his own venture.

To be sure, few regret their undergraduate degree in engineering. However, many wish they had exposure to other professions or career counselling at that age.

Lekshmi Vaidyeswaran, 29, who topped the CBSE Class 10 exam in 2007 with 99%, and is currently a senior product manager at ICICI Prudential Life Insurance in Mumbai, has a BTech degree in applied electronics and instrumentation from the College of Engineering Trivandrum. "My family wanted me to go for Commerce. I insisted on engineering as any other choice was perceived as something opted by those who could not make it to engineering," she said. "In hindsight, yes, I would have gone for Commerce and pursued Chartered Accountancy. Subhojit Ghosh, 29, who topped the ISC Class 12 exam from a Kolkata school in 2009 with 99.25%, has a BTech in Mechanical Engineering from IIT Kanpur. He later did an MBA from Harvard Business School and is working as senior product manager at Amazon in Seattle.



Bhattacharjya with wife Charu Sethi, who works with a UN agency, and children Ahaan and Ameha

I stayed back in India since I got through a good college (BITS-Pilani). Beyond that, it was a personal decision to stay close to family and parents SANKALPA BHATTACHARJYA,

PARTNER AT PWC INDIA, GURGAON; TOPPED CLASS 12, ISC, 1996

THE INVESTIGATION, THE METHOD

The Indian Express obtained names of 86 toppers of Class 10 and 12 exams conducted by the Council of Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Of the 86 names, 62 graduated between 1996 and 2015 from schools affiliated to the CISCE Board, and 24 were national CBSE toppers from 2004 to 2015. Some years, the Boards had three or even four joint national toppers. For CBSE Class 10, there was no topper from 2010 to 2015 since the Board had switched from marks to grades.

To track down the toppers, over four months, The Indian Express checked newspaper archives, social media sites, contacted school principals, teachers and alumni associations. In one case, help came from a bank union in UP, which tapped its network to locate retired employee, who is the father of an ICSE national topper.

was little incentive to pursue postgraduate studies in management abroad since, she says, premier business schools in India offered more value for money. While she was at IIM-Calcutta, where she did her MBA, Singh was offered a job by Kearney, a global management consulting firm, and joined them in Delhi as consultant this month. "While an MBA abroad has its merits, it is too expensive. And today. India has lots of great jobs and opportunities in the private sector," she said.

Tackling social, economic challenges

Of the 86 toppers, only one belonged to the Other Backward Class (OBC) category. None was Dalit or tribal. Of the 76 toppers who responded to this newspaper's questionnaire, just five were first-generation college-goers.

Mohammad Ismat, 29, from Imphal, Manipur, topped the Class 12 CBSE exam in 2012. Ismat, who says his teacher SM Singh paid his Board examination fee since his family couldn't afford it, went on to study BSc (Honours) Physics at Delhi's St. Stephen's College, funded by a corporate house.

A personal crisis at home meant that Ismat had to put his career aspirations on hold for almost four years after he graduated from Delhi University. This year, he started preparing for the UPSC examination. Of the 74 toppers who shared their family income with The Indian Express, only one came from the lowest earning quartile. The student, who didn't want to be identified, said his parents earned less than Rs 1 lakh per annum when he topped the Class 12 Board exam. Almost three-fourths said their parents earned over Rs 5 lakh annually at the time of their Board exams. The remaining reported annual family incomes of between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 5 lakh. More than half the toppers are from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities such as Dehradun, Dhanbad, Asansol, Jamshedpur, Trivandrum, Lucknow and Meerut - cities where Englishmedium ICSE and CBSE schools have ridden on the ambition and aspiration for a better future in these parts. These are also the cities hardest hit during the pandemic, compounding fears of job losses and school dropouts.

Evidence and found an Army officer culpable for the killing of the three Rajouri youths. The next step in the process is a court martial. Earlier, on September 18, the Army's Court of Inquiry confirmed that the three youths killed were labourers from Rajouri.

The J&K Police chargesheet states, "Avehicle(A-Star) used for the abduction and transportation of the victims was seized as evidence." The "weapon of offence" of the Army officer has been seized and sent to CFSL, Chandigarh.

According to the chargesheet, the officer and the two civilians have been charged under Section 302 (murder), Section 364 (abduction), Section 201 (destruction of evidence), Section 436, 120-B (criminal conspiracy to commit an offence punishable with death) and Section 182 of Indian Penal

Code and Section 7/25 of Indian Arms Act (possession or carrying of prohibited arms or ammunition).

While the accused civilians, Tabish and Bilal, have been arrested and are in judicial custody, the Captain is "yet to be arrested for procedures under AFSAP (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) and the Army Act whereas sanction is also required to be obtained for launching prosecution against him".

The chargesheet states that the questioning of the two civilians led to the recovery of a Maruti Alto car and some cell phones from the "Victor Force camp Awantipora". Besides examining all Call Detail Records, it details the planning, abduction of the youth, the routes taken, and prior arrangement of illegal weapons by the accused.

The Army officer, the chargesheet stated, misled his officers and colleagues. It states he "furnished false information to mislead the senior officers and for As per the CBL Ghosh had also getting lodgment of FIR done to written to Rajeev Kumar in tailor-fit his motive for grabbing November 2013 "against Shri prize money in furtherance of Arnab Ghosh, the then Deputy criminal conspiracy". Commissioner of One of the civilian accused, Bidhannagar Bilal Ahmad Lone, turned ap-Commissionerate", accusing the prover and his statement under police of pressuring him to "make Section 164 of Code of Criminal statements". Procedure (CrPC) has been recorded. The DNA analysis by t had found that Rs 6.21 crore was paid from the CM's Relief Fund to CFSL, Chandigarh, post mortem Tara TV. which was part of the report and the missing report by Saradha Group, "at the rate of Rs three Rajouri families led to the identification of the three civilian 27 lakh per month", from May victims, the chargesheet stated. 2013 to April 2015. "In order to fur-

Court, which is monitoring the Saradha probe, Trinamool MP Kalyan Banerjee said the agency had been reduced to "a political agency". "Six years back the CBI was given the investigation because of the allegation that the state machinery was not helping in the probe. After six years, this agency is saying the same... If the CBI is fair, why don't they arrest Mukul Roy and Suvendu Adhikari?"

Former Trinamool leaders and co-accused in the Saradha scam, Rov and Adhikari are now with the BIP. The other accused in the case include former Trinamool minister Madan Mitra, late Trinamool MP Tapash Pal, TMC MP Sudip Banerjee, and Bengali film producer Srikant Mohta.

The CBI did not respond to queries sent by The Sunday Express.

Regarding Kumar, the agency told the Supreme Court, "more evidence has emerged substantiating further the active connivance Kumar, the then Commissioner of Police, Bidhannagar, in shielding and protecting the influential co-accused persons who had promoted the illegal business activities of the group of Ponzi companies and

who had ... benefited from the illegally collected funds". The CBI also talked about a detailed complaint sent by Sen in April 2013, which "contains serious allegations against many influential persons such as Shri Kunal Kumar Ghosh, Shri Srinjoy Bose, Shri Santanu Ghosh, Smt Nalini Chidambaram, Shri Matang Sinh, Smt Manoranjana Sinh who were allegedly associated with the affairs of Saradha Group and accused". However. it said. the SIT and Bidhannagar police arrested and chargesheeted "only... Ghosh... and a few employees of the Saradha Group".

The CBI's application said that

ther look into the gravely suspi-

cious payments to a clouded pri-

vate media entity, a letter dated

16.10.2018 was written to the

Chief Secretary, West Bengal, to

provide information about the

constitution and functioning of

the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Despite repeated efforts, the state

government has parted with in-

complete and evasive replies," it

ernment of not sharing "a list con-

taining names of certain influen-

tial persons and a synopsis of

evidence against them", which

had been earlier submitted by the

state to the SC. "State Police did not

The CBI accused the state gov-

Police,

Police

tion exercise dragged on for years. The matter reached the courts with multiple judgements by the Madras High Court and the Supreme Court. Since June last year, a bitter tussle between Chief Minister V Narayanasamy and Lt Governor Kiran Bedi over appointment of an Election Commissioner for Puducherry has meant further delays.

Referring to the PDP-BJP government in Jammu and Kashmir after the 2014 Assembly polls, he said, "There was a time when we were part of the Jammu and Kashmir government. We had a Deputy Chief Minister and also the ministers, but we pulled out of the government on the issue of panchayat elections. We wanted empowerment of people in villages across Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

The Prime Minister also invoked Atal Behari Vajpayee's three principles of Insaaniyat, Kashmiriyat and Jamhooriyat, stating Jammu and Kashmir was progressing on the path of development on the basis of these three principles.

'Love jihad' Bill

Narottam Mishra described the Bill as "the most stringent" against "the practice of love jihad". Apart from BIP-ruled MP and UP, the party's Himachal Pradesh government has also notified a similar legislation with the aim of "checking conversions".

In a significant departure from the UP ordinance though on registration of FIRs in such cases, the MP Bill says these can be dealt only by police personnel not less than the rank of sub-inspector. and that parents and siblings of the affected individual alone can file a complaint directly. In case a guardian or a custodian wants to register an offence, they must approach a Sessions Court authorised to deal with these matters and get a court order.

In UP, any "aggrieved person", who may have no connection with the couple involved, can register an FIR. In several cases in the state, right-wing organisations

Hyperloop

Rs 25,000 in UP.

corridor between Amritsar and Chandigarh.

While the technology hurdle has been more or less overcome, an uphill task is convincing regulators about something that is this new. "We all try to relate something new to what we already know. And so people kind of look at hyperloop and think, it's obviously not a car, and it's definitely not a plane, and it's really not a boat, so it must be a train," Giegel spells out his frustrations.

But the conversations have been making progress. "In July, the US Department of Transportation gave us regulatory guidance. They actually said that we are an official mode of transportation. which is a big deal. India, as part

of the Mumbai to Pune project,

also declared us an infrastructure project." In Europe, hyperloop has been listed as part of the Smart Mobility strategy.

Giegel thinks it is important to have these conversations in parallel. "If we wait until everything is perfect, it will just take too long for certification," he says, adding how the recent tests were a lot about "the incremental development of technology and the incremental development of safety". The regu-

lators, he says, were very excited with the way tests were done and the rigour of the process.

The lack of sleep over the past many months is finally paying off. "We didn't think that would happen this quickly."

The tests could only achieve 172 kmph, but Giegel says it's because the Nevada test track just was 500 metres long. "The goal wasn't speed, it was safety," he says, adding that a new certification track being built in West Virginia will give a glimpse of higher speeds.

Manjrekar does not see many challenges in hyperloop getting

A detailed qualitative questionnaire was sent to each of the 86 toppers. Ten did not respond, but their stories are part of this series.

Of the 86, 74 were Science students in Class 12, 12 did Commerce. No topper was from the Arts/Humanities stream. Year 2015 was chosen as the cut-off year to ensure that all students featured had, by 2020, completed or were close to completing their first undergraduate degree.

"While the IIT brand was definitely a factor, there was no family pressure... I liked math and science, and agree that I did not know much about other non-IIT options at that point, probably due to lack of career advice at a school level. But in hindsight, a better awareness on how your undergraduate degree links to various types of future career roles may have altered my decision of choosing mechanical engineering,'

has robust design practices and

technology to get over them. "In

terms of challenges, it's really a

race for governments right now to

shown safe travel is possible on

this, by not astronauts but normal

people. I think the biggest thing

for me is how fast we can scale

2020' to exclude farmers from pe-

nal provisions of the ordinance;

and, changes to be made in the

draft Electricity(Amendment)Bill,

2020 to protect farmer interests.

will intensify their agitation by in-

creasing blockades on highways

of Delhi NCR if the talks do not

An estimated 30,000 people,

affiliated to the BKU (Ugrahan)

and Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh

Committee(KMSC), are headed to

Delhi from Barnala, Ludhiana,

lead to a tangible solution.

The unions warned that they

Farmer unions

WITHENSINPUTS

Giegel weighs in, "We have

get the first one up," he adds.

he said.

up."

Those who stayed back in India

Among toppers who stayed back or returned to India after their higher studies, most have chosen a career in finance. followed by the tech sector, consulting, and business. This is unlike those settled abroad, who mostly worked in the tech sector.

For Parnil Singh, 27, the CBSE Class 10 topper of 2009 from a school in Visakhapatnam, there

where it should and, if at all there Sangrur, Patiala and Gurdaspur. are bumps, thinks the company

Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan, BKU(Ugrahan)general secretary, said more than 3,000 vehicles, carrying nearly 16,000 farmers from over 100 villages of Punjab, entered Narwana Saturday noon. He said the convoy was given a rousing welcome by Haryana farmers and made a halt at Jhanjh Kalan village. They will head towards Tikri Sundav.

Kulwant Sharma, a block president of BKU (Ugrahan), said another batch of 15,000 volunteers will enter Haryana via Bathinda-Dabwali highway and hold a rally with Harvana farmers at Fatehabad before heading to Tikri Monday.

Swaraj India president Yogendra Yadav, speaking on behalf of farmer unions, said: "We want to make one thing very clear. We are not going to discuss whether the government should take back these laws or not. We will now discuss how these should be taken back. The government must discuss the procedure involved in calling back a law. This

is the only direction in which the talks will head.'

> Farmer leaders were critical of the Prime Minister's speech Friday. Alleging "misinformation", Rashtriva Kisan Mazdoor Mahasangh president Shiv Kumar Kakka said it was for the Prime Minister to "create an environment conducive for talks".

Rajouri youths

and Ábrar Ahmad (25) of Tarkasi village of Kotranka Rajouri – were "abducted" from their rented accommodation in Shopian and then killed.

Both the Army and the I&K Police had earlier claimed that the three youths were unidentified militants and had buried them discreetly in a graveyard in north Kashmir's Baramulla. On October 3, the J&K government exhumed the bodies of the three labourers killed during the night in the presence of family members and handed them over to the families.

The Indian Express had on Friday reported that the Army had conducted a Summary of

Saradha

Minister, West Bengal, and promoter of M/s Saradha Group Shri Sudipta Sen had very good relationship", and cited call data records to show that Ghosh and Sen were in constant touch.

The CBI is particularly critical of the role of former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar, who when posted in Bidhannagar had supervised the SIT probe into the Saradha case, and has sought his custodial interrogation. In February 2019, Mamata had personally sat on a dharna to stop a CBI team from questioning Kumar. Referring to this, the CBI told the Supreme Court that the

provide the information on record "facts clearly point towards condespite repeated requests." certed institutional connivance and a complete breakdown of rule

said.

of law and constitutional machinery in the State of West Bengal". The development is set to further heat the bitter political atmosphere in the state, which heads to Assembly polls next year, with Mamata leading the charge against a combative BJP.

The CBI application also talks of the ED questioning of Safiqur Rehman, an employee of Saradha Group, saying it had "revealed that...(MP)Ghosh used to direct... (Saradha promoter) Sen to pay money to different Durga Puja Committees" and that "when the Chief Minister, West Bengal, contested for MLA seat... Sen was forced to sponsor all the Pujas of Bhawanipur, Kolkata".

Asked about the CBI's contempt plea before the Supreme

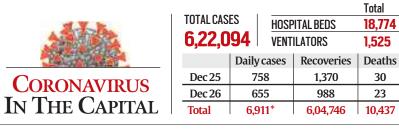
Talking about an auction held of Mamata's paintings, in 2011-2013, the CBI said that while these were bought by promoters of other ponzi companies besides Saradha, these were not investigated. "It has come on record that not only M/s Saradha paid funds... but other ponzi companies like M/s Rose Valley Group; M/s Tower Group; M/s Pailan Group; M/s Angel Agro Group have also bought paintings worth lakhs of rupees steered by certain persons linked to the highest state authorities." The state police did not investigate "any case against any

other group of ponzi companies as mentioned", the CBI said. The agency mentioned in detail the February 2019 incident when Mamata had sat on a dharna to stop a CBI team from

questioning Rajeev Kumar.

New Delhi

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, DECEMBER 27, 2020 3 'I'HE CITY



AT SINGHU Metro revenue Month on, as protest grows, farmers deficit Rs 1,900 cr, install CCTVs to keep eye on crowd

AMIL BHATNAGAR NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

ON NOVEMBER 26, more than 3,000 farmers arrived at the Singhu border between Delhi and Harvana on their tractor trollevs to set up base for a protest against the new farm bills. Within two days, a cardboard base on the side of a truck was turned into a small stage, where speeches were made through a portable mic and speaker.

Exactly a month on, the main protest stage is now a two-storey pandal – a nearly 30 feet wide platform with barricaded seating for hundreds of people. As the scale of the protest grows bigger by the day, so has the paraphernalia around it, with farmer unions even installing eight CCTV cameras to monitor the crowd.

The oft-repeated statement by farm leaders and protesters – that they're here for the long haul appears to ring more true today than a month ago. The initial row of tractor trolleys that spread across 3-4 km is more than 10 km long now. And owing to support from nearby areas, daily footfall at the protest has remained in thousands every day. Which is why, farmer unions say, a need was felt to monitor the crowd to maintain the sanctity of the protest and keep anti-social elements away.

These cameras give us a bird's eye view of the protest since there are so many people





coming in now. We come to Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, who know of incidents where people manages the CCTV department.

with ulterior motives try to cre-Some cameras have been ate problems. This way, we can placed near steel poles of the keep a record of what is happenstage, while another camera ing and counter any narrative to pans towards the langars. The seblame us for any anti-social accurity team did not reveal positions of other cameras. "Our fotivity," said Gurdeep Singh of

Inside the CCTV monitoring room at Singhu; (left) the protest site now includes a bigger stage, more langars

cus is to keep a record of all those places where a large crowd gathers, since the possibility of someone creating a problem in a gathering is high," said Gurdeep.

Behind the main stage, a trollev with a wooden door has been placed next to the entry barricades. At the further end of the trolley, two 32-inch TVs have been placed, which displays the feed from the eight cameras. At least two people monitor it at all times. There are 15 volunteers in the entire CCTV team who take turns during the day. Farmers say the equipment

Delhi: Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava visited the Singhu border Saturday and met personnel and officers from Delhi Police and CRPF who have been deployed at the site for over a month. He tweeted: "They (Delhi police and central force) are doing a good job regarding farmers' agitation. Suitable arrangements are in place for their food and protection against cold and Covid". Police have been guarding Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders since the time the protest started. ENS

has been brought from Delhi through funds pooled in by farmers as well as donations.

The CCTV team is just one example of how the protest has become more organised over the past month. A stage management committee decides who addresses the crowd. donation teams keep track of funds, an 'IT Cell' handles what information has to be put out on social media, while volunteers at the site clean roads and dispose of garbage.

India). The award was announced

by Gandhi on November 19, 1986.

Ralph Lerner (USA), the second

was Gautam Bhatia (India), and

the third was shared between

Francoise Helene Jourda and

Perraudin (France), David Jeremy

Dixon (UK) and Alexandros

Tombazos (Greece). The first prize

winner was awarded Rs 10 lakh,

the second 5 lakh and the third

foundational design princip

As per IGNCA's introduction to

prize winners Rs 3 lakh each.

The first prize winner was Prof

officials told to limit expenditure SOURAV ROY BARMAN NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

Services resumed on Sep 6

Loan

woes

DMRC had earlier written

to the Centre requesting it

to defer payment of its

loan installment for the

year 2020-21. It owes JICA,

which has so far granted

Rs 35,198 crore loan to

DMRC, Rs 1,242.83 crore in

the current financial year.

Garg pointed out that till last

year, the O&M wing had an oper-

ational ratio of 80.55%, "which in-

dicated that O&M was self-reliant

to meet day-to-day expenditure

and a balance was left to meet JICA

The consultancy funds in the

rojects division pertain to funds

that Metro maintains to use in

case of consultancy services it pro-

vides for other Metro rail projects

that the company's total revenue

generation was Rs 5,387 crore, Rs

6,211 crore and Rs 6,461 crore in

2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 re-

spectively. Out of the total, earn-

ings, excluding expenditure, from sale of tickets during these years

was Rs 2,179 crore, Rs 3,027 crore

When contacted, DMRC

and Rs 3,582 crore respectively.

Executive Director (Corporate

Communications) Anuj Dayal

said: "The funds mentioned are

DMRC's annual reports show

across the country.

loan and interest repayment".

are to be incurred...," he said.

EXPLAINED

THE COVID-19 pandemic has severely hit Delhi Metro's finances, with its revenue deficit crossing Rs 1,900 crore in the last eight months, forcing the public transporter to transfer funds from its projects wing to the operations division and direct its officials to only allow bare minimum expenditure to run trains.

The Sunday Express has accessed a December 21 note signed by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Director (Operations) AK Garg saying that "in the last 8 months, DMRC has earned only Rs 247.65 crore while expenditure was Rs 2,208.24 crore (approx) including JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) loan and interest repayment due during this period".

Garg attributed the state of finances in the corporation to the pandemic-induced shutdown of Metro services and low footfall even after reopening of the network, which spans 390-km across Delhi-NCR. He said to meet the shortfall between earnings and expenditure, the corporation has sanctioned Rs 1.910 crore to be transferred from the project division to the operations and maintenance (O&M) division.

The projects division is responsible for construction activities while O&M is entrusted with daily operation and maintenance. "With the onset of pandemic, the government imposed lockdown on DMRC train operations with the result that for a period from 22.03.2020 to 06.09.2020, we had almost nil income from traffic earning as well as property business and parking revenues. Even after reopening of Metro system, due to several restrictions and fear in the public, ridership is very low and consequently the property business and parking revenues

are also very low," Garg wrote. from the revenue earned by "To meet this gap, the compe-DMRC independently from its Consultancy assignments which tent authority has sanctioned Rs 1,910 crore for transfer of funds are only earned and maintained by the project unit. These funds from consultancy funds maintained by the project division. are, therefore, not to be mixed up Now, the balance fund available or confused with funds received in consultancy fund is only Rs 260 for construction of the Metro proirore All HODs of O&M are hereby directed to curtail expenditure incurred by their departments judiciously. Only those expenditures which are very essential for running the trains

BRIEFLY -

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Vacant

940

Tests

85,749

67,115

82,75,838

16,210

Avoid setting up barricades during peak hours: Police chief's order

New Delhi: Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava issued an order Friday, instructing police personnel to not put non-permanent police pickets with barricades during peak hours as it results in traffic jams. The order states that the barricades "cause inconvenience to commuters and hampers movement of emergency vehicles". To help the public, the Commissioner has asked personnel to avoid putting barricades during peak hours, unless senior officers have instructed them to do so.

Woman falls to death from third floor of building

New Delhi: A 32-year-old woman fell from the third floor of a DDA building at Janakpuri district centre in West Delhi, Saturday afternoon. Police said the woman, Snehdeep Kaur, worked as a teacher at a private school in Tilak Nagar. DCP (West) Deepak Purohit said: "The woman's body was found on the terrace of the first floor. A two-page resume was found near her. The woman is a resident of Virender Nagar in Janakpuri. It appears she fell from the third floor.'

Argument takes fatal turn, 1 dead

New Delhi: An argument between two neighbours in East Delhi's Trilokpuri Saturday night took an fatal turn when two people suffered bullet injuries. One of them, Shahid, succumbed to his injuries, said DCP (Fast) Ia Singh. "The argument was over an employee of a shop being beaten up," he said. ENS

Security guard killed in factory fire

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

A 45-YEAR-OLD security guard died in a fire that broke out at a mask manufacturing factory in West Delhi's Mayapuri on Saturday. Fire officials said it was caused by a short circuit.

Delhi Fire Services director Atul Garg said the fire broke out on the third floor, where machines and raw material were Three men - the victim Jugal Kishor, and workers Aman Ansari (18) and Firoz Ansari (24) - were sleeping inside at the time. Police have registered a case against the factory management under IPC sections 304A (causing death by negligence) and 285 (negligent conduct with fire). Fire officials said the factory doesn't have an NOC and isn't authorised to run operations, adding that LPG cylinders were found inside. Garg said, "We had to break the doors... We rescued the three men: one of them was unconscious and was rushed to DDU hospital. We completed rescue operations in less than an hour and the blaze was doused before it could spread to other floors." Kabir (28), who works at the factory, told The Indian Express, "I was nearby when the incident took place and I saw smoke billowing from the building. It hardly has any windows. Only 4-5 of us work there. Before the pandemic, we made khadi tshirts and shirts at the factory. Now, we make khadi masks."

ANANYA TIWARI NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

THE NEW Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) is expected to be completed by 2023, with a design that will have modern facilities while retaining elements of Indian architectural and design heritage based on its foundational principles, officials at HCP, responsible for its design, have told The Indian Evni The new IGNCA will come up at Jamnagar plot on C-Hexagon or the India Gate circle. It is currently located at lanpath road over a plot of 10.10 hectares, and its construction is incomplete due to lack of funding for decades. For the time being, it is readying itself for a shift to Janpath Hotel, which is currently undergoing renovations and is expected to be completed by February-March 2021. Director (admin) Lt Col(Retd)RA Rangnekar told The *Indian Express*, "We are in the process of making an inventory of everything, and our target to move out is December 31." The Janpath Hotel will have an auditorium, an outdoor exhibition centre, a media room, lecture and exhibition halls for the centre, he added.



New IGNCA to be 'forward-looking

but retain traditional elements'

Police chief visits Singhu

Workers said Kishor lived in the factory and was also in-charge of duties on the floor. His wife and children live in Kanpur.



The old and new

The HCP said the design of the new IGNCA is at a concept stage, though it will follow the foundational principles envisioned for the current IGNCA. As per HCP, the new facility "will be a modern, forward-looking Indian building, retaining elements of India's architectural and design heritage". The new building will be

It is currently located at Janpath road. Express

of its new incarnation."

pected to be Rs 2,990 crore.

ground plus four floors, spread across the Janpath road and the across different blocks. The HCP National Museum across the said: "At its inception, the IGNCA Vista. That did not materialise. was based on deep philosophical and it was occupied by an Indian Air Force Officers' Mess accessed attitudes to nurturing, research and sharing of all forms of India's from Janpath road and two govindigenous arts and crafts... and ernment bungalows accessed these concepts shall continue to from Dr Rajendra Prasad Road. The foundation for IGNCA was drive the inspiration and design

laid by former PM Rajiv Gandhi on The IGNCA's plot, as per the November 19, 1985, on the birth plans, will house three Central anniversary of former PM Indira Secretariat office buildings reach-Gandhi, and an International ing up to 39 metres in height. Architectural Competition was lower than the India Gate at 42 announced for its design. The jury metres. The plans for it include comprised 7 architects and the late Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, the then two basements, a ground and six floors, to house over 14,000 emsecretary to the department of arts, and founding member of plovees and over 2.400 vehicles in its underground parking. The IGNCA's trust. The architects were Olufemi Makekodunmi (Nigeria), cost of the three buildings is ex-Geoffrey Bawa (Sri Lanka), Before the IGNCA came up, Fumihiko Maki (Japan), James the plot was envisaged as a Stirling (UK), Habib Rahman Cultural Plaza by Lutyens in re-(India), AP Kanvinde (India), BV lation to the National Archives Doshi (chairperson of the Jury,

from that time, "the five divisions of the Centre are envisioned in a manner which emphasises the interdependence of the conceptual, ideational, theoretical, textual, historical and the practical, the contemporary and the creative".

The five components of the design were the Kala Nidhi (a national information system/data bank, library), the Kala Kosha (for research studies leading to publication), the Janapada (research division focused on oral, tribal and folklore traditions, its documentation and display, along with ecology), the Kala Darshana (focused on venues for theatres, performances), and the Sutradhara (administrative offices).

Dr Ralph Lerner's design had five major courts – each representing one of the Centre's objectives. Due to various reasons related to lack of funding, only one building emerged. The plot currently has a colonial style bungalow with halls and seminar rooms.

ect It is clarified that P struction funds are separate." Under current arrangements, alternate seats are left empty in trains. Standing passengers are advised to maintain 1-metre gap.

GOVT. OF BIHAR BIHAR COMBINED ENTRANCE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION BOARD I.A.S. Association Building, Near Patna Airport, Patna-14. UNDER GRADUATE MEDICAL ADMISSION COUNSELLING (UGMAC)-2020 for MBBS / BDS / B.V.Sc. & A.H. in Govt. Medical / Dental / Bihar

Veterinaty Colleges and Private Medical / Dental Colleges of Bihar

Adv. No.- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2020/14 Dated 26.12.2020

द्रितीय कॉउन्सेलिंग से सम्बन<u>्धित आवश्यक सूचना</u>

विज्ञापन संख्या- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2020/12 दिनांक 23.12.2020 के क्रम में UGMAC-2020 से सम्बन्धित सभी अभ्यर्थियों / संस्थानों / सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि द्वितीय चक्र (2nd round) सीट आवंटन उपरांत Document verification / नामांकन की तिथि जो पूर्व में दिनांक 23.12.2020 से 26.12.2020 तक निर्धारित की गयी थी, को निम्नवत् विस्तारित किया जाता है;

कार्यक्रम पूर्व निर्धारित तिथि विस्तारित तिथि क्र. i. Document Verification and Admission : 23.12.2020 to 26.12.2020 23.12.2020 to 29.12.2020 (2) पूर्व प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या-BCECEB(UGMAC)-2020/09 दिनांक 20.12.2020 एवं 2020/12 दिनांक 23.12.2020 की अन्य शर्त्ते यथावत् रहेंगी।

परीक्षा नियंत्रक

GOVT. OF BIHAR

BIHAR COMBINED ENTRANCE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION BOARD I.A.S. Association Building, Near Patna Airport, Patna-14.

UNDER GRADUATE MEDICAL ADMISSION COUNSELLING (UGMAC)-2020 for MBBS / BDS / B.V.Sc. & A.H. in Govt. Medical / Dental / Bihar Veterinaty Colleges and Private Medical / Dental Colleges of Bihar

Adv. No.- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2020/15 Dated 26.12.2020

New Delhi

MOP-UP कॉउन्सेलिंग से सम्बन्धित आवश्यक सूचना

विज्ञापन संख्या- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2020/10 , 2020/11 दिनांक 22.12.2020 एवं 2020/13 दिनांक 24.12.2020 के क्रम में UGMAC-2020 से सम्बन्धित सभी अभ्यर्थियों / संस्थानों / सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जात है कि UGMAC-2020 के आधार पर द्वितीय चक्र (2nd round) सीट आवंटन उपरांत Document verification / नामांकन की तिथि 29.12.2020 तक विस्तारित होने के कारण, आयोजित की जाने वाली Mop-up कॉउन्सेलिंग से संबंधित Registration एवं आवंदन पत्र भरने की तिथि को निम्नवत् विस्तारित किया जाता है;

I	<u>क्र.</u>	कार्यक्रम	<u>पूर्व निर्धारित तिथि</u>	<u>विस्तारित तिथि</u>
	i.	Online Registration and filling up of Application		
		Form starting date :	23.12.2020	
	ii.	Online Registration closing date :	25.12.2020 (10:00 p.m)	29.12.2020 (10.00 (p.m.)
	iii.	Last date of payment through Net Banking/ Debit Card/ Credit Card with final submission of the online Application Form of Registered candidate :	25.12.2020 (11:59 p.m)	29.12.2020 (11:59 p.m.)
	(2) (3)	 मेधासूची प्रकाशन एवं अन्य सम्बन्धित कार्यक्रम की सूचना पूर्व प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या-BCECEB(UGMAC)- 	यथासमय दे दी जायेगी ।	
				परीक्षा नियंत्रक

produce in hurry. S. K. Panigrahi L. K. Gupta Pradeep Kumar Agarwal CGM(Marketing) Director(Finance) Chairman cum Managing Director 022-27579215 022-27560143 022-27576044

(A Govt .of India undertaking)

Appeal to Cotton Farmers

THE Cotton Corporation of India Ltd (CCI) is a nominated nodal agency of Government of India for undertaking procurement of Cotton under Minimum

n Cotton season 2020-21, CCI has opened 440 MSP procurement centers at 140

So far CCI has procured 352 lakh quintals of kapas in a period of three months as

against 130 lakh quintals in the corresponding period of last year. Current MSF

Due to unregulated heavy kapas arrivals in Market yards, the farmers are facing

hardship and compelled to wait in long queues for days together in selling their

Therefore CCI has requested district administration and APMCs to regulate kapas

arrivals in market yards in such a way that FAQ kapas brought by farmers can be

sold, weighed and billed on the same day so that farmers need not stand in long

CCI management makes an appeal to all cotton farmers to bring their produce to

CCI assures that it will remain present in market yards till 30th September 2021 and shall procure entire FAQ grade kapas from farmers.CCI is committed to all cotton

farmers to save them from any distress sale. Therefore they need not sell their FAQ

produce and processing capacities are also under tremendous pressure.

districts in 11 cotton growing states under 15 branch offices.

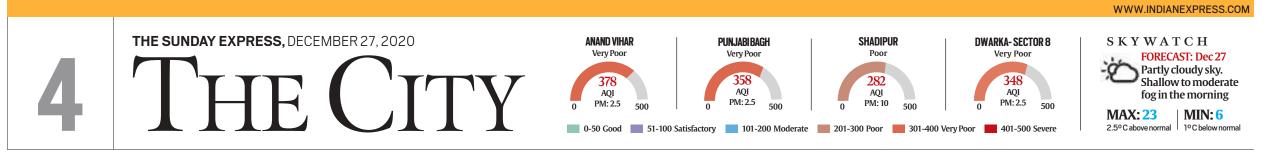
queues and do not face any difficulties in selling their produce.

market vards in phased manner as per advice of respective APMCs.

procurement is around 300 % more than last year.



Support Price (MSP).



Police register FIR against Pracha, claim he abused and intimidated team during search

JIGNASA SINHA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

THE COUNTER Intelligence Unit of Delhi Police's Special Cell has lodged an FIR against lawyer Mehmood Pracha after he and his associates allegedly abused and intimidated the police team during searches at his Nizamuddin East office two days ago.

The FIR was registered under IPC sections 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions) after a complaint was filed by an investigating officer (IO) of the Special Cell on Thursday.

Pracha's firm Legal Axis is defending several persons accused in different cases related to the

Delhi riots. Many in the legal fra-ternity described the police search as an attack against the attorney-client privilege and on the fundamental right to legal

representation. Police said the Special Cell had gone to his office to investigate an FIR registered in August, which alleged false evidence and forged notary stamps were used to secure bail of an accused arrested in a riots case. Police alleged the complaint letter used to get bail in the case was sent from Pracha's office computer. A Delhi court had issued a search warrant on December 22 to look

for the incriminating documents. Pracha refused to comment on the mail pertaining to the complaint letter. On Friday, he had moved court seeking clari-



Mehmood Pracha

fication on the search warrant order issued by the Special Cell, alleging he was directed by the personnel to provide incriminating material against himself.

Pracha had said: "I unlocked all computers and the office was given to the police to conduct their search. However, the police personnel, who was not even the IO as per the warrant, directed us to show that material ourselves.

and if not, they threatened to take away our computers." "The search ended at 3 am

and they could not find anything. Even though police are alleging misconduct on our behalf, they recorded everything on video and that video will show to the world what happened," he said.

In the FIR, the IO said he left his office with staff, videographers and public witnesses and reached Pracha's office at 11.45 am on Thursday.

"On reaching the spot, we started videography... and showed the search warrant to Pracha. We requested him in writing to cooperate in locating the computer wherein the incriminating documents may be found so as to avoid the general search of all the systems. Pracha informed us that he was en-

ई-निविदा सूचना

DIPR/C/9978/2020

Сс

an

gaged in a video call and asked to help them look for other inus to wait. We waited patiently for two hours. Thereafter, he

started harassing us over one pretext or another and, gradually, started getting aggressive and abusive...," reads the FIR. Police said Pracha later

agreed to cooperate and showed the team the computer system from which the mail was sent. "After a lot of patient persuasion, he led us to a computer on his office table... and said the email that we are looking for may be located in the mail outbox," said the IO in the FIR.

A senior police officer claimed that "the complaint letter, containing fabrications, which was drafted in his (Pracha's) office, pertaining to the complainant... was located". Police claimed they asked Pracha

criminating documents but he refused

The IO then found another computer system at his office and typed keywords into the system to look for similar documents. He said in his complaint, "A suspicious extension/pathway was noticed and, therefore, I decided to seize the hard disk of the said computer to collect necessary evidence. Pracha and his associates started raising their voice and attempted to remove the computer systems."

The police team then gave a written request to Pracha and his associates for the hard disk.

Police claimed on receiving the request, Pracha "became verbally aggressive and started creating a ruckus with a clear intent to precipitate things and provoke some kind of violent/forceful/unprofessional response from us".

The FIR also mentions that Pracha called several associates your body temperature." to "intimidate" the IO and his cast in Jammu and Kashmir. team.

Avoid drinking, says IMD in cold warning

Himachal Pradesh

Uttarakhand under the influence

of a Western Disturbance be-

Disturbance, cold northwesterly

winds blowing from the western

Himalayan region would lead to

cold or severe cold wave condi-

tions in parts of Delhi, Punjab,

Haryana and Chandigarh

Cold wave is when the mini-

normal

from

wave, departure from normal

temperature is 6.5 degrees or

lower. Delhi has recorded five

cold wave days so far this month.

vatory, which is representative

of Delhi, recorded a minimum

Celsius on Saturday and maxi-

The IMD's Safdarjung obser-

After passing of this Western

tween Sunday and Monday.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHL DECEMBER 26

COLD WAVE conditions are forecast in Delhi and north India Monday onwards, which has India prompted the Meteorological Department (IMD) to advise people against drinking alcohol.

In a forecast on Friday, the Monday onwards, as per the IMD said minimum tempera-IMD. tures would rise in the plains of mum temperature dips to 10 denorth India – including in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar grees Celsius or less and the de-Pradesh and north Rajasthan parture until Sunday, before falling by 3 temperature is 4.5 degrees to 5 degrees Celsius. Celsius or lower. In severe cold

Maximum temperature is also forecast to fall by 3 to 5 degrees Celsius after December 28.

In an impact based advisory, the IMD said, "Moisturise your skin regularly with oil or cream. Eat fruits & vegetables rich in temperature of 4.4 degrees Vitamin C and drink sufficient fluids, preferably warm fluids to maintain adequate immunity. Don't drink alcohol - it reduces

mum of 21.9 degrees Celsius. By December 31, minimum temperature is forecast to fall to Rainfall and snowfall is fore-3 degrees Celsius and maximum to 19 degrees Celsius.

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, PWD Zone-II Udaipur,
HQ Banswara Rajasthan
Email: acepwdbanswara@gmail.com
Notice Inviting Bid
NIT No 04/2020-21
RFP Code-PWD2021RFP0003
Dated
lance Work for Construction of High Level Bridge across river Anas including approaches N

No.- D-472 RFP for Ba - 16.12.202 ear Bherav Mandir on Nahali - Bhattar- Bheravji- Peechhawara - Naharpura road (MDR-125) District Banswara i the State of Rajasthan on EPC Basis.

The Rajasthan Public Works Department is engaged in the development of Highways & Bridges and as part of this endeavou It has been decided to undertake Balance Work for Construction of High Level Bridge across river Anas including approaches Near Bheravji Mandir on Nahall - Bhattar Bheravji- Peechhawara- Naharpura road (MDR-125) District Banswara in the State of Rajasthan through an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract

State	Section	Name of work	Estimated Project Cost		Maintenance period
	Bheravji- Peechhawara - Naharpura road (MDR-125) Distt.	Balance Work for Construction of High Level Bridge across river Anas including approaches Near Bherayij Mandir on Nahall - Bhattar Bheravij- Peechhawara- Naharpura road (MDR-125) District Banswara in the State of Rajasthan		18 Months	10 years / 120 Months

http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in or http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in from 18.12.2020 to 07.01.2021 (upto 18.00 Hrs. IST) id must be submitted online only at http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in on or before 07.01.2021 (upto18.00 hours IST). Bid eceived online shall be opened on 11.01.2021 (at 13.00 Hours IST). Bid through any other mode shall not be entertained. However, Copy of Single Online Challan generated through

egras.raj.nic.in in favour of "Executive Engineer PWD Division, Garbi (DDO code -14254) Containing to Amount of Bic Security, Bid Processing Fee, Bidding Document Fee, Power of Attorney and Joint Bidding Agreement, GST registration and ontractor registration etc. shall be submitted physically by the Bidder on or before 08.01.2021 (up to 13.00 Hrs. IST), Please ote that the Authority/ reserves the right to accept or reject all or any of the BIDs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

PWD Zone-II	Sd/- (Ramhet Meena) Additional Chief Engineer, , Udaipur (HQ Banswara), Rajasthan
	Date of NIT: 23-12-2020

GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND GEOLOGY Email: biddingcell@raiasthan.gov.in NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 10B of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, its subseque mendments and in accordance with the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 as amended from time to time notified thereunder, th Government of Rajasthan has notified the following mineral blocks for the purpose of grant of Mining Lease for mineral limestone and hereby invites bids in digital format only from eligible bidders through electronic auction he details of mineral blocks and last date of submission of bid is as summarized below:

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL SANSADHAN VIKAS EVAM NIRMAN NIGAM, DEHRADUN (A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking) 403/1 Indira Nagar, Dehradun-248001 Phone/ Fax: 0135-2764075 email:cgmnirmanwing@yahoo.com, gmnirmanwing@gmail.com Letter No. 3303/Nivida(Garhwal)/505 Date: 26.12.2020

E-TENDER

On behalf of "Chairman Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam" tender is invited through electronic tendering system for the following work under two bid system from eligible bidders, who are technically and financially capable, up-to prescribed date as per following key dates according to terms and conditions given on website and e-tender notice or office notice board and in the document available at Project Manager Office, Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Dehradun/Rishikesh/Vikasnagar. Any corrigendum regarding the work shall only be published through electronic system if required

	Government of Uttarakhand "e" procurement Notice					
S. No.	Work Name	Estimate Cost Rs.	Work Completion Month			
1	Govt. I.T.I. Niranjapur, Dehradun	1290.60 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	18 Month			
2	Govt. I.T.I. Vikasnagar, Dehradun	365.63 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	15 Month			
3	Govt. I.T.I. (Boys), Rajpur Road, Dehradun	328.68 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	15 Month			
4	Govt. I.T.I. (Girls), Dehradun	275.18 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	15 Month			
5	Govt. I.T.I. Narsan, Haridwar.	292.01 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	15 Month			
6	Govt. I.T.I. Visith, Haridwar.	515.038 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	15 Month			
7	Govt. I.T.I. Piran Kaliyar, Haridwar.	398.77 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	15 Month			
8	Govt. I.T.I. Delna, Haridwar.	438.99 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	15 Month			
9	Govt. I.T.I. Barkot, Uttarkashi.	784.00 Lakh (Including G.S.T)	15 Month			
	ove tenders, documents downloads start da					

29.01.2021 at 15:00 hrs. The details of E-Tender of above work can be obtained directly from website https://www.uktenders.gov.in General Manager (Garhwal)

SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL, SKIMS SOURA, MC & H, BEMINA, SRINAGAR Tel.: 0194-2402617, Ext.: 2159, E-mail: mechanicalskims@gmail.com RE-O1 NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS Gist of E-NIT No. 55 of 2020-21 Dated. 24.12.2020

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover system from **Original Lift Manufacturers or** their Authorized Dealers/Representatives/Registered Firms having experience in Installation Testing and Commissioning of Lifts in Govt. Institutions/Departments, detailed in the tender documen for the following works:

Sr. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (in Lacs)				
1.	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing, Inspecting and Commissioning of Goods Lift (01 No.) in new Drug & Pharmacy Block with CMC for 03 Years at SKIMS, Srinagar.	34.00 Lacs				

The complete tender document is available at website http://jktenders.gov.in. Interested Bidders/Tenderers ment. see nentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Specifications, Bills of Quantities & Terms and conditions of the contract and other relevant details.

Office of the Chairman, NEET UG Medical & Dental Admission / Counseling Board- 2020 and Principal, Government Dental College (RUHS College of Dental Sciences), Subhash Nagar, Behind T.B. Hospital, Jaipur | Phone: 0141-2280090 Websites: www.education.rajasthan.gov.in/medicaleducation

www.rajugmedical2020.com No. State UG Counseling Board/2020/ Dated: 24.12.2020

NOTIFICATION (Mop-up round, Off-line) NEET UG (MEDICAL / DENTAL) COUNSELLING 2020

(MBBS, BDS) (STATE OF RAJASTHAN)

In continuation to earlier notification dated 18.12.2020, all concerned candidates are informed that mop-up round allotments will be done or 26-27 December 2020 for both Medical as well as Dental seats. Al concerned candidates are required to visit the website www.rajugmedical2020.com and are required to be present at the venue GDC, Jaipur for seat allotments, as per this revised schedule.

NEET UG Medical & Dental Admission/

Counseling Board-2020

Sd/- Chairmar

DIPR/C/9987/2020

🚳 NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ E-Tender Notice No. 03/2020 (Medical) Date: 23.12.2020

E-Tender Notice

Chief Medical Supdt. North Central Railway Agra acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through on Line only (E-Tendering) for the ollowing work

Nowing work.	
Name of work with it's location	Approx. Cost of the work
ontract for sanitation work of constructed 175 Railway. Qtrs. at gah & Agra Cantt (South, North & officers Railway colony) and y other institutional building in the colony. Along with material and manpower will be supplied by the contractor for 24 months d garbage removal disposal at laid down nominated municipal umping place.	₹ 1219353/- (Twelve Lac Nineteen Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Three only)
or Full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railw	

ww ers will be able to submit their original/revised bids through web portal www.ireps.gov.in up to 12:15 hrs on 22.01.2021. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. 1429/20(D)

पश्चिमांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि., विक्टोरिया पार्क, मेरठ निम्नवत् कार्यो हेतु ई-टेन्डरिंग के माध्यम से निविदाऐं

1.वि.वि.नि.लि./मेरठ/आई.टी./डाईनामिक वेबसाइट/15/20-21 के अन्तर्गत प.वि.वि.नि.लि.. मेरठ के विभिन्न योजनाओं के

डाटाबेस को लिंक करने हेतु Dynamic Website का निर्माण कराया जाना आवश्यक है। निविदा दिनांकः- 18.01.2021 को

14:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन स्वीकर की जायेगी।''विस्तार से सभी जानकारी एवं निविदा में भविष्य में किसी भी प्रकार के संशोधन

हेतु www.pvvnl.org एवं www.etender.up.nic.in पर लॉग ऑन करें। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता (आर-ए.पी.डी.आर.पी.

पार्ट-ए) कते प्रबन्ध निदेशक बिजली चोरी की सचना हैल्पलाईन नम्बर 1912 एवं 1800–180–3002 (मेरठ) पर दें **!'' हस्ता**.∕

. मधीक्षण अभियन्ता (आई.टी.) कृते प्रबन्ध निदेशक राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचायें पत्रांक:- 11558 दिनांक: 26.12.2020

X) Budget Head No. SIMS 139 EX.520/20-3346-55-5856-5859 Dated: 24.12.2020 SIMS-5858		Sd/- Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS
x)	Budget Head	Ongoing works for the Year 2020-21
ix)	Completion Time	Six (06) Months from the Date of issue of LOI or Allotment Order
viii)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (CDR/FDR)	Rs. 68000/- (Rupees Sixty Eight Thousand only)
vii)	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 1500/- (Rupees One Thousand & One Hundred only)
vi)	Date & Time of Financial Bid (Cover-IInd) Opening of Qualifying Bidders	Shall be intimated separately
v)	Date & Time of Commercial/Technical Bid (Cover-I) Opening	12.01.2021, 11.00 Hours (or next convenient day)
iv)	Date of Submission of Hard Copies (only Original EMD/DD for Document Fee)	11.01.2021 upto 14.00 Hour
iii)	Last Date & Time of Bid Uploading	09.01.2021 upto 16.00 Hour
ii)	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/Clarification/Pre-bid meet	31.12.2020 at 11.00 Hours
i)	Date and Time of Downloading/Sale of Tender Documents (Starting Date)	26.12.2020 from 11.00 Hour



SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL, SKIMS SOURA, MC & H, BEMINA, SRINAGAR Tel.: 0194-2402617, Ext.: 2159, E-mail: mechanicalskims@gmail.com RE-01

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS Gist of e-NIT No. 57 of 2020-21 Dated. 24.12.2020

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover system from Original Lift Manufacturers or their Authorized Dealers/Representatives/Registered Firms having experience in Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Lifts in Govt. Institutions/Departments, detailed in the tender document for the following works:

Sr. No	Name of the Work		Estimated Cost (in Lacs)
1.	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing, Inspecting and Cor Passengers Service Elevator at "Engineering Block, SKIMS,"	0	22.00 Lacs
may mer	complete tender document is available at website http://jkten view, download the e-bid document, seek clarifications and subitioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying ntities & Terms and conditions of the contract and other relevant	mit their bids online up criteria for bidders. S	oto the date and time
i)	Date and Time of Downloading/Sale of Tender Documents (Starting Date)	26.12.2020 from 11.	00 Hour
ii)	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/Clarification/Pre-bid meet	31.12.2020 at 11.00	Hours
iii)	Last Date & Time of Bid Uploading	15.01.2021 upto 16.	00 Hour
iv)	Date of Submission of Hard Copies (only Original EMD/DD for Document Fee)	18.01.2021 upto 14.	00 Hour
V)	Date & Time of Commercial/Technical Bid (Cover-I) Opening	19.01.2021, 11.00 H next convenient day	
vi)	Date & Time of Financial Bid (Cover-IInd) Opening of Qualifying Bidders	Shall be intimated s	eparately
vii)	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 1100/- (Rupees One Hundred only)	One Thousand &
viii)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (CDR/FDR)	Rs. 44000/- (Rupees Thousand only)	s Forty Four
ix)	Completion Time	Six (06) Months from of LOI or Allotment (
x)	Budget Head	Ongoing works for the	ne Year 2020-21
Date	SIMS 139 EX.522/20-3367-76-5848-51 d: 24.12.2020 S-5850		Sd/- ive Engineer, inical, SKIMS

L Norul Celluar lailways					
🕥 पश्चिमांचल	विद्यत	वितरण	निगम	लि0	

अल्पकालीन ई—निविदा संख्याः— 87 / 2020—21 / वि०वि०मं० / मेरठ, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड चतुर्थ, मेरठ के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड प्रथम, मेडिकल के अधीनस्थ 33 / 11 केवी विद्युत उपकेन्द्रो पर स्थापित 11 केवी वी0सी0बी0 की ओवरहालिंग एवं मरम्मत का कार्य करने हेतु अल्पकालीन ई—निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी है जिसे http://etender.up.nic.in पर प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य को पूर्ण करने की अवधि 30 दिन है। सन्दर्भित निविदा हेतु धरोहर राशि रुपये 2000.00 है। ऑनलाईन निविदा भरने की अंतिम तिथि दिन. ाक 11.01.2021 (12:00 बजे तक) है। अल्पकालीन ई—निविदा संख्याः— ८८ / २०२०—२१ / वि०वि०मं० / मेरठ, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड चतूर्थ, मेरठ के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड द्वितीय, किठौर के अधीनस्थ 33 / 11 केवी विद्युत उपकेन्द्रो पर स्थापित 11 केवी वी0सी0बी0 की ओवरहालिंग एवं मरम्मत का कार्य करने हेत्र अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी है जिसे http://etender.up.nic.in पर प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य को पूर्ण करने की अवधि 30 दिन है। सन्दर्भित निविदा हेतु धरोहर राशि रुपये 2000.00 है। ऑनलाईन निविदा भरने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 11.01.2021 (12:00 बजे तक) है। अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्याः– 89/2020–21/वि०वि०मं०/ मेरठ, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड चतुर्थ, मेरठ के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड तृतीय, खरखौदा के अधीनस्थ 33 ⁄ 11 केवी विद्युत उपकेन्द्रो पर स्थापित 11 केवी वी0सी0बी0 की ओवरहालिंग एवं मरम्मत का कार्य करने हेतु अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी है जिसे http://etender.up.nic.in पर प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य को पूर्ण करने की अवधि 30 दिन है। सन्दर्भित निविदा हेतु धरोहर राशि रुपये 2000.00 है। ऑनलाईन निविदा भरने की अंतिम तिथि दिन ाक 11.01.2021 (12:00 बजे तक) है। अल्पकालीन ई—निविद संख्याः— 90 / 2020—21 / वि०वि०मं० / मेरठ, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड वतूर्थ, मेरठ के अन्तर्गत 33⁄11 केवी उपकेन्द्रो एवं लाईनो पर स्थापित 11 केवी एवं 33 केवी क्षतिग्रस्त हीट सिंग्रकेबिल ज्वाइटिंग किट को बदलने हेतु अल्पकालीन ई—निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी है जिसे http://etender.up.nic.in पर प्रकाशित किया गया है। कार्य को पूर्ण करने की अवधि 30 दिन है। सन्दर्भित निविदा हेतु धरोहर राशि रुपये 2000.00 है। ऑनलाईन निविदा भरने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 11.01.2021 (12:00 बजे तक) है। कार्य की मूल मात्रा, निविदा विशिष्टीकरण व अन्य नियम एवं शर्ते ई–निविदा पोर्टल पर उपलब्ध है। अधोहस्ताक्षरी को बिना कारण बताये अल्पकालीन ई—निविदा निरस्त करने का अधिकार होगा। निर्धारित तिथि के विस्तार तथा शुद्धि पत्र से सम्बन्धित सूचना यदि कोई होगी, केवल वेबसाईट पर डाली जायेगी। अतः स्वंय को अपडेट रखने के लिए उपरोक्त वेबसाईट को नियमित देखे। **'राष्ट् हित मे बिजली बचाये**' अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत चोरी की सूचना 1800–180–3002 पर दें। विद्युत वितरण मण्डल—मेरठ। पत्र संख्या—4143, वि०वि०मं० / मेरठ, दिनांक : 26.12.2020

S No	Block	Lease	Start Date of Sale of Tender Document on MSTC website	Last Date of Sale of Tender Document on MSTC website	Bid Due date and time
1	Khinya - II A (KH-II A) Block Tehsil Shri Mohangarh & District jaisalmer	Mining Lease	23.12.2020	07.01.2021 upto 1700 Hrs (IST)	27.01.2021 upto 1300 Hrs (IST)
2	4G IIa Block Tehsil Khimsar & District Nagaur	Mining Lease	23.12.2020	07.01.2021 upto 1700 Hrs (IST)	27.01.2021 upto 1400 Hrs (IST)
regis	ration, the eligible bidder can purchase the T	ender Docu	iment online on paymer	nt of the tender fee of Rs	
regis bidde ment only The bidde	ration, the eligible bidder can purchase the T r) and can participate in the e-auction pro- tioned blocks in first attempt of auction, then ti subsequent to a payment of non-refundable t SST at the rate of 18% is applicable on the pu r itself and the copy of receipt is to be atta	ender Docu cess. Howe his time the ender fees rchase of te ched with t	ment online on paymer ver, if a bidder alread tender document is ma of INR 25,000/- + GST onder document. The GS he technical bid. The p	nt of the tender fee of Rs y had purchased the te ade available for downloa (Indian Rupees Twenty I ST applicable is to be sub prospective bidder shall	c. 2,00,000/- + GST (fresh nder document of above ad to that particular bidder Five Thousand Only). mitted by the prospective be solely responsible for
regis bidde ment only The bidde remit what	ration, the eligible bidder can purchase the T r) and can participate in the e-auction proc ioned blocks in first attempt of auction, then the subsequent to a payment of non-refundable the ST at the rate of 18% is applicable on the pu	ender Docu cess. Howe his time the ender fees rchase of te ched with t ttory liability	iment online on payment ver, if a bidder already tender document is ma of INR 25,000/- + GST onder document. The GS he technical bid. The p r in this regard will be r	nt of the tender fee of Rs y had purchased the te ade available for downloa (Indian Rupees Twenty I ST applicable is to be sub prospective bidder shall responsibility of prospect	b. 2,00,000/- + GST (fresh nder document of above ad to that particular bidder Five Thousand Only). omitted by the prospective be solely responsible for ive bidder and no liability

r Document and Mineral Blocks Summaries are available free of cost in electronic form and can be downloaded from the website of MSTC Ltd, < https://www<u>.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcl/index.jsp</u>>; and Department of Mines & Geology cwww.mines.rajasthan.gov.in > for the purpose of information only. Timelines, notifications, updates and other details for the e auction process are available on the website of <<u>https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcl/index.jsp</u> >. Any revision, clarifications, addendum, corrigendum, time extensions, etc. to the above tender documents will be hosted on website or setting.

https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcl/index.jsp>; and <www.mines.rajasthan.gov.in> only and no separate ons shall be issued in the press

DIPR/C/9943/2020



SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, SOURA EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL, SKIMS MC & H, BEMINA & SKIMS, SOURA, SRINAGAR Tel.: 0194-2402617, Ext.: 2159, E-mail: mechanicalskims@gmail.com RE-02 NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS Gist of NIT No. 56 of 2020-21 Dated. 24.12.2020

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, SKIMS, Soura MC&H Bemina Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover system from original Lift Manufacturers or their Authorized Dealers/ Authorized Representatives/Registered and Repurted Firms having experience in Installation of lifts in Govt. Institutions/Departments, detailed in the tender document for the following works:

Sr. No	Name of the Work		Estimated Cost (in Lacs)
1.	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing, Inspecting and Commitypes Lifts along with CMC for 03 Years at New Maternity Host	U	175.00
may	d Bidders/Tenderers to the date and time pecifications, Bills of		
i)	Date and Time of Downloading/Sale of Tender Documents (Starting Date)	26.12.2020 from 11.	00 Hour
ii)	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/Clarification/Pre-bid meet	31.12.2020 at 11.00	Hours
iii)	Last Date & Time of Bid Uploading	15.01.2021 upto 16.	00 Hour
iv)	Date of Submission of Hard Copies (only Original EMD/DD for Document Fee)	18.01.2021 upto 14.	00 Hour
V)	Date & Time of Commercial/Technical Bid (Cover-I) Opening	19.01.2021, 11.00 H next convenient day	
vi)	Date & Time of Financial Bid (Cover-IInd) Opening of Qualifying Bidders	Shall be intimated se	eparately
vii)	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 8700/- (Rupees Seven Hundred only	
viii)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (CDR/FDR)	Rs. 350000/- (Rupee Fifty Thousand only)	
ix)	Completion Time	Six (06) Months from of LOI or Allotment (
x)	Budget Head	Ongoing works for the	ne Year 2020-21
Date	SIMS 139 EX/MECH/2020-21/512/20-3356-66-5852-55 d: 24.12.2020 S-5854	Sd/- ive Engineer, inical, SKIMS	









Advertorial

DID YOU KNOW SANITIZER PROTECTS YOU FOR JUST 30 SECONDS!?

Are sanitizers the best option?

COVID-19 has wrecked the world, over 1.73 million have died across the globe, and in India, the figure is inching towards 150,000. And this is not even a final knockout. People are hoping for a vaccine invention and assuming themselves to be safe when applying a hand sanitizer. Sanitizers, have filled the racks of shops and departmental stores and many of us have made it an integral part of our life.

Sanitizer is just a 30 second wonder.

When you apply any standard alcohol based sanitizer to your hands the liquid remains on for just 15-30 seconds before evaporating. After the evaporation there is now no more protection against the subsequent exposure/contact with germs. So we end up using again and again. For a few of us it is now almost an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)!

As members of our family are stepping out to work or to fulfill other responsibilities; is just 15-30 second protection enough?

A recent sample study covering the cities of Delhi and Mumbai has shed light on sanitizer use in the present pandemic times:

22% of respondents use sanitizers 10 or more times daily. That is significant use of sanitizers!

97% respondents had concerns with sanitizer usage. They are worried over its side effects.

53% wondered if sanitizers are just for the hands, then how does one protect the other exposed parts of the body?

Sanitizer Side effects.

Much of the sanitizers are high on alcohol percentage that can create skin complications and other side effects. The constant application of alcohol-based sanitizer rips off all the natural moisture and oils of the skin, causing irritation, burning and increasing the risk of hand dermatitis, or 'eczema.' This commonly manifests on the skin with redness, dryness, cracks, and even blisters that causes pain and discomfort.

Research says non-alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing an antibiotic compound called triclosan are a health hazard, their overuse has negative effects on fertility, fetal development, and rates of asthma. FDA says triclosan present in a hand sanitizer can also cause hormonal problems.

Sanitizers are just for the hands, does it care about the rest of the body?

Do you think the viruses and germs can find its way into our system only through the skin of our hands?

What about our elbows resting on a table or on a seat rest? What about the face and neck exposed to airborne germs when inside an aircraft or a centrally air-conditioned office or at a family function?



World's First Clinically Proven COVID-19 Protection Lotion



COVID-19 Protection



Viruses



Formulated With the Patented PAP (prolonged antimicrobial protection) Technology



Pick 24 hours COVID-19 protection lotion, drop sanitizers.

Clensta COVID-19 protection lotion that kills 99.9% of germs.

Effective, intense and safe protection is the need of the hour as the deadly virus/germs hang in the air and surfaces impacting anyone and everyone who does not have a protective cover.

The multiple award winning Indian company Clensta International Pvt. Ltd. in partnership with scientists at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, has developed a unique germ protection lotion, branded as Clensta COVID -19 Protection Lotion.

It is also the 'World's First Clinically Proven Lotion' that protects against the COVID-19 virus and is effective against 99% of other viruses/germs.

It is a breakthrough advancement in the formulation of engineering chemistry with the first of its kind use of PAP Technology (Prolonged Antiviral Technology) to prevent bacterial, viral infections. Most importantly, the product has been approved by the FDA and complies with the CDC, WHO, and FDA policies. A true 'make in India' success story.

Up to 24 hours Protection

This lotion can disrupt the deadly germs for upto 24 hours on a single application*. It works by creating a prolonged protective shield on the skin that continually protects you from all subsequent repeat germ exposures. The usage of this lotion automatically reduces the extended use of sanitizers and the multiple hand wash routine daily.

Skin friendly and safe

This lotion uses skin friendly, natural ingredients extracts of tea oil and aloe vera) and is an excellent skin moisturizer that nourishes your skin and protects it against harmful UVA/UVB rays. The best you can get when compared to serious side effects of the hand sanitizer!

Alcohol Free, Paraben Free, Gluten Free, 100% Vegan, Child safe (aged 5+).

Not just hands but protects face & body too!



Unlike the sanitizer this excellent lotion can be applied on the hands, face, neck, arms and the whole body offering a significantly better protection against surface and airborne germs we are constantly exposed to.

So what are we waiting for? Let us go ahead and make the right choice for our families, the better choice, the safer choice - Clensta COVID-19 Protection Lotion.

MAKE SURE YOUR FAMILY IS COVID-19 PROOF





THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, DECEMBER 27, 2020 GOVT & POLITICS 6

PM launches health cover scheme in J&K: Benefit everywhere but in Kolkata

EXPRESSNEWSSERVICE JAMMU, DECEMBER 26

LAUNCHING THE PM-Jan Arogya Yojna SEHAT scheme, which promises health insurance cover to all 1.30 crore people of Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that they can get free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh in any of the 24,000 hospitals across the country, but for West Bengal

"Your free treatment under the Ayushman Bharat SEHAT scheme will not be confined to only government and private hospitals in J&K but in 24,000 hospitals across the country," Modi said in an online address. "In case you have gone to Mumbai and suddenly come across some problem, the SEHAT card will help you as a companion there. In case of Kerala, too, hospitals there will give you free treatment," he said. In an indirect attack on the

Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal, Modi said, "If you go to Kolkata [and need help of the scheme], then there will be a problem, as the government there

CBSE exam dates on BIP webinars on 'one Dec 31: Pokhriyal

New Delhi: Dates for the 2021 CBSE board examinations will be declared on the evening of December 31, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal announced on social media on Saturday.

The central board earlier made two major announcements about the 2021 board examinations-that they will not begin in January or February, and that they will be conducted as physical written exams and not as online examinations

Bengal scheme better: Minister

Kolkata: After Narendra Modi said that people of other states cannot get benefits of the Centre's Bharat health insurance scheme in West Bengal, the state's Health Minister, Chandrima Bhattacharya, hit back, saying that the state has already introduced the

need to take such schemes for which we have to give a share?" ENS

is not associated with Ayushman Bharat Scheme. Kuchh log hotey hein...kya karein."

of the legal community will be

and that frequent elections under-FNS mine development.

MANOJCG NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

A DAY after Rahul Gandhi said there is no democracy in India, PM Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday hit back. Referring to Congress-ruled Puducherry, said that local body elections are not Ayushman being conducted in the Union Territory despite a Supreme Court order. The Supreme Court order Modi apparently referred to came in May 2018. Elections to panchayat and municipal bodies

'Sasthya Sathi Scheme' for people of West Bengal. "Our health scheme is better... Our scheme covers the beneficiary and her/his extended family... The Central government's scheme does not have that provision. Why do we

nation, one election' New Delhi: The BJP is set to hold 25 seminars over the coming weeks to discuss 'One Nation. One Election' as it aims to rally support on the issue, party leaders said on Saturday. According to them, senior party members, academics and representatives

part of the exercise. The idea has often been pushed by the BJP, with PM Narendra Modi arguing that it will lead to a decrease in expenditure,

ENS

had reached courts and there have been multiple judgments by Madras High Court and Supreme Court over the years. But in the last two years, a bitter tussle between Chief Minister V Narayanasamy and Lt Governor Kiran Bedi over appointment of a State Election Commissioner (SEC) has opened up a new dimension.

The Sunday Express spoke to both Narayanasamy and Bedi.

The CM said AINRC was in power when courts first directed Puducherry to hold the polls in 2012. He said AINRC was with the NDA and supported the Central had not been held in Puducherry government for two years when it was in office after 2014, but "did The delay is primarily because not take any action (on holding the delimitation exercise has elections).'

In May 2018, the SC directed

Shah in poll-bound Assam: State gained nothing from 'andolan'

Amit Shah with Assam CM

peasant rights organisation

Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiiti

and led by the jailed Akhil Gogoi.

Both new parties owe their gene-

sis to the anti-CAA agitation.

ABHISHEK SAHA GUWAHATI, DECEMBER 26

since 2011.

HOME MINISTER Amit Shah Saturday set the tone for the BIP's 2021 Assam election campaign with a swipe against newlyformed political parties, the launch of a raft of educational projects, and outreach to the

dragged on for years. The matter

Vaishnavite community. Promising employment and

industries, Shah said "andolan" (protests) had brought nothing to Assam—a likely reference to the anti-CAA agitation in the state.

"They [new parties] can never form government. They want to ruin BJP's votes and help the Congress win," he said at a foundation stone-laying ceremony in Kamrup district's Amingaon.

Shah was seen as referring to the Assam Jatiya Parishadformed under the aegis of the All

"Tell me, those who do andolan or the Congress party, which fires bullets on youths of Assam, can they ever bring investment and industry to Assam," Shah said. Focusing on Assam's

PM Narendra Modi

the polls by June 2015.

Puducherry to complete the de-

limitation process and hold pan-

chayat and municipal polls with-

out delay. The order came on a SLP

filed by Puducherry government

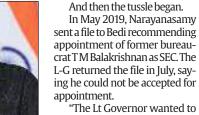
against a Madras HC order to hold

Vaishnavite heritage, Shah laid the foundation stone for a Rs 188crore project to develop and beautify Bardowa Than, the birthplace of the revered Vaishnavite reformer Srimanta Sankardey.

He ceremonially distributed financial assistance of Rs 2.5 lakh each to 8,000 namghars (Vaishnavite prayer halls) under the Asom Darshan scheme. Shah laid the foundation stone

for a super-speciality medical college being set up at a cost of Rs 755 crore in Guwahati. He also ceremonially launched the construction work of nine law colleges. FULLREPORTON

www.indianexpress.com



PM BLAMING WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAILS, SAYS CM; UT GOVT 'DRAGGING FEET' OVER POLLS, SAYS L-G

PM's Puducherry pointer sparks CM-Bedi tussle

PTI

"The Lt Governor wanted to appoint an election commissioner without the government. Under the Village and Commune Panchayats Act, and also Municipalities Act, power is vested with the minister. The L-G

is only for clearance," he said. Bedi said despite her repeated interventions, the Puducherry government has been "dragging its feet" and not "publishing the delimited wards" before coming up with a name for the post of SEC.

DEEP MUKHERJEE

JAIPUR, DECEMBER 26

THE RASHTRIYA Loktantrik Party

(RLP) on Saturday announced

that it was breaking away from

the National Democratic Alliance

(NDA) in protest against the three

farm laws brought by the Centre.

made by RLP chief and Nagaur

MP Hanuman Beniwal at a rally

at Shahjahanpur in Rajasthan's

Fevicol? Today I announce that in

protest against the farm laws, and

after seeing problems that the

farmers are facing, I am leaving

NDA," he said. Beniwal, a promi-

nent Jat leader, said if the govern-

ment is ready to withdraw the

laws, then talks on the question

"When these three Bills were

of the alliance will remain open.

brought in Lok Sabha, Hanuman

Alwar district.

The announcement was

"Am I stuck to NDA with

Beniwal announces split

from NDA over farm laws

The L-G, she said, is the competent authority to appoint the SEC. "They (government) just picked up somebody and sent a file for approval. It was not by due process," she said.

After returning the file, the L-G's office in July last year issued an open advertisement for appointment of SEC. Later that month, Puducherry Assembly Speaker VP Sivakozhunthu annulled the advertisement. A day later, the government appointed Balakrishnan as SEC. On December 20, 2019, Bedi

issued an order declaring Balakrishnan's appointment as "void ab initio". In January this year, Narayanasamy issued an order annulling the L-G's order declaring it 'illegal'.

Hanuman

Beniwal

Had I been there and these Bills

were introduced, I would have

torn and thrown them." he said.

Election in alliance with BJP,

Beniwal being its lone MP. The

Ex-Punjab MP quits BJP

MP Harinder Singh Khalsa has

quit the BJP, accusing its leader-

ship of an indifferent attitude to-

WITHPTIINPUTS

FROM PUNJAB

wards protesting farmers.

Meanwhile, former Punjab

party has three MLAs.

RLP contested 2019 General

In October, Bedi issued an order appointing former forest officer Rov P Thomas as the SEC. "He is a forest officer. His appointment was illegal. That is being challenged by another person and is before the court,"

Narayanasamy said. Bedi said the government is dragging its feet to see that the elections are held after Assembly polls.

Narayanasamy said, "It is unfortunate that the honourable PM, without going into details of what had happened, who was responsible for delay, is putting the blame on the elected government without correcting the L-G, who was appointed by the Centre..." **FULL REPORT ON**

www.indianexpress.com

Farmers should have open mind towards new laws:

Kumaraswamy

Bengaluru: Cautioning about India's image globally taking a hit because of the ongoing farmers' protest and urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to end the stalemate, ID(S) leader H D Beniwal was not in the House. I Kumaraswamy on Saturday said was kept out of Lok Sabha on the he feels that farmers should have an open mind towards experipretext of a false Covid-19 report.

menting with the new laws. "The remarks of senior Union

Minister Rajnath Singh with respect to the new legislations have instilled a new hope. He has appealed to farmers to allow an experimental implementation," Kumaraswamy said, adding that there has been a strong public opinion that Indian agricultural sector is caught in a vicious circle. "Hence, I personally feel that farmers should have an open mind towards experimenting with the new legislations. But there has to be proper coordination." PTI

Govt. of Haryana **Another Unique Initiative of Haryana Government**







WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, DECEMBER 27, 2020



In the flashbacks of 2019, remember when people were celebrating the coming of 2020 and the world was looking towards the beginning of a new decade full of expectations. But things did not live up to those expectations and the world fell under the coronavirus epidemic. But by battling coronaviruses, people have achieved an amazing ability, people have been able to withstand the biggest problems. Now the spirits of the people have increased and immunity has also strengthened. Uttarakhand has taken

The first phase will run in two phases. After this, the remaining people will be vaccinated in the second phase.

It is hoped that New Year 2021 will fulfill the expectations of all people and people will move towards prosperity. In the new year, people will be enthusiastically engaged in achieving their goals. Our own efforts will provide new employment opportunities.





* R E D (READ ENGAGE DELIVER) IS THE MARKETING SOLUTIONS TEAM OF THE INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP

BIG PICTURE 8



Who's who — and where

From the co-founder of a stealth AI start-up in New York to a hedge fund manager in Singapore, from a competition law specialist in Delhi to a Harvard professor - RITIKA CHOPRA tracked down 86 men and women who topped national school boards between 1996 and 2015, to find individual stories of talent and effort

1. SANKALPA BHATTACHARJYA Frank Anthony Public School, Bangalore TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 1996

Partner at PwC India. BE (Hons) in EE from BITS-Pilani and MBA from Faculty of

Management Studies, Delhi University. LIVES IN: Gurgaon

2. ROHIT CHARLES FERNANDES Don Bosco School, Park Circus, Kolkata

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 1996 Senior Software Engineer with Google India, working on improving Google Maps. BTech in Computer Science from IIT-Madras and Master's and PhD from Cornell University. LIVES IN: Bengaluru

3. **R**ISHI **R**AJ **S**INGH Cambrian Hall, Dehradun

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 1997 Assistant Vice President at Genpact, in charge of digital transformation initiatives BTech at IIIT Allahabad and MBA at XLRI Jamshedpur. LIVES IN: Noida

4. SHALINI PRASAD

fied CA. LIVES IN: London

De Nobili School, Mugma, Dhanbad TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 1997 Vice President (Finance) at British Petroleum looking after electric vehicle charging and customer offers. BCom Honours) from SRCC and is now a quali-

5. CHAITRA CHANDRASEKHAR Sophia High School, Bengaluru

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 1998 Partner at consulting firm Oliver Wyman. Has two Bachelor's degrees in Management and Computer Science and Engineering; and a Master's degree in **Electrical Engineering and Computer** Science from MIT. LIVES IN: New York

6. KIRAN GOPINATH Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, Thiruvananthapuram

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 1998

Cardiologist at NIMS Medicity. MBBS and MD from CMC. Vellore. and DM from Government Medical College Trivandrum. LIVES IN: Thiruvananthapuram

7. Somnath Bose

St. Patrick's Higher Secondary School, Asansol

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 1998 Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School (HMS) and staff anesthesiologist at HMS's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, MBBS at Medical College Kolkata. MD at AIIMS and Residency in anesthesiology at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. LIVES IN: Boston, USA

8. Prem Karthik S

Vikaasa School, Madurai TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 1998 Principal at Daugherty Business Solutions helping Fortune 500 companies deliver IT transformation initiatives. BE degree in Computer Science from Thiagarajar College of Engineering and MS in Software Systems from BITS-Pilani. LIVES IN: Greater Chicago Area, USA

9. VARTIKA BHANDARI St. Mary's Convent Inter College

Area. USA

Allahabad TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 1998 Senior Staff Software Engineer at Google. BTech in Computer Science from IIT Kanpur and PhD in Computer Science from University Illinois at Urbana Champaign. LIVES IN: San Francisco Bay

10. PUSHPRAJ SHUKLA Methodist High School, Kanpur

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 1999 Partner Director of Machine Learning at Microsoft. BTech from IIT Kanpur and MS Computer Science from University of Texas, Austin. LIVES IN: San Francisco Bay Area. USA

11. KARUNA GANESH Maneckji Cooper Educational Trust School, Mumbai

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 1999 Physician-scientist at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. BA in

Biochemistry, MA in Medicine, PhD in Molecular Biology & MD from Cambridge University. LIVES IN: New York, USA

12. ANOOP MENON Hari Sri Vidya Nidhi School, Thrissur

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2000 Recently guit as Assistant Professor of Strategy at Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, to co-found a stealth AI startup in New York City. BA in Economics and Psychology from Amherst College and PhD in Strategy from Harvard Business School. LIVES IN: New York, USA

13. BIKAS SAHA

St. James' School, Kolkata TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2000 Platform architect at Adobe. Bachelor's and Master's in Computer Science and Engineering from IIT Kharagpur. LIVES IN:

Mountain View, California, USA 14. YASHODHAN KANORIA Campion School, Mumbai

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2001 Sidney Taurel Associate Professor of Business Decision, Risk and Operations Division at Graduate School of Business.

15. S MAHAVIR AGARWAL

LIVES IN: New York, USA

Ispat English Medium School, Rourkela TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2002

Columbia University, BTech in EE from IIT-

Bombay, PhD from Stanford University.

Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Foronto, Staff Psychiatrist and Clinician-Scientist in the Schizophrenia Division at Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto. MBBS from JIPMER, Puducherry, and MD and PhD in Psychiatry from NIMHANS, Bangalore. LIVES IN: Toronto, Canada

16. VIBHOR JAIN Boys' High School & College, Allahabad

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2002 Principal Member of Technical Staff at Global Foundries, where his role is in R&D of semiconductor technologies. BTech-

MTech Dual Degree in EE from IIT Kanpur, PhD from University of California Santa Barbara. LIVES IN: Vermont, USA

17. RAHUL SHARMA Brightlands School, Dehradun

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2003 Product Manager at Google. BE (Honours) in Electronics and Instrumentation from BITS-Pilani, PGDM

from IIM Bangalore. LIVES IN: Seattle, USA

18. VINEET KUMAR

City Montessori School, Lucknow TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2003 Strategy Manager at Google. Bachelor's in Computer Science and Engineering from BITS-Pilani and PGDM from IIM Lucknow. LIVES IN: New York, USA



OVERALL

86%

TOPPERS DID

SCIENCE IN

CLASS 12

CLASSES 11 & 12 CLASSES 11 & 12

Owns a Tanishq showroom and a ven-

ture called 'Creative Circus' that does pop-

up events. BSc Management Science from

University of Warick. LIVES IN: Kolkata

71%

OF GIRLS

STUDIED

SCIENCE IN

WHO TOPPED

19. MEGHA SINGH

20. KSHITIJ GARG

21. RISHABH SINGH

22. ADITYA GALGOTIA

The Modern High School, Dubai

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2004

La Martiniere for Girls, Kolkata

TOPPED: CLASS 12 ISC, 2003

St. Joseph's Academy, Dehradun

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2004

Equity Research Analyst at Goldman

Sachs. Bachelor's in Computing from

National University of Singapore, and

Economics from Delhi University, PGDM

from IIM-Rohtak. LIVES IN: Bengaluru

Kendriya Vidyalaya, ONGC, Dehradun

Research Scientist with Google X. BTech

from MIT. LIVES IN: San Jose, California

Facilities Engineer at Imperial Oil

Resources. BE in Mechanical Engineering

in CS from IIT-Kharagpur, MS and PhD

TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2004

96%

STUDIED

SCIENCE IN

OF THE BOYS

WHO TOPPED

from McGill University, Montreal. LIVES IN: Calgary, Canada

23. RAHUL LAKHMANI Seth MR Jaipuria School, Lucknow TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2004 ■ Working in family business. BE in CS from BITS-Pilani, PGDM from IIM Ahmedabad. LIVES IN: Lucknow

24. KAUSTAV MAJUMDER The Blue Bells School, Gurgaon

TOPPED: CLASS 10, CBSE, 2005 General Surgery Resident at University of Minnesota. MBBS at AIIMS. LIVES IN: Minneapolis-St Paul, Minnesota, USA

25. SAGAR RAKSHIT

Laurels School International, Indore TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2005 ■ In second year of his postdoc fellowship in Hematology/Oncology at Mayo Clinic in USA. MBBS from AIIMS and Residency in Internal Medicine at Cleveland Clinic. LIVES IN: Cleveland, USA

26. ANAND VENKATRAMAN

PS Senior Secondary School, Chennai TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2005 In neuroendovascular training at University of South Carolina. MBBS from AIIMS, Neurology Residency from University of Alabama and a Neurocritical care fellowship at Harvard Medical School. LIVES IN: South Carolina, USA

27. SUBHANKAR MOHAPATRA

DAV School, Chandrasekharpur, Odisha TOPPED: CLASS 10, CBSE, 2006 ■ IAS officer (2018 batch) of Odisha cadre, posted as Sub-Collector, SDM, Kandhamal, Odisha. MBBS at SCB Medical College, Cuttack. LIVES IN: Kandhamal, Odisha

28. VIPUL GUPTA DAV Public School, Thermal Colony,

Panipat TOPPED: CLASS 10, CBSE, 2006

Preparing for civil services and doing MA Economics from IGNOU. BTech in EE from Delhi College of Engineering, and was a Young India Fellow at Ashoka University. LIVES IN: Zirakpur, Punjab

29. ABHISHEK KAR

Stewart School, Bhubaneswar TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2006 Senior Research Scientist at Google working on algorithms to help comput-

ers see the world as we do. BTech in CS from IIT-Kannur. PhD from UC Berkeley. LIVES IN: California, USA

30. SATYAM SAXENA St. Peter's College, Agra

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2006 Vice President, Group Finance at DBS, Singapore. BE(Hons) in Computer Science from BITS-Pilani, PGDM from IIM Ahmedabad. LIVES IN: Singapore

31. GEETAK GUPTA

St. Mary's Academy, Meerut Cantt TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2006 Research scientist at Transphorm, a semiconductor company. B. Tech in EE from IIT-Kanpur and MS and PhD from University of California Santa Barbara. LIVES IN: Santa Barbara, USA

32. RAJHANSA RAMASUBBA SRIDHARA

Smt Sulochanadevi Singhania School, Thane TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2006 Project Leader at Boston Consulting

Group. Dual degree (BTech & MTech) in Aerospace Engineering from IIT-Bombay, MS in Management Science and Engineering from Stanford, MBA from The Wharton School. LIVES IN: San Francisco

45

57

100

46 🍃

33. PALLAVI CHANDRA Welham Girls' School, Dehradun

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2006 Co-founder & Director of Vidyanjali

Montessori Preschool and Symphony Events, an event management company. BA (Hons) in Economics at St. Stephen's College, MSc(Finance & Economics) at University of Warwick and a diploma in Early Years Education from Modern Montessor Institute London. LIVES IN: Karnal

34. JERENE MATHEWS

Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kottayam TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2006 Paediatric dermatologist at Believers Church Medical College Hospital. MBBS from Government Medical College, Kottayam, MD (Dermatology) and postdoc fellowship from JIPMER. LIVES IN: Thiruvalla, Kerala

35. GAURAV MISHRA

S.C.B. Medical Public School, Cuttack TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2007

Senior Software Engineer at Google building AI systems, BTech in EE from II Delhi. LIVES IN: Mountain View, California

36. PARUL GARG

Arya Vidya Mandir, Santacruz, Mumbai TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2007 Senior Associate at Nexia Advisors, a boutique investment banking firm. BCom (Honours) from Narsee Monjee College of Commerce and Economics and is a qualified CA and Chartered Financial Analyst. LIVES IN: Mumbai

37. JAHNVI DHAR

Brahm Prakash DAV School, Hyderabad TOPPED: CLASS 10, CBSE, 2007 Senior Resident in third year of DM Gastroenterology at PGIMER, Chandigarh. MBBS. MD from Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi. LIVES IN: Chandigarh

38. Lekshmi Vaidyeswaran Bhartiva Vidva Bhawan Senior

Secondary School, Trivandrum TOPPED: CLASS 10, CBSE, 2007 Senior Product Manager at ICICI

Prudential Life Insurance. BTech in Applied Electronics & Instrumentation from College of Engineering Trivandrum, PGDM from IIM Kozhikode. LIVES IN: Mumbai

39. Aparna Muralidhar Kendriya Vidyalaya, ASC, Bangalore

TOPPED: CLASS 10, CBSE, 2007 Pathologist at Chandramma Dayananda Sagar Institute of Medical Education and Research. MBBS from Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences, Bangalore, and post graduation in Pathology from the same college. LIVES IN: Bengaluru

40. ANTARIKSH BOTHALE

Delhi Public School, Jodhpur TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2007 Senior Software Engineer at Google working on Google Assistant. BTech and MTech in ME from IIT-Bombay, MS in Computational Linguistics from University of Washington. LIVES IN: California, USA

41. JANAKI KIRIT SHETH

Smt Sulochanadevi Singhania School, Thane TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2008 Postdoc scholar at Perelman School of





13 🍃

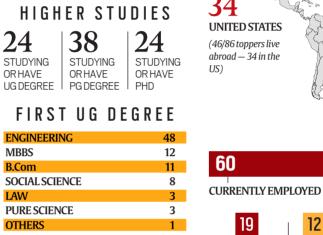


Medicine, University of Pennsylvania; CITY OF SCHOOLING BTech in Engineering Physics from IIT-Bombay, PhD in Physics from University of **TER 1 CITIE** California, LA. LIVES IN: Philadelphia, USA

TIER 2 CITIES 41 IFR 3 CITIES 52% COME FROM TIER 2 AND TIER 3 CITIES (Two toppers from CISCE-affiliated schools in Dubai)

HIGHER STUDIES 38 24 24 STUDYING STUDYING STUDYING **OR HAVE**

FIRST UG DEGREE



IT, tech or

software industry

56. SPRIHA BISWAS

57. ETI AGARWAL

Rajendra Vidyalaya, Jamshedpur

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2011

Chief Product Officer at Scribetech, head-

ing development of a medical speech recog

from IIT-Bombay. LIVES IN: Mumbai

La Martiniere Girls' College, Lucknow

Tax Manager at EY. BCom (Honours)

rom SRCC. Delhi University. Is also a qual-

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2011

ified CA and Company Secretary.

LIVES IN: Bahadurgarh, Haryana

58. DRAVYANSH SHARMA

Delhi Public School, Ghaziabad

59. MADHAVI SINGH

Carmel School, Dhanbad

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2012

Oxford. LIVES IN: Delhi, India

Lawyer with Shardul Amarchand

Mangaldas working on competition law

cases. BA LLB (Hons) at National Law

School of India University, Bangalore, and

Bachelor's in Civil Law at University of

Currently pursing MBA from Yale School

of Management, BTech in EE from IIT-

nition software. Metallurgy Engineering

3

CANADA

COL HAD ENGINEERING AS **D V** THEIR FIRST DEGREE who studied engineering as their first degree studied

Oncology at Centre for Sight Superspecialty Eye Hospital, Hyderabad. MBBS from Seth G S Medical College, Mumbai, MD Ophthalmology from AIIMS. LIVES IN: Hyderabad

51. JANVI VIPUL THOSANI

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2010 Analvst with IP Morgan working on managing banks' liquidity and interest rate risk. BCom from Mumbai University,

52. SWATI PRUSTY

DAV Girls Senior Secondary School, Chennai

Strategy Consultant at L&T Infotech. BTech in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from BITS-Pilani, MBA from IIM Bangalore. LIVES IN: Mumbai

53. SHREYA DAGA

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2010 Manager in the tax department of PwC India. B.Com (Hons) at St Xavier's College, Kolkata, and is a qualified CA. LIVES IN: Kolkata

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2010 Studying MS in Data Science at New York University, BA (Hons) Economics from St. Stephen's College and MSc

MINAL BATHWAL

N SUNDRESH

Don Bosco School, Kolkata

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2000

IIM Calcutta. LIVES IN: Singapore

Portfolio Manager at Brevan Howard, BA

(Honours) Economics at St. Stephen's College,

DAV Boys Senior Secondary, Chenna

TOPPED: CLASS 10, CBSE, 2004

PG diploma in business management from

St. Xavier's Institution, Panihati TOPPED: CLASS 10. ICSE. 2011 Associate at Goldman Sachs working on platforms that calculate market risk for the firm's daily trades. BTech in EE from IIT-Roorkee. LIVES IN: Bengaluru

Hyderabad. LIVES IN: Bengaluru

PIYUSH SRIVASTAVA Boys' High School & College, Allahabad TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2005 Reader at TIFR. BTech in CS from IIT Kanpur, PhD from UC Berkeley and postdoc from Caltech. LIVES IN: Mumbai

PRIYADARSHINI BANERJEE Modern High School for Girls, Kolkata TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2007 Principal at B Capital Group, a venture cap-

ital firm. Bachelor's in Computer Engineering

at National University of Singapore and MBA

WHERE THE TOPPERS ARE

Consulting Entrepreneur Medicine Research or Industry

Delhi. LIVES IN: Imphal

62. ANIKA AGRAWAI

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2013

Toxicology at same university

LIVES IN: Galveston, Texas, USA

63. MANASI ARORA

65. SOPAN KHOSLA

labalpur

Delhi Public School, Mandla Road,

TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2013

BTech in CS from IIT Roorkee

LIVES IN: Pittsburgh, USA

Studying Master's in Machine Learning

and Natural Language Processing at

Carnegie Mellon University. Earlier

worked at Adobe Research Bangalore.

Mumbai

Pursuing MS Marine Biology from Texas

A&M University; BS in Environmental

St. Mary's School, Pune

or business

1 EACH IN CIVIL SERVICES, LEGAL, CORPORATE

11 OR 13% OF TOPPERS WORK WITH GOOGLE

UNITED KINGDOM

UAE

7

Finance

- SINGAPORE 40 INDIA AUSTRALIA WORK STATUS Kahali STUDYING — OTHERS 6

academics

*Self-employed, preparing for exams

Bachelor's from St. Stephen's College,

BANGLADES

LIVES IN: Bengaluru, India

71. TEZAN TAPAN SAHU St. Mary's ICSE School, Mumbai TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2015 Now a 4th-year BTech student at IIT Bombay. LIVES IN: Mumbai

Chatrabhui Narsee Memorial School

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2013 Working as an analyst in a global finan-

cial services firm. BCom from HR College of Commerce and Economics and is also a qualified CA. LIVES IN: Mumbai 64. SIMRAN KHANUJA

St. Mary's School, Pune

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2013 Predoc Researcher at Google Research India working on developing technologies for low-resource languages. BE in CS and MSc in Economics from BITS-Pilani, Goa. LIVES IN: Bengaluru

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2015 Now a 4th-year student of BA LLB (Hons) programme at the National Law School of India University, Bangalore, **LIVES IN:** Bengaluru

Kolkata

Mumhai

66. PARAS SHARMA

Lancer Convent School, Rohini, Delhi TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2013 ■ Is a Master's student in International Relations at University of Queensland. BA (Honours) Economics at SRCC, Delhi University. LIVES IN: Queensland, Australia

from Wharton. LIVES IN: Singapore

GAYATHRI RAVICHANDRAN

ROHAN SAMPATH

RISHABH RAJ

DAV Girls Senior Secondary, Chennai TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2010 Studying MS in Electronics & Communications Engineering from UC, San Diego. BTech from NIT Trichy. LIVES IN: San Diego, USA

M GAYATRI

Dubai Modern High School, Dubai TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2012 CEO of Copilot, a startup. Bachelor's in Economics, Master's in Management

BCom from SRCC (Delhi University) and ostgraduate diploma in management rom IIM-Bangalore. LIVES IN: Dubai 55. AVISHEK DE 50. Mrittika Sen Rajhans Vidyalaya, Mumbai TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2009 Pursuing a fellowship in Ophthalmic and Facial Plastic Surgery and Ocular

The following either were unavailable for a response or didn't give their consent for use of their photos. All photos on page provided by subjects themselves **GRISHMA N PACHCHIGAR** LIVES IN: San Francisco Bay Area Villa Theresa High School, Mumbai

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 1999 No full-time job. Degree in management studies from HR College of Commerce and

Economics. Mumbai. MMS from Jamnalal Baiai Institute of Management Studies. LIVES IN: Hong Kong

BISWANATH PANDA Little Flower School, Jamshedpu

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 1999 Senior Director of Engineering at Google. BTech in Computer Science from IIT

To start his own venture. BTech from IIT Kharagpur, MS and PhD from Cornell. Roorkee, PGP in Management from ISB,

MBBS and documentation intern at Rashtram School of Public Leadership, Sonipat, BTech

& Public Policy at University of Chicago to ENGINEERING Fall 2021 due to pandemic. Now a research from VNIT Nagpur. **LIVES IN:** Thane, India SOCIAL SCIENCE PURE SCIENCE OTHERS

30 studied their first degree at an IIT (63% of those

Smt. Lilavatibai Podar School, Mumbai MBA from IIM-Ahmedabad and is a gualified CA. LIVES IN: Mumbai

TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2010

TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2011 Pursuing PhD in the Computer Science Department at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh. Was earlier senior software engineer with Google. BTech from IIT-Delhi. LIVES IN: Pittsburgh, USA

Mahadevi Birla Shishu Vihar, Kolkata

54. SUMEDHA RAI

St. Anthony's Junior College, Agra

60. Shalaka Abhay Kulkarni Smt Sulochanadevi Singhania School, Finance from University of Warwick. TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2012 LIVES IN: New York

Bombay. LIVES IN: Connecticut, USA

TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2012 Preparing for civil services exam. Physics

61. MOHAMMAD ISMAT Zenith Academy Sangaiprou, Imphal





67. BHUVANYAA VIJAY

St. Joseph's Academy, Dehradun TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2013

Self-employed as a freelance research assistant in international environmental law. BA LLB (Hons) from National Law School of India University, Bangalore. LIVES IN: Bengaluru

68. Shreyas Sudhaman

Sri Kumaran Public School, Bangalore TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2014 Pursuing PhD in Chemical Engineering from Cockrell School of Engg, University of Texas. Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from Ohio State University LIVES IN: Austin, Texas, USA

69. SIDDHARTHA SHANKAR

Little Flower School, Jamshedpur TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2014 Analyst at Goldman Sachs. BTech in Mathematics and Computing from IIT-Delhi. LIVES IN: Bengaluru

70. Apoorva Narayanaswamy

St. Paul's English School, Bangalore TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2014 Attending medical school at Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute

72. AYUSH BANERJEE

Loyola School, Jamshedpur TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2014 Investment Analyst at Accel; BTech in Chemical Engineering from IIT Kharagpur. LIVES IN: Bengaluru, India

73. SARTHAK AGRAWAL DPS Vasant Kunj, Delhi

TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2014

Till recently, he was working as an econ omist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies in London. Returned to Delhi to work on an initiative that will help governments use big data and AI for better governance; BA in Economics from SRCC, Delhi, and MPhil from Oxford University. LIVES IN: Delhi

74. Ananya Patwardhan Chatrabhuj Narsee Memorial School

75. SOUGATO CHOWDHURY St. Xavier's Collegiate School, Kolkata

TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2015 Fourth-year student enrolled in the five year integrated BS-MS program at IISER Pune. LIVES IN: Pune, India

76. Arkya Chatterjee

Vivekananda Mission School, Joka,

TOPPED: CLASS 12, ISC, 2015

Now a second-year PhD student at MIT. BTech in Engineering Physics from IIT Bombay. LIVES IN: Massachusetts, USA

Science and Engineering, and Master's in CS. all from Stanford. LIVES IN: Toronto

St. Paul's School, Rourkela TOPPED: CLASS 10, ICSE, 2014 Software Engineer at Microsoft Hyderabad. B.Tech in CS at IIT Bombay. LIVES IN: Hyderabad

New Greenfield School, Saket, Delhi TOPPED: CLASS 12, CBSE, 2015 Preparing for CA final exam. BCom from SRCC. LIVES IN: Delhi

DPINION

Across **THE AISLE**



PCHIDAMBARAM Website: pchidambaram.ir Twitter@Pchidambaram IN

Unemployment is always a huge challenge in a developing country like India. The rapid decline in growth rates (2018-19 and 2019-20) triggered the rise in unemployment, the pandemic made it worse and the unplanned lockdowns exacerbated the situation. At its peak, 130 million persons lost their jobs or livelihoods. Jobs have come back slowly, but some jobs have disappeared permanently

MERCIFULLY, THE year 2020 is coming to an end. Every country is bruised, some are battered. Covid-19 has not gone away, but it is less threatening, and the vaccines that are being distributed give us hope. As far as India is concerned, our economy is battered and the lives of millions of people (especially the migrants and those who lost their regular jobs) have been severely bruised. Further, the divisive and polarising utterances of, among others, Mr Amit Shah and Mr Adityanath have torn the social fabric asunder.

The abiding lesson of 2020 is that a nation will suffer if there is a decline in three measures - work, wealth and welfare. I wish to devote this year-end column to reflect on this lesson.

Work: Ultimately, it is work that distinguishes one human from another. There are many thousands who do not have to work, yet they do, because work is pleasurable, enhances esteem, earns rewards and determines one's standing among peers and in the society-at-large. At the other end, there are millions who need to work, but cannot find work; they are the unemployed. By last count, the unemployment rate in India was 8.7 per cent (CMIE, December 22, 2020). In between, there are people who do not wish to join the work force and there are people who are home workers who are not counted as part of the work force.

Unemployment is always a huge chal-

Work, wealth and welfare

End of Year	Work Force (in million)	Rate of Unemployment	GDP (Constant) in Rs Cr	HDI Rank (out of 189)	Human Freedom Index (out of 162)	World Press Freed Index (out of 180)
2004-05	438	2.3	32,42,209			120
2013-14	472	-	105,27,673	130		140
2017-18	484	4.7	131,75,160	131	102	136
2018-19	487	6.3	139,81,425	130	110	138
2019-20	494	8.5	145,65,951	129	140	140
2020-21 Q1		18.9	26,89,556			
2020-21 Q2	500	7.3	33,14,166	131	142	142

lenge in a developing country like India. The rapid decline in growth rates (2018-19 and 2019-20) triggered the rise in unemployment, the pandemic made it worse and the unplanned lockdowns exacerbated the situation. At its peak, 130 million persons lost their jobs or livelihoods. Jobs have come back slowly, but some jobs have disappeared permanently. The figures speak for themselves (see Table).

Wealth: The most easily understood measure of a nation's wealth is the Gross Domestic Product. If the GDP grows, wealth is enhanced, and the average share of a citizen in the pie (per capita income) is larger. I have taken the simplest measure: GDP in constant prices. Look at the slow growth rates after 2017-18 and look at the destruction of wealth in 2020-21 (see Table). Not at all encouraging for a developing country that has many millions who are poor. Is it any wonder that among the people there is pessimism about the future?

Welfare: A combination of unemploy-

ment and slow (or negative) growth will impact welfare. My concern is not economic welfare alone. Food, healthcare and social security are indeed important, but welfare goes beyond material and tangible goods and services. Ask yourself some questions: Do people think they are a free people? Do they have a heightened sense of fear? Are people afraid that presumably independent agencies like the CBI, ED, Income Tax Department, NCB and NIA will hound and persecute them? Are people confident that the courts of law are accessible and will render swift justice? Can two young people be friends, go out to-

gether, fall in love and marry? Can one, according to her choice, eat, wear clothes, speak, write and associate with other people? 'Welfare' is the sum of these things. Some indicators where India stands, in relative terms, are the Human Development Index, Index of Freedom, Press Freedom

etc (see Table). Overall, there is a decline. Three Abiding Images: In a democracy, good or bad, the cause being external

ernment must bear responsibility. The government may be well-intentioned, get the best available advice or may have committed unintended errors, but the buck stops with the government. Good or bad, governments must be changed. That is why, in many countries, there are term limits on Presidents and Prime Ministers. A sense of permanence is the cause of the beginning of a downfall. As we end the year, the three abiding

factors or internal developments, the gov-

images of 2020 are:

1. The millions of migrants – tired, hungry and sick - trudging hundreds of kilometres along highways and railway tracks with their meagre belongings to reach what they believed was home.

2. The long and peaceful protests – first at Shaheen Bagh and now on the borders of Delhi - demanding that the government hear them and heed their appeals for justice.

3. The resounding vote in the Kashmir Valley comprehensively rejecting the unconstitutional coup staged by the government on August 5, 2019.

In sum, Work, Wealth and Welfare suffered in 2020, making it a forgettable year. I urge you, however, paraphrasing George Santayana, never to forget 2020 so that we may never repeat 2020. Instead, be proud, fearless and freedom-loving Indians. I wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2021.



Confronting reality

TILL THE farmers brought their trolleys, tractors and their protest to the borders of Delhi, Narendra Modi had the image of being the most powerful Prime Minister of India ever. This has changed. For the first time in seven years, he is beginning to look weak. Not just because the farmers openly attack him personally on national television but because he seems no longer to know what to do. So, his attempts to reach out to the protesting farmers are confused and confusing. One day he goes off to address farmers in Kutch and explains to them the virtues of the new farm laws. The next day it is some other group of farmers in Madhya Pradesh that he talks to but never directly to those who have been sitting on Delhi's northern borders now for more than a month. Then there was that visit to Rakab Ganj Sahib gurudwara that was so transparent an attempt to placate protesting Sikh farmers that they would have seen it for exactly what it was.

All of this came after weeks in which he allowed his ministers and party spokesmen to use television debates and social media platforms to malign the protesting farmers as Khalistanis and Naxalites. When the Prime Minister changed track and began his efforts at placation even the most abusive of these spokesmen started to temper their abuse by praising the farmers as 'equal to God because they feed mankind'. On the part of the government the softening has included assurances that every change that the farmers want will be made in the three new farm laws. This must mean that there are serious flaws in the laws.

Unfortunately for Modi his conciliatory gestures have come too late. It is no longer just about the farm laws, it is about other things. For a start there is the arrogance with which they were brought. In the words of one of the protesting farmers, "You tell us that these will be beneficial for us but why are you trying to give us benefits that we do not want?" So many farmers said this or something similar that famous TV anchors who usually exhibit their loyalty to the government in every show, began to tell BJP spokesmen that instead of trying to convince them of the benefits of these laws they should convince the protesting farmers.

It is also about unfulfilled promises. Farmers point out that when Modi became Prime Minister, he promised to double their income by 2022. Not only has this not happened but easier promises have not been kept either like the promise to ensure that sugarcane farmers were finally paid their dues by the mills they sell their cane to. And the promise that old debts would be forgiven those who could not pay them because of the terrible hardship they have endured in this year of disease, disruption and death.

Other things have now become part of the protest. Suddenly, the things that have been autocratically imposed in Modi's

A WEEKLY WINDOW INTO THE LIVES OF INDIA'S NEWSMAKERS AND THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON THEM

My **ISOLATION**

'I'm at Singhu, Tikri daily, in mask, sanitised car... I unwind to Kishore songs'

What precautions are you taking?

I try to follow all the basic guidelines, of washing my hands frequently, wearing a mask at all times and using a sanitiser whenever I am out or meeting someone. Besides, I don't socialise and try to avoid gatherings as much as possible. The point is to have minimal contact. I also take vitamins regularly to boost my immunity.

Have you got yourself tested for Covid-19?

Not yet. Fortunately, I have had no symptoms so far.

What is your daily routine like?

I have been regularly exercising at home and practising yoga. Most of our meetings with seniors are held through video conferencing. But whenever there is a law-andorder situation and I have to go out in the field, I ensure that my mask is always on and a sanitiser handy for personal safety. Cur-



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

Both the Tikri and Singhu borders of Delhi where farmers are amassed protesting against the new agriculture laws fall under SANJAY SINGH, Special



Seeing India, Pak history through the lens of caste

WE SEE caste as a problem, not as an analytical category. It is the object of analysis but never its subject. Scholarship on India's history includes caste as one element, with class and community comprising other categories. What would the history of India look like if seen through the lens of caste?

Ambedkar made this argument for ancient India, seeing the struggle between Brahminism and Buddhism, interrupted by Muslim invasions that destroyed the latter and included the former within a new order. Hinduism emerged from this conquest by adopting Buddhist practices of vegetarianism, temples, floral offerings and non-violence. Buddhists, meanwhile, converted to Islam from the low castes to which they had been reduced.

Whatever its accuracy, Ambedkar's history repudiated the dualistic narrative of Hindu-Muslim conflict by including caste within it. Ambedkar claimed that by launching the movement for Pakistan, the Muslim League abandoned its history of alliances between caste and religious minorities. It came instead to an agreement with the Congress as one high-caste party with another to divide the spoils of Independence.

I want to offer a parallel account of how ste permits us to understand modern Indian history. Consider how the Bania tells us a different story about this past. The first time this caste transformed modern India was in the 18th Century, when traders supported the East India Company to make colonialism possible. They did so by switching allegiance from Kshatriya rulers, whether Hindu or Muslim. The second time Banias changed India's modern history was with the development of the Congress as a mass organisation under Gandhi. The Kshatriyas displaced by colonialism had by then been replaced in politics by Brahmin lawyers and administrators. The first Bania to take power from the Brahmins who dominated the party, Gandhi gained for it the support of India's traders. The national and religious culture promoted by Gandhi was also Bania in character, defined by *bhakti*, *ahimsa* and popular Vaishnavism. His rival linnah performed a similar feat in the Muslim League, which had been run by an administrative class equivalent to the Brahmins, alongside remnants of the old Kshatriya elite. linnah was from the Khoia caste of traders and, like Gandhi, the first Bania to gain control of his party while bringing Muslim capitalists to support it. Khoja are mostly converts of Hindu Lohana caste. Jinnah boasted of his ability to talk to Gandhi as a Khoja would to a Bania.



Getting ready for Ambedkar Jayanti in Gulbarga, Karnataka. Archive

If Gandhi's rise to power signalled the emergence of a new national culture for Hindus, Jinnah's rise accomplished the same for Muslims. The culture of learning and honour that had characterised the League's Brahmin and Kshatriya elite was replaced by a Bania focus on contractual politics.

With Independence, Banias in both countries had to take a back seat. In India they were restricted by a Brahmin bureauture in both countries, allowing different castes to identify with each other by excluding minorities. While Hinduism provides a home for many sectarian cultures in India Islam in Pakistan is exclusive.

Why does Islam as a national ideology have to find its enemies within the Muslim community in Pakistan, whether among Ahmadis or Shias, Deobandis or Barelvis? Because the emergence of Bangladesh

rently, as the farmers' agitation is going on at the Singhu and Tikri borders which fall in my zone. I have to be on ground and monitor the day-to-day situation closely. I also have the additional charge of Special CP (Transport Zone). So, when flight and train operations resumed during the lockdown, I had to inspect airports and railway stations in Delhi to ensure all arrangements were in place. I did the same for Delhi Metro too.

What kind of mask do you use?

I buy the plain ones, not the ones with air filters, and have been using them since the beginning of the pandemic.

How do you stay safe at work?

I maintain social distancing inside my office. Whenever there are in-person meetings, seating arrangements are made keeping adequate distance. I ensure that my staff wear masks at all times. I also get my work space sanitised at regular intervals.

Do you take any specific precautions when you travel?

Every day, before I head out, I ensure my vehicle is cleaned and sanitised.

How much time do you spend in front of a screen?

It isn't healthy and one must try and re-

CP, Western Zone. This means the officer finds himself in a hot spot yet again, after handling reopening of trains, flights following the lockdown

INTERVIEW BY MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL

duce their screen time. But because the world today is operating virtually, I have to constantly be on my computer and check my mobile phone. That would easily amount to more than six hours a day.

How do you keep your mind off the pandemic?

Daily monitoring of crime and maintaining law and order in my zone is usually enough to keep me occupied. In the limited free time, I listen to old songs, especially Kishore Kumar to relax and unwind.

What is the first thing you want to do in a Covid-free world?

I want to go on a vacation with my family. We have been in the house since the lockdown and have not gone out anywhere, except for work.

cracy and in Pakistan excluded by a new Kshatriya elite. With Brahmins disempowered by the loss of their bases in north India, power soon came to be exercised directly by Kshatriyas through the military.

The multiplicity of power centres in post-colonial India led to a variety of alliances, in which the numerical dominance of Shudras has been divided joined or mediated by other castes. Pakistan was dominated by a Kshatriya-Shudra grouping in the west and a Shudra-Dalit-Adivasi one in the east, with Brahmin administrators and Bania capitalists of little account in either wing.

In India, Banias played a major role for a third time during the country's economic liberalisation in the early 1990s, which freed them to adopt a new political identity in Hindutva's Brahmin-Bania combine. Their religiosity is not the austere kind valued by Brahmin ideologues like Savarkar, however, but continues to be focused on bhakti.

In Pakistan, meanwhile, the Kshatriya-Shudra grouping became an absolute majority with the separation of Bangladesh. Even a traders' party like that of Nawaz Sharif must adopt Kshatriya ideals to survive. As for Brahmins, their declining status has allowed them to emerge as ideological brokers for groups making claims to power in the name of Islam.

Religion has come to define national cul-

eliminated Hindus as a substantial minority, with Christians, Sikhs and Parsis also too insignificant.

While Christians and Hindus are discriminated against and even persecuted in Pakistan, as Muslims and Christians sometimes are in India, they are not seen to represent any serious threat to Islam. This means that Islam comes to dominate politics in such a way as to obscure both caste and religious difference.

If the suspect religious minority in Pakistan is to be found within Islam, non-Muslim groups come to represent not religious but caste difference. A Muslim community dominated by Kshatriyas and Shudras thus attacks Christians in Punjab as Dalits, while discriminating against Hindus in Sind as Dalits, Banias and Adivasis.

Christians and Hindus also serve as repositories for the caste identities of Muslims, who escape their status by displacing it onto them. While caste differences in India are also displaced onto a religious minority, in Pakistan this displacement locates the minority within and caste outside Islam. Caste really does allow us to see history anew.

Faisal Devji is Professor of Indian History at the University of Oxford Suraj Yengde, author of Caste Matters, curates the fortnightly 'Dalitality' column

'new India' are attracting more notice than they have before. Dissent has been crushed ruthlessly in this new India, and for the sake of winning elections there have been unashamed attempts to sow hatred between Hindus and Muslims. These things have not gone unnoticed by farmers who the government believes are too stupid to know that the new laws benefit them. It astonished me to hear a white-bearded farmer tell a TV reporter that, "They want us to fight among ourselves but now we have all come together, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. We are all together now." In the echo chamber in which Modi has functioned, especially since his second term began, these are not words that he would hear.

There is more confusion. His ministers may now be speaking in conciliatory voices, but BJP Twitter warriors continue to use social media platforms to spew hatred against the protesting farmers. Especially Sikh farmers. They rant hysterically about 'international conspiracies to defame India'. They say that the same people who made trouble over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) are now using farmers to make trouble because their last attempt to disrupt and divide India failed.

The truth is that those who protested against the CAA were genuinely worried about the weaponisation of citizenship. The truth is that the farmers are genuinely worried about the new laws. The truth is that this has been a terrible year for India in every way and the pain caused by the economy hitting rock bottom is now beginning to hurt badly. If the Prime Minister had concentrated on dealing with the loss of jobs and income by putting together schemes that would directly transfer money into the bank accounts of those who are hurting the most, this sudden revolt against his government may not have happened.

Instead, he has chosen to follow the pattern that has become the leitmotif of his second term, which is to contemptuously ordain for the people what he believes is good for them. This happened first with the changes in the citizenship Act, then with Article 370 and now with the farm laws. The farmers have shown him that this kind of contempt for the people is not something that even the most powerful political leaders can get away with. Modi has been forced finally to step out of his echo chamber into the real world.

On the leherkala@amail.com IN ONE episode of The Fabulous Lives of

Bollywood Wives on Netflix, Maheep Kapoor's daughter is preparing to debut at Le Bal. Paris. For the uninitiated, 'Le Bal de Debutantes' is a hark back to past European grandeur where, for one fairy tale evening, quaint traditions like the waltz and white gloves are resurrected and wealthy young women are "presented" (to vetted company). Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the coming-of-age ball was a milestone for young aristocrats, a way to meet potential mates and announce their place in 'polite society'. Point to note: would Elizabeth Bennett ever have met Mr Darcy in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice if it was-

Whatever gets you through the day

n't for a ball? In recent years, Indian participants at the highly sought after Le Bal have included politician Jyotiraditya Scindia and industrialist Yash Birla's daughters.

www.imdb.com has given The Fabulous Lives... a dismal two stars and a 3.8/10 rating. Audience reviews haven't been very charitable either. Glimpses of Shanaya Kapoor among a glittering assembly of debutantes in a French palace provoked sneering reactions to this frivolity in gowns. "A revolting patriarchal ceremony," went one opinion on Twitter. I, for one, thoroughly enjoyed watching the antiquated ritual of ladies waltzing the night away, first led by their fathers and then, chevaliers. For those scoffing at this pretentiousness, of course everyone knows a debutante ball serves no purpose other than showcasing fine jewellery and, in Darcy's words, a fine

figure. It's an elaborate charade, but in this godforsaken year, pardon me if I choose to see old world symbolisms as a comforting and distinguishing characteristic of the human species. Indeed, the age of debutantes may have passed but let us not deny the nostalgia they evoke.

In fact, it's the very outmodedness of these customs and curtsies that add to their romantic allure - especially on screen. It explains the success of shows like Downton Abbey and their timeless appeal. We wish to misremember the past as charming and elegant, basically everything the present is not. At the beginning of the lockdown I saw Contagion on Amazon Prime, director Steven Soderbergh's remarkably prescient 2011 film on the horrors unleashed by a terrifying virus. An apt watch, it incentivised me to furiously keep washing my hands.

Life has gotten much more precarious since, and to stave away subliminal stress, it's crucial to steer clear of calamity content. My leisure viewing these days is reserved solely for rich people drama. Bring on the scones and high tea! At this point, living vicariously through characters consumed by appearances feels like the ultimate in luxury.

World over, people are gravitating to entertainment that takes them away from the agony of uncertainty. Streaming platforms have noted a spike in interest in comedy shows and reruns of old hits. It's not difficult to gauge why. They're predictable and have happy endings. Socially isolated, we're craving time with friends - perhaps familiar TV faces stand in as proxies. One of the great criticisms aimed at genres like science fiction and reality TV like The

Fabulous Lives... is that they are "escapist" in nature. There is pressure to adhere to an (unspoken)intellectual standard that folks on Twitter care about because the notion prevails that the impulse to escape is a terrible character flaw. In truth, what could be more natural? 2020 was not the year to revisit Schindler's List but to do whatever gets you through the day.

It's people who can switch off from their everyday problems via simple pleasures like comics, music, exercise or other hobbies who are best able to handle adversity. Don't knock the debutantes bowing in ice blue dresses or the Bollywood Wives' prattle. If there is anything this Covid year has proved, it's we have to find our own methods of salvation to guard against reality.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films



intendent Sujith Das said police

have arrested the woman's father

and uncle. "As the couple belonged to different castes, we

prima facie assume that it is a case

of 'honour killing'. A detailed

probe is on and statements are

being recorded. The murder has

happened after a series of inci-

dents over the last three months.

After the marriage, both parties

were summoned to the police

station. The girl's family had

agreed not to trouble the newly-

wed couple. Even after that, her

uncle reacted emotionally against

the marriage. He wanted the girl

to come out of the relationship.

On Friday also, the uncle had a tiff

with the youth, which later in the

victim's

Arumughan said his son had been

facing threats since the marriage.

threatened Aneesh. He (Suresh)

told my son that he would be fin-

ished off before the marriage

complete three months. We had

lodged a complaint with the lo-

cal police, but they failed to act

"Haritha's uncle Suresh had

father

day led to the murder," he said.

The

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, DECEMBER 27, 2020 EXPRESS NETWORK 11



ALL FOR DIDI: TMC workers protest at BJP's Kolkata office against former minister Suvendu Adhikari and MP Sunil Mondal. The TMC men allegedly vandalised Mondal's vehicle while he was entering the office, tried to block Adhikari's car when he was leaving, and clashed with BJP workers. Express

Sen: Santiniketan land registered on long-term lease

Don't act on advice of failed CM: BJP

ENS&PTI KOLKATA, DECEMBER 26

Responding to the controversy

over media reports that Visva-Bharati University has named him among those "occupying additional illegal plot", Nobel laureate and economist Amartya Sen said that the land is registered in records and is on a long-

term lease. Referring to reports that Visva-Bharati University Vicechancellor Bidyut Chakrabarty was arranging the eviction of unauthorised occupation of leased land on the campus and that he has also been named in the list of occupants, Sen said that the central university has never complained about any irregularity of landholding either to him or his family.

The Nobel laureate asserted that the Visva-Bharati land on which his house is situated is en tirely on a long-term lease, which is nowhere near its expiry. "Additional land was bought by my father as freehold and registered in land records under

mouja Surul," he said "I could comment on the big gap between Santiniketan culture and that of the V.C., empowered

Nobel Sen

as he is by the Central government in Delhi with its growing control over Bengal," Sen added. Referring to recent reports on

Sen had called him up against eviction of hawkers before his Pratichi residence, Sen said, "He would be spared the necessity of inventing completely imagined conversations with me, begin-

ducing myself as Bharat Ratna something that no one has ever heard me do"

A day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote to Sen and slammed the BJP for "baseless allegations" against him, state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh said: "We respect him (Sen). But he should not be seen as the spokesperson of a group. If he works on the advice of

a failed chief minister, people will think otherwise.

Centre sets up panel to work out common entrance test for varsities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

IN WHAT marks the first attempt, after the introduction of the new National Education Policy, at moving away from unrealistic cut-off marks for admissions to universities, the government is exploring the feasibility of holding a common entrance test for undergraduate admissions across all central universities from the next academic year.

The UGC set up a seven-member committee on December 23, headed by Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Punjab R P Tiwari, "to consider the issue (of) holding common entrance test at undergraduate level only from the next academic year in central

CASES:

CASES

22.273

299

DEC25

Kerala

Bihar

Delhi

Kerala

Odisha

West Bengal

Maharashtra

Maharashtra

West Bengal

Maharashtra

West Bengal

Delhi

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

DEATHS

STATES WITH RISING ACTIVE CASES

ACTIVE CASES

64,096

5,348

2,922

STATES WHERE ACTIVE CASES ARE DECLINING

14.749

7,267

56,823

STATES REPORTING MAXIMUM CASES

ON DEC 25

5,398

3,431

1,541

STATES REPORTING MAXIMUM DEATHS

ON DEC 25

72

31

30

and state governments. Often the numbers released every day contain data non para as well. As such, trends based on daily numbers are only indicative and not definitive

as on **December 25**, released by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medica earch and state governments. Often the numbers released every day contain data from previous days

251

1.01.69.118 | DEATHS: 1,47,343

TESTS: 16,71,59,289 | RECOVERIES: 97,40,108



To ease

cut-off

sure of soaring cut-off marks based on Class 12 Board exams for admissions to universities.

universities to provide a single platform for admission".

ACTIVE CASES: 2,81,667

RECOVERIES

22.274

The new NEP, released in July this year, advocates reducing the number of entrance tests to "eliminate the need for taking

TESTS

RISE IN LAST WEEK

5,161

294

255

4,316

4,152

3,529

TOTAL

7,32,085

19,13,382

5,44,755

TOTAL

50,261

9,536

10,414

Raut calls for expanding UPA,

ACTIVE CASES DECLINE IN LAST WEEK

8,53,527

coaching for these exams".

There are 40-odd central universities run by the Ministry of Education(MoE) and, collectively, all of them have about 1 to 1.25 lakh seats across different disciplines at the undergraduate level. said a ministry officer. Of these, currently about 16 central universities, all set up under the UPA-II government, have a common en-

trance test for Bachelor's study. If the NEP suggestion is implemented, the National Testing Agency will be tasked to conduct a common aptitude test as well as specialised common exams for different disciplines at least twice a year, for admission to bachelor's in central universities.

"Conducting a common entrance test seems simple but there are several intricacies. For

5% of positive samples to go for whole genome sequencing: Covid task force

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

THE HIGH-LEVEL task force for Covid-19 Saturday said that as a part of its strategy to detect and contain the mutant variant. as many five per cent of positive cases from all states will be tested for Whole Genome

Sequencing (WGS). On Saturday, the Health Ministry said more than 50 sam-

ples of UK returnees are currently under sequencing at the designated laboratories.

The meeting of the National Task Force on Covid-19 was attended by Dr Vinod Paul. Member, Niti Aayog, AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria and independent subject experts. "NTF concluded that there is no need to change the existing treatment protocol in view of mutations...," the Ministry said.

During the meeting, the NTF discussed the UK variant. "NTF recommended that in addition to the existing surveillance strategies, it is critical to conduct enhanced genomic surveillance for SARS-CoV-2, especially in incoming passengers from the UK."

instance, given the range of subjects offered across central universities, this committee will have to identify the disciplines for which separate tests will be needed. We expect a report by January and hope to take a decision by March 2021. The attempt is to have a common entrance test for the next session starting in August," said Higher Education Secretary Amit Khare.

Principal of DAV Public School, Pushpanjali Enclave, Rashmi Biswal said while a joint entrance test was a good idea, a sensitive area would be streamlining the exam curriculum for all students. Director of Ahlcon group of schools Ashok Pandey said moving towards a joint entrance exam might encourage more multiculturalism.

150 troops in Delhi for R-Day test positive

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI. DECEMBER 26

NEARLY 150 Army personnel who are in Delhi for the Republic Day parade have tested positive for Covid-19. Official sources said all those who tested positive were in a "safe bubble". Seven of

them were symptomatic. More than 2000 Army personnel have come to Delhi for Republic Day. All those who came in from outside had to undergo Covid-19 test. The "safe bubbles", sources said, are within hospital. the cantonment area in Delhi.

RAJASTHAN Nobody helped, says friend of journalist who died in assault

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE JAIPUR, DECEMBER 26

DAYS AFTER a 27-year-old video journalist succumbed to his injuries in Jaipur after being assaulted by three men, his friend, who is also an employee of a private news channel and was a witness to the attack, said that nobody helped them at the time of the incident in front of a roadside eatery.

'HONOUR KILLING' SUSPECTED; 2 HELD Man hacked to death by wife's family in Kerala

SHAJU PHILIP THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 26

A 27-YEAR-OLD man was hacked to death allegedly by his wife's father and uncle in Kerala's Palakkad district on Friday night in a suspected case of "honour killing". Both of them have been arrested, police said.

The victim Aneesh, who belonged to the OBC blacksmith community, had married Haritha, 21, after several years of friendship, which began from their school days

Haritha belonged to Vellar Pillai (a community of Tamil origin). Besides, she hailed from a well-to-do family while Aneesh was a daily wager. They had married some three months back, and since then have been allegedly facing threat.

According to police, Aneesh was hacked to death on Friday night while he was riding a twowheeler with his brother Arun. While Aneesh stopped the bike near a shop on his way to home at Thenkurussi village in Palakkad, his father-in-law Prabhu Kumar and uncle Suresh Kumar, who had followed the brothers, attacked Aneesh. A se-

However, the SP said there was no lapse their in addressing the complaint. "They lodged a complaint on December 8, two days before the local body elecriously injured Aneesh died tions. Our entire force was dewhile he was being taken to the ployed in election duty. Yet, we acted timely and told both sides to settle the issue," he said.

timely," he alleged.

Palakkad district police super-

Arunachal: BJP wins Pasighat, JD(U) secures 9 seats in Itanagar civic body

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ITANAGAR, DECEMBER 26

The BJP, the ruling party in

When I caught one of them, they maiden contest in the Itanagai

beat me too with the rod and I lost consciousness. There were other people too at the eatery and around us but nobody came to help us. It was all over within a matter of minutes. Later, when we regained consciousness Abhishek drove towards the hos-Municipal Corporation polls, pital but on our way too we didn't bagged nine wards. find any police outposts or offithe state, won 10 seats, one short cials," said the woman. A case has been filed under of the majority mark, in the 20-IPC sections 302 (murder), 323 member Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) and the NPP (voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 354A bagged one. Among the 10 wards won by the BJP in the (sexual harassment) on the basis of her complaint, police said. Itanagar civic body polls, five candidates were elected unop-"After the two of them went

later came back and started as-

saulting him with an iron rod.

THE BIP on Saturday wrested the Pasighat Municipal Council (PMC) from the Congress by winning six of the eight seats of the civic body in Arunachal Pradesh, while the JD(U), in its

laureate Amartya

the V-C's claim to the faculty that

ning impossibly with me intro-

Meanwhile, the BJP on Saturday hit out at the Nobel laureate, saying that he "should not work on the advice of a failed chief minister"

Ex-litigant unhappy with Ayodhya mosque design



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 26

THE BLUEPRINT of the proposed mosque in Ayodhya has come under criticism from former litigant in the Ayodhya land dispute case, Iqbal Ansari. According to Ansari, not a single point in the proposed mosque represented Islamic culture or etiquette of a religious structure.

The blueprint of the proposed mosque, which will be built on the five-acre land allotted by the state government, was unveiled on December 19.

'The Supreme Court has given 5 acres of land for the mosque and the structure should resemble the mosques built in India. The map they have showcased has no structure. A mosque or a temple has an etiquette, and if there is a temple without a shivala, it won't be considered a temple. Everything should be as per religious traditions. They need to understand that it is a place to offer namaz



An artist's impression of the mosque complex

and not enjoying a picnic," Ansari told The Sunday Express. Ansari also questioned the

authenticity of the Trust and said: "Five litigants fought the case for 70 years in all the courts and no suggestion was taken from us.'

Trust secretary Athar Husain said replicating a structure was not architecture, and their concept is to promote the idea of a syncretic culture. "Under that plan we have decided to build a hospital to provide better medical facilities to the people of Ayodhya," he said.



Sabha MP and spokesperson Sanjay Raut on Saturday called for expanding the scope of the UPA.

Raut said more parties need to be brought under its fold to strengthen the Opposition to take on the "dictatorial attitude" of the BJP-governed Centre.

"As of today, the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is strong, and in front of it the UPA has to be united and transform itself into a powerful force," he said. "There are various political parties across states which have fought the BJP to come to power but they are not



chairperson, the party's Rajya part of UPA. We need to talk to them and invite them to be a part of the UPA.

Formed in 2004, the UPA at present includes 11 political parties. Over the years, nine prominent parties have left its fold.

On speculation that the Sena favours Pawar as the UPA chief, which arose after the party mouthpiece, 'Saamana' on Saturday published an editorial highlighting the need for strengthening the UPA, Raut told The Sunday Express, "We have not said Sharad Pawar should be made the UPA chairperson.'

He emphasised that the editorial nowhere says the NCP chief should be made UPA chairperson, and said it "does mention that Pawar is the only leader

who is being taken seriously by BJP as well as by other opposition parties". Raut said, "Even Prime

Minister Narendra Modi takes him seriously. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee is set to meet Pawar to take his advice for fighting BJP in the West Bengal elections. Pawar seems to be the most capable leader at this juncture with wide acceptability."

Raut also said the Congress does not even have the required numbers in Lok Sabha to get the opposition leader's post. "Rahul Gandhi is putting up a good fight, his efforts are praiseworthy, but somewhere, something is lacking..." he added.

According to the police, Abhishek Soni, 27, died at a hospital in Jaipur on December 23. a fortnight after the attack which took place on the night of December 8.

The 29-year-old private channel employee said she received several stitches as she was also injured in the attack.

"My friend Abhishek Soni worked with a private news channel as a video journalist and he would also shoot for weddings. On December 8, we were returning from such an event and since he was using my mobile for the shoot, I had accompanied him. After 10 pm, we were sitting inside our car at a roadside eatery near Naravan Vihar where we had stopped for dinner. Three men who had arrived on a motorcycle were also there and we noticed that they were staring at me," the woman told The Sunday Express. She said Abhishek got out of the car to confront the men.

"Abhishek went to them and asked why they were staring at me. The men left but a short while

to the hospital, the police came to know about the incident through the control room... After investigation we identified the three accused and one of them, 19-yearold Shankar Choudhary, has been arrested. Two other accused, including a juvenile, are absconding and efforts are being made to nab them," said Dilip Kumar Soni, SHO of Mansarovar police station. Soni said the accused are stu-

dents and the arrested person has claimed that it was Abhishek who had assaulted them with a rod from the car and they acted in self-defence. Asked why the eatery was open during the night curfew imposed in wake of the pandemic, Soni said that the eatery was closed from outside

and had curtains drawn. Family members of Abhishek said they are not satisfied with the police action so far

The Congress, which had won seven seats in the 2013 PMC elections, secured only two wards this time, and the party failed to open its account in the IMC polls. The performance of the Janata Dal United in the civic polls assumes significance as the party received a major jolt in Arunachal on Friday, with six of its seven MLAs defecting to BJP.

posed a State FC official said

The ID(U), led by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, won seven of the 15 seats it contested in the 2019 Arunachal assembly elections and emerged as the second-largest party after the BJP, which had bagged 41 seats.

The PMC had 12 seats, while the IMC had 30 during the 2013 civic polls. However, the number of seats of both the urban local bodies was reduced after delimitation of wards.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROBE

Akhilesh Gundecha dropped from MP's Tansen Samaroh

SUANSHU KHURANA NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

ORGANISERS OF the Tansen Samaroh, a four-day classical concert series that takes place near the tomb of 16th-century musician Tansen in Behaat in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district, have dropped a performance by pakhawaj player Akhilesh Gundecha.

Since October, an Internal Complaints Committee has been investigating allegations of sexual harassment against Akhilesh Gundecha and Ramakant Gundecha, two of the three Gundecha brothers who run the Dhrupad Sansthan in Bhopal. After the allegations surfaced,



Akhilesh Gundecha and Ramakant Gundecha

Akhilesh had voluntarily recused himself from all the activities of Dhrupad Sansthan

Tansen Samaroh is organised jointly by the Ustad Alauddin Khan Kala Evam Sangeet Academy and the Madhya Pradesh Department Of Culture. Students of Dhrupad Sansthan

are scheduled to perform on December 28.

The decision to drop Tailang told The Sunday Akhilesh's performance comes in the wake of discomfort from Madhu Bhatt Tailang, the Jaipur-

whom Akhilesh was to perform, and social media backlash from past and present students of Dhrupad Sansthan and artistes such as Carnatic classical vocal-

ist TM Krishna due to the ongoing probe. #MeToo accused Akhilesh Gundecha who has serious charges against him was to participate at the Tansen Samaroh in Gwalior hosted by Ustad

Alauddin Khan Kala Evam Sangeet Academy and the Culture department, MP Govt

what are you going to do about it?" tweeted Krishna.

Express that she wasn't aware of the sexual harassment investigation when she chose Akhilesh based dhrupad singer with as her accompanying artiste. Tailang, a professor of music at Rajasthan University and an A Grade artiste at All India Radio, has performed with him before a number of times. "I have always shared a good relationship with Akhilesh ji. Besides being a good pakhawaj player, he has been very respectful. I wasn't aware of the allegations since I was dealing with my father's ill health. I am a woman and because this particular investigation is on, it does not give out the right message that I perform

with him. I have already recommended pakhawaj player Ankit Parikh's name to the Academy. I want to have the freedom of mind while giving a perform-

ance," said Tailang. Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary of the Department of Culture, Trustee Secretary at Bharat Bhawan and Secretary of the MP Culture Council, refused to comment on the matter.

Naeem Khan, the programme manager of Tansen Samaroh, who has been in touch with Tailang regarding the listing and dropping of Akhilesh, also denied comment on the issue.

Rahul Rastogi, director of the Sangeet Academy, could not be reached for comment.

After JD(U)'s jolt in Arunachal, Bihar BJP leader says Nitish must leave home dept

is burdened with too many as-

signments. He must give away

home department to someone

else. I am not saying he should

hand over the ministry to BJP. Let

some other JD(U) leader take

over." Asked if his demand is due

to a law and order issue, Paswan

said, "Yes. Law and order deteri-

oration has to be addressed in a

more effective manner.'

SANTOSH SINGH PATNA, DECEMBER 26

A DAY after six of the seven JD(U) MLAs in Arunachal Pradesh defected to the BJP, BJP MLC and former Union minister Sanjay Paswan on Saturday mounted more pressure on Bihar CM Nitish Kumar by asking him to hand over the home department to someone else.

The Bihar CM holds charge of home, general administration, vigilance and general administration departments.

Paswan said, "Nitish Kumar

than two dozen people have Nitish Kumar

been killed in the state. Reacting to the defection of

to say on it." However, JD(U) leaders refrained from commenting on

In the last two weeks, more

Paswan's remarks. "Our top leaders are meeting today. There is a meeting of our national executive on Sunday. We are likely to discuss every issue, right from Arunachal Oradesh to our resolve to contest forthcoming Assembly polls in West Bengal," a JD(U) leader said.

New Delhi

six ID(U) MLAs to BIP, Paswan said, "We do not have anything

12 EXPRESS NETWORK

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I Priyanka Munish Jain D/o Sh.Swaraj Singh Thakur W/o Sh.Munish Jain R/o 1441. Sector-B, Pocket-1, Near Green Valley School, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070 have changed my name to Priyanka Thakur for all purposes.

0040558739-3

I,VED PRAKASH S/O TARA CHAND BHARDWAJ R/O HNO.313,NEAR PAKKI CHOUPAL, ALIPUR, DELHI-110036. CHANGED MY NAMETO VED PRAKASH BHARDWAJ. 0040558777-5

I.SURJIT SINGH.S/O JASBEER SINGH R/O 21-24 Savitri Nagar Near Malviya Nagar New Delhi-110017, Have Changed Mv Name to Surieet Singh, permanently. 0040558777-1

I,SHOBHA DEVI,SPOUSE OF 655803 N EX JWO SHIVA KANT TRIPATHI, RESIDENT OF, D-160, GALI.NO-2, BHARAT-VIHAR KAKROLA.SOUTH WEST/DELHI,DELHI-110078, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM SHOBHA DEVI TO SHOBHA TRIPATHI AS PER AFFIDAVIT, DATE-26/12/2020. 0040558782-7

I,SAYADA SUHIRA FARUQUI,D/O Shariq sagri, R/o-C-172, st.no-20,Subhash mohalla Northghonda Delhi.Have changed my name, from Sayada suhira to Sayada suhira Faruqui.Both are same person.For all the, future purposes. 0040558777-6

I,SANTOSH KUMAR SINGH S/O RAM NATH SINGH R /o FLAT NO.-P 103, TOWER P CITY APARTMENTS, NH 24, **OPPOSITE COLOMBIA ASIA** HOSPITAL NH 24, ADITYA WORLD CITY, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201002.have changed the name of my minor Daughter YASHVI VANDANA SINGH aged about 1 YEAR and She shall hereafter be known as SHRIMEDHA SINGH. 0070725305-1

I,SAHIL BATRA S/O SATISH KUMAR BATRA,R/0 H.NO-750, 1ST Floor, ,Sector-52, Gurgaon, HARYANA-122001, have changed the name of my minor Daughter AMAAYA aged about 3 Years and She shall hereafter be known as SAAZ BATRA. 0070725291-1 I,Poonam,D/o Lt. Shri M.L. Srivastava R/o-Village-Gejha Behind SK-II,VDS Market,Sector-93, Noida,G.B.Nagar, U.P., have changed my name.from Poonam Rani to Poonam, for all purposes. 0040558782-1

I,Pankaj Kumar s/o Bir Pratap Singh.R/o-C-87. 3rd-Floor. Ganesh Nagar, Pandav-Nagar Complex, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Pankai Kumar Singh, permanently 0040558777-7

I,Manita W/o-Manish Kumar Garg R/o-H.No.2, G.F., Block 10, Spring Field-Colony, Sector 31,Faridabad have changed my name to Anjali Garg after-0040558768-8 marriage.

I,ASAFAQUE ALAM,S/O ABDUL WHAB, R/O:E-53, BLOCK-E, ABUL FAZAL ENCLAVE PART-2, SHAHEEN BAGH, OKHLA, DELHI-110025, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ASHFAQUE ALAM, FOR ALL 0040558777-2 PURPOSES.

I,ABHISHEK RANJAN BHARTI S/O RAM CHANDRA BHARTI,R/o 1/989, Vasundhra S.O. Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, 201012, have changed the name of my minor Daughter AAVYA BHARTI aged about 5 years and She shall hereafter be known as JAISHREE BHARTI.

0070725283-I, Sharafat Ali S/o Kadir Ahmad R/o Eid Gah, Teliwala, Doiwala, Dehradun Uttarakhand-248140, have changed my name to Aarish Malik

0070725259-1 I. Saloni Meena D/o Chandra Prakash Meena R/o B-31, New Thermal Colony, Kota, Raiasthan -324008, have changed my name to Saloni 0070725255-1 Khokar I, SURESH KUMAR BAID S/O-SOHAN LAL BAID R/O-E-7/19. VASANT-VIHAR-1 DELHI-110057, changed my name to SURESH BAID. 0040558768-5 I. Puran Chand.S/o

Narayan, have changed my Address H.N.02, Sunder Nagar, New Delhi to 430A.Gali.No.08 2nd-Floor West Vinod-Nagar 0040558782-4 Delhi-92.

I, Pramod Kunwar S/O Ram Bahadur Kunwar, R/o H.No.3, Street No-9/2, Shakit Vihar Meethapur Jait Pur, Jaitpur, South Delhi-110044 declare that Mine and My wife name has been wrongly written as Parmod Kunwar and Sarala Kunwar in my minor son's aged 15 years namely "KUNAL KUNWAR" SCHOOL TRANSFER CERTIFICATE NO-999.The actual name of Mine and My wife are Pramod Kunwar and Sarla Kunwar, which may be amended accordingly. 0070725303-1

I, Mohd Anus Salmani S/o Mohd Rafi R/o 11/454, Topiya Saray, Saharanpur, UP-247001, have changed my name to Kabir 0070725260-1 Malik I, PRIYAANKA L BHASIN ALIAS PRIYANKA BHASIN,W/O JITTEN VEER BHASIN,R/o E-3/18,DLF PHASE-1,SIKANDERPUR GHOSI(68), GURGAON HARYANA-122002. have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as PRIYANKA LUTHER.

0070725301-1 I, NASRA BANO/SHEHNAZ, W/O.WAZIR AHMAD, H NO 187 H6/2 IFEVAN-NAGAR ASHRAM.SOUTH-EAST DELHI-110014, changed my name to SHEHNAZ HUSSAIN, 0040558768-3 permanently.

I, Mohammad Haris, S/o Mohammad Ismail, R/o-E-I-339, Madangir Dr. Ambedkar-Nagar.New Delhi-110062, inform that Mohammad Haris Siddiqui and Mohammad Haris Both

I. JITENDER BEDI, S/O DIDAR SINGH BEDI, R/o-FLAT.NO.09091,TOWER-9, ATS ADVANTAGE, AHINSAKHAND-1, INDIRAPURAM, GHAZIABAD, U.P201014, changed my name

to JITENDER KUMAR.

I. Hrishikesh Dileeprao

Near D Mart, Sector-15,

Diliprao Suryawanshi.

Jama-Masiid.Delhi-

purposes.

Sud.

purposes.

changed my name and shall

I, Eram Alvi,w/o Tayyab Urfi

Alvi, R/o-1705 Pahari Bhojla

110006,Have changed my

name to Eram Alavi, for all

, Deepak Kumar Choudhary S/o

Jay Ram Choudhary, residing

323305, have embraced ISLAM

and renounced HINDUISM with

effect from 17.10.2020 and also

have changed my name from

Deepak Kumar Choudhary to

Riyaz Hussain 0070725258-1

I, Bala Sud, W/O Kamlesh Kumar

Sud, R/o House no 5770 Sector 38 West Chandigarh, Sector

14,Chandigarh-160014,have

changed my name and shall

hereafter be Known as Vir Bala

Kavita Rani D/o Sh. Dhan Singh

R/07518, Gali No.4, Raghubar

Delhi-110031 have changed my

I, Amandeep Bhatti D/O Des Raj

Bhatti,W/O Harmeek Yuvraj

LTD Plot No-14 Sector-18-

110078, have changed my

B Pavagadhi alias Subhra

Barua Pavagadhi D/o Late

Sh.Kartik Pavagadhi R/o J-

Sh.Jinananda Barua W/o

name to Subhra Barua

name to Ramesh Chand

LOST & FOUND

I, Nikita Gupta, D/o Niranjan lal

extension, new Delhi-80, have

certificate/marksheet Class-

Sudha D/o Late Sh. Amir Chand

Gurudwara, Gopal Park, Delhi-

Madan R/o H.No.99, Street

No.3, Near Singh Sabha

0040558777-9

Gupta, R/o C-35 tigri-

12th year-2020, Rollno-

14622750 CBSE-DELHI.

lost my original

name and shall hereafter be

Known as Amandeep Chahal.

A,Dwarka,Delhi Pin-

Chahal. R/o A-703 Ircon CGHS

name to Kavita Singh for all

Pura No.2, Gandhi Nagar,

0070725292-1

0040558739-2

0070725302-1

at Bus Stand Rawatbhata,

Tehsil Rawatbhata, Post

Chittorgarh, Rajasthan-

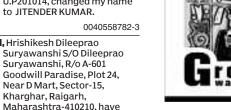
Rawatbhata, Distt-

hereafter be Known as Rishiraj

0070725294-1

0040558777-4

Kharghar, Raigarh,



SIKH/PUNJABI

Match for Professional Qualified Sikh Khatri Girl, 5' 7", Oct. 92 Born Canadian PR.Sikh Boy from GTA Canada preferred Contact 9779584339

0020415592-1

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

HE PUBLIC IN LARGE IT IS INFORM 1AT MY CLIENT MR. KARTAR SING 1AWLA, SO LATE SH. KHUSHI RAH 1NGH, R/O HOUSE NO. 474 ARMANAND COLONY WEST, DELH 10009, HAS DISOWNED, DEBARRE ND DISINHERITED HISHER DAUGHTE ND DISINHERITED HISHER DAUGHTET MRELY MS. AMITA KAUR BHATTA W/C HR. GURSHARAN SINGH BHATTA M/C +9, VICK VIHAR PHASE-1, DELH ROM ALL HIS MOVABLE & IMMOVABLE ROPERTIES AND HAVE SEVERED ALL ELATIONS FROM THEM AS THEY ARE O MORE IN TOLCH WITH ME AND HAVE EVER VISITED ME FROM 4TH MAY, 2011 EVER VISITED ME FROM 4TH MAY, 2011 DI ALSO WHEN I HAD CORONA IN THE DALSO WHEN I HAD CORONA IN THE NTH OF OCTOBER, 2020 SHE NEVER RED TO COME AND SEE ME, I HAVE VER GIVEN MY WILL FOR THE RTICULAR PROPERTY HOUSE NO 4, PARMANAND COLONY WEST, IN YOUR OF MY SON IE. MR. UTTAM JIT WOLD CHAMINA

Sd/- SAKSHI BUDHIRAJA ADVOCAT Ch. No. 463, Western Win

PUBLIC NOTICE it known to all through this Pul tice that my clients Sh. Rajendra Kun Sh. Jai Pal Singh and Smt. Kamle Sh. Rajendra Kumar both F Vo Sh. Jai Pal Singh and Smt. Kamlesh Vo Sh. Alajondra Kumar both R/o 4990, Street No. 6, Ganga Vihar, Delhi-1990, Street No. 6, Ganga Vihar, Delhi-1990, Sh. Wanit Kumar & theialaughter in law namely Smt. Anju Rami Wo Sh. Sumit Kumar, from their all onvable and immovable properties & Vihar Kumar, from their all oublished Public Notices in Daily News 'apers' **Indian Express**' & Jansatta of date 120.12020, in this regard, down date y and the ana the sent set of the sent set of the set of t ing in all respect. Sd/- UMESH GUPTA (ADVOCATE) Ch. No. 660, Western Wing Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

I for and on behalf of my client Sh. Dheeraj Kapoor S/o Late Sh. Suresh. Chand Kapoor R/o B-3615/75, Gali No. 98, Sant Nagar, Burań, Delhi-110084 do hereby inform the public at large that on account of iliegal acts and immoral behavior my client has disowned his wife Smt. Yogita Kapoor d/o Late Sh. Rajnder Kumar Saini and he has debarred her from all his movable and immovable assets forever. My client has also cancelled the General Power of Attorney dated 25th March, 2013 in favour of Smt. Yogita Kapoor in respect of his built up property measuring 50 sq.yds. situated in Khasra No. 117/24, Village Burari, Delhi colony known as B-Block, Sant Nagar, Burari, Delhi-110084 which he had executed in her favour ou of love and affection and without any consideration and further my client will not be responsible for any action of Smt. Yogita Kapoor in future in any manner and anyone dealing with her shall be doing so at their own risk and consequences and my client shall not be responsible for the same. Sid- SHALLENDER DAHYA (ADVOCATE)

PUBLIC NOTICE

ENRL. NO. D349/88

My client Ramroop S/o Sh. Paras Nath R/O H.No. C-3/2087, Gali no. 17, Prem Nagar, Patel Nagar, Delini-110008, has severed all kinds of relations with his wife Smt. Malti Devi, two son's Jitender Choudhry along-with his wife Smt. Sindhu & Rajat Choudhary, two daughters Mrs. Renu & Reema, due to heir mishehavior and has cheared & their misbehaviour and has debarred & disowned them from all of his properties (moveable and immoveable

nd relations with immediate effect

Anybody dealing with them in any manner will be doing so at his/her/thei

when risk and responsibility. My clier thall not be held responsible for an

acts, deeds and things done by them. Sd/- Y. MISHRA (ADVOCATE) ENRL. NO. D/6023/2017 OFFICE AT: - C-4/13, ST. NO. 3 SADATPUR EXT, DELHI-10094 MOB. NO. 8527785813.

Public Notice

nd Floor, Anand Vihar

Pitam Pura, Delhi-110034

s currently under

dispute, Any third Party involvement shall

be at the risk and peril

of party thus involved.

PUBLIC NOTICE

-Sd.-/, Jagdish Arora,

Enl. No. D-2290/14.

Advocate

That House No. 11

Threat mail to judge: Police Cong says its UP chief

trict and session judge

Mohammad Ahmad Khan. In his

complaint, the judge said that he

with dire consequences if he did

not grant bail to Chunni Lal.

around seven months.

(criminal intimidation).

he knew Fahim," said Kapil.

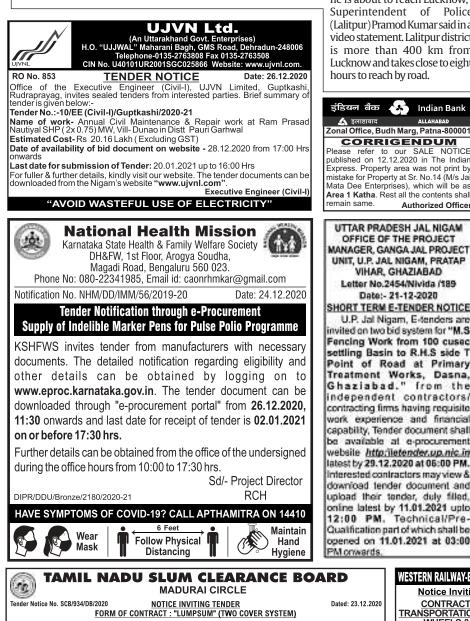
to the judge.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 26

NEARLY 10 days after Bareilly police received a complaint of an alleged threat letter sent to an additional district and sessions judge. the investigation has found that the accused died in a police encounter in Moradabad in 2012.

Bareilly police came to know about it when they visited the Moradabad residence of the accused — Mohammad Fahim Pakistani. A case was filed against Fahim for allegedly threatening the judge if he failed to grant bail to one Chunni Lal, who has been arrested in connection with a corruption case.

"When we collected details about Fahim, we came to know that he was killed in a police encounter in 2012 in Moradabad. Later, we questioned Chunni Lal. He said that he did not know any person named Fahim Pakistani," Station House Officer (Bareilly Police Station) Gitesh Kapil said.



say accused killed 8 yrs ago missing after arrest, cops According to the SHO, an FIR say sent to Lucknow was registered on December 17 on a complaint by additional dis-

Sources in the Congress later

said Lallu had reached Lucknow

by midnight. Earlier, the Congress

alleged that UP Police was not dis-

closing the location of Lallu after

he was taken into custody.

"Adityanath's police had left for

Lucknow with UP Congress chief

Ajay Lallu in the evening, but even

after several hours his location is

unidentified," the UP Congress

In an earlier tweet, the party

questioned the behaviour of the

UP Police."When the glass of BJP

chief(JP Nadda)'s car is broken in

Bengal then the BJP says democ-

racy is in danger... Police have ab-

ducted our state chief for the last

several hours in UP to stop a

ers were arrested in Lalitpur after

they tried to take out the march.

District Congress president

Balwant Singh Rajput said about

two dozen party workers were

injured as the police used force.

it will take out the march in dif-

ferent districts of Bundelkhand to

highlight the alleged mismanage-

ment in cow shelters.

The Congress had announced

(WITH PTI INPUTS)

Lallu and over 50 party work-

protest. Democracy?'

tweeted around 9.30 pm.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 26

had received the letter on December 14 in which the sender AS THE Congress alleged "disapthreatened him and his family pearance" of its state unit chief Ajay Kumar Lallu after he was taken into custody by Lalitpur po-The sender had identified lice during his 'Gai Bachao, Kisan himself as Chunni Lal's friend Bachao yatra' on Saturday, the Mohammad Fahim Pakistani, a district police on late Saturday resident of Moradabad," said the night said the Congress leader SHO, adding that Lal is in jail for was sent back to Lucknow under

police protection. The FIR was lodged against "Today, the Congress had or-Fahim under IPC section 506 ganised a yatra in Lalitpur district, and Ajay Kumar Lallu was taking During the investigation, popart in it. As the administration lice visited the Moradabad post ofhad not given him any permisfice from where the letter was sent sion, he was arrested. Later in the evening, he was let go on a per-"We checked the CCTV sonal bond. As he had come from footage of the post office but did Lucknow and had no one with not find anything. We collected him – he also did not have his details about Chunni Lal and phone with him – he was sent to found no evidence suggesting that Lucknow with an officer with police protection. As per his location, he is about to reach Lucknow," Superintendent of Police (Lalitpur)Pramod Kumar said in a video statement. Lalitpur district is more than 400 km from Lucknow and takes close to eight

hours to reach by road.

Date:- 21-12-2020

इंडियन बैंक 😽 Indian Bank Militant killed \land इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD onal Office, Budh Marg, Patna-800 in encounter at CORRIGENDUM lease refer to our SALE NOTIC ublished on 12.12.2020 in The India

J&K's Shopian Express. Property area was not print by nistake for Property at Sr. No.14 (M/s Ja Mata Dee Enterprises), which will be a Mata Dee Enterprises), which will be a Area 1 Katha. Rest all the contents sha Srinagar: An unidentified militant was killed in an overnight Authorized Office encounter with security forces UTTAR PRADESH JAL NIGAM in Shopian district of Jammu and OFFICE OF THE PROJECT Kashmir, taking the death toll of

MANAGER, GANGA JAL PROJEC ultras in the operation to two, UNIT, U.P. JAL NIGAM, PRATAF police said on Saturday. VIHAR, GHAZIABAD "One more militant has been Letter No.2454/Nivida /189

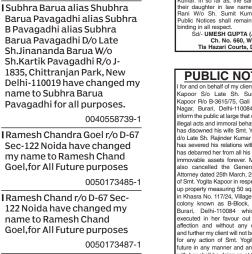
killed in fresh exchange of fire with security forces in Shopian today. The number of terrorists killed in the operation now stands at two," a police official said.

Security forces had launched a cordon and search operation in Kanigam area on Friday following information about the presence of militants in the area, the official said. He said as the forces were conducting the searches, militants fired upon them.

The forces retaliated, resultng an encounter, the official said. In the exchange of fire, one militant was killed last night (Friday night), he said, adding two soldiers were also injured in the gunbattle.

> Bihar nod to new civic bodies in 5 districts

> > ENS



I,Parveen Kumar S/o Harbans Lal, R/o-557, Sector 29, Faridabad, have changed my name to Parveen Bhardwaj.

0040558768-9

I,Manish Verma S/O Rajesh Verma, R/o B-44, Mohan Park Naveen Shahdara, North East Delhi-110032, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Manish Khatri.

0070725299-1

I,MEGHA,W/O-SANJEEV ARORA.R/O-FLAT.NO 110,PATRAKAR PARISAR,GH 2,SEC-5,VASUNDHARA, GHAZIABAD.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AFTER MARRIAGE TO MEGHA ARORA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

0040558782-2

I, JAYESH S/0 KRISHAN BAHL R/o-C-905 EXPRESS GREEN APPARTMENT SECTOR-1 VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD 201010 U.P., HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO JAYESH BAHL. 0040558768-6

I.Deepa Chandaran. D/o Chandran Govindan, R/o 11542, Gali no.354, Sanjay Colony, Sector-23, Faridabad, have changed my name to Deepa Chandran. 0040558768-7

I,Champa W/o Birender Singh, R/o.H.No.A-205, Gali.No.10. South Gamri Extension, New Delhi, have changed my name to Chitra Mehra after-marriage.

0040558768-10

I,Ahmed Taha Alvi,s/o Tayyab Urfi Alvi, R/o-1705, Pahari-Bhoila, Jama-Masiid, Delhi-110006,Have changed my name to Ahmad Taha Alavi,for all purposes. 0040558777-3

I.Abhinav Kumar S/O Ashok Kumar Jha, R/o Amritapuram Colony, Sarovar Nagar Devi Mandap Road Ranchi-834005. have changed the name of my minor Son Advik Jha aged about 2 Years and He shall hereafter be known as Kiaan 0070725285-1

I, KM JULY GOYAL D/O Mukash Kumar Goyal, W/O Vipul Agarwal. R/o 33/17A/29 Jaswant Ki Chhatri Balkeshwar , Agra, Uttar Pradesh-282005 have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Juhi Agarwal.

0070725296-1

are same one person. 0040558768-1

I. MILAN KUMAR S/O MANOHAR VISHWAKARMA, R/o Vasant Vihar, Hirak Ring Road, Kalakusuma, Dhanbad, Iharkhand-826005 have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as MILAN KUMAR SHARMA.

Mohammad Ismail R/o-E-I-

339, Madangir, Dr. Ambedkar

110062, inform that Kishwar

and Kishwar Jahan Both are

I, KM. CHANDRAMATI D/O PREM

SINGH. W/O Rakesh chauhan.

R/o st. no. 113/1 Santnagar,

Near kushal chowk Burari-

110084, have changed my

name and shall hereafter be

Known as Priyanka chauhan.

l, Jagan Nath S/o Gurda Ram R/o

C-143, Tagore Garden

Extension, Tagore Garden,

Delhi-110027, have changed

I, JITTEN VEER BHASIN ALIAS

JITTEN BHASIN S/O HEMANT

BHASIN.R/o E-3/18 DLF PHASE

1.GURGAON-122002.HARYANA

INDIA, have changed my name

and shall hereafter be Known

as JITTEN VIR BHASIN.

FLOOR.RAJOURI-GARDEN

DELHI-110027, changed my

R/O.V- 243, 1ST-

my name to Dharam Vir Singh

I, Kishwar Jahan, W/o

Nagar, New Delhi-

same one person.

110051 have lost Photocopy of Will executed on 30.10.1996 executed by Shvam Lal in favour of Kamal Kishore of Property No.A-31, Indra Park Chander Nagar, Delhi-110051.

0070725300-1

0040558768-2

0070725287-1

0070725256-1

Finders may contact at above address. 0040558739-4 Gurmukh Singh S/o Sh.Charan

Singh R/o 11/20, Old Gobind Pura Extn., Delhi-110051 have lost Original GPA, ATS, Payment Receipts alongwith others papers executed on 22.05.1974 & 21.12.1979 by Ram Nath, Hakumat Rai and others in favour of Mohd Hanif, Guru Sharan and Parveen Kumar of Property No.24, Rashid Market Extn., Delhi-110051. Finders may contact at above address.

ride

0040558739-5

CLIENTS SH. KHAJAN SIN SH. BHEEM SINGH AND HAR, NANGLOI, DELHI-11004 EREBY DISOWN/ DEBAR 1 ON NEERAJ KUMAR AND HIS IFE DEEPA FROM THEIR ALL OVABLE/ IMMOVABLE ROPERTIES AND SEVER THEIR ELATIONS EROM THEM DUE TO ELATIONS FROM THEM DUE TO HEIR MISCONDUCT. MY CLIENT /ILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FO HEIR ANY ACTS

Advocat Ch. No. 922, 9[™] FLOOF L.C. BLOCK, ROHINI COURTS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sd/- (SURENDER SINGH

My client HARDEVI W/O LATE AMAI SINGH R/O A-227, MADIPUR J COLONY, DELHI-110063, ha bebarred her son DHARMENDER & hi wife SANDHIYA and their childre SANEHA, YASH, AMAN & SHIV fror rer all movable-immovable propertie and severe all her relations due to the pibebaue, and hed hebaujau nisbehave and bad behaviou nybody dealing with them shall bear is own cost & risk Sd/-GEETA BHANDAR

ADVOCATE ROOM NO. 16, ROHINI COURTS DELHI-8 MOB. NO. 882697903

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it know to all concerned That m clients (1) SHIV PRAKASH S/O SHI DESH RAJ SINGH AND (2) KISHOR JATA W/O SHIV PRAKASH BOTH R/ I2/10, DAKSHINPURI EXTN., NE' DELH-110062, have severed a relations and discovered their son VIPI elations and disowned their son VIPi is wife SONAM and his son NISHAI om their all movable- immovab rom their all movable-immovable properties due to their disobedience and bad behavior. My clients & thei other family members shall not be responsible and liable for their acts. Sd/- TUSHAR SI

En. No. D-192/201 Ch. No. 466, Lawyers Block Saket Court Complex New Delhi

For and on behalf of Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, sealed tenders consisting of two separate sealed covers ne for Pre-qualification with EMD to be enclosed in 'A' cover and another for price schedule with name of work duly

Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer, Madurai Division tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintending Enginer, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of Rs.17,700/-(Non refundable) upto 3.00 PM on 11.01.2021. Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www.l The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without "169,K.K.Nagar Main Road," Opp. Jawagar Hospital, Madurai 625 020. DIPR/4989/TENDER/2020 3.प. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. इं– मण्डल, मुरादाव	Tender Value (Rs. In Lakhs) Period of Contract (3)	EMD (in Rs.)					
1 Construction of 504 Slum tenements adopting T.D.37/2018 includir internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements includir development works at Pottalkalam Phase-I, Allinagaram Municipality Theni District under HFA, Vertical-III (AHP) of PMAY. CER-Madur No.7/HFA/2020-21 2 Construction of 264 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+ including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including development works at Chatrapatti in Koduvilarpatti village Theni District under HFA, Group-I. CER-Madurai No.8/HFA/2020-21 3 Construction of 240nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+ including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including development works at Chatrapatti in Koduvilarpatti village Theni District under HFA, Group-I. CER-Madurai No.8/HFA/2020-21 3 Construction of 240nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+ including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including development works at Chatrapatti in Koduvilarpatti village Theni District under HFA, Group-II. CER-Madurai No.9/HFA/2020-21 The cost of tender schedule, EMD should be drawn as Demand Draft or E Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer, Madurai Divisit tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintending Engi Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of Rs.17,700/-(Non refundable) upto 3.00 PM on 11.01.2021. Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www: The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders withou "169,K.K.Nagar Main Road," Opp. Jawagar Hospital, Madurai 625 020. DIRM4989/TENDER/2020 3.J.J. URAT ZixtIPATE contUt							
1 Construction of 504 Slum tenements adopting T.D.37/2018 includir internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements includir development works at Pottalkalam Phase-I, Allinagaram Municipality Theni District under HFA, Vertical-III (AHP) of PMAY. CER-Madur No.7/HFA/2020-21 2 Construction of 264 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+ including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including development works at Chatrapatti in Koduvilarpatti village Theni District under HFA, Group-I. CER-Madurai No.8/HFA/2020-21 3 Construction of 240nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+ including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including the schedule, EMD should be drawn as Demand Draft or E Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer,Madurai Divisit tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintending Engi Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of Rs.17,700/-(Non refundable) upto 3.00 PM on 11.01.2021. Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www: The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders withou "169,K.K.Nagar Main Road," Opp. Jawagar Hospital, Madurai 625 020. DIRR4989/TENDER/2020 3.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. ई- मण्डल, मुरादाs							
including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including development works at Chatrapatti in Koduvilarpatti village Theni District under HFA, Group-I. CER-Madurai No.8/HFA/2020-21 3 Construction of 240nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+ including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including development works at Chatrapatti in Koduvilarpatti village Theni District under HFA, Group-II. CER-Madurai No.9/HFA/2020-21 The cost of tender schedule, EMD should be drawn as Demand Draft or E Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer.Madurai Divisi tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintending Engi Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of Rs.17,700-(Non refundable) upto 3.00 PM on 11.01.2021. Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www: The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders withou "169,K.K.Nagar Main Road," Opp. Jawagar Hospital, Madurai 625 020. DIPR/4989/TENDER/2020	g 4654.00	(4) 23,40,000/-					
including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangement including development works at Chatrapatti in Koduvilarpatti village Theni District under HFA, Group-II. CER-Madurai No.9/HFA/2020-21 The cost of tender schedule, EMD should be drawn as Demand Draft or E Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer.Madurai Divisit tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintending Engi Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of Rs.17,700/-(Non refundable) upto 3.00 PM on 11.01.2021 . Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders withou "169,K.K.Nagar Main Road," Opp. Jawagar Hospital, Madurai 625 020. DIPR4989/TENDER/2020 3.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. ई — मण्डल, मुरादाद	n 12 Months	11,76,000/-					
Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer, Madurai Divisit tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintending Engin Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of Rs.17,700/-(Non refundable) upto 3.00 PM on 11.01.2021. Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www.: The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders withou "169,K.K.Nagar Main Road," Opp. Jawagar Hospital, Madurai 625 020. DIPR/4989/TENDER/2020 3.y. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि.	s 2103.00	10,62,000/-					
	Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www.tenders.tn.gov.in. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. "169,K.K.Nagar Main Road," SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,						
21 ई-टैण्डर, चार माह की वैद्यता हेतु, दो भागों किराये पर उपल में, भाग-1 व भाग-2 अधोलिखित विवरण के कार्य का ना अनुसार आमंत्रित किया जाता है। निविदा प्राप्त जानपद पारेषण होने/खोले जाने का दिनांक व समय क्रमशः विभागीय कार्य 01.02.2021, 14.00 बजे एवं 02.02.2021 ड्राईवर (इंधन का नाम 220 14.00 बजे है। क्रमांक 1. कार्य का नाम 220 का कार्य । क्रमां के.वी. उपकेन्द्र मझोला कालोनी, मुरादाबाद का अधिकारी, विद् वार्षिक अनुरक्षण कार्य । क्रमांक 2. कार्य का प्रथम, मुरादाबा नाम 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र मझोला कालोनी, डीजल चालित प्र मुरादाबाद पर वाटर सप्लाई एवं साफ-सफाई हेतु किराये पर उपर वार्षिक अनुरक्षण कार्य । क्रमांक 3. कार्य का 11. कार्य का मुरादाबाद पर इंकटर हॉस्टल, पार्क प्लानटेशन, लिये विभागीय मुरादाबाद पर इंकटर हॉस्टल, पार्क प्लानटेशन, लिये विभागीय मुरादाबाद पर इंकटर हॉस्टल, पार्क प्लानटेशन, लिये विभागीय मुरादाबाद पर इंकटर हॉस्टल, पार्क प्लानटेशन, लराये का मुरादेशा का कार्य । क्रमांक 5. कार्य का नाम 220 कराने का कार्य के.वी. उपकेन्द्र नहटौर, 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र, बिजनौर सरवीकार किये ज पर वार्षिक अनुरक्षण कार्य । क्रमांक 5. कार्य का विवरण यथा तव पर वार्षिक अनुरक्षण कार्य । क्रमांक 6. कार्य का नाम 132	ाद के लिये विभाग बाहन मय ड्राईवर (ब्ध कराने का कार्य खण्ड, मुरादाब हेतु डीजल चालि हित) किराये पर उ क 10. कार्य का त जानपद पारेषा त जानपद पारेषा त जानपद पारेषा त जानपद पारेषा त जानपद पारेषा त जानपद पारेषा कार्य के लिये विभाग तक्य कराने का व नाम उपखण्ड हितीय, कार्य हेतु डीजल प्र स्हार) किराये ा निविदा प्रपत्र ग/etender.up.n ायेंगे। उक्त निविदा ज्नीकी विशिष्टीकरा देवा प्रपत्र की लाग संशोधन, परिवर्तन, er.up.nic.in .org पर लॉगिन व	(ईधन रहित) । क्रमांक 9. यन्ता, विद्युत त वाहन मय पलब्ध कराने नाम उपखण्ड– ग उपखण्ड– गे उपखण्ड– ये कार्य हेतु ग उपखण्ड– ये कार्य हेतु (ईधन रहित) कार्य । क्रमांक यकारी, विद्युत मुरादाबाद के वालित वाहन पर उपलब्ध ई–प्रोक्योरमेंट ic.in से ही से सम्बन्धित प, कार्यावधि, त इत्यादि एवं शुद्धि पत्र हेतु अथवा					
चन्दौसी एवं 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र सम्भल का मण्डल उ.प्र. वार्षिक अनुरक्षण कार्य। क्रमांक 8. कार्य का लि. मुरादाबार नाम अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत जानपद पारेषण बचावें'' पत्रांक	यन्ता विद्युत जान						

CONTRACT WORK FOR NSPORTATION OF COACHING WHEELS & TROLLEYS TRANS No:- M 442/Trolley & Wheel Movement/BVP/10/2020 Date:21.12.20, Patna: Ahead of The Divisional Railway Manager (Mech Western Railway Bhaynagar Para the Panchavat vites e-tenders on behalf of President and civic bodies' ndia for the following work- Tender No elections lined 10/2020: "Contract work fo transportation of coaching wheels & trolleys to and fro from Coaching Depots up for 2021, the Bihar Cabinet Veraval, Porbandar and Bhavnagar to designated workshops and inter depot/division of Western Railway on Saturday approved the intransportation by roadways over Weste clusion of 237 Railways for a period of 2 years". Sr.No. 1. Description: Name of work with its gram panchaylocation Details "Contract work for ats into civic transportation of coaching wheels & trolleys to and fro from Coaching Depots bodies as nagar panchavats and Veraval, Porbandar and Bhavnagar to designated workshops and inter depot/division of Western Railway nagar parishad. Besides, 194 transportation by roadways over Wester Railways for a period of 2 years". 2 Approximate Cost of the work gram panchavats lost some 13419558.52 (₹ One crore thirty fou areas to the na-_akhs Nineteen Thousand Five hundre fifty eight and paisa fifty two only gar panchayats. 3. Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹ 217100/- (₹ Two lakh seventeen Thousand One Hundred only), 4. Cost of Most of exercise took place Tender document: ₹ 5000/- (₹ Five in East and West Thousand only), 5. Date & Time of closing of Tender: 15.00 hrs. or Champaran, Madhubani, 12.01.2021, 6. Date & Time of Tende Opening: 15.30 hrs. on 12.01.2021 7. Website particulars: www. Samastipur and Rohtas. ireps.aov.in Like us on: f facebook.com/WesternRiv

WESTERN RAILWAY-BHAVNAGAR DIVISION

Notice Inviting E-Tender

Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited, Vidyut Nagar, P.O.-DLW Varanasi-221004 E-Tender Notice E-tenders are invited for the following materials. The tenderer will be accepted up to at 15.00 hrs. Please visit website www.etender.up.nic.in for details/ download and for any other corrections/ amendments/ modifications/ extensions till the date of submission of bids. SI. No.: 1., Tender Specification No.: EAV-26/2020-21, Name 0 Material: Different type of 11 KV Cable Jointing Kit. Qty .: 3200 Nos. Name of Material: Different type of 33 KV Cable Jointing Kit. Qty .: 1740 Nos. Earnest Money (Rs.): 6,05,000.00 Tender Fee (Rs.): 5,000.00 + GST @ 18%, Last date & Time for online submission of tender document: 28.01.2021 15.00 Hrs., Date & Time for online opening of tender part-I: 29.01.2021 15.00 Hrs. Sd/- SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MM-I) **"SAVE** ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION" पत्रांक 3787/ पू.वि.वि.नि.लि.(वा.)/सा.प्र.-|/अअ-|/विज्ञापन देनांक 26.12.2020







HINDU 0070725307-1 SM for Kamboj Hindu boy 6'1 May 1991, M.Tech B.Tech IIT I, AJIT SINGH S/O-AGYA SINGH Kharagpur. Management consultant US firm in Gurugram 40 lpa, Panchkula name to AJIT SINGH KHURANA. family, father Doctor Class-1 0040558768-4 officer Chandigarh, mother

8699124252

PhD. Caste no bar. Contact

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THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, DECEMBER 27, 2020 **13** THE WORLD



WORLD Millions in US lose jobless benefits as Trump refuses to clear Covid aid

Govt shutdown from Tuesday unless Congress can agree stop-gap spending Bill

A postal worker delivers packages last week in Chicago. AP

USA 'Unprecedented'

mail volume delays **Christmas gifts** SOME WHO mailed holiday

presents weeks early this year found they didn't act early enough as Christmas arrived with their gifts stuck in transit. The US Postal Service said on its website that it was "experiencing unprecedented volume increases and limited employee availability due to the impacts of Covid-19." Austin Race of Grand Rapids, Michigan, placed an online order Nov. 30 for a collector's model die-cast of a NASCAR racing car. It hadn't reached his father after the Postal Service passed through his neighbourhood Thursday night, even though he was notified Dec. 8 that it was shipped by two-day priority mail. "I do understand the situation, but it's still kind of frustrating," he said. AP

USA

Judge delays execution of only woman on federal death row

A FEDERAL judge said the US Justice Department unlawfully rescheduled the execution of the only woman on federal death row. potentially setting up the Trump administration to schedule the execution after President-elect Joe Biden takes office. US District Court Judge Randolph Moss also vacated an order from the director of the Bureau of Prisons that had set Lisa Montgomery's execution date for Jan 12. Montgomery had previously been scheduled to be put to death at a **STEVE HOLLAND &** RICHARDCOWAN PALM BEACH, WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 26

MILLIONS OF Americans saw their jobless benefits expire on Saturday after US President Donald Trump refused to sign into law a \$2.3 trillion pandemic aid and spending package, protesting that it did not do enough to help everyday people.

Trump stunned Republicans and Democrats alike when he said this week he was unhappy with the massive Bill, which provides \$892 billion in badly needed coronavirus relief. including extending special unemployment benefits expiring on Dec 26, and \$1.4 trillion for normal government spending.

Without Trump's signature, about 14 million people could lose those extra benefits, according to Labour Department data. A partial government shutdown will begin on Tuesday unless Congress can agree a stop-gap government funding Bill before then.

After months of wrangling, Republicans and Democrats agreed to the package last weekend, with the support of the White House. Trump, did not object to terms of the deal before Congress voted it through on Monday night.

But since then, he has complained that the Bill gives too much money to special interests, cultural projects and foreign aid, while its one-time \$600 stimulus checks to millions of struggling Americans were too small. He has demanded that be raised to \$2,000.

"Why would politicians not want to give people \$2,000, rather than only \$600?...Give our people the money!" the billionaire President tweeted on Christmas Day, much of which he spent golfing at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, **REUTERS**



Soldiers carry the first shipment of Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccines in Budapest, Hungary, on Saturday. Reuters

Europe to begin vaccination as doses shipped across continent

movement questioned during

a period of closed borders. EU

leaders celebrated the collec-

tive effort to get the vaccine as

"a touching moment of unity"

With surveys pointing to high

the injections.

REUTERS DECEMBER 26

EUROPE LAUNCHES a crossborder vaccination programme of unprecedented scale on Sunday as part of efforts to end a Covid-19 pandemic that has crippled economies and claimed more than 1.7 million lives around the world.

The region of 450 million people has secured contracts with a range of suppliers for over two billion vaccine doses and has set a goal for all adults to be inoculated during 2021.

The sheer scale of the effort means that some countries are calling on retired medics to help out while others have loosened rules for who is allowed to give

Bringing vaccine in countries from France to Poland, leaders of the 27-counsense of hope, unity THE ARRIVAL of the vaccine in Europe brought hope to a region that has seen some of the earliest and worst-hit Covid hotspots in the world. It also brought a sense of unity to a way out of the pandemic." post-Brexit EU which had its After European governments fundamental principle of free

were criticised for failing to work together to counter the spread of the virus in early 2020, the goal this time is to ensure that there is equal access to the vaccines across the entire region. Countries including France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Portugal and Spain are planning to begin mass vaccinations, starting with health workers on Sunday.

She chronicled China's crisis, but is now accused of spreading lies

VIVIAN WANG DECEMBER 26

IN ONE video, during the lockdown in Wuhan, China, she filmed a hospital hallway lined with rolling beds, the patients hooked up to blue oxygen tanks. In another, she panned over a community health centre, noting that a man said he was charged for a Covid test, even though residents believed the tests would be free.

At the time, Zhang Zhan, a 37year-old former lawyer turned citizen journalist, embodied the Chinese people's hunger for unfiltered information about the epidemic. Now, she has become a symbol of the government's efforts to deny its early failings in the crisis and promote a victorious narrative instead.

Zhang abruptly stopped posting in May, after several months of dispatches. Police later revealed that she had been arrested, accused of spreading lies. On Monday, she will go to court, in the first known trial of a chronicler of China's coronavirus crisis.

Zhang has continued to challenge the authorities from jail. Soon after her arrest, Zhang began a hungerstrike, according to her lawyers. She has become gaunt and drained but has refused to eat, the lawyers said, maintaining that her strike is her form of protest against her unjust detention.

Zhang's prosecution is part of the Chinese Communist Party's continuing campaign to recast China's handling of the outbreak as a succession of wise, triumphant moves by the government. Critics who have pointed to early missteps have been arrested, censored or threatened. NYT

CHRIS GALLAGHER & SAM NUSSEY

TOKYO, DECEMBER 26 JAPAN ON Saturday said it would temporarily ban non-resident foreign nationals from entering the country as it tightens its bor-

ders following the detection of a

new, highly infectious variant of

but must show proof of a nega-

tive coronavirus test 72 hours

before departing for Japan and

must guarantine for two weeks

after arrival, the statement said.

first cases of a fast-spreading

variant in passengers arriving

from Britain. The new variant

has also been detected in a man

who visited the UK and a family

member - the first cases of in-

fected people found outside air-

port checks - Nippon TV re-

ported on Saturday.

Japan on Friday reported its

The ban will take effect from

the coronavirus.

The number of coronavirus cases hit a record 949 in Tokyo

people stream from the capital into the provinces. AP

Japan bans foreigners

virus variant detected

from entering after UK

just as Japan heads into New Year holidays that normally see

foreign residents will be allowed to enter but must show proof of a negative coronavirus test 72 hours before departing for Japan and must quarantine for two weeks after arrival

Japanese citizens and

December 28 and will run through January, the government said in an emailed statement. the capital into the provinces. Serious cases were un-Japanese citizens and foreign residents will be allowed to enter

changed from a day earlier at 81. Tokyo transport hubs were subdued, local media said, a day after Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, under pressure as cases continue to climb, urged the nation to stay home and avoid soial mixing

With New Year celebrations centred around family gatherings and mass visits to temples and shrines, experts have warned public restraint will be essential to prevent infection rates from rising further amid concerns of pandemic fatigue. Suga's initial political hon-

The new strain adds to worries about a surge in cases as eymoon after taking his post in Tokyo reported another record September has ended, with his popularity sliding after critirise on Saturday.

Infections of the virus that cism he was slow to react to riscauses Covid-19 hit a record 949 ing infections in Tokyo and for in the capital just as Japan heads attending a group steak dinner into New Year holidays that norin defiance of his own calls for mally see people stream from caution. **REUTERS**

Nashville blast knocks out communication lines

KIMBERLEE KRUESI,

a recorded warning that a bomb would detonate in 15 minutes,

The chief said investigators at the scene "have found tissue that Drake said. Police evacuated we'll have that examined and let nearby buildings and called in the you know at that time." Police bomb squad. The RV exploded could not say whether it came shortly afterward, Drake said. from someone inside the RV.

Surveillance video published

on Twitter that appeared to be

across the street from the blast

captured the warning issuing

from the RV, "... if you can hear this

message, evacuate now," seconds

before the explosion. AP

Multiple blasts

in Kabul, at least

four people dead

POLICE STILL TRYING TO DETERMINE TARGET OF LARGE 'INTENTIONAL' EXPLOSION

try European Union are promoting it as the best chance of getting back to something like normal life next year. "We are starting to turn the page on a difficult year," Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission president, said in a tweet. "Vaccination is the lasting

levels of hesitancy towards the

Federal Correctional Compley in Indiana this month. AP

IRAN

Heavy snowfall kills 8 climbers, several missing

AT LEAST eight climbers have died and several more are missing in mountains north of Iran's capital Tehran after heavy snowfall and a blizzard, state television reported on Saturday. Several climbers remain unaccounted for since Friday when two deaths were reported, while the number reported as missing has increased as concerned families contact the authorities. the broadcaster said News reports said the number of people unaccounted for could be as high as 12. Search efforts were halted for the night and would resume on Sunday, the report added. REUTERS



ANCIENT 'STREET FOOD SHOP' UNCOVERED

Frescoes on an ancient counter discovered during excavations in Pompeii, Italy. Reuters

Archaeologists in Pompeii, the city buried in a volcanic eruption in 79 AD, have made the extraordinary find of a frescoed hot food and drinks shop that served up the ancient equivalent of street food to Roman passersby.

Known as a termopolium, Latin for hot drinks counter. the shop was discovered in the Regio V site, which is not yet open the public. Traces of nearly 2,000-year-old food were found in some of the deep terra cotta jars.

■ The front of the counter was decorated with brightly coloured frescoes, some depicting animals that were part of the ingredients in the food sold, such as a chicken and two ducks hanging upside down.

ERICTUCKER NASHVILLE, DECEMBER 26

A RECREATIONAL vehicle parked in the deserted streets of downtown Nashville exploded early Christmas morning, causing widespread communications outages that took down police emergency systems and grounded holiday travel at the city's airport.



At the blast site Friday. AP

Police were responding to a report of shots fired Friday when they encountered the RV blaring

Senior Chinese official to visit Nepal amid political crisis in the country

YUBARAJGHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, DECEMBER 26 A VICE MINISTER of the Chinese been trying to avoid.

Communist Party will arrive in Kathmandu on Sunday in an apparent emergency visit to try to restore the unity of the ruling Nepal Communist Party. The visit of Guo Yezhou, vice

minister of the International

Department of the Communist Party of China, takes place in the wake of a split in the NCP, something that Beijing has

There has been no official word from either the Chinese side or the government of Nepal, but sources in both factions of the NCP said Guo will be meeting Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Sunday, and Pushpa Kamal Dahal

'Prachanda' and Madhav Kumar Nepal, both leaders of the anti-Oli faction, on Monday.

Mayor John Cooper has is-

Police believe the blast was in-

tentional but don't yet know a

motive or target, and Drake noted

that officials had not received any

threats before the explosion.

sued a curfew in the area.

"I guess China is still trying KABUL, DECEMBER 26 for a patchup, which I don't think is possible," a senior leader of the A SERIES of explosions hit the Prachanda-faction said.

advised them to still try for unity.

Afghan capital on Saturday Chinese Ambassador to morning, killing at least four people including two police of-Nepal, Hou Yanqi, has in recent days met many top leaders from ficers, officials said. both sides and is believed to have

RAHIM FAIEZ

The deaths were caused by a sticky bomb attached to a police vehicle detonated in western Kabul, police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz said. The explosion wounded two civilians.

Two other police officers were wounded when a bomb attached to their car exploded earlier Saturday in southern Kabul, Faramarz said.

Maooma Jafari, deputy spokeswoman for the health ministry, said that four corpses and four wounded people were taken to hospital following the two explosions.

A third sticky bomb detonated in eastern Kabul but caused no casualties, he said.

There were reports of at least two other blasts elsewhere in the city but police had no immediate details.

In a separate report form northern Balkh province, a senior army officer was killed when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb, police said. Mohammad Tareq, the garrison commander of the army brigade in Balkh was the apparent target who was killed in the attack. AP

THE MI6 AGENT WAS UNMASKED AS A SOVIET SPY IN 1961 AND SENTENCED TO PRISON BEFORE HE ESCAPED TO RUSSIA George Blake, last in line of Cold War spies who betrayed UK, dies

have been well worth it," he said.

"I thought it could be, and I did

TIMOTHY HERITAGE & POLINA IVANOVA LONDON, MOSCOW, DEC 26

GEORGE BLAKE, who died in Russia on Saturday at the age of 98, was the last in a line of British spies whose secret work for the Soviet Union humiliated the intelligence establishment when it was discovered at the height of the Cold War.

Britain says he exposed the identities of hundreds of Western agents across Eastern Europe in the 1950s, some of whom were executed as a result of his treason.

His case was among the most notorious of the Cold War, along-



1961, Blake was sentenced to 42 vears in London's Wormwood Scrubs prison. In a classic cloakand-dagger story, he escaped in 1966 with the help of other inmates and two peace activists, and was smuggled out of Britain in a camper van. He made it through Western Europe undis-

covered and crossed the Iron Curtain into East Berlin. He spent the rest of his life in the Soviet Union and then Russia,

where he was feted as a hero. Reflecting on his life in an interview with Reuters in Moscow

in 1991, Blake said he had be-



'The memory of this legendary person will be preserved forever in our hearts,' Putin said after Blake's death

lieved the world was on the eve of Communism.

"It was an ideal which, if it what I could to help it, to build such could have been achieved, would a society. It has not proved possi-



ble. But I think it is a noble idea and I think humanity will return to it."

In a condolence message published by the Kremlin, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Blake was a professional of particular vitality and courage who made an invaluable contribution to global strategic parity and peace. 'The memory of this leg-

endary person will be preserved forever in our hearts," he wrote. Blake was born in Rotterdam

in the Netherlands on Nov 11, 1922, to a Dutch mother and an Egyptian Jewish father who was a naturalised Briton.

He escaped from the Netherlands in World War Two after joining the Dutch resistance as a courier and reached Britain

in January 1943. After joining the British Navy, he started working for the British Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, in 1944.

After the war, Blake served briefly in the German city of Hamburg and studied Russian at Cambridge University before beingsent in 1948 to Seoul where he intelligence on gathered Communist North Korea. Communist China and the Soviet Far East. He was captured and imprisoned when North Korean troops took Seoul after the Korean War began in 1950. It was during his time in a North Korean prison that he became a committed Communist, reading the works of Karl Marx and feeling outrage at heavy US bombing of North Korea.

After his release in 1953, he returned to Britain and in 1955 was sent by MI6 to Berlin, where he collected information on Soviet spies but also passed secrets to Moscow about British

posed by a Polish defector and brought home to Britain, where he was sentenced and jailed.

When he escaped from Wormwood Scrubs, he left behind his wife, Gillian, and three children. After Gillian divorced him, Blake married a Soviet woman. Ida. with whom he had a son, Misha. He worked at a foreign affairs institute before retiring with her to a dacha, or country house, outside Moscow. REUTERS

and US operations. Blake was eventually ex-

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



THE YEAR THAT WAS Our Broken, Hopeful Lives Our pick of the best tales of human upliftment on OTT platforms THE YEAR THAT WAS Don't Blame the Sci-fi Writer 2020 has had more than sufficient drama for a reality-show season finale



TOUCHING THE VOID

In our last issue of 2020, a look back at this strange, disruptive year and how it taught us to examine our lives anew. First up, long before social distancing brought home to us the transformative power of touch, a relentless, invisible segregation had ensured that we did not meet each other as equals

Annie Zaidi

TOUCH, LIKE love, reveals itself more fully once it is in retreat.

Nine months of not touching anyone except my mother, and I am down a mineshaft of memories about touch: what was permissible for whom, the shock of implied touch where none existed, sanguine touch, and touch that inverts all presumption.

During the long months of self-isolating, my childhood stepped out of its shadows, bemused at the social-media hoo-ha about not being able to hug friends. Despite growing up in a family where hugs were the norm and a culture that emphasised embracing as a form of greeting, I grew up not hugging friends. Where I was growing up in Rajasthan in the 1980s and early '90s, I never saw others hug in public. Classmates shook hands formally occasionally, say, when you first met someone, or when you wanted to say "Congrats" or "Happy Birthday". Violent touch was a different matter. I recall plenty of beatings and other kinds of assaults on students in school.

Kids touched each other, of course, during sports or stage performances. We danced socially a couple of times a year, but even that was something my mother initiated at the birthday parties she hosted. Grown-ups gathered at dinners, *pujas*, club fetes, orchestraparty nights; I didn't see them hugging.

It wasn't until I joined a girls' hostel that hugging became a more constant demonstration of friendship. Once I moved to metropolises like Mumbai, I observed new social rules. Friends, colleagues, even acquaintances reached out for hugs. In the new millennium, I saw new kinds of informal touch: air-kissing, fist-bumps, high-fives. By early 2020, the casual half-hug had little emotional significance. It remained, however, a significant social contract. Hugs assured participants of a certain ple bricked off from your affection. You could always tell which social class you belonged to based on who gave you a hug while leaving the room, who would merely nod, and who didn't feel the need to acknowledge you at all. Now that separateness is the norm, now that we hesitate at thresholds, constantly alert to each body's proximity, I see clearly what was always there, but not easy to acknowledge. Casual social hugging had become one of those tools that affirmed class distinctions.



residents". It is no secret that most upper-caste households keep separate cups and plates for domestic workers. There are apartment complexes where Muslims or Dalits may not reside even if they can afford to. Public parks charge entrance fees, effectively barring the poor and the homeless. Kids are routinely segregated via food with certain schools insisting on vegetarian tiffin and many states refusing

MAKE THINGS TOPSY-TURVY Now that

separateness is the norm, we realise how much of a significant social contract touch in the canteen. Now, I am starting to wonder if it wasn't because even the fanciest lunch requires that suits turn into men. Men and women, with hands that are ageing and mouths that make chewing sounds and bellies that have to be filled. Eating at the same table would expose them as human, no more and no less than the guy who swept the floors or the woman who sat up half the pight fixwas about a Dalit youth beaten to death because he had touched the food that had been served at a feast. The victim had been called to the venue to "clean up". Two upper-caste men saw that he had served himself some of the food and reacted by beating him senseless.

In an attempt to verify the report, I Googled "Dalit beaten to death". An unconscionable list infurled In May 2019 vear-old Dalit man was beaten to death at a wedding. He had offended his upper-caste assailants because he'd occupied a chair. One story from November this year mentioned a Dalit farm worker in Guna, Madhya Pradesh, who was beaten to death for refusing to hand over a matchbox. In September, two Dalit children – a 12-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy - were beaten to death in Madhya Pradesh, apparently for defecating in the open. Another story from June was about a Dalit college student in Pune who had fallen in love with an upper-caste woman. Chairs. Food. Utensils. Love and sex. Of all things, this last touch is feared the most for it erodes, and eventually, erases hierarchies

written in blood. Touch signals acceptance, respect, solidarity. While the mixing of bloodlines is its ultimate frontier, living in mixed neighbourhoods and eating at the same table is the very brickwork of a functional, healthy society. The transformative power of touch is greatly diminished if you refuse to share space. Various degrees of segregation, on the other hand, ensure that we are not forced to confront each other as equal citizens. The true opposite of untouchability is, thus, not a legally defensible touchability but de-segregation, which is resisted fiercely in our country.

It wasn't surprising that, in the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, we began to hear a few excuses for the practise of untouchability - the fear of infection. Stringent socialphysical distancing rules have not cut both ways though. Could people higher up in the caste and class hierarchy be asked to take turns to do dangerous and "polluting" work, and be subject to the ancient "untouchable" rules in the bargain, including being denied access to common water resources and being forced to live on the fringes of all villages and towns? Could the upper and middle classes, even now, just be asked to deal with their own waste, making sure to dispose it of only within the narrow periphery of their own apartment complex, and not create pollution in other parts of the city, where the poor live?

Our relentless segregation, so ferociously guarded, is it treatable? I don't know, but I place my hope in education and empathy, which are a kind of spiritual touch. In liberating ourselves from ignorance and falsehood, we may find that exclusions via touch only handicap our society. We gain nothing except a bloated sense of self and a mindless fear of losing what we have. Through science and history we may learn that all the segregations in the world cannot prevent changes to our way of life and to our DNA.

We can expend our strength clinging to be bands of the clock straining to prevent a

Indians are not new to social and physical distancing. Long before the pandemic, there were separate lifts and staircases for "service" staff. Private gardens restricted access to "nonto allow eggs or meat in school lunches.

Many work organisations have separate eating areas for different classes of employees. One of the offices I worked at would serve the bosses fancier lunches on nicer trays. They did not come to the canteen to eat the subsidised, vegetarian meals the rest of us ate. In passing, I had glanced at those top-management trays: china and cutlery, bowls filled with neatly cubed fruit, served discreetly in conference rooms or their opaque offices.

I used to wonder why this separateness was necessary. Why could bosses not share tables with clerks and secretaries? It wasn't as if healthy or expensive foods were forbidden is in our lives

ing other people's grammar for wages that didn't allow her to retire.

It is harder to yell at, bully or render jobless the people you eat with. Proximity to another human body allows you to look beyond clothes, designations and clan affiliations. It forces you to acknowledge that vast privilege is rarely earned. This is, naturally, a terrifying proposition for those who have unearned privilege, and, so, they must hold themselves separate, pretending they are superior or more deserving of calmer, prettier environments.

More than once over these nine months we have woken up to brute reminders that touch is constantly policed. One recent story mix of food habits, blood, faith. We will slow down the wheel of time for a minute, no more. Or, we could reach out the way poet Manglesh Dabral, snatched from our midst by the coronavirus this year, had written: "Touch you must even though it makes things topsy turvy". We could reject those "Do not touch" injunctions, and marvel at what we have gained: the great peace of not having to worry about who and what is denied to us. The endless relief!

Annie Zaidi is a writer and short-film maker. She's the winner of the 2020 Tata Literature Live Book of the Year (Fiction) Award for her *Prelude to a Riot*

A Glossary of 2020 Words

Vatsala Mamgain

FOR A year that left us speechless, 2020 has been full of words. A few have expectedly, been dangerous to health. A word like "unprecedented", for instance, has single-handedly converted us into a nation with very poor liver health. It has been rigorously proven by an unscientific study that if a person took a sip of a drink every time they read or heard the word "unprecedented" this year, their liver would be shot to hell by now.

Back in 2016, President Donald Trump had famously boasted, "I know words. I have the best words." But sadly, in this, as in other things, 2020 had him beat. So, as a public service to future historians, here is the dictionary of 2020 all the words of the year, defined as they are really used, in one pithy, inaccurate volume:

2020 (VERB): When you bugger things up beyond belief. E.g. Legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin 2020'd his career after he accidentally exposed himself on a Zoom work call. (PS: This is a true story. 2020 is a fabulous year for stories of 2020-ing)

CORONACOASTER (NOUN): The ups and downs of your mood during the pandemic. E.g. If you're loving lockdown one minute — baking bread and happy as a bug — and the next minute, you are missing the office coffee,

drinking vodka at noon and weepy with anxiety, you're on an emotional coronacoaster

CORONIALS (N): Babies produced after a year of lockdown. E.g: Coronials are the product of the fact that while social distancing was mandated outside, the impact in the bedroom was quite the opposite

COVIDIOT (N): A person with their brains in their bum when it comes to COVID-19 safety. E.g. Medical tests have proven that sadly for the rest of us, no covidiot is asymptomatic

FITNESS/WORKOUT(N): Thirty minutes of getting your heart rate up followed by 23.5 hours spent in the same position. E.g. It's been important to keep up with one's routine during quarantine. So, right through the year, I continued to not work out, just like before

HANDWASHING (V): The No.1 gap-year activity in most CVs in 2020. E.g. Future generations will be shocked to learn that the "Happy birthday" song used to actually be sung at birthdays and not just to time handwashing

LOCKDOWN (N): A period of complete restrictions when everyone's true hair colour was revealed. E.g. Lockdown was what was needed for a whole bunch of people to learn that "sufficient time home alone" was not the only thing needed to write a great novel



LOCKTAIL HOUR (PHRASE): Beer o'clock in the lockdown era. E.g. Is it just me or has locktail hour started creeping earlier with each passing week?

MID-MORNING COFFEE (N): (also known as mid-afternoon coffee) An amazing drink except with tequila, lime juice, triple sec and no coffee. E.g. Let me get my mid-morning coffee, the ideas will really begin to flow when I have that in my system

MORONAVIRUS (N): What covidiots test positive for. E.g. Donald Trump, Rudy Giuliani. etc

NEW NORMAL (PHRASE): What stinks for everyone. E.g. The new normal for this year is

to continually get used to a new but much worse normal

one they live with will leave the house

THE COVID-19 (PHRASE): Refers to the 19

pounds an average person put on during this

pandemic from stress-eating. E.g. Remember

when everyone used to say the key to losing

weight was eating more of your meals at

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ZOOM (PHRASE):

The glaring issue during a videoconferencing

call that everybody feels unable to mention.

E.g. I did this afternoon's meeting in a towel as

nothing fits me any more. But I relied on it be-

TODDLERS (N): The fruit of your own loins

with whom you played hide and seek all

through the lockdown, even if they didn't re-

alise it. E.g. Send help to the parents, rumour

has it the toddlers are winning hands down

VACCINE (N): Hope in a syringe. E.g. The vac-

cine should first be tested on politicians. If they

are okay, the vaccine is safe, but if they aren't,

ing the elephant in the Zoom

home? The Covid 19 hadn't struck then!

the country is safe

WORK FROM HOME (WFH) (PHRASE):

SOCIAL DISTANCING (PHRASE): (also referred to as anti-social distancing) Using lockdown as the perfect reason to avoid everyone you don't like. E.g. Introverts are desperate for social-distancing rules to be lifted so every-

YOU'RE ON MUTE! (PHRASE): The most used words in 2020. E.g. YOU'RE ON MUTE!

ZOOM (N): The app you use to prove to your boss that you've managed to get out of bed. E.g. Has anyone else forgotten they are on a Zoom meeting with the video on and inadvertently started plucking lint out of their belly button? If not, then me neither

THE END (PHRASE): Not here by any means but hopefully close. E.g. It's the end of 2020! Things can't possibly get any worse next year, so they can only get better!

This unprecedented dictionary for unprecedented times is available on order in a classy leatherite bound volume. You can invest in this for the coronials in your life. Meanwhile, Happy 2021. Stay safe, stay healthy and remember — keep the midmorning coffee close at hand. You never know what the New Year has in store!

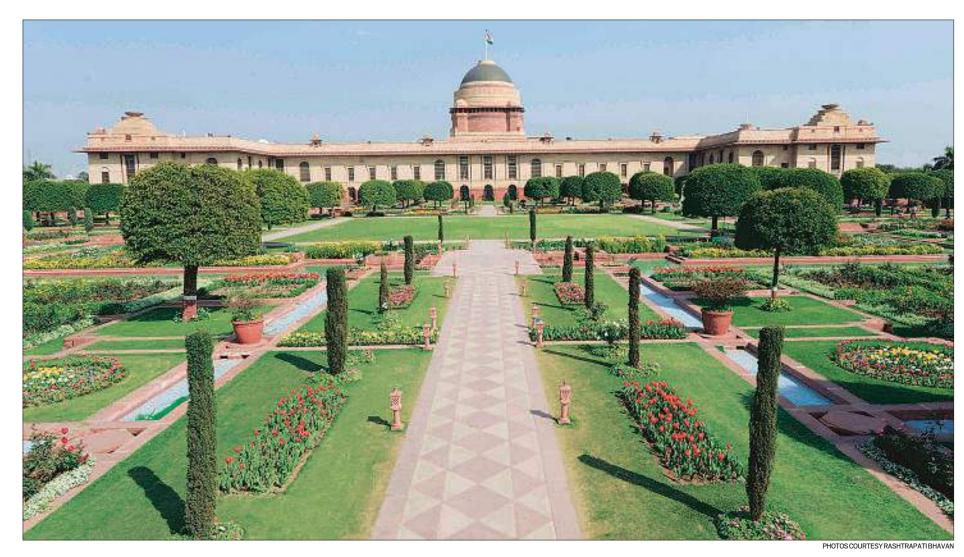
Vatsala Mamgain is a glutton, cook, runner, tree lover, shopper and reader

New Delhi



EYE, THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

Ε Y R Η Н A A Ε Т DECEMBER 27, 2020



First Gardens of the Republic

The Rashtrapati Bhavan's serene, verdant estate is rich with blooms and history

Pawan Kumar Sain

N NOVEMBER 13, 2019, Prince Charles, the longest-serving heir apparent to the British throne, walked down paths quite familiar to British aristocracy. He was taken to the Herbal Garden in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, where he planted a champa sapling. Accompanied by President Ram Nath Kovind, the Prince of Wales not only exuded charm but also exhibited childlike curiosity when experts from the Ministry of AYUSH briefed him on the medicinal properties of various plants in the garden. He was

told about the collaboration between the All India Institute of Ayurveda and the College of Medicine, UK. The Herbal Garden is

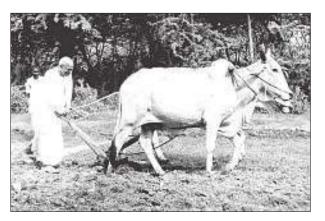
one among an array of gardens that impart a touch of mystique to the Rashtrapati Bhavan. They hark back to mythology – the way to

wing of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, are the elegant gardens, planned in the formal Mughal style while also incorporating some elements of British gardens. They follow the exquisite symmetry of the Persian-inspired charbagh (quadrilateral) tradition. In their three sections, architectural and arboreal features are equally emphasised.

Robert Grant Irving, in his acclaimed study, Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial Delhi (1981, Yale University Press), describes the ambience thus: "The massive, nobly severe walls which enclose the garden literally grow out of the lower basement, resembling an imposing fortress. Channels of water intersect in a grid pattern, with the intersections

marked by impressive sandstone fountains constructed in a petal design based on the hexagram. Sandstone-paved paths continue the grid pattern, set amidst a formal plantation of trees, grass and flower beds.' Though the layout of

Rajagopalachari the garden was in place by ploughing a section 1917, the planting was



GREENAND Zakir Husain.

The gardeners of the Rashtrapati Bhavan SERENE have kept alive the tradition of nurturing the (Top) The gardens of the Rashtrapati Bhavan were planned in the formal Mughal style while also incorporating elements of British gardens; Governor-General C

defining feature of the gardens - the multitude of rose varieties. They include Adora, Mrinalini, Taj Mahal, Eiffel Tower, Scentimental, Oklahoma (also called Black Rose), Black Lady, Blue Moon and Lady X. There are also roses named after personalities: Mother Teresa, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mr Lincoln, Jawahar, and Queen Elizabeth - not to forget Arjun and Bhim. The ingenious gardeners also introduced new, exotic varieties of flowers like birds of paradise, tulips and heliconia in 1998.

The Long Garden, a part of the Mughal Gardens, is known for its varieties of roses. It lies a few steps below the highest level of the

Mughal Gardens. It is enclosed by 12-feet high

and promoted new kinds of gardens. During the food shortage of 1950, Governor-General C Rajagopalachari made a powerful gesture when he rolled up his sleeves and ploughed a part of the premises to grow food grains. Today, the Nutrition Garden, popularly known as Dalikhana, stands there. Perennial and seasonal vegetables and fruits with high nutritional value are grown organically there.

When R Venkataraman was the President, a cactus garden was added. A large number of new types of cacti, developed via intergeneric hybridisation and growth manipulation at the Regional Plant Resource Centre at Bhubaneswar, were added in early 2005.

During the presidency of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, many theme-based gardens came up on the premises. Among them, the Musical Garden offers a spectacular show when scintillating lights, in perfect synchronisation with the tunes of veena and shehnai, fall on cascading jets of water. Two herbal gardens were created to promote natural and gentler remedies for the well-being of the common people. A Spiritual Garden came up with plant selections based on information gathered from the sacred books of different religions. Based on the theme of "sense", the Tactile Garden was introduced for the visually challenged so that they can also enjoy the beauty of nature.

The most important aspect of these glorious gardens, of course, is the democratic spirit of the presidents of India: The Rashtrapati Bhavan gardens, particularly the Mughal Gardens, are thrown open to the public during the bloom season, and this Udyanotsav attracts millions of visitors. Thanks to the cornucopia of nurseries, the President's Estate remains filled with colour, fragrance and tranquillity, through the year. Nature lovers visiting the Estate are richly rewarded with the experience of the beauty and insights into the web of life.

EYE SPY EVERY FORTNIGHT, WE PICK, YOU WATCH A Little Solace



THE RIGHT MOVES Anya Taylor-Joy in The Queen's Gambit

During this difficult year, a few shows thrilled, entertained and comforted us

Shubhra Gupta

TORIES THAT can take you out of yourself, even momentarily, are worth paying attention to: just how did they shift your axis? In any other year, I would go looking for the unusual, veering towards stuff that was a little off-kilter. But as these months wore on, during which we hunkered inside, fearful of a virus that has no cure (yet), I caught myself actively leaning towards tales of human upliftment.

So, yes, I did succumb to the quirky charms of Lyra Silvertongue and her daemon, Pan, in the second season of His Dark Materials (Disney+ Hotstar). The series is based on Philip Pullman's classic trilogy featuring parallel universes, a host of fantastical creatures, a fascinating fight pitting good and evil, and endless adventures.

I also took a deep dive into Perry Mason's origin story, which revived our fading memories of Erle Stanley Gardner's indomitable lawyer who cracked almost every case he took on. Perry Mason (Disney+ Hotstar) starts with him as a weathered war veteran-turned-private investigator looking for paying gigs in 1931-32 Los Angeles. What lifts this murder-kidnap whodunit is the startling depth on display: not only does Mason, played wonderfully by Matthew Rhys, solve the case, he finds purpose.

But my top four shows would have to be those which placed people like you and me, and their struggles, front and centre. Unorthodox (Netflix) tracks the flight of a young woman from a Hasidic Jewish community in Williamsburg, New York City, to Berlin. Nineteen-year-old Esty, played by the delicate Shira Haas, is imprisoned by the tight coils of tradition and community. Her journey is specific to her roots, but we know her troubles: you can be anywhere in the world, but as a woman, you have to fight to be your own person.

Normal People (Hulu), based on Sally Rooney's book of the same name, refreshes the teenage romance trope guite beautifully. The fresh-faced Marianne and Connell play out their complicated, off-on relationship in Sligo, Ireland, but who doesn't remember the flush of first love? From an adult, done-and-dusted perspective, it takes you back to your own time when youth stretched endlessly, and not talking to someone who mattered the most could be a silly choice of your own making. Anya Taylor-Joy doesn't make a single false move in

The Queen's Gambit (Netflix), in her playing of chess prodigy Beth Harmon who fights the twin demons of drug and alcohol dependency on her way to becoming a world champion. As an orphan in '50s America, Beth needs to find her way to a chess board, and to unlikely supportive partners, including a vulnerable older woman, who provides both succour and wisdom. This one's pure joy, even if you don't understand chess. And Michaela Coel has my heart with her brilliant I May Destroy You (Disney+Hotstar), a disturbing tale of rape and responsibility. Coel plays Arabella, a Londonbased Twitter star-turned-author, who relives the trauma of a dark night through flashes, and a hard path of self-realisation. It's a difficult part to pull off, and Coel takes no prisoners, laying herself out completely, offering no excuses. So hard to watch, and so rewarding.



Living History

paradise or firdaus passes through gardens. Or, consider the Garden of Eden, the paradise on earth. The lush landscape surrounding the Rashtrapati Bhavan, designed to display colonial

power and style, was once a secluded oasis for the private enjoyment of the viceroy. This was reoriented to serve the sovereign democratic republic after Independence.

If the Rashtrapati Bhavan is an architectural marvel, the 15-acre Mughal Gardens are its soul. On the west side, behind the central

AN INDIAN EXPRESS COLLABORATION WITH THE RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

Director of horticulture William Mustoe, who planted the garden, was especially skilled at growing roses and is said to have introduced more than 250 different varieties of hybrid roses gathered from every corner of the world. Lady Beatrix Stanley, a prominent horticulturist,

taken up only in 1928-29.

noted in 1931 that she had not seen better roses in England. Later, more variety was added, especially during the presidency of Dr

of the gardens to grow foodgrains during the 1950 food shortage

walls with pergola creepers running through the passage. The Long Garden leads downward into a circular sunken garden, which consists of a large pool surrounded by tiers of plants. In the words of Irving, "The tranquillity of a circular pool climaxes the main urban axis and faintly echoed the War Memorial ro-

tary, more than two miles distant." After Independence, the Indian occupants of the place added pragmatism to aesthetics

Pawan Kumar Sain is director, President's Secretariat

Bridge Over Troubled Waters

The pandemic has exposed the deep divides in our world. Can we find a way to cross them?



Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

ASTHE pandemic goes on, it shows no mercy. Death and sickness stalk us. Life as we knew it 10 months ago is eroding. Stripped of the veneers of civility and development, 2020 has shown how little we have progressed since the end of the World War II, even as we speak of the world as a global village.

Disparity has always been the despair of

humanity. In recent decades, we have seen it reveal the rot in our midst, one that we have to accept as being of our own making.

For 27 years, I lived between New York City and a farmstead in a village called Hebron, nestled between the Adirondack mountains of New York and the picturesque Green Mountains of Vermont. While in the city, I enjoyed the high of the New York minute and the thrill would intensify each time I arrived from the farm. The 70 acres of luxuriant green living and an organic lifestyle never made me feel as comfortable and safe as the city. At least not outside of our farm's boundaries and those of dear friends.

My life partner and I worked hard to create a home on the farm that welcomed one and all and was connected to nature. Hives carefully tended by a trained apiarist brought millions of bees buzzing around wild and cultivated flowers. Four dozen alpacas roamed our pastures, drinking from a state-designated trout stream, and 50 ducks and geese ranged free on our property and found a safe haven in our pond. Two hundred chickens of over three dozen varieties – all endangered, rare, or threatened — lived in a coop that Michael Batterberry, the late publisher of such magazines as Food and Wine and Food Arts, called the "Palazzo de Pollo", the palace for chickens. They had screened windows with shutters for the blistery winter; ceiling rafters and skylights kept their home light and bright and ensured that they breathed fresh air free of ammonia. These chickens defied all previously

understood norms about chicken husbandry and lived happily despite their differences in sizes and forms. Even the roosters in our flock didn't get aggressive. Then there was Antonio Banderas, our majestic, charming, and almosthuman llama – a gift from the neighbour whose alpacas we rescued when she couldn't afford keeping them.

Our fields, our care, and our food and housing kept these animals from money-hungry and inhumane breeders. We had a huge family of otherwise shy blue herons, wild turkeys and geese, too, as well as deer and rabbits. But the prize was the family of five mountain lions, who, when spotted, scared us but whose presence made us proud of how we were maintaining our parcel on this planet.

You could call our farm Utopia – a labour of mad and deep love. Our farmhouse was our safe haven, our comfortable place to host and entertain. We opened it to neighbours and strangers, alike. We made friends, changed lives, and were also at the receiving end of this enriching exchange. We savoured the slow pace of life and being connected to Mother Earth. We cherished living as one with the seasons and braved their challenges as happily as we enjoyed their resplendency. But we were lucky to not have had a revolution begin due to the glaring disparity between our fairy-tale life and the misfortunes of many of our neighbours - adversities that were not their fault, but their lot because they were born into a generational lack of opportunity and access. We did our best to be responsible neighbours,



LIFE LESSONS A taleof two cities -

New York City

and Hebron

extending our creature comforts to others around, and we knew others doing the same. But we were the minority. Living in this rural outpost just a few hours north of New York City, I saw great disparity in the wealthiest and most powerful nation of the world.

My father, visiting us from India, would say that we lived in the fourth world in Hebron. He was heartbroken by the poverty in rural America. He would say that the developing world knows its challenges and faces them, but the US works hard to hide its broken reality: families living in the Tundra winter with no heating; another family so broken that they gassed themselves to death when they were unable to pay their creditors; children who would come to school hungry on Monday, not having eaten a meal since they left for home on Friday; children and adults wasting away because a hospital visit would bankrupt them; youngsters being homeschooled by parents who couldn't educate them but thought it better to not expose their lives to uncaring and judgemental neighbours; families eating food that was neither whole nor fresh - and this while working as farmers.

Why should anyone have to worry about taking a loved one to a doctor and getting their illness treated? Why should a hospital visit be the reason someone becomes homeless and jobless? How can a rural outpost ever truly be part of a global village when there is no affordable high-speed internet access?

This year has shown what afflicts us across all borders and on every side of the political aisle. The Donald Trumps of this world do not come from a vacuum. They are the result of a system that has failed. For every leader like Trump, there are millions of people broken by society. When comfort and advantage for the lucky come with the marginalisation of other people, all of us suffer.

Humans have always treated each other unfairly; greed is as old as humanity. The internet and social media have brought inequity front and centre and have also heightened its repercussions. The coronavirus will die like we all do; life will go on, with or without us. Riches fly as easily as they come and fame is temporary. To leave a lasting legacy, we must rise above the easy traps of material gains. COVID-19 is a clarion call to reflect upon our actions and choices, to be kind and unselfish and to remember that, in the end, what goes around, comes around.

New Delhi

EYE, THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE E R Н Н E A DECEMBER 27, 2020

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

I'm Only Sleeping

If only the hibernators were turned to before declaring the lockdown

O SLEEP through bone-chilling winters is, alas, the luck of several animal species and insects, for hundreds of years. To qualify for true hibernation, the body temperature and the heart rate must drop as the animal goes into a deep, deep sleep. By this yardstick, it is argued that polar bears do not technically hibernate but go into a state of torpor for the winter months after stuffing their faces and putting on thick layers of pure fat before snuggling down under the snow. But polar-bear moms also give birth to their cubs at this time – and all babies need warmth and milk, which the mama bear has stocked up on.

Rodents – from the great clan of ground squirrels – and other insectivores also hibernate. While hiding nuts and acorns galore in caches all over their territory, they are extra watchful. Keeping an eye out for potential thieves – other squirrels and birds – they pretend to bury the nuts in a particular place, while keeping them stuffed in their cheeks and hiding them elsewhere when the coast is clear. A species of woodpecker, too, rams in hundreds of acorns and nuts in tree's boles, to feast on in winter. The rationale behind hibernation is simple: winters in the northern hemisphere are ferociously frigid and all sources of food vanish. If you are unable to escape to warmer climes - by migrating on foot or by air (which is what a lot of birds do) or sea, you simply find a den and go to sleep: for months, if necessary. Apart from the fat-tailed dwarf lemur of Madagascar, no primate hibernates: no creature living in the tropics needs to. Some, like frogs and toads, do however "aestivate", disappearing deep underground during the parched dry summers, because sixfeet under, it is still cool and moist, which is what they need so as to avoid death by desiccation.

Imagine, as the days get colder, darker and depressing (causing SAD – seasonal affective disorder in people in the frigid north), you first spend the autumn months pigging it out at "eat all you can" buffets: helping yourself to every sinful fat-oozing delicacy. Then you furnish your bed with piles of quilts and blankets, get into your pyjamas, wriggle into bed and sink into a deep, peaceful sleep



Stranger Things

Fantasy helps to escape reality. But what if it becomes the reality? Two filmmakers, two takes - on how the year 2020 comes to an end

FROM THE FRYING PAN

Bhaskar Hazarika



voices and ambient party music from inside the apartment. I glanced at my smartphone to check the time. It was 10.43 pm on December 31 - the last day of this most wretched year 2020 AD. I was here not just to ring in the new year and bid a relieved farewell to this one, but also for my first - and I hoped not the last - maskburning party.

Ever since the vaccine for COVID-19 got deployed around the world, groups of the vaccinated have been throwing boisterous mask-burning parties. They tended to feature wild merriment, feasting, and fornicating – like pre-COVID parties on hyperdrive. But the main attraction at these parties, as the name suggests - is the collective burning of face masks

The bulk of the guests at these parties feature the vaccinated, but many of the masked, too, turn up, secure in the belief that the vaccinated cannot transmit the virus anymore. That's why I was here. Rishi was a friend from when we were both cub reporters for a news chan-

nel, and had just gotten his second dose along with the usual clutch of privileged folk like ministers' sons and judges' daughters. I accepted his invite not (just) because of the aforementioned feasting and fornication, but also to document a mask-burning party for a small news website I sometimes wrote for.

An hour later, I watched as people danced around a drum of fire in the large balcony, tossing masks in the flames as they whirled around it. The mood was ecstatic, and it was difficult for the dozen-odd masked guests like myself not to get carried away and fling our own masks in the fire, too. Some did exactly that, and maybe I would have joined

look at the source, and was stunned to see my friend Rishi tearing into the neck of a starlet — with his teeth. More screams distracted me from this hideous sight, and I saw that the vaccinated were attacking the masked, ripping them apart with their teeth in a rabid frenzy. I turned to look at Rishi, and his eyes - or what used to be his eyes but were now putrid orbs filled with pus - locked on to me. He charged, snarling like a

them but for a piercing scream. I turned to

Ever since the vaccine, groups of the vaccinated have been throwing maskburning parties

...

SEASON'S GREETINGS Fiction to

wolf. I ran and shut myself inside a bathroom. Panicked, I turned on my smartphone to figure out what the hell was going on.

A few minutes on Twitter told me the bare facts. The vaccinated were turning into zombies, governments were paralysed, and no one knew how to stop it. Just then, I heard a distant church ringing in

the new year with bells. The ringing wafted through the open window, mixed with the sound of fireworks and screams of terror. I looked in the mirror and said to myself -"Happy new year."

Bhaskar Hazarika is a National Award-winning Assamese filmmaker of Kothanodi and Aamis

the rescue

WONDER GIRL

Vasan Bala

SAIBA LIVES on a beautiful island. One day, as she sits on the cliff overseeing the sea, she sees a pod crash into the water, it drowns but a thing is ejected out of it. Saiba dives in to see. As she swims closer, she realises it's a robot and brings it ashore. The robot has

a message encrypted in it. Saiba sees it as a holographic vision. It's to find a missing Warrior of the Resistance to save the world of the

Evil... an Evil Empire. Saiba takes on the plots of Wonder Woman, Moana and Star Wars and navigates her way through an incredible adventure, in which she makes new friends, meets her heroes who disappoint

in a world that is losing hope, and an Empire that is ready to wipe out all magic and wonderment from the world.

Saiba gets on a flying dog, blends The NeverEnding Story plot, and tries to save "imagination" as people are losing faith in it. Without imagination, there's no world.

The voyage shifts from the Flying Dog to

security agencies released UFO footage, and

mysterious radio waves reached our planet in

bursts from unknown sources, so it's possible

aliens exist, and they have a podcast, and none

hired trolls to attack its own players; where

British restraint involved tearing down 5G

towers because of rumours; where even the

world's richest men are more interested in

space colonisation than matters terrestrial.

can identify you by your anal print. In

California, the seas turned fluorescent. On the

moon, water was found. There were locust

swarms and murder hornets. In India, a Rhea

was attacked for no reason by pro-government

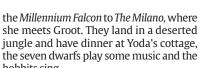
mobs. In Brazil, a rhea (an emu-like bird) at-

tacked the head of government and became a

folk hero. In Thailand, inflatable ducks were

used for protest. In Texas, K-pop fans helped

In Stanford, they created a smart toilet that



hobbits sing. After that Captain Kirk beams Saiba into his USS Enterprise. She plays chess with Spock when a distress signal from Fireball XL5 makes her leave the game unfinished



Empire is still strong. To defeat it, Saiba needs to find the Warrior she'll join forces with. Armed with a map, some food, some water, and loads of imagination, Saiba sets off from Arendelle to meet the Dragon Warrior...the Kung Fu Panda!

> Vasan Bala is a writer, and director of Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota



WINTER IS COMING

Arctic ground squirrel hoards up to sustain hibernation

- for the next several months. Your metabolism slows down, and no, you don't have to get up thrice every night to pee. In the process, you actually lose much of the horrendous flab you had put on as your body burns up all the stored fat and you eventually emerge looking trim and fit! (Polar-bear moms can lose up to one-third their body weight over winter.) This is one get-slim regime that could become a rage if marketed right – just sleep softly, love! For the next several months, you've no cares or worries or bills to pay, just hopefully sweet dreams to revel in. And then, when you finally yawn and stretch and awake, the sun is out and the first flowers have begun to bloom. Surprise, you may even have a lovely brand-new baby by your side! No doubt you're ravenous, so, off you go to the supermarket and the world is a wonderful place again!

As usual the denizens of the animal kingdom thought of this first. And it would be such a perfect solution for so many of our problems too. Imagine, if the populations of the entire northern hemisphere went to sleep between November and April, the kind of savings we would make - pollution would drop drastically, there'd be no need to ravage the earth of its precious resources, fossil fuels would last another 100 years, there'd be no murders, hate-speeches or weddings that killjoys can lynch at. Yes, maybe some more babies, but then everyone loves babies! And, maybe, those living in the sweaty tropical south could do the same in summer, go to sleep between May and October (though, of course, they'd demand airconditioning so that could be an issue!)

Actually in 2020, we did take a shot at hibernating, though as usual we went about it in a totally ham-fisted manner. Giving 1.3 billion people a four-hour notice to retire from social activity for an indeterminate period of time is not the way to assure them of a good rest. Businesses and livelihoods collapsed, educational institutions, sports, travel and entertainment shut down, and the mantra became "work from home". We, of course, took advantage of this COVID-coma syndrome - a marvellous excuse to shirk work and get rid of vast numbers of people who needed to work. "We can't deliver since we're working with only 10 per cent of our staff, because the rest are tramping along expressways, back to the boondocks."

Our great leaders should have taken the cue from polar bears and given people enough time to fatten up before they battened down the hatches on their heads. More deviously, they pushed through rapacious legislation without due diligence, because we - the duly diligent were hibernating on their orders.

Don't Blame the Sci-fi Writer

This is the year where reality completely overtook the human capacity for imagination — and not always in a good way

Samit Basu

THERE'S A bad habit that news/culture commentators often have: whenever something really bizarre and illogical happens they compare it to sci-fi or fantasy. The aim, probably, is to underline weirdness, but this habit always makes actual writers of speculative fiction (such as myself) chafe - fiction, even physicsexceeding imaginative fiction, is compelled to obey internal logic and narrative consequence. Reality, and the news, are not. There is no better example of this than all the news of 2020.

We began the year with protests, civil strife, political violence and the incredible decline of several democratic institutions. It looks like we're ending it with all of these, too, with a pandemic that refuses to be sandwiched in between. But while early 2020 was rich in dystopian story inspiration, the rest of the year had more in store, a whole meteor shower of logic-defying news. As protests turned into lockdowns, breakdowns, meltdowns, takedowns and countdowns, every day, headlines that would have been world-changing in previous eras were just casual daily-digest material in this one. We learned that we were living in a post-truth world a few years ago, but 2020 has been post-reality. Hoaxes, miracles and all-round absurdity have been appropriated by the news cycle. Loyalty tests have eaten facts. Most of my imagination is exhausted just thinking of peaceful times.

This has been a year of drastic reminders of every privilege we have – to have a house to live in and work out of, to have work to do, to have family and friends who are healthy and safe, and for a fast-diminishing number of people, to have some remaining sense of being inside some systems that still function. The next few years (at least) are going to be very rough for us all, and I hope 2021 doesn't make us immediately look back fondly at this year.

I spent the last three years writing a speculative fiction near-future novel, based almost entirely on non-fiction and the news. Trying to carve some sort of hopeful narrative out of piles of notes about multiple-choice impending apocalypses took every bit of creativity I have. My work mostly involves sitting at home and



typing for a living, and despite the severe oddness of releasing a novel during a pandemic, I had a great year professionally - this has never before been guilt-inducing. So, I think, I can declare this officially: 2020 is the year where reality completely overtook the human capacity for imagination, and soon most sci-fi is going to look as tame and relaxing as your average mundane-life novel: comfort reading, because however strange the story, the laws of internal logic still apply. On the day of writing this, dead minks infected with mutated COVID-19 have risen from their graves in Denmark after a mass culling. Nobody's imagination did this: speaking for speculative-fiction storytellers, we refuse to take the blame. I think zombie minks win the 2020 news award, but there are many other contenders.

This was the year that featured several people's representatives denying the coronavirus threat even after getting infected themselves. Where the most powerful man in the world may still have to be dragged kicking and screaming out of his official residence after losing an election. The year where American

DEEP BLUE SEA

In California, the seas turned fluorescent this year

of this even holds our attention. The year among other strange where a celebrity released a personalised genhappenings around italia-odour candle into the market; where one of the world's top football clubs may have the world

if anyone will be particularly worried. In fact, there's every chance we won't even notice.

When you're surrounded by cultural, institutional, social, political, financial and environmental collapse, even for those of us who are presently safe and have the luxury of being able to observe and speak, it is difficult to find either meaning or reaction. But if we are to make our way out of these years, it becomes imperative to find the strength to rally and rebuild. We were told that the challenge of this decade would be reskilling, but the truth is it is really about survival.

As we lurch from crisis to crisis, it becomes crucial that we find within ourselves the ability to do more than just survive - many have already given in to either despair or the comfort of submission, and have themselves become regressive, violent reality-deniers. Finding reserves of courage, conviction, empathy and fortitude is no easy task, but it's the only way we are going to find the hope we need, to believe that brighter days will come.

A few years ago, at a leading TV producer's office, I delivered a few pitches for show ideas, which were promptly and predictably rejected for not being Real India enough. I was asked if I had any ideas for Scripted Reality. I was unaware until that point that reality shows as a category were called Scripted Reality by producers, that none of them were curated showcases of spontaneous behaviour. The world might look very sci-fi now to those who don't read sci-fi, and that's just because of all the shiny technology. But the truth is, this was not my year in a sci-fi world, nor yours, and no band of heroes is on its way to save us. We are inside a very poorly-designed Scripted Reality show: the cameras in place, the predecided winners are swaggering about everywhere, and the ad breaks are relentless. But all reality shows, like all empires, end eventually. We don't have the option of ignoring this one, but we'll find a way to defeat the programming. 2020 has had more than sufficient drama for a season finale: I can only hope it's not too many years before we find a way to collectively change the channel.

> Samit Basu is a Delhi-based writer, most recently of Chosen Spirits

defeat police surveillance with fan-cams. Tomorrow, if there's an alien invasion, I doubt





THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, DECEMBER 27, 2020 17 ECONOMY

CRUDE WATCH

IRAQ TO BOOST CRUDE EXPORT CAPACITY

Dubai: Iraq aims to increase crude oil export capacity from its southern ports to 6 million barrels per day from the current 3.5 million barrels a day capacity, Karim Hattab, deputy oil minister for distribution affairs, said in a statement. **REUTERS**

BRIEFLY —

FinMin allows Rajasthan to borrow more

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry on Saturday said it has permitted Rajasthan to borrow an additional Rs 2,731 crore after the state successfully undertook ease of doing business reforms. Rajasthan has now joined the five other states namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, which have completed the reform facilitating ease of doing business to be eligible for additional borrowing. These six states have been granted additional borrowing permission of Rs 19,459 crore.

Entities under 1% cash payment of GST liability

New Delhi: The mandatory requirement of 1 per cent cash payment of GST liability with effect from January 1 would be applicable to about 45,000 taxpayers, which is only 0.37 per cent of the total businesses registered in the Goods and Services Tax system, Department Revenue sources said on Saturday. PTI

'US holiday retail sales rise 3%'

Bengaluru: US retail sales rose 3 per cent during this year's expanded holiday shopping season from Oct. 11 to December 24, a report by Mastercard said Saturday, powered by a pandemicdriven shift toward online shopping.US ecommerce sales jumped 49 per cent in this year's holiday shopping season, as per a Mastercard report. **REUTERS**

MINING PROFITS NMDC-Karnataka tiff could spill over to Centre vs state revenue claims

INTERIM AGREEMENT

Under the interim

agreement, NMDC is

required to pay a total

royalty of 37.5 per cent

state government over

the 15 per cent royalty

on sales of iron ore,

additional 22.5 per

cent royalty to the

the company was

suspension of

paying prior to the

operations in 2018.

in 2018, extended NMDC's min-

ing lease for Donimalai mines

for 20 years, but asked the com-

pany to pay 80 per cent of the

average sale value of iron ore to

the state government - leading

to NMDC suspending opera-

aside the requirement that

NMDC pay 80 per cent royalty to

the state government, leading to

Karnataka withdrawing the ex-

estimated resource reserve of 149

million tonnes and an annual pro-

duction capacity of 7 million

tonnes. The royalty to be paid to

the state government, decided by

the high-level committee, will be

applicable retroactively to all pro-

duction at the Donimalai mines

under the interim agreement. In

case the amount is lower than the

22.5 per cent agreed to under the

interim agreement, NMDC will

not be permitted to seek refunds

for payments made during the in-

panel on the royalty payable to

The decision of the high-level

terim time period.

The Donimalai mines have an

The Karnataka High Court set

tions at the mines.

tension award.

including an

KARUNJIT SINGH NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

STATE-OWNED IRON ore major NMDC is set to resume operating the Donimalai mines in Karnataka after a two-year hiatus due to litigation with the state government. Its mining lease was extended as an interim measure while a government panel decided royalty due to the state exchequer.

Under the interim agreement, NMDC is required to pay a total royalty of 37.5 per cent on sales of iron ore, including an additional 22.5 per cent royalty to the state government over the 15 per cent royalty the company was paying prior to the suspension of operations in 2018. The interim agreement is applicable till the recommendations of the government panel are executed or November 2022, whichever is earlier. According to sources aware of

developments, NMDC, which is currently in negotiations to lower the royalty rate to be paid to the state government, expects that the royalty decided by the government panel for extension of mining leases for government companies will not change very significantly from the interim roy-

alty set for the Donimalai mines. "The number is not going to change drastically from the one arrived at through discussion in this interim agreement," said a source, adding the drop from the earlier demand of the state government for an 80 per cent premium on iron ore sales was a better reflection of a viable levy for NMDC. The source also noted that the company was preparing to re-

sume operations at the mines. The Karnataka government.

state governments by government companies under the Mining by Government Company Rules, 2015 will also affect NMDC iron ore mines in Chhattisgarh, which account for a majority of the iron ore production by the company. NMDC's Kirandul and Bacheli

complexes in Chhattisgarh contribute around 24 million tonnes of iron ore, or about 75 per cent of NMDC's annual iron ore output.

According to experts, state governments are likely to seek greater premiums from public sector mining companies upon renewal of mining leases, or seek to auction off mining rights for higher revenues under the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act.

"The recent hike in the price of iron ore announced by NMDC is more or less good enough to account for the increase in royalty. Under the current demand-supply scenario, NMDC has the pricing power to be able to absorb the increase in levies but once there is greater supply from merchant miners, in the next few years, their ability to pass through the impact of the levies and profitability will be affected," said Jigar Mistry, partner at portfolio management firm Bouyant Capital. Mistry added state govern-

ments were looking to get a larger proportion of revenues from mining in their states by state-owned companies. "State governments are seeking to get a greater proportion of profits of mining PSUs which would otherwise flow to the centre as either dividends or through reinvestment to build capacity replacing investment by the central government."

emailed requests for comment.

VOTE BEGINS TO WIND UP 6 SCHEMES WITH ₹26,000 CRORE OF INVESTOR MONEY STUCK Sebi appoints TS Krishnamurthy observer for Franklin MF e-voting

Future

balance

THE OUTCOME of the

the schemes with

Rs 26,000 crore of

voting will determine if

unitholders' money must

will get their money back.

not and how soon unitholders

technical assistance team com-

prising BN Sahoo, chief general

Sebi has also constituted a

will get their money back.

close down or not and

how soon unitholders

hangs in

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, DECEMBER 26

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on Saturday appointed former Chief Election Commissioner TS Krishnamurthy 'observer' in e-voting of unit holders of six schemes of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund.

The voting process for unitholders to decide the fate of the six debt schemes of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund will take place between December 26 and 28.

The outcome of the voting will determine if the schemes with Rs 26,000 crore of unitholders' money must close down or

COVID IMPACT

'CFO Optimism Index at all-time low for Dec qtr'

The confidence level of chief financial officers over financial and macroeconomic conditions in the country reached a record low for the December quarter, said a Dun and Bradstreet report

EXPLAINED

8.4% DECLINE IN THE DUN & BRADSTREET COMPOSITE CFO OPTIMISM INDEX (Y-O-Y) TO 98.1 DURING Q4 2020,

(Q-O-Q) BASIS AND RISK

18% OF CFOs SURVEYED **EXPECT AN INCREASE IN** THE RISK APPETITE IN THE **CURRENT SCENARIO**

> Key issues: Businesses are still foreseeing financial risk on their balance sheet and this can be attributed to various factors including high inflationary pressures and supply side risks Methodology: Based on the survey of over 350 respondents

> > If it's your

Birthday

Sunday December 27

NMDC did not respond to



RESPONDENTS SEE CASH

58% OF CFO

Source: Dun and Bradstreet/ PTI manager, Sebi; Nayana Ovalekar, chief operating officer of CDSL; K Sriram, practising company secretary; and scrutiniser M Krishna and E Sai Prasad, assistant directors of Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Hyderabad, to assist Krishnamurthy.

"The Supreme Court of India vide its order dated December 09, 2020 has directed Sebi to appoint an Observer regarding the e-voting of unit holders of six schemes of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund which is scheduled between 26th December to 29th December, 2020. Further the Supreme Court has also directed that the result of the e-voting would not be announced and

would be produced before the Supreme Court in a sealed cover along with the report of the Observer appointed by the Sebi. Accordingly, Sebi has appointed TS Krishnamurthy as the "Observer" on December 18, 2020," the market regulator said in an official statement.

The SC, on December 9, asked Sebi to appoint an observer for overseeing the e-voting process. The six schemes are Franklin India Low Duration Fund, Franklin India Ultra Short Bond Fund, Franklin India Short Term Income Plan, Franklin India Credit Risk Fund, Franklin India Dynamic Accrual Fund and Franklin India Income Opportunities Fund.

CEBR: India to become 3rd largest economy by 2030

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

INDIA, WHICH appears to have been pushed back to being the world's sixth biggest economy in 2020, will again overtake the UK to become the fifth largest in 2025 and race to the third spot by 2030, the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) said in

an annual report on Saturday. India had overtaken the UK in 2019 to become the fifth largest economy in the world but has been relegated to 6th spot in 2020.

"India has been knocked off course somewhat through the impact of the pandemic. As a result, after overtaking the UK in 2019, the UK overtakes India again in this year's forecasts and stays ahead till 2024 before India takes over again," said the report.

tank forecast that China will, in 2028, overtake the US to become the world's biggest economy

The UK-based think

The CEBR forecasts that the Indian economy will expand by 9 per cent in 2021 and by 7 per cent in 2022. "Growth will naturally slow as India becomes more economically developed, with the annual GDP growth expected to sink to 5.8 per cent in 2035." The UKbased think tank forecast China will in 2028 overtake the US to become the biggest economy, five years earlier than previously estimated due to contrasting recoveries of the two nations from Covid

YOUR WEEK AHEAD ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) This week, the emphasis is on long term planning. Make sure that all legal

LIBRA Sept. 24 - Oct. 23 Financial and property matters Ω loom large, so it's time to get your affairs in order. There have

problems are cleared up and that been unavoidable delays recently, and you're not totally

BRIDGE ler: North, Vulnerable: North South OUICK CLUES Urbane (8) WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH Capital of Macedonia (6) 2D 10. Capital of Israel (3,4) dbl 11. Beseech(7) Pass 2H Pass Pass Metallic sound (5) Like champagne (9)

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2301

A RECORD LOW **32.1%** INCREASE

PERCEPTION STILL REMAINS HIGH AMONG RESPONDENTS



NORTH

🛧 KJ3

A

♥QJ109

♣K1097

South made a Negative Double of 2D, hoping to find a spade contract. He followed with 2NT to show an invitational hand of around eleven points. West led the king of diamonds, his partner's suit.

How should South plan the play? Be specific.

The West Hand: S-9874H-A7652D-K2C-54 The East Hand: S-A5H-4D-J109654C-QJ82

What South did was win the ace, thinking that the lead had given him a trick. He decided, randomly, to lead, hearts next. West won the first round and continued diamonds, which set up East's suit. In time South had to lead spades and East took his ace and set 3NT with the remainder of his diamond

"I was unlucky," said South. "If I guess to lead spades first I make 3NT." "That's true," noted North, but leaving something unsaid that hung in the air. What did North mean by his unfinished statement? ain. What North meant was that South should have made SNT. You saw what South did do and it is agreed that South was unlucky to lead hearts before spades. Had heled spades first, that would have removed East's entry. How could South have made 3NT without guessing to play spades first?

South should have realized that East probably had one of the major suit aces. If East had both of them it would be inconsistent with the bidding, but one ace was possible. South should have let the king of diamonds win trick one. West would lead his second diamond but now South could lead either ma-jor and succeed because West would not be able to lead diamonds again.

Dealer: South, Vulnerable: North South

JUMBLED WORDS

the answer for the given quip.

llove

BSEEO

HSISU

NORTH		SOUTH ♠ J3 ● A ♦ AKJ932 ♣ A982	
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1S	2H Dava	3D
3H Pass	4D Pass	Pass Pass	5D

uth bid conservatively at first but when North made a competitive 4D bid South went to game. It is a good game, depending on guessing the spades West led the jack of hearts, which South won. How would you go about playing the hand to help you guess the spade suit?

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to

IOTCMM

CISTKY

Answer:I love **Mickey Mouse** more than any woman I've ever known - Walt Disney

SOLUTION: OBESE, SUSHI, COMMIT, STICKY

the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get

more than any woman I've ever known - Walt Disney (6,5)

14. They have to be followed ! (6,6)18. Sam Manekshaw's rank ? (5,7) 21. Type of calendar, of chant (9) 23. An ancient Celtic tribe of Eastern England (5) 24. Jennifer of Friends fame (7) 25. Altitudes(7) 27. Inscription(8) Simple song(6) Directed a course Stuffing for pillows



- political[†]parties(14) Accomplishing(9) see(7)
- 16. Caught ____: caught unprepared or unawares?(3,5)
- 17. Variety of celery (8)
- ____ Aur Shera : lovers of Indian
 - folklore?(6)
- 22. Chose(5)

CRYPTIC CLUES

26. Settle(6)

1. Sense(6)

(9)

(5)

Probes (14)

Invigorate (8)

DOWN

2.

6.

9

15

20

- Violet canine?(8)
- 5. Happen to be autumn
- 10. Quiet reason to exercise character
- (7)11. One order sung about self-centred
- 12. Run away to join up, perhaps (5)
- 14. Vehicles for driving instructors
- 18. Never out but not invariably
- 21. African has warm drink about ten
- 23. Asian leader turned chicken before
- game(5)
- old culinary herb(7)
- 25. Coal pit worked out as you can

- 26. Point to a flower for a festival

- Sentimental art (6)

- ACROSS

- prayers(7)
- 13. Breaking up can be very painful
- (5,7)
- (12)

- 24. Heart possibly retains energy with

က

က္

4

SUDOKU

- 27 One having daylight cast on coin collection in Paraguay's capital
- (8)DOWN
- 1. Bird at the fair?

(6)2. Leave Regina to go north ? Monster

- !(6) 3. How you may live if single-minded ?(2,4,3) 4. Games held by people following revolutionary art movement (14)
- 6. So, with time, it causes grain to spoil(5) 7. Quite satisfactory, so there's none
- left(3,5) 8. An injured stag in the Alps moved round when at the point of death
- (4.4)9. Continual hail's giving me weird visions! (14)
- 15. Burial place of a Kennedy girl, not an Askew (9) 16. Desirable stiffener provided by the
 - merry thought? (4-4)

Difficulty Level 5s

To solve a Sudoku puzzle.

must appear in each of the

each of the nine horizontal

nine vertical columns. in

rows and in each of the

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;

3s = Medium: 4s = Hard:

5s = Very Hard; 6s =

every digit from 1 to 9

Instructions

nine boxes.

Genius

Difficulty Level

- 17. Sends in different directions (8) 19. Fashionable greeting, but overaffected (6)
 - 20. Colonel lushly retired a little out of sorts(6) 22. Make sure slip isn't showing

Solutions to 2300

QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Eraser, 4 Dominant, 9 Forged, 10 Scissors, 12 Rick, 13 Reciprocal, 15 Extravagance, 18 Freewheeling, 21 Applicable, 22 Tito, 24 Hard copy, 25 Nepali, 26 Transfer, 27 Pantry. **Down:**1 Enforced, 2 Atrocity, 3 Even, 5 Once in a while, 6 Instructed, 7 Avouch, 8 Tussle, 11 Set an example, 14 Hairpieces, 16 Vigilant, 17 Ignominy, 19 Sachet, 20 Sparta, 23 Meta. Cryptic Clues: Across: 1 Bubble, 4 Abortive, 9 Nerves, 10 Reaffirm, 12 Mobs. 13 Instalment. 15 Attache cases, 18 Friday's child, 21 Mace-bearer, 22 Team, 24 Thematic, 25 Begone, 26 Semidome, 27 Gaggle. **Down**: 1 Bone meal, 2 Birdbath, 3 Lief, 5 Breathalyser, 6 Refulgence, 7 Ibidem, 8 Enmity, 11 Incendiarism, 14 Scoreboard, 16 Live-long 17 Adam Bede, 19 Smites, 20 Scream 23Leda

1

4

7

9 2

7

6

5

2

1

5 6 9

7

9

3 6

2

8

1

6

5

1 3

8 7 4

ur long-range goals but spare a thought for short-term pressures. There seems to be a great deal to be said for sorting out a financial mess.

Monday December 28

As the days pass, passion will be replaced by a laid-back feeling. You do take life a little too seriously. You can now reap the rewards of initiatives you started.

Tuesday December 29

The Sun is hitting some of its strongest alignments over. This is positive, favours hard work and offers hope if you are willing to put in the extra effort required to achieve your goals.

Wednesday December 30

Life has been confusing lately. One reason might be that close partners need to come clean about what they're really up to - and you need to be more aware of your longterm ambitions.

Thursday December 31

You'll be taking your pleasures seriously and if you can mix self-improvement with simple fun, you'll make the most of a profoundly productive period. I doubt if you'll have a moment to yourself.

Friday January 1

You can now afford to put your foot down at home. The Moon gives you the advantage, and this week only a close friend can call your bluff. Colleagues and partners should finally admit that you are right.

Saturday January 2

It's a fine time to put in extra effort. You might be working quite hard at the moment. In a strange sense, you'll gain the greatest pleasure from mature behaviour and sober activities.



connections are all in fine form to blame for the slow pace of Don't expect to finalise decisions before Thursday, incidentally, as developments. However, friends and loved ones are there still seems to be a number of changes in circumstances on the way.

foreign and overseas

their ways.

GEMINI May 22 - June 21 The week is full of

with. In fact, it's your business

scrutiny. The brightest days of

the week for resolving all legal

distance travel are Wednesday

issues and arranging long-

CANCER June 22 - July 23

partnership matters, in

particular by the need to

agree with your plans. As it

happens, this is an excellent

week to get proposals for

LEO July 24 - Aug. 23

persuade a friend or colleague to

domestic change back on course.

ideas and

have been neglected for some

significant alignments in the middle of the week, you'll have

waiting for to arrange

VIRGO Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

all the opportunity you've been

appointments, seek interviews

and hold important discussions.

time. After Mercury makes some

The Sun is busy

shedding light on

agreements which

and Thursday.

affairs which are coming under

promise, even

though there may be

The Moon begins the

week by challenging

your sign, so you may

be pre-occupied by

many crises to deal

waiting for you to take decisive action.

SCORPIO Oct. 24 - Nov. 22 Often it works well if

TAURUS Apr. 21 - May 21 Family members and people at home are in you keep certain information to an impatient mood, and there'll be yourself, though moments when you're forced family members may be into a corner. People at work challenging your secretive may have rejected your advice. Don't worry, though, as before the week is out colleagues

tendencies, inspiring you to come clean. But, are you really ready to reveal all? It may be best should have realised the error of to keep friends and partners fully informed of your plans and activities.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23 - Dec. 22

The week's top planets are Mars and Uranus, a combination which is bound to make you think afresh about your independence - and about what you need to do

to recover your freedom. What is taking place at the moment involves all that is most profound and fundamental to your existence.

CAPRICORN Dec. 23 - Jan. 20

You may be feeling a little more emotional than usual, but this is natural now that Neptune is making its presence felt in fresh regions of your chart. However, don't get too carried away, otherwise you'll miss out on very exciting professional developments.

AQUARIUS Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

Life is always complicated, never easy! There'll be a

great deal going on behind the scenes at the beginning of the week, but don't fall into the trap of imagining that other people are out to get you. You should ignore rumours and discount superstitions unless you have hard concrete evidence that they're true.

PISCES Feb. 20 - Mar 20

The Moon flirts with your sign at the end of the week, an indication that, whatever happens over the next few days, events should be running in your favour by Friday. You may take advantage of the fact that, for once, your practical skills seem to be growing stronger.

expenditure plans have been subject to end of the week.

Although business deals and various delays in recent weeks, Mercury, the planet responsible for placing hurdles in your path is about to form another series of alignments. You should be prepared for a flood of communications around the

New Delhi

18 THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, DECEMBER 27, 2020



ROBIN JACKMAN NO MORE

Former England cricketer Robin Jackman, who played four Tests and 15 one-day internationals, has died. He was 75. Jackman took 1,402 wickets in a 399-game first-class career between 1966 and 1982. AP

Wish *abba* was alive: Brother says Siraj has fulfiled late father's dream

VISHAL MENON DECEMBER 26

MOHAMMED ISMAIL gathers himself, clears his throat, and tries his best to control his emotions, before uttering the barely audible: "I wish abba (late Mohammed Ghouse) was alive today."

Ismail – elder brother of Team India's latest pace sensation Mohammed Siraj – says he's a bit groggy after being glued to the television set in the wee hours on Saturday to watch Siraj make a sensational Test debut at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. "After what we have gone through over the last month, this is a proud moment for us. I want to thank Allah. Abba always wanted Siraj to play Test cricket for India. He would always say, 'Desh ka naam roshan karo," Ismail tells The Indian Express over the phone from his Towli Chowki residence in Hyderabad. On November 20, little more than a month before Siraj's Test debut, his father Ghouse passed away. The stringent quarantine restrictions meant the 26-year-old couldn't return to India for his father's final rites. "Stay strong for your father's dream"; those words from captain Virat Kohli helped Siraj stay back in Australia. However, Ismail remembers his brother breaking down over a call, days after their father's demise. "He called me from Australia and didn't say anything. All I could hear was the sound of him sobbing inconsolably," Ismail recollects.

It was Ghouse, an auto-rickshaw driver's, unflinching support that gave Siraj the confidence to bunk classes and sneak past disciplinarian mother Shabana Begum to play tennis-ball cricket in his mohalla near Masabtank. Formal training began at 18, when a friend introduced Siraj to 'Mabboob sir', a genial middle-aged man, who runs an HCA-affiliated



Mohd Siraj's father passed days after Team India reached Australia. Instagram

coaching centre called Charminar Cricket Club. "I was impressed by what I saw. He was raw but had the ability to extract good pace," Mabboob notes. "On his debut against a club called Balaji CC, he picked five wickets." An incident from Siraj's Hyderabad U-23 days still rankles Mabboob.

"HCA had organised a fitness camp for fast bowlers of the U-23 squad at Secunderabad Gymkhana ground. Everyone assembled that morning, but Siraj was missing. When I later inquired, he said, 'Sir, I don't have the money to travel to and fro from Hyderabad and Secunderabad. How much will I trouble my father for money.' I told him, 'Never hesitate to ask me for any sort of financial help'."

Siraj's fiery spell at an U-23 game caught the eye of Jyothi Prasad, then chairman of selectors, who picked the pacer for the Ranji Trophy. According to Prasad, Siraj benefited enormously in his first season as a first-class cricketer, because the Hyderabad coach was Bharat Arun, current bowling coach of the Indian team. "Bharat played a key role in his evolution as a fast bowler. He fine-tuned his

skills and it was because of him that he landed an IPL contract two years later, in 2017 for the Sunrisers Hyderabad," Prasad says.

MSK Prasad, the former national chairman of selectors, says it's because of the abundance of fast bowlers that Siraj had to wait so long to make his Test debut. "Siraj's story is similar to that of T. Natarajan's as both have made it from humble beginnings. There's never been any doubt in my mind about his credentials as a red-ball bowler. Because we have an abundance of fast-bowling talents that Siraj had to take the route of IPL and T20s before making it in long-form cricket. Look at his first-class numbers, they are really impressive," he avers.

In 38 first-class games, Siraj has accounted for 152 scalps, averaging a shade over 23, with four five-wicket hauls. In 2016, he picked 41 wickets, galvanising Hyderabad to the Ranji Trophy knock-outs for the first

time in five seasons. Since then, he has been a regular at India A tours, all of which have been instrumental in his seamless transition from a raw pacer to a bowler with astute cricketing nous.

The successes on the cricket field, however, have not changed Siraj's outlook or demeanour. Last year, the family shifted from their modest rented apartment in Masabtank to a more lavish setting at Towli Chowki, near Mehdipatnam. Back in Hyderabad, he is known to have funded wedding ceremonies of friends and relatives. "Allah has been kind to us. So, Siraj is making it a point to give back to society. He is really large-hearted and never stops even once when it comes to going out of his way to help others," Ismail says.

Ready to forego any wee-hour tranquillity for the next four days, Ismail hopes Melbourne Test Day 1 is just the first day of Siraj's long and fruitful international career.

BRIEFLY ——

New Zealand 222-3 at stumps on 1st day

Mount Maunganui: Kane Williamson made an unbeaten 94 and shared a 120-run partnership with Ross Taylor which lifted New Zealand into a strong position at stumps Saturday on the first day of the first cricket test against Pakistan. Taylor made 70 and Williamson added a further 89 with Henry Nicholls who was 42 not out at stumps when New Zealand was 222-3. Williamson came to the crease when only three balls had been bowled and remained for the next 86.3 overs, reshaping the New Zealand innings and changing the course of the first day. Pakistan had been on top after winning the toss, bowling on a green pitch and after Shaheen Afridi removed New Zealand openers Tom Latham for 4 and Tom Blundell for 5 with only 13 runs on the board. BRIEF SCORES: New Zealand 222/3 (Williamson 94*, Nicholls 42*, Taylor 70, Afridi 3/55) vs Pakistan

East Bengal hold Chennaiyin 2-2

Bambolim: German midfielder Matti Steinmann emerged as the unlikely source of goals for SC East Bengal as the Kolkata side rallied to draw 2-2 with Chennaiyin FC in the Hero Indian Super League at the Tilak Maidan. Chennaiyin took the lead twice, through Lallianzuala Chhangte (13') and Rahim Ali (64'). However, a brace from Matti Steinmann (59', 68') saw Robbie Fowler's side split honours in an exciting encounter. On Sunday, Kerala Blasters will take on Hvderabad FC. Both sides have played six matches so far with seventh-SILLING JUST LWC places above Kerala Blasters on the table, but with a difference of six points. While Kerala have suffered three defeats, the Nizams saw their unbeaten streak end in their previous game against Mumbai City.

New-look India

Impressive debutants, unrelenting bowlers & a shrewd captain help visitors move on from Adelaide debacle with an all-round show

SANDIPG DECEMBER26

AN ENSEMBLE cast comprising two debutants, two highly-skilled bowlers at the peak of their prowess, and an inspired captain combined to produce a blockbuster first day for India in the Boxing Day Test. It was a bright day in Melbourne when Ajinkya Rahane's leadership felt like a breath of fresh air, Jasprit Bumrah bowled like the wind in the morning, Mohammed Siraj whipped up a storm, and Ravichandran Ashwin blew like a calm afternoon breeze. And at the fag end, came Shubman Gill, like a ripple of evening thunder.

Australia reeled under the weather, mustering only 195 runs on a placid surface after choosing to bat, before India ended the day at 36/1. The score at stumps was the only reminder of that afternoon in Adelaide, as India demonstrated that they have the skills as well as the will to turn adversity around. If the scars of Adelaide remained, they did well to conceal them. Rather, they were a transformed bunch, bustling with energy and purpose and bounding with relish and resolve. Rahane seized the moments and ensured that the team kept their poise and composure.

A classic example of his non-plussed captaincy was when Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne were engineering a comeback after finding themselves in each other's company at 38/3. Weathering the initial storm, the two were looking to accelerate, when Rahane recommissioned Bumrah. A reactive captain would have sought defensive measures. like introducing Ravindra Jadeja or setting run-stopping fields. Here, Rahane counterattacked Australia's counter. Head struck Bumrah for a brace of boundaries off fuller deliveries, which in the end seemed like an elaborate scheme. The pacer then pushed the left-hander onto the length deliveries, before he bowled one fuller and seaming away from Head, who prodded instinctively at the ball with his feet crease-tied. An edge was all but unavoidable. The final wall of resistance was breached, and Australia fell apart, not in a heap but brick by other. Central to that was India's planning and the supreme execution of their plans. The dismissals of Steve Smith and his protege Labuschagne stood out, for both the enormity of the wickets as well as the rationale behind the tactics. Both are leg-side virtuosos. So most captains and bowlers look to block their leg-side run-scoring avenues and overcompensate by bowling outside the off-stump. But sometimes, batsmen are most vulnerable playing the instinctive strokes. Both Smith and Labuschagne could not resist the leg-side glide, and the fielders were perfectly stationed to gobble up the ensuing catches. Smith was caught at leg-gully and Labuschagne at backward square-leg. Smith seemed hypnotised by the curve Ashwin conjured throughout what would arguably be his best day in Australia. It was a spell out of the off-spinner's dreams, when everything was coming out perfectly from his fingers - from the amount of drift, dip, pace and spin. The ball was obedient to the orders of its mas-



Mohammed Siraj took two wickets and as many catches on his Test debut. Reuters

ter. Some would spin and bounce, some would just bounce, some would just spin. The uncertainty was harrowing for Australia's batsmen. As was Sirai whose skills Rahane master-

As was Siraj, whose skills Rahane masterfully harnessed. In the lead-up to tea, he was bowling intensely but without luck. Each time he beat the edge or an edge fell short, Siraj would throw his hands in the air. But Rahane would walk up to him and reassure him. He even obliged him with a referral that looked far from straightforward (and once politely refusedthe skipper kept his faith in the debutant. And just before tea, he dismissed Labuschangne. Buoyed, Siraj increased his pace and purchased reverse swing, not massive like in the subcontinent but just enough to trouble the batsmen. Eventually, Cameron Green missed one and was pinned in front of the wicket, ending another brief period of resistance. Here again, Rahane would have been tempted to replace Siraj with Umesh Yadav or Bumrah to polish off Australia's lower order, but that would have been cruel to Siraj who was bowling hostilely as well as tirelessly. But after Tim Paine departed, Bumrah was reintroduced. He did the needful with the wickets of Mitchell Starc and Nathan Lvon, before Iadeia denied him a five-for by packing Pat Cummins. But India's good work would have been largely negated had they lost more than the wicket of Mayank Agarwal. For this, they have to thank the free-stroking Gill, who in his 28 not out of 38 balls oozed ample signs that he's equipped to deal with the best of seamers in the world. The pull strokes off Starc were brutal; imperious was he when he stepped out and drove Lyon against the turn through mid-off. Though he was once grassed. Gill showed excellent defensive technique to ensure that India didn't suffer further damage

SCORECARD -

AUSTRALIA vs INDIA

MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND Toss: Australia, chose to bat

AUSTRALIA 195 ALL OUT J Burns c Pant b Burnah 0 (10b) M Wade c Jadeja b Ashwin 30 (39b, 3x4)

M Wade c Jadeja b Ashwin30 (39b, 3x4)M Labuschagne c Gill b Siraj48 (132b, 4x4)

How Ashwin remained a step ahead of Smith & Labuschagne

SRIRAM VEERA DECEMBER 26

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN doesn't quite rip an off-break around off-stump, with loop and dip, and let the batsman cope with it. Like Muttiah Muralitharan, especially when younger, used to do. Or as Nathon Lyon does on occasions. The art of Ashwin lies in entangling the batsmen into meanderings from which they are unable to disengage themselves in time. Like Steve Smith on Day 1 of this Boxing Day Test.

The ball that took out Smith opened up its trickery under the gaze of the batsman, rather than reveal its perfection from the moment it was released. It's a familiar theme with Ashwin. His deliveries are constructed for what a batsman might do, tailored to probe the anticipated response, as opposed to a pre-fabricated line of thought. He doesn't do those pre-designed dream balls.

Someone like Shane Warne can dispense with reality and make the batsmen dance to his machinations. His genius and the art of legspin allowed him to do that. Barring Muralitharan, off-spinners don't have such wizardry in the DNA of their art. But every now and then, Ashwin manages to create a private reality within the batsmen's world where he makes them work against themselves.

The surprise in Smith's dismissal wasn't how it ended but how soon it ended. Just two balls. Ashwin targeted the intended shot or rather the hands, that Smith claimed to have found during the limited-overs leg of the



R Ashwin picked crucial wickets of Wade, Smith and Paine. AP

The art of Ashwin lies in entangling the batsmen into meanderings from which they are unable to disengage themselves in time. Like Steve Smith on Day 1 of this Boxing Day Test

off. It was an interesting move; he had attempted one in Ashwin's first over but was beaten, nevertheless he revived that approach now. When the ball was fuller, he would push it away, without a big stride, letviation. For the rest, he would shuffle sideways to ping the large gap at covers, left deliberately open. For most of the day, Ashwin bowled with just two on the off-side. Ashwin's art isn't static. It keeps changing colours according to the perceived threat. Soon, he shifted to around the stumps, and over-spun one on leg-andmiddle on a length. Labuschagne almost combusted, going for an ill-executed sweep on an urge, and was saved by the DRS on the lbw appeal. Though the moisture evaporated from the track in the second session, Ashwin returned around the stumps but wisely abandoned that line of attack after sensing the lack of pre-lunch biting turn and bounce. From over the stumps, he quietly tried pushing Labuschagne back and getting him to wrist the turning ball to waiting hands. Though he wasn't successful, a similar line of attack worked for Mohammed Siraj. Ashwin has already shown in the first Tests of the last tours to England and Australia that his art isn't parochial. It isn't pinned down to India's soil. But untimely iniuries meant he couldn't finish what he started on those tours. Now, it seems, he is on a celebratory run.

Irving stars as Nets beat Celtics

Boston: Kyrie Irving scored 37 points, Kevin Durant added 29, and the visiting Brooklyn Nets enjoyed a successful return to the NBA's Christmas Day schedule by pulling away in the second half for a 123-95 victory over the Boston Celtics on Friday. In his first regular-season game in Boston since joining the Nets, Irving made 13 of 21 shots, hit seven 3-pointers, and handed out eight assists. Irving scored 17 by halftime, but the Nets trailed by three before outscoring Boston 72-41 in the second half in their first Christmas Day game since facing Chicago in 2013. AGENCIES

T Head c Rahane b Bumrah 38 (92b, 4x4) 12 (60b) C Green Ibw Siraj T Paine c Vihari b Ashwin 13 (38b, 2x4) P Cummins c Sirai b Jadeia 9 (33b, 1x4) M Starc c Siraj b Bumrah 7 (8b, 1x4) N Lyon Ibw Bumrah 20 (17b, 2x4, 1x6) J Hazlewood not out 4 (1b, 1x4) Extras (nb 3, w 1, b10) 14 **FoW:** 1-10 (Burns, 4.2), 2-35 (Wade, 12.5), 3-38 (Smith, 14.3), 4-124 (Head, 41.5), 5-134 (Labuschagne, 49.3), 6-155 (Green, 61.4), 7-155 (Paine, 62.6), 8-164 (Starc, 67.1), 9-191 (Lyon, 71.5), 10-195 (Cummins, 72.3) Bowling: J Bumrah 16-4-56-4, U Yadav 12-

2-39-0, R Ashwin 24-7-34-3, R Jadeja 5.3-1-15-1, M Siraj 15-4-40-2

INDIA

 M Agarwal Ibw Starc
 0 (6b)

 S Gill batting
 28 (38b, 5x4)

 C Pujara batting
 7 (23b, 1x4)

 E Extras (nb1)
 1

 F FoW:1-0 (Agarwal, 0.6)
 1

 Bowling: M Starc 4-2-14-1, P Cummins
 4-1-14-0, J Hazlewood 2-0-2-0, N Lyon

 1-0-6-0
 1

DAY 2, LIVE ON SONY SPORTS NETWORK, 5AM

36/1

tour. The first ball spun sharply down leg but Smith didn't handcuff his hands. The next dropped on a length around middle-and-leg, forcing Smith to lunge.

For a minute, scrub out the two players, photoshop in Ricky Ponting and Harbhajan Singh – and you wouldn't have noticed a difference. The seam of the ball towards leggully, the ripping side-spin and the doorknob turn of the wrist at release that took the ball in the air from a shade outside off to its eventual destination. Perhaps it was the lure of the trajectory, but Smith's hands trespassed into areas from which he couldn't extricate them in time.

Marnus Labuschagne too did the same, almost. Unlike Smith, he seemed more intent to play off the backfoot. Ashwin's plan was ready: to get him caught at backward short-leg, wristing the turning bouncing ball off his hip. If the batsman tries to block straight down the pitch, the bounce and turn would hopefully be enough to get the ball ricochet off the inner edge to forward short-leg. The ball sailed past the two shortlegs a few times and then Labuschagne made his move.

He started to move sideways. Side-stepping to leg, he started to cut and punch to the

Late Leicester equaliser ends Man SA players raise fists before first Test vs Lanka United's away winning streak

REUTERS

LEICESTER, DECEMBER 26

LEICESTER CITY came back twice to end Manchester United's away winning streak in the Premier League with a 2-2 draw at the King Power stadium on Saturday. A Jamie Vardy shot which deflected off United defender Axel Tuanzebe, five minutes from the end, secured a point for Brendan Rodgers' side after Bruno Fernandes appeared to have secured another victory on the road for United.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side, who had won their last ten away games in the Premier League, stay third on 27 points, a point behind second-placed Leicester. Liverpool are top of the standings on 31 points and have a chance to extend their lead when they face West Bromwich Albion on Sunday. Marcus Rashford had missed a wide-open header but put United ahead in the 23rd minute with a cool finish after being slipped in by Fernandes before Harvey Barnes equalised eight minutes later with a fine shot from the edge of the box.Rashford had a great chance to put United back in front on the hour but his powerful drive was well saved by the right hand of Kasper Schmeichel.

Two minutes later Anthony Martial had an effort disallowed for offside but Fernandes restored United's lead in the 79th minute, drilling into the bottom corner after being found inside the area by substitute Edinson Cavani. Again though, the lead was short-lived as Vardy's first time shot on the half-turn from a low cross from Ayoze Perez, went in off Tuanzebe and earned a point for the Foxes.



South Africa's Lungi Ngidi celebrates after taking a wicket. AP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CENTURION, DECEMBER 26

SOUTH AFRICAN players raised a fist to acknowledge the country's struggle against apartheid but refrained from taking the knee associated with the global Black Lives Matter Movement just before the start of the first Test against Sri Lanka, here on Saturday.

The players, led by Quinton de Kock, raised their firsts after singing the South African national anthem before the start of the opening day at the Super Sport Park. Pressure has been mounting on the Proteas to show their support to the global BLM Movement by taking a knee, but the players in a statement said that the raised fists have more historical context to the South Africans. "The raised fist is a powerful gesture in our

Sri Lanka take control after Day 1

Pretoria: Dinesh Chandimal and Dhananjaya de Silva scored fluent halfcenturies as Sri Lanka took advantage of some lacklustre South Africa bowling to post 340 for six at the close of day one of the first test at Centurion Park on Saturday. **REUTERS BRIEF SCORES:** Sri Lanka 340/6 (Chandimal 85, de Silva 79, Mulder 3/68) vs South Africa

own history, as expressed in the iconic images of Nelson and Winnie Mandela on Mandela's release from prison in 1990," the players said in a statement. "In this context it was a powerful gesture of triumph, an acknowledgment of the struggle against apartheid, and a commitment to continuing to fight for equality, justice and freedom, while also honouring the religious and cultural responsibilities of every member of our team."

The players said the team had, on multiple occasions, declared its "unmistakable" support to the BLM campaign and committed to continue doing the same together.

"We recognize that our actions will most likely result in criticism from some community, one way or another, but ... we have taken the decision through a process of deep democracy to raise our fists. We recognize the historical and political connotations of the raised fist as a gesture of ongoing solidarity in the fight for racial justice and anti-racism work."

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