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eye
THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

THIS IS THE WAY IT ENDS

The highs and lows of the year on celluloid and OTT, which prove that art is the only thing that can sustain us

PAGES 14,15,16

PM ANNOUNCES COVID vaccines for below 18 from Jan 3 | **'PRECAUTIONARY' SHOTS** for vulnerable from Jan 10

In Jan, shots for 15-18, boosters for elderly, healthcare staff: PM

Announcement after Covaxin gets emergency use nod for 12-18

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

IN A surprise address to the nation Christmas night, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that Covid-19 vaccination will start January 3 onward for children in the 15-18 age group, while healthcare and frontline workers will be administered a booster – he called it "precaution dose" -- from January 10.

The "precaution dose" option, he said, will also be available from January 10 for citizens above the age of 60 with co-morbidities. They can take this shot on the advice of their doctors.

Amid fears over the spread of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Visitors to Sacred Heart Cathedral in Delhi on Christmas Day offer prayers at barricades, with entry restricted. *Praveen Khanna*

The timing: Case uptick, waning vaccine, Omicron

R value crosses 1 in several states

AMITABH SINHA
PUNE, DECEMBER 25

EXPLAINED

THE KEENLY awaited decision to provide additional doses of vaccine has come when the Covid case count, after a five-month decline, has begun to move up in some states, apparently fueled by the Omicron variant.

Latest data shows that reproduction number R, a measure of how fast the disease is spreading, has crossed the value of 1 in several states, the threshold after which cases begin to rise rapidly.

The decision was due in any

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'Precautionary' shot could be of a different vaccine

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

THE UNION Health Ministry Sunday is likely to announce the blueprint for rolling out the "precautionary doses" the Prime Minister announced Saturday. Top government sources, earlier, had told The Indian Express that there is preliminary consensus in the country's top technical advisory body on Covid vaccination that the next dose should be of a vaccine based on a platform different from that of the first two doses.

Using the label "precautionary," keeps this window

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CENTRAL TEAMS IN STATES
PAGE 7

249 NEW CASES IN DELHI, CURBS ACROSS STATES
PAGES 3, 7

Pandora probe picks up: Over 160 requests go out to 33 countries

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

THE INVESTIGATION into the Pandora Papers, conducted by a global consortium of news organisations including The Indian Express, has set off unprecedented cooperation between Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) of different countries.

This has been under the aegis of the Egmont Group, an umbrella organisation that brings 167 FIUs together for the "secure exchange of expertise and financial intelligence to combat money laundering and terrorist financing."

For India, too, this cooperation has paid rich dividends.

Until date, officials told The Indian Express, the FIU here has sent out 161 requests to its counterparts in 33 countries, mostly the tax havens named in the Pandora Papers investigation.

Significantly, responses have already been received by the FIU in over 35 cases.

The Pandora Papers marked the largest leak of offshore financial records as many as 12 million documents from 14 companies in offshore tax havens with details of ownership of 29,000 offshore companies and Trusts.

Obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), a one-year investigation of data linked to India by The Indian Express revealed how individuals and businesses, many already under the scanner, are pushing the envelope to evade detection, using loopholes in the law at home and the lax jurisdiction of tax havens.

Many have opted for a rejig

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

As Omicron hits global travel, domestic traffic weathers it for now

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

IN A departure from the manner in which the two Covid-19 waves in India impacted travel and flights – both domestic and international segments recorded a perceptible drying up of demand during the two waves – the spread of the Omicron variant is having a varied impact on travel patterns.

Information sourced from airlines and multiple online travel agencies point to a continuing uptick in domestic air travel demand going into 2022, but there's perceptible dampening of international travel sentiment – to and from India.

One of the main reasons for the subdued expectation on international travel is the numerous restrictions being imposed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

22 farm unions float front, to fight from all Punjab seats

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 25

AS MANY as 22 farmer organisations which were a part of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) that spearheaded the year-long farmers' agitation floated their own political outfit Saturday and announced that they will contest all the 117 seats in the coming Assembly elections.

Balbir Singh Rajewal, 78, who emerged as a prominent face during the farm agitation, will be the face of the front, named the Samyukta Samaj Morcha (SSM). Addressing the media after a meeting, Rajewal and farmer leaders Harmeet Singh Qadian and Kulwant Singh Sandhu said at least three more farmer organisations might join them.

"This was a demand of the people of the state, who said that we had emerged victorious in the farmers' agitation and should fight on the political front also," Qadian said, adding that they were just leading the front, and their strength were the people of the state.

While the farmer leaders said

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SUNDAY STORY
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PANTH MEETS WEALTH

Bikram Singh Majithia has had everything going for him. But will drugs charge change that?

PM INVOKES GURUS' VALOUR, EK BHARAT
PAGE 6

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

THE BEST SMARTPHONES OF 2021
The rise of Realme was clearly visible, while OnePlus had a quiet year despite the success of the Nord series. Meanwhile, Vivo showed the progress it has made in the imaging space with the X70 Pro Plus. However, there weren't many blockbuster smartphones.

LIFESTYLE

WHAT WILL BE ON OUR PLATES?
Indian food trends that are set to continue into 2022

ENTERTAINMENT

OUR TOP PICKS THIS WEEKEND
We have 11 shows and movies that will be worth your time

EXPRESS AUDIO
Game Time: The Indian Express sports team looks back at 2021?
NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY
In this year's final episode of Game Time, the *Indian Express* sports team takes a look back at 2021, and shares their favorite sports moments of the year.

FROM PAGE ONE

The timing: Case uptick, waning vaccine, Omicron

case, even if there was no threat from Omicron. In the United States and Europe, booster doses started well before the emergence of Omicron, once the bulk of the eligible adult population had been fully vaccinated.

India now is at a similar stage, with over 60 per cent of the eligible population fully vaccinated and over 90 per cent of it having got at least one dose.

There is growing evidence to show that immunity generated by vaccines reduces significantly after eight to nine months, necessitating a fresh round of vaccination to prevent severe diseases and deaths. So those who received their second doses before April, mostly healthcare workers and the elderly, could, therefore, benefit with booster doses.

The Omicron threat isn't out of the calculus either.

For about a week now, some states are showing signs of Covid resurgence, mainly Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka. Major cities like Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Pune are also showing a similar trend.

Latest data by a team of researchers at Chennai's Institute of Mathematical Sciences shows that the R-value, an estimate of the average number of people the infection is being passed on by an already infected person, was now over 1 in Maharashtra.

Delhi crossed 1 a few days ago and is now joined by Bengaluru and Kolkata as well, according to Sitabhra Sinha, the lead researcher.

For India as a whole, the R value is still less than 1, but it's showing signs of inching up. A surge is not being ruled out. That would hardly be surprising considering that over 600 Omicron infections have been confirmed in the country.

In view of the fact that only a fraction of the positive cases are being confirmed as Omicron infections because of the need for genome sequencing results, the actual spread of the Omicron variant in the population could be several times higher.

And as is evident from countries like the US, UK and several others in Europe, the Omicron variant spreads at a much faster rate, infecting even the previously infected, fully vaccinated, or children.

For the last four days now, the UK has been reporting a record number of new cases – with 1.7 lakh cases detected Saturday. Before the current surge, the daily case count had never even come close to 1 lakh.

Several other countries in the region, including Spain and France, have been detecting a record high case count.

Though the Omicron variant, till now, has been found to be relatively milder than the Delta in causing severe diseases, the large number of infections has the potential to overwhelm hospitals and medical facilities, a situation already being faced by the UK.

In the worst case scenario, India could witness a similar surge by the middle or end of January. Additional doses of vaccines can do little to prevent this surge if it happens, but these could be vital in preventing hospitalisations and deaths.

Same is the case with the decision to vaccinate the younger population. Data from Europe shows that a substantial number of people getting infected with the Omicron variant are in the lower age groups who have not been vaccinated.

In fact, in some countries like Spain or Italy, the prevalence of the Omicron variant in younger people is almost double of that in the wider population. Even in India, a significant proportion of those confirmed to have been infected with Omicron variant are below the age of 18, and thus unvaccinated.

So getting the 15-18 age group jabbed beginning January 3 and re-vaccinating the elderly and the frontline health workers from January 10 couldn't be more timely.

'Precautionary' shot could be of a different vaccine

open: that the next shot could be a new vaccine rather than just a third shot.

As on Saturday, 12.04 crore over the age of 60 have received their first dose of vaccine; and 9.21 crore are fully vaccinated. The official data also shows that 1.03 crore healthcare workers have received their first dose, and 96 lakh are fully vaccinated; 1.83 crore frontline workers have received their first dose, and 1.68 crore are fully vaccinated. Which effectively means that more than 11 crore beneficiaries will be eligible for the "precautionary dose".

"There is some clarity that if an additional dose is given to a beneficiary, it cannot be, at least in case of inactive whole virus or adenovirus vector Covid-19 vaccine, the same vaccine. So the preliminary consensus is that a beneficiary cannot take three doses of Covishield or Covaxin," sources said.

Sources said it is very likely that the precautionary dose will be a vaccine of a different platform. Multiple options are likely to available in the coming months. First up is the Hyderabad-based Biological E's Corbevax, a protein sub-unit Covid-19 vaccine.

This differs from the inactivated whole-cell vaccines, by containing only the antigenic parts of the virus, to trigger a protective immune response. Bio E's vaccine candidate includes an antigen developed by Texas Children's Hospital Centre for Vaccine Development and is licensed from BCM Ventures, Baylor College of Medicine's integrated commercialization team.

The Centre has already made an advance payment of Rs 1500 crore to reserve 30 crore doses of Corbevax. Sources said that Corbevax is expected to get Emergency Use Authorisation in the next two weeks.

The second candidate for a likely third dose, could be Serum Institute of India's Covovax. This is a recombinant nanoparticle protein-based COVID-19 vaccine. The US-based Novavax and SII have already received EUA for this vaccine in the Philippines.

The third candidate for a likely third dose, could be Bharat Biotech's intranasal vaccine. Sources said that this vaccine is expected to come in the second half of January.

The fourth candidate for a likely third dose could be India's first m-RNA Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pune-based Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd.

Earlier, the government, had said that Gennova's mRNA vaccines are expected to produce 6 crore doses. More significantly, unlike Pfizer and Moderna's mRNA vaccine, this can be stored at India's immunisation drive's cold storage requirements (2-8 degrees Celsius).

Experts across the globe are recommending mRNA vaccines as booster doses. In September, after reviewing data on booster responses from different combinations of COVID-19 vaccines, the UK expert body, was the first to advise a preference for Pfizer's mRNA vaccine to be offered as the third booster dose irrespective of which product was used in the primary schedule.

PM's New Year gift: Shots for 15-18, boost for elderly

the Omicron variant, the Prime Minister, while telling the public not to panic and not to give up the practice of wearing masks and washing hands, listed the three priority groups for the "precautionary dose", less than a year after the country rolled out its Covid-19 immunisation programme.

According to official estimates, there will be approximately 10 crore children in the 15-18 age group eligible for the Covid-19 vaccination. As of Saturday, 12.04 crore people over the age of 60 had received their first dose of vaccine; and 9.21 crore were fully vaccinated. Official data also showed that 1.03 crore healthcare workers had received their first dose, and 96 lakh were fully vaccinated; 1.83 crore frontline workers had received their first dose, and 1.68 crore were fully vaccinated.

"Today is also the birth anniversary of Atalji (former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee). We are also celebrating Christmas. So I thought I should share this decision today. Covid-19 vaccination will be introduced for all children in the age group 15-18 years. From January 3, 2022, we will start this drive. This decision will further strengthen our fight against the pandemic. Parents have been worrying about children returning to schools and colleges. This decision will help reduce their stress," Modi said.

The announcement came hours after the country's drug regulator granted emergency use authorisation (EUA) to Covaxin for vaccinating children in the 12-18 age group. With this approval, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin becomes the second vaccine to receive an EUA for the 12-18 age group -- the drug regulator had earlier approved Zydus Cadila's DNA Covid-19 vaccine for children above the age of 12.

The Prime Minister also said India will soon introduce a nasal Covid-19 vaccine and DNA vaccine.

He said the decision on "precaution dose" will strengthen confidence of health care workers and frontline workers. "It is our experience that Corona warriors -- the healthcare and frontline workers -- have played the most significant role in our fight against the pandemic. Even today, they are spending an immense amount of time treating Covid-19 patients. Which is why, as a precautionary measure, the government has taken a decision that a precaution dose will be started for healthcare and frontline workers. This will begin from January 10, 2022," he said.

Elderly citizens with associated comorbidities, he said, can avail the "precautionary dose" based on the recommendations of their treating physicians. "It is also our experience from the vaccination drive that the elderly and those who have serious comorbidities should take the extra precaution. Keeping this in mind, for those above the age of 60 years and with associated comorbidities, based on the recommendation of their doctors, precautionary vaccine dose will be made available to them. This also will start from January 10," he said.

Modi underlined that decisions on prioritisation of vaccination have been taken on the basis of scientific recommendation from the experts.

"We all know that the pandemic is not yet over. In these circumstances, we have to remain vigilant. We have continuously worked towards keeping the country and citizens safe. We started the vaccination drive based on scientific recommendations: who should receive the first dose on priority; what should be the gap between two doses; when should recovered Covid-19 patients receive their dose; and when should comorbid patients receive the vaccine. We have continuously taken these decisions that have been beneficial and helped us bring the situation under control," he said.

"India has taken the decision based on its own situation. We have taken these decisions purely on the basis of the advice of India's scientific community. At present, there is a lot of discussion on Omicron. The experiences are different in different parts of the world. The Indian scientific community is keeping a very close watch on these developments. We have completed 11 months since we launched the vaccination drive. They have examined the facts in totality, and learning from the global experience, they have made some decisions today," he said.

The Prime Minister urged people not to panic and adhere to precautions in the backdrop of emergence of the highly contagious Omicron variant. "I have one request: please don't spread rumours and fear. Please avoid those who are trying to spread fear. The country, together, has run the world's largest vaccination drive. In the future, we need to further accelerate it. Our collective efforts will help strengthen the fight against the pandemic," he said.

"In India, many people have been detected with Omicron. I would urge you all not to panic; you have to be careful and alert. Remember these things: wear the mask, and wash hands regularly. The global experience so far shows that following Covid-19 appropriate guidelines at an individual level is the greatest weapon to combat the infection," he said.

The Prime Minister said that today, as the virus is mutating, "our capability and confidence to face the challenge is also multiplying along with our innovative spirit". He said the country has 18 lakh isolation beds, 5 lakh oxygen-supported beds, 1.4 lakh ICU beds, 90000 ICU and non-ICU beds specially for children, more than 3000 PSA oxygen plants, 4 lakh oxygen cylinders. He said support to states is being provided for buffer doses and testing.

Pandora probe picks up: Over 160 requests go to 33 countries

of their offshore assets setting up a network of trusts to project a degree of separation from their wealth and to insulate their assets from creditors.

Om October 4 this year, when the first set of investigative reports were published, the Finance Ministry announced the setting up of a Multi Agency Group (MAG).

Representatives of the FIU, along with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are members of the MAG, which is headed by the Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).

Government officials said that besides the CBDT which has since sent notices to "most" individuals named in the Pandora Papers investigation (using the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement route), the FIU began dispatching requests for information on offshore entities and ownership by Indians on a daily basis to its counterparts.

Besides requesting for a confirmation of details published in The Indian Express, the FIU in New Delhi asked its counterparts elsewhere for details such as financial transactions; assets and bank accounts linked to the offshore entity; identity of Beneficial Owners (BOs) and Trustees and current status of the offshore entity.

Officials point out that some requests were of cases/individuals already under the scanner of Indian agencies prior to the publication of the Pandora Papers.

The data received so far from tax havens like the British Virgin Islands (BVI) is being described by officials as "rich in details." These are being passed on by the FIU to the CBDT and the ED on a real time basis, without waiting for meetings of the MAG.

The MAG has held three meetings so far with updates on progress of the Pandora probe being prepared on a fortnightly basis by member agencies.

Besides the Egmont Group, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has also taken note of the ICIJ investigation.

During its October 19-21 plenary in Paris, the FATF had issued a statement which noted, "the recently released Pandora Papers have highlighted, once again, that not enough is being done to prevent criminals from hiding illicit wealth and activities behind complex corporate structures and in offshore banks."

As Covid hits global travel, domestic weathers it for now

by not only India but also other jurisdictions.

"We have seen a temporary dip of around 20% (compared with the company's expectations) in international bookings for now. Countries like the UK, France, US, Singapore are getting impacted due to the restrictions and concerns related to the new variant," Rikant Pittie, co-founder, Easy Trip Planners, told The Sunday Express, adding that most of these travellers were not cancelling but postponing their travel plans due to concerns around the new variant.

A senior executive with a domestic low-cost airline said the reluctance was on account of experiences from previous travel bans.

"Thousands of people, especially NRIs, who came home last time around could not go back to the countries of their employment. They came to India and were stuck here because a country like Singapore or Saudi Arabia wouldn't allow them to enter without rigorous quarantines. That is why international demand is running below what was originally expected for Christmas, New Year's and so on," the executive said.

Singapore, for example, announced freezing of ticket sales for flights under its programme for quarantine-free travel into the city-state from December 23 to January 20. Under this programme, Singapore allowed quarantine-free entry from some countries, including India, to fully vaccinated and tested passengers.

Domestic travel demand, though, continues to be robust despite a rise in Covid-19 numbers. Prahlad Krishnamurti, Chief Business Officer of Flipkart-owned online travel agency Cleartrip, said: "We are witnessing a minor increase in cancellation for international flights towards the end of the year amid conversations about the new variant. However, domestic flight bookings continue to be on a healthy growth trajectory. In 2022, the domestic flight trends are looking very strong compared to 2021. Metro destinations are on track to exceed 2021 numbers. Leisure destinations like Goa, Chandigarh, Jaipur are showing very strong uptick compared to 2021 numbers."

The domestic travel demand, which started gaining momentum since the festival season in October-November, has continued till the year-end holidays season, and is expected to rise going ahead as reflected by the increase in search queries being made for leisure destinations.

Rajnish Kumar, Co-founder & Group CPTO, ixigo, said: "Domestic travel appetite is still strong for the holiday season. We have seen a 10-15% year-on-year surge in search queries for popular domestic leisure destinations for year-end travel including Goa, Jaipur, Srinagar and Udaipur. Wedding-related travel demand has also surged in November and December with people getting back to the trend of destination weddings. With air quality worsening in metro cities like Delhi, we are also witnessing a trend of 'escape tourism' where an increasing level of pollution has tourists flocking to destinations like Goa".

In addition, a survey by LocalCircles flagged that despite the Omicron risk, 58% of the respondents in India still planned to travel in the next three months. But even though more than half of the respondents plan to travel up till March, only 18% have made their bookings to travel by either of the three means of transport -- air, rail and road.

22 farm unions float front, to fight all Punjab seats

that there was no decision on forming an alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), sources said talks were on with the party, which had emerged as the principal opposition in the last elections.

The SSM leaders said that the BKU (Dakaunda), BKU (Lakhowal) and BKU (Major Singh Poonewala) might join them too. Their constitutions do not allow them to jump into politics, and they would need to amend the same first, the SSM said.

Jagmohan Singh Dakaunda, the general secretary of the BKU (Dakaunda), said they would hold a meeting on December 27 on whether to support the SSM or not. What was clear, he added, was that they would neither oppose the SSM nor contest polls.

A decision was taken to not go by the name SKM for the political front to keep the Morcha distinct as a purely farmers' plank. In a statement, the SKM's nine-member coordination committee, including representatives Darshal Pal and Jagjit Singh Dallewal, said nine of the Morcha's member organisations were not in favour of contesting elections.

In total, 11 farmer unions were staying away from the SSM as of now, including the BKU (Darshan Pal), BKU (Krantikari), BKU (Sidhupur), Azad Kisan Committee (Doaba), Jai Kisan Andolan, Dasuya Ganna Sangharsh Committee, Kisan Sangharsh Committee, Lok Bhalai Insaf Welfare Society, and Kirti Kisan Union.

Rajewal's outfit BKU (Rajewal) is the second biggest organisation of farmers in Punjab, with Rajewal, a farm union leader since 1971, considered the state's tallest leader. During the farmers' agitation, videos of his speeches were widely circulated. "He has become a national figure now," a political leader said.

At 43, Qadian is among the youngest farmers leaders in the state, with his organisation BKU (Qadian) claiming 70,000 members in Fatehgarh Sahib area. His grandfather was a founding member of the BKU.

Sandhu, the third farmer leader who addressed the SSM meeting on Saturday, heads the Jamhoori Kisan Sabha. A former member of the students' wing of the CPM, he was shot in his leg during militancy days. He quit the CPM in 2001.

Pointing out that the SKM was a non-political platform for farmers' issues, comprising 400 organisations from across the country, the SKM committee said the Morcha would neither give a call for boycott of the elections nor would it contest.

The SKM is planning to meet on January 15 to decide its future course of action, now that the farmers' agitation has been called off after the government repealed the three contentious farm laws.

If the farmers' political front goes alone, Punjab will see a five-corner contest, including the SSM, Congress, AAP, Akali Dal-BSP alliance, and the BJP with its ally Punjab Lok Congress of Amarinder Singh.

This is likely to dent the fortunes of all political parties, but particularly the Akali Dal that counts the farmers as a major support base. However, with the biggest farmers' union, BKU (Ugrahan), along with other organisations with Leftist leanings staying away, farmer votes might not rally completely behind the SSM.

Railway engineer, other officials sell off vintage steam engine as scrap in Bihar, 7 booked

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, DECEMBER 25

AN ENGINEER of the Eastern Central Railway in Bihar has allegedly sold off a vintage steam engine as scrap in connivance with several railway officials.

The shocking case recently came to light following which the Samastipur diesel shed's engineer Rajeev Ranjan Jha and helper Sushil Yadav were suspended and an FIR was registered in the matter.

On 14 December, 2021, Rajeev Ranjan Jha and Sushil Yadav were found getting an steam engine at the Purnia court railway station dismantled with the aid of gas cutters.

As the old steam engine, a relic of railway history, has been lying at the Purnia court station for more than three decades, Purnia outpost Railway Protection Force (RPF) in-charge MM Rahman found its dismantling unusual and doubted the engineer.

But the accused promptly showed Rahman an "order" issued by the divisional mechanical engineer (DME) for dismantling the steam engine and taking it back to the Samastipur railway shed.

On 15 December, a constable posted at the railway shed saw a mention in the register about the entry of a vehicle with the steam engine. But he could not find the steam engine when he looked for it in the shed.

The dismantled steam engine was actually sold on way to the Samastipur railway shed, about 180 km from the Purnia court station, which comes under the Samastipur division of the Eastern Central Railway.

The "DME order" was also found to be forged. After DME Sanjay Paswan confirmed to the Purnia court station RPF in-charge that he had not issued any such order, a case of forgery and criminal conspiracy was filed on 19 December against Jha, Yadav and five other officials at the Banmankhi RPF post on Rahman's complaint. The accused are reported to be absconding.

Samastipur divisional railway manager (DRM) Alok Agrawal told reporters that after suspending the accused engineer and the helper, a sub-inspector posted at the diesel shed, Virendra Dwivedi, was also suspended for negligence of duty.

The DRM called the sale of the old steam engine "a breach of trust" by railway insiders.

Samastipur divisional safety commissioner AK Lal said the department was trying to find out where the steam locomotive was sold as scrap. Its price was also being ascertained.

The Purnia Court railway station is one of the oldest railway stations in Bihar. It is marked as the "last station" under the Eastern Central Railway in the state.

CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

VACCINATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS
1,14,311

TOTAL CASES
14,43,062

	Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	13,500	13,252
ICU BEDS	2,786	2,753

	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Dec 24	180	82	0	62,697
Dec 25	249	96	1	57,295
Total	934*	14,17,024	25,104	3,23,46,295

*Total active cases

249 CASES ON SATURDAY

Delhi cases near 250, positivity rate inches to 0.5%

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

DELHI'S DAILY Covid cases crossed the 200-mark for the first time since mid-June. On Saturday, the city reported 249 new cases, the highest since June 13 when 255 new cases were reported, as per data.

This week, over 144 cases were reported on average each day in comparison to over 70 cases last week and 51.4 cases on average the week before.

Not only has the absolute number of cases gone up, but the daily positivity rate also shot up to 0.43% on Saturday with 57,295 tests conducted — inching closer to the 0.5% mark.

The first level of restrictions under the government's graded response action plan kicks in when positivity rate remains over 0.5% for two consecutive days, or cumulative new positive cases for the week touch the 1,500-mark, or occupancy of oxygen beds remains at 500 for a week.

Under this, shops in markets and malls dealing with non-essential goods and services will be allowed to open as per the odd-even formula from 10 am to 8 pm, while one weekly market will be allowed per municipal zone at half the vendor capacity.

Restaurants can operate at 50% capacity from 8 am to 10 pm, bars from 12-10 pm, also at 50% capacity. Delhi Metro and buses will be allowed to operate at 50% capacity. Delhi government offices can call 100% grade I officers, while private firms will be allowed to call 50% of staff between 9 am to 5 pm. Night curfew will come into effect under which movement of people will be restricted between 10 pm and 5 am.

The city has achieved 100% first dose vaccinations. *Amit Mehra*

Besides this, cinemas, banquet halls, auditoriums, spas, gyms and entertainment parks, gyms and yoga centres will be shut. There will be a complete ban on social/entertainment/religious/political/festival-related gatherings. Sports complexes, stadiums (except national/international sports events), entertainment parks will be shut.

Positivity rate up

Positivity rate is an important marker of the spread of the infection, and although it has been below 0.1% almost constantly since mid-July in the city, it started increasing over the last 10 days.

To compare, the positivity rate at the beginning of March stood at 0.44% just before the second wave when over 28,000 cases were reported in a single day at the peak. By the end of March, it had shot up to 2.71% and by the end of April to 32.69%, as per data.

The increase in positivity rate has been despite an increase in the number of tests; the rate usually dips when there is an increase in tests. On average, more than 57,000 tests were conducted in the city each day in the last seven days. There were 53,505 tests conducted the week before.

There are only 221 hospitalised patients in the city as of Saturday. However, the number is likely to go up as the number of cases does.

Data also shows that Delhi has reported another death due to the infection, the fourth in a week. There were no deaths recorded in the 9 days before that.

At South MCD park opening, Shah takes swipe at CM, AAP hits back

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

TAKING A swipe at the Delhi government, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday said it does more publicity and less work. He was speaking after inaugurating the Bharat Darshan Park set up by the South MCD at Punjabi Bagh. The attack drew a sharp reaction from the AAP, which said the PM's hoardings "blow his own trumpet for even the smallest of the jobs".

"I have come to tell the Chief Minister of Delhi that he should advertise a little less and pay arrears due to the MCDs. If the Kejriwal government gives the municipal corporations Rs 13,000 crore, they will be able to do very good work," Shah said.

"One way of working is to do what is promised... whether it is development of Delhi, fighting Covid, securing the nation, making policies...," he said. "The other way is to give advertisements, whether or not work is done, and get photos published and appear on TV for interviews."

The Aam Aadmi Party hit back, calling the BJP-ruled MCDs the "world's most corrupt municipal corporations". "BJP leaders eat up all the money of the three MCDs and loot public funds. If Amit Shah tries to run them honestly instead of supporting their corruption, there will be a huge corpus of funds left for welfare," it said in a statement.

On the cost for advertisements, the AAP said the Delhi government has "only put up 108 hoardings" against 850 hoardings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UP CM Yogi Adityanath in the capital. "The Delhi government spends barely Rs 70 crore on advertisements compared to Adityanath's splurge of Rs 2,000 crore annually," it said.

"Mr Shah should go around Delhi once and see how every nook and corner of it has been hijacked by Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath," the AAP statement said.

Shah was speaking after inaugurating the Bharat Darshan Park. *Gajendra Yadav*

At Saturday's event, Shah also spoke about the under-construction Ram Mandir at Ayodhya and said this was the BJP's old promise to the people.

"People made fun of us saying '*mandir wahin banayenge, thithi nahin batayenge*'. Now that the temple is being built, these people are going to pray there. We welcome this," he said.

The Union government has done much for Delhi, he added, listing work including housing, beautification of the Yamuna riverfront, and extension of the Metro.

The Bharat Darshan Park, spread across 8.5 acres, houses replicas of 21 historically or culturally significant structures from across the country, including the Taj Mahal, Mysore Palace, Charminar, Gateway of India, Sanchi Stupa, and Konark Temple. The structures are made out of around 350 tonnes of scrap material that was with the SDMC.

At city's Sacred Heart Cathedral, a muted Christmas for second year

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

DELHI'S SACRED Heart Cathedral remained closed for visitors on Christmas to maintain Covid protocol, but the festivities played out outside its gates on Christmas Eve.

The Cathedral, one of the biggest and oldest in Delhi, draws visitors every year during Christmas. Like always, it is draped with lights and a bright star shines atop it this year as well. But for the second year in a row, it is a quiet Christmas on its premises.

To avoid large numbers, the Cathedral's main gates were closed on December 24 and will remain closed till December 26 morning and no visitors have been allowed inside.

Besides the Christmas Vigil Mass at midnight, six other masses were held over the course of Friday evening and Saturday morning, each with entry for only 200 people who registered themselves for it online. To reach more people, the midnight mass and the Christmas morning masses were live-streamed on the YouTube channel of the Cathedral.

"It's not nice to have to restrict people. We would have loved to celebrate with everyone. It doesn't feel good to have to turn people away but it's for everyone to be safe," said a young 24-year-old volunteer manning the side gate through which registered people were entering the church. He and the other volunteers would have to keep vigil till late into the night as people flocked to the Cathedral hoping to attend the midnight mass.

Outside the church on Saturday. *Praveen Khanna*

Sanjay Raj had come to drop his mother, sister and two nephews for the mass. They could register but three members of his family, including him, had not been fast enough. "I've spent so many Christmas Eve nights here, it's strange to know that there are such few people inside. I'll just go home for now, I'll attend morning mass in another church," he said.

Beyond the barricades, the main gate was bustling with activity as dozens of people gathered to look at the lights and click photographs. Vendors selling Santa hats, plastic reindeer horns and other bric-a-brac milled around and several chaat stalls were busy with their customers.

Lines of burning candles grew in front of the statue of Christ outside the Cathedral as visitors lit them and prayed before it. Among them was Sapna (33) who had come with her parents and sister. "I wanted to attend mass but didn't know I had to register. But it's okay, I'll pray here and then pray at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib and go home," she said.

Will offer job to Dalit cook fired from Uttarakhand govt school: AAP minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

In a recent incident, upper-caste students allegedly refused to eat mid-day meals prepared by the woman in a government school at Champawat, Uttarakhand

SOCIAL WELFARE Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam Saturday said the Delhi government would offer the job of 'Bhojan Mata' to the Dalit woman who was ousted from her job as a cook at a government school in Uttarakhand.

He alleged that the BJP—which is in power in the state—had "encouraged casteism" by firing the cook. "I, being the Minister of Women and Child Development of Delhi, invite her to come to Delhi and the Delhi government will give her the job of preparing food," he said.

In a recent incident, upper-caste students allegedly refused to eat mid-day meals prepared by the woman in a government school at Champawat, Uttarakhand. Following this, the school management committee removed her from the job on the grounds that her appointment was wrongly done.

"Instead of convincing the children, the school authorities fired her. People who spread hatred should not be encouraged. Removing her from the job means promoting casteism," said Gautam, adding that "the parents argued that general category students are in majority in the school, so 'Bhojan Mata' should also be appointed from this category".

"From utensils, buildings, roads, shoes, clothes, even idols of god that are placed inside temples, are made by backward castes. So, if people with such casteist thinking refuse to eat food cooked by a Dalit woman, will they stop wearing their clothes, shoes or even staying at home? Our country cannot develop if people continue with such a mindset," he said.

Taking a jibe at the Uttarakhand government, he added, "CM Pushkar Singh Dhami is not capable of delivering justice to people. The BJP only does politics of religion and caste, politics of dividing the society."

DELAY IN NEET PG COUNSELLING

Resident docs across country threaten mass resignation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

PROTESTING THE delays in NEET-PG counselling, resident doctors across the country have threatened mass resignation if the government fails to expedite the matter, according to the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA). Doctors have stayed away from all duties, including in the emergency department, for nine days now.

"Resident doctors across the nation will be forced to go forward with mass resignation from services if the demand is not met at the earliest. We once again urge the Union Government to fast track court hearings and to expedite NEET-PG 2021 counselling and subsequent admission process," said a release from FORDA on Saturday.

The doctors symbolically returned the candles and flowers showered on them to commemorate their contribution during the pandemic.

After delays due to the second wave, NEET 2021 was conducted in September instead of May. But the counselling process has been stuck because of pending cases related to the recently created EWS quota in the Supreme Court.

"The Union Government needs to submit a report on the criteria for the quota. This is the reason the court case is taking so long. Despite our protest, nothing concrete has happened to expedite the case," said Dr Manish Kumar, president, FORDA.

Big medical college associated hospitals such as Safdarjung, RML, Lady Hardinge, Lok Nayak, and GTB have been on strike. All services, including emergency services, have been affected at all the hospitals.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of the following Mail/Express Trains running over Katihar Division will be changed (PREPONED) for better mobility and punctuality. The list is as under:-

Train No. & Train Name	At New Jalpaiguri Station				Date (from Originating Station)
	Existing Time		Revised Time		
	Arr.	Dep.	Arr.	Dep.	
15624 Kamakhya - Bhagat Ki Kothi (Jodhpur) Exp.	01:30	01:40	00:45	00:55	07.01.2022
15903 Dibrugarh - Chandigarh Jn. Express	03:50	04:00	03:25	03:35	03.01.2022
15933 New Tinsukia Jn. - Amritsar Jn. Express	04:00	04:10	03:25	03:35	04.01.2022
15909 Dibrugarh - Lalgarh Jn. Express	06:00	06:10	05:10	05:20	02.01.2022
22411 Naharlagun - Anand Vihar Terminal Exp.	09:50	10:00	09:05	09:15	04.01.2022
12423 Dibrugarh - New Delhi Rajdhani Express	13:05	13:15	13:00	13:05	02.01.2022
22449 Guwahati - New Delhi Poorvottar S Kranti Exp.	13:30	13:40	13:15	13:25	05.01.2022
14037 Silchar - New Delhi Poorvottar S Kranti Exp.	13:30	13:40	13:15	13:25	03.01.2022
14619 Agartala - Firozpur Cantt Jn. Tripura Sundari Exp.	13:30	13:40	13:15	13:25	06.01.2022
12505 Kamakhya Jn. - Anand Vihar (T) Northeast Exp	20:10	20:20	19:20	19:30	02.01.2022
15934 Amritsar Jn. - New Tinsukia Jn. Express	07:30	07:40	07:10	07:20	07.01.2022
12506 Anand Vihar (T) - Kamakhya North East Exp.	08:20	08:30	07:35	07:45	02.01.2022
15904 Chandigarh Jn. - Dibrugarh Express	09:30	09:40	08:30	08:40	05.01.2022
20504 New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express	11:45	11:55	11:30	11:40	03.01.2022
20506 New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express	11:45	11:55	11:30	11:40	02.01.2022
15654 Jammu Tawi - Guwahati Amarnath Express	14:00	14:10	13:05	13:15	07.01.2022
15652 Jammu Tawi - Guwahati Lohit Express	14:00	14:10	13:05	13:15	05.01.2022
15623 Bhagat Ki Kothi (Jodhpur) - Kamakhya Exp.	14:00	14:10	13:05	13:15	04.01.2022
12424 New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express	13:05	13:15	12:50	13:00	02.01.2022
15910 Lalgarh Jn. - Dibrugarh Avadh Assam Exp.	17:20	17:30	16:30	16:40	02.01.2022
20502 Anand Vihar Terminal - Agartala Tejas Exp.	17:40	17:50	17:00	17:10	05.01.2022
15635 Okha - Guwahati Express	21:05	21:15	21:00	21:10	07.01.2022
15667 Gandhidham Jn. - Kamakhya Express	21:05	21:15	21:00	21:10	08.01.2022
22450 New Delhi - Guwahati Poorvottar S Kranti Exp.	23:10	23:20	22:50	23:00	02.01.2022
14038 New Delhi - Silchar Express	23:00	23:10	22:50	23:00	06.01.2022
14620 Firozpur Cantt Jn. - Agartala Express	23:00	23:10	22:50	23:00	03.01.2022
15656 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Kamakhya Exp.	00:45	00:55	00:05	00:15	05.01.2022
19305 Dr. Ambedkar Nagar - Kamakhya Express	03:20	03:30	02:10	02:20	06.01.2022

NOTE: Passengers are therefore, advised to please check the detailed Time-Table of above trains through RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or the NTES App.

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

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
3045/2021

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

With profound grief and sorrow,
we inform the demise of our beloved

Bharti Nayar
(W/o Late Shri Kuldip Nayar)
on 24.12.2021

The Virtual Prayer Meeting
will be held on 27.12.2021 from 3 to 4 pm
Zoom Meeting ID : 896 2340 9765
Passcode : 12345

Cherished by:
Kavita and Sudhir
Kavita and Rajiv
Mandira and Ratish
Kanika and Kartik
Kanika and Advitya
Jihan, Inan, Kairav and Mahira

ASHOK VIHAR	SIRIFORT	SHADIPUR	IHBAS
Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
475 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	429 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	427 AQI PM 10 (0–500)	426 AQI PM 10 (0–500)

0-50 Good | 51-100 Satisfactory | 101-200 Moderate | 201-300 Poor | 301-400 Very Poor | 401-500 Severe

SKYWATCH

FORECAST: Dec 26

Generally cloudy sky. Shallow fog in the morning. Light rain/ thundershowers towards the evening/ night

MAX: 22 (1.6 ºC above normal) | MIN: 8 (0.1º C above normal)

6 held for 'buying babies from poor women, selling them to childless couples'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

THE DELHI Police Crime Branch has arrested six women for allegedly running a baby trafficking racket. Police have rescued two infants from their possession and identified 10 others who were trafficked.

According to police, the gang allegedly approached poor women to "buy" their children and sold them to childless couples for a hefty sum. An FIR has been filed under sections 365 (kidnapping), 370 (trafficking), 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code and under section 81 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

Initial investigation has revealed that the gang has been operating for the last three years and has, so far sold 50 babies. Raids are on to nab the remaining accused, police said.

DCP (crime branch) Rajesh Deo said, "We have arrested the six women, including the kingpin, Kajal (31). The other mastermind is absconding. The gang used to approach poor people and offer to buy their children, and later sold the babies," he said.

Police suspect their racket has spread to other states as well.

On December 17, police received information about a gang involved in kidnapping and trafficking of babies. "They got to know that some of the gang members would come to Gandhi Nagar to sell an infant, and police nabbed three women from the spot. They had an 8-day-old boy with them and were asking for money when police made their arrest," Deo added.

During questioning, the accused told police that some years ago, they would donate eggs at an IVF clinic for Rs 25,000 each. That's when they got the idea that rich, childless couples would be willing to pay for the opportunity to have a baby.

Police said that the gang started identifying pregnant women from poor families and offering them money to give up the child. "In the meantime, they identified several potential 'buyers' and also circulated the child's pictures among touts via WhatsApp," Deo said.

"The gang also convinced seller and buyers that the whole process was not illegal. In some cases, they provided notarised documents in which the seller would claim to know who had legally adopted the child," the DCP said. "A child was 'purchased' for anything between Rs 2 lakh-Rs 3 lakh and the accused would get a hefty commission," he added.

Retired teacher dies of cardiac arrest trying to stop carjacking bid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

TWO PERSONS, including a juvenile, were nabbed for allegedly robbing a car from a retired 65-year-old government school teacher in Rohini, who tried to stop them by hanging on to the door and was dragged on the road for a few metres before collapsing and dying of cardiac arrest.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini district) Pranav Tayal identified the accused as Kapil Tiwari (27) and a 17-year-old boy. Police said they had left the car in Shahbad Dairy and fled.

"On December 23, we received a PCR call that a man's car was robbed and he was found in an unconscious state. He was taken to BSA hospital where he was declared dead. The man was identified as Ramesh Chander Rana by his wife; she informed police that her husband had left home in his WagonR around 2 pm," he said.

During investigation, Tayal said they recorded a statement of an eyewitness, Akash Grover, who was in the vicinity in his car around 10.30 pm.

"He told police in his statement that at K N Katju road in front of G3S mall, he saw a WagonR being driven at a high speed and one person hanging from the driver's side, who later fell on the road. The man called for help to catch the thieves as they drove away. He eventually lost consciousness," said the DCP.

An FIR of murder and robbery was registered, he added.

Several teams were formed and they found the stolen car in Shahbad Dairy.

"Our teams scanned footage from 34 CCTVs, and received information on Saturday about one of the accused. A trap was laid in Rohini's Sector 11 and he was arrested. He was on a stolen motorbike, and disclosed that he is involved in five cases of burglary and theft. The juvenile was apprehended on Friday and sent to an observation home," Tayal said.

CURFEW

Police on patrol as night curfew kicks in across Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. The curfew is from 11 pm to 5 am. *Gajendra Yadav*

Water supply to be hit in parts of Delhi on Monday

New Delhi: Water supply will be disrupted in parts of Delhi on Monday.

The DJB said in a statement that supply is likely to be hit in Panchsheel Enclave, Akbar Road, Sarojini Nagar, Chanakya-puri, Safdarjung, Race Course, Maulana Azad Road, Sujan Singh Park, Mayur Vihar Phase-2, and Satya Niketan.

The disruption is due to annual flushing of the underground reservoir. **ENS**

AT PATAUDI SCHOOL

Christmas event disrupted by outfit alleging conversion

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
PATAUDI, DECEMBER 25

A GROUP of people affiliated with several right-wing outfits entered a school in Pataudi during a celebration on Christmas Eve and disrupted the event, alleging that people from the Christian community had gathered there for "religious conversion".

According to police, the incident took place at 5 pm at SBD Public School on Friday. Amit Kumar, SHO Pataudi, said, "We got to know of the incident from video clips. The school's owner had given the premises to some people for a Christmas celebration. Some men arrived and raised slogans, they thought that religious conversion was happening. They left after the school owner requested them to, saying it was a Christmas event. We have not received any complaint."

RP Pandey, who runs Dharam Jagriti Mission in Pataudi, and lives across the school, said some women knocked on his door on Wednesday and gave him an invitation to attend a function in the school on Friday.

He alleged: "... On Friday at 3 pm, we heard that some outsiders were conducting religious conversions under the garb of celebrating Christmas there. So we went to check their agenda. For over an hour, we observed the function... But later we saw they were brainwashing children through drama and speeches into accepting Christianity with the aim of religious conversion... So, we stopped it and asked them to leave... *hum iss tarah ki gatividhiyon ko safal nahi hone denge* (we won't allow such activities to succeed)."

Video grab of protesters disrupting the choir. *Express*

He said he got on to the stage and grabbed the mic to address the crowd. In a video clip shared on social media, Pandey can be heard saying, "We are not disrespecting Christ, but we want to tell these children... to remember him if they want and do it legally but don't fall for attempts of religious conversion or destruction of Indian culture is guaranteed. You need to take a resolution to protect it, take that resolution and chant 'Jai Shri Ram'." In several video clips, protesters could be heard disrupting the choir and raising 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Satya Sanatan Dharm ki Jai' slogans.

Narender Singh Pahari, a former RSS and BJP leader, who was among the protesters, alleged, "It was not a Christmas celebration, their aim was religious conversion. They had spent a lot of money and brought pastors and people from outside. They were targeting poor people from nearby areas for conversion. Our religious sentiments were hurt as there were attempts to divide Hindus." Pahari had contested the 2019 assembly polls from Pataudi as an independent candidate.

The event organiser, Ravi Kumar, said they stopped the function after the objections.

Kumar, who has a tent business in Pataudi, said the claims of religious conversion were baseless: "It was a simple Christmas function... there was no preaching. At least 55 people, including women and children, were in attendance and some people from the Christian community had come. Around 4 pm, a group of more than 100 people came and opposed the gathering. We told them if they had any objection, we would cancel the function. But they said they just wanted to observe and told us to not mention anything about their religion. An hour later, they disrupted the event. Some got on stage and raised slogans, alleging religious conversion was being conducted."

Kumar said they asked women and children to leave to avoid an escalation: "The protesters told people to leave and never return. We felt hurt since it happened in front of children, who were scared. Everyone has a right to practice their religion. We don't know what we did wrong. Only a few elements are trying to disrupt harmony. We have chosen not to file any complaint."

Srikant, who runs the school, said a woman in his neighbourhood had requested him for space to hold a programme on the premises. "I told them I can give the space for an hour after school... I did this as a gesture of goodwill. In the evening, I got calls from several Hindu outfits asking me why I had provided the space. They alleged that religious conversion was happening. I am not aware of any such thing. It was just like Christmas day is celebrated. None of the students from our school were present," he said.

DELHI ASSEMBLY RESEARCH CENTRE
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME
CORRIGENDUM

With reference to the Advertisement **DIP/Shabdarth/D/167/21-22**, published on Dt. 25.12.2021 regarding **Engagement of Fellows/Associates Fellows**, the Last date of Submission of application may be read as **8th January 2022** which was wrongly published as 8th January 2020. Rest will remain unchanged.

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD
(Irrigation Wing)

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR DESILTING WORK WITH DREDGER AT BALANCING RESERVOIR, BBMB SUNDERNAGAR (H.P)

Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) is seeking a qualified and experienced firm to perform the dredging work with their own dredgers, during the month of monsoon season (1st July 2022 to 30th September 2022) in the Balancing Reservoir at BBMB Sundernagar (H.P). The EOI document and details can be downloaded from **https://www.bbmb.gov.in/infocuslist.htm.** Qualified firms with adequate resources, experience and track record interested in this work are requested to submit their respective Expression of Interest (EOI) before 3:00 PM on 07.01.2022 at below address:-

Sr. Executive Engineer, Electrical and Workshop Division, BBMB Sundernagar

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Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR

(Tele-fax No: 019-2496089, e-mail id: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in)
Gist of e-NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/252/e-tendering
(Short-Term)
Dated:-24.12.2021.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K State e-tenders are invited from registered/ reputed/ experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	AAA	Position of funds	Time of completion (Days)	TS No.	Earnest Money (Rs)
1	2	3	4	5		6	7
Annual Maintenance Contract of one (01) No. 13 Passenger Thyssen Krupp and One (01) No.20 Passenger (G+4) OTIS make Lift at Govt. LD Hospital, Srinagar	1.50	200	09 AHof 2021 Dt:-22.03.21	Available	365	167 of 12/21	3000.00

1. The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 24.12.2021 (16.00 hrs).
2. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 24.12.2021 (16: hrs) to 04.01.2022 (14:00 hrs) in two (02) cover.
3. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 04.01.2021 (17.00 hrs) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

DIPK-15675/21

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
सातवां वृत्त, लोक निर्माण, गोपेश्वर

Office of the Superintending Engineering, 7th Circle, PWD, Gopeshwar
Website:-http: pwd.uk.gov.in Email: sepwdgope@rediffmail.com

पत्र संख्या: 7484/50 यातायात(रूद्र0)-7/2021 दिनांक-24.12.2021

शुद्धि पत्र सूचना

इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक 7133/50यातायात (रूद्र0)-7/2021 दिनांक 09.12.2021 के द्वारा निम्न ई-निविदायें आमंत्रित की गयी थी।

क्र0 स0	कार्य का नाम
1	राज्य योजना के अंतर्गत जपनद रूद्रप्रयाग के विधानसभा क्षेत्र रूद्रप्रयाग के विकासखण्ड जखोली में मयाली रणधार मोटर मार्ग के किमी. 1.00 से 5.00 तक बी.एम./एस.डी.बी.सी. द्वारा सुधार कार्य (स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में)।
2	-तदैव-किमी. 6.00 से 10.00 तक बी.एम./एस.डी.बी.सी. द्वारा सुधार कार्य (स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में)।
3	-तदैव-किमी.11.00 से 14.50 तक बी.एम./एस.डी.बी.सी. द्वारा सुधार कार्य (स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में)।

उक्त ई-निविदा के शीर्षक को निम्न प्रकार संशोधित किया जाता है:-

क्र0 स0	कार्य का नाम
1	राज्य योजना के अंतर्गत जपनद रूद्रप्रयाग के विधानसभा क्षेत्र रूद्रप्रयाग के विकासखण्ड जखोली में मयाली रणधार मोटर मार्ग के किमी. 1.00 से 5.00 तक पी0सी0 द्वारा सुदृढीकरण कार्य (स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में)।
2	-तदैव-किमी. 6.00 से 10.00 तक पी0सी0 द्वारा सुदृढीकरण कार्य (स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में)।
3	-तदैव-किमी.11.00 से 14.50 तक पी0सी0 द्वारा सुदृढीकरण कार्य (स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में)।

उक्त ई-निविदाओं में संशोधित Schedule "B" के अनुरूप दरें भरी जाय, तथा ई-निविदा हेतु संशोधित तिथियां निम्न प्रकार है:-

क्र0 स0	कार्य का नाम	पूर्व तिथि	संशोधित तिथि
1	Document Download/ Sale End Date	28-Dec-2021 03:00PM	30-Dec-2021 03:00PM
2	Bid Submission End Date	28-Dec-2021 03:00PM	30-Dec-2021 03:00PM
3	Bid Opening Date	29-Dec-2021 03:30PM	31-Dec-2021 03:30PM

ई-निविदा की शर्तें पूर्ववत रहेंगी।

हस्ता/-
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
सातवां वृत्त, लो0नि0वि0
गोपेश्वर

Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran Offers e-Auction of
Residential and Commercial Properties in Urban Estate of Hisar
On 29th December, 2021

List of Residential properties in Urban Estate of Hisar

S. No	Sector, Urban Estate	No. of Plots
1	1 & 4, Hisar	4
2	3, Hisar	10
3	4 P-II, Hisar	24
4	5, Hisar	26
5	9&11, Hisar	21
6	13P	1
7	14P-II	4
8	33, P-I, Hisar	41

List of Commercial properties in Urban Estate Hisar

S. No	Sector, Urban Estate	No. of Plots
1	CUE-I, Hisar	9
2	Adjoining Pushpa Complex, U.E.-II, Hisar	7
3	Sector 9 & 11, Phase I & II, Pocket A & B, Hisar	29
4	13P, Hisar	14
5	Sector-14, PKT-A, Hisar	1
6	15A, Hisar	1
7	Old Court, Hisar	9
8	MGA, Hisar	10

e-Auction Portal https://hsvphry.org.in e-Auction will start at 10:00 AM

Registrations will close one day before the scheduled date of e-Auction, at 5 pm.

Loan Facility From Leading Banks

For any queries email us at eauctionquery.hsvp@gmail.com

Helpline Number: 8360516607 (9 AM to 5 PM), 1800-180-3030 (8AM TO 8 PM)

Chief Administrator Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran

The detailed information of the sites and terms & conditions of e-auction will be available on https://hsvphry.org.in.

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-III, DELHI
4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act. 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993).
In the matter of: O.A. No.364/2021
CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA ..... Applicant
Versus
KRISHAN LATA ..... Defendants

D-1. KRISHAN LATA
S/O SH. MAHAVIR PRASAD LATA
PROP. OF M/S. JAI AMBE PRINTER,
2228, Sita Ram Bazar, Shankar Gali North, Delhi-110006
Also at: PROP. OF M/S. JAI AMBE PRINTER, IInd Floor, No.246, in Block - KP, Pitampura, Delhi-110034.
Also at: G-23/123, Sec-7, Rohini, Delhi-110085.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal **27.01.2022 at 10:30 A.M.**

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-

(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the **"Cisco Webex"** application / software.
(ii) **"Meeting ID"** and **"Password"** for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar / Recovery Officer-I/and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal **i.e. "drt.gov.in"** under the Public Notice Head.
(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates / Litigants can contact the concerned official at **Ph. No.23748469.**

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the **16th Day of December 2021.**

SEAL OF COURT

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL

SBI State Bank of India
LOCAL HEAD OFFICE,
1 Strand Road, Kolkata- 700001
Telephone No. 033-22436677, E-mail: agmpre.lhokol@sbi.co.in

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS/AGENCIES/FIRMS FOR MAINTENANCE OF FAÇADE LIGHTING AND HT&LT ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

SBI invites separate applications from expertise contractors/agencies/firms for pre-qualification of undertaking Annual Maintenance Contract for following jobs at above mentioned premises as under:-
1. Façade Lighting
2. Low Tension and High tension Electrical Installation at Local Head Office Kolkata.

The contractors/agencies/firms who are already empanelled under different categories need to apply afresh. Interested contractors/agencies/firms may download the detailed application forms from the Bank's website **www.sbi.co.in** under Procurement News. Last date and time of Submission of application forms upto 3.00 PM on 12.01.2022

Place: Kolkata **Assistant General Manager**
Date: 26.12.2021 **(Premises & Estate), State Bank of India**
9th floor, B-Block, Samriddhi Bhavan, 1 Strand Road, Kolkata- 700001

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD
(Power Wing)

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

ENIT No.: 02/2021-22/POD-23 Dated: 23.12.2021
Name of Office: The Sr. Executive Engineer, O&M Division BBMB, Jagadhri-135003 (Haryana)
Name of the Work: Work for providing White wash, Colour wash, Distemper and Snowcem etc. on the Residential & Non-Residential buildings at 220 KV Sub Station, BBMB, Jagadhri.

Last Date of submission of pre-qualifying Documents along with cost of tender documents	22.01.2022 up to 15.00 hrs.
Total cost of the work	Rs.8.14 Lacs
Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs.8200/-

For detailed NIT/terms & conditions etc. please visit/downloaded from BBMB website http://eproc.punjab.gov.in and www.bbmb.gov.in.

1355-PR-Bhakra TS-4 | For Your Better Tomorrow Save Energy Today

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
1st & Ground Floor, I.T. Bhawan, Mehli, Shimla-171013, H.P.
Tel. No. 0177-2623259, 2623513, 2626320, 2623043
FAX: 0177-2626320, Website: www.hpsedc.in

No. HPSEDC/HW/Drones/2k21-7693 Date: 24.12.2021

e-TENDER NOTICE

H.P. State Electronics Development Corporation intends to procure Unmanned Arial Vehicles (UAVs) (Drones) to Various Govt. Department/ Boards/ Corporations/ Autonomous bodies in Himachal Pradesh.

Pre-bid meeting will be held on 03.01.2022 at 12.30 P.M. through Video Conferencing as per link: https://meet.google.com/hqw-vqxy-yxc. Last date of bids submission is 21.01.2022 upto 2.30 P.M. and same shall be opened on 22.01.2022, 2.30 P.M. at HPSEDC. Tender document is also published on HPSEDC website i.e. **hpsedc.in**.

603/HP **GENERAL MANAGER (TECHNICAL)**

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, सा.नि.वि. संभाग।।
उदयपुर, मुख्यालय बाँसवाड़ा

क्रमांकः- डी-1263 दिनांकः 21.12.2021

(निविदा संशोधन सूचना)
निविदा संख्या 12/2021-22

कार्य का नामः Construction of High Level Bridge (Across Mahi River) at Beneshwar Dham on Dungarpur-Banswara Road
NIB Code:- PWD2122A2163
UBN No.:- PWD2122WLOB10697

विवरण	निविदा के अनुसार दिनांक	संशोधित दिनांक
ऑनलाईन निविदा फार्म जमा कराने की अन्तिम तारीख एवं समय	27 दिसम्बर, 2021 (सोमवार) अपरान्ह 6:00 बजे तक	03 जनवरी, 2022, (सोमवार) अपरान्ह 6:00 बजे तक
निविदा सम्बन्धित दस्तावेज जमा कराने की अंतिम तारीख एवं समय	दिनांक 28.12.2021 (मंगलवार) को प्रातः 11.00 बजे तक निविदा खोलने वाले कार्यालय में।	दिनांक 04 जनवरी, 2022 (मंगलवार) को प्रातः 11.00 बजे तक निविदा खोलने वाले कार्यालय में।
ऑनलाईन निविदा खोलने की तारीख एवं समय	29 दिसम्बर, 2021, (बुधवार) अपरान्ह 1:00 बजे तक	05 जनवरी, 2022, (बुधवार) अपरान्ह 1:00 बजे तक

हस्ता./-
(विजय कुमार वर्मा)
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता,
सा.नि.वि. संभाग-II, उदयपुर
मुख्यालय बाँसवाड़ा

DIPR/C/13204/2021

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Tender Notice (Commercial Branch) No: C/CP/BPL/NFR/Gaming Zone/ 2021-1 Date: 23.12.2021

Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Bhopal Division, West Central Railway on behalf of the president of India invites offers through open competitive Bidding under a single Packet System for awarding contract for setting up Gaiming Zone and Digital lockers (Cloak Room) at Platform no 06 new Building Bhopal Railway Station, Bhopal Division in West Central Railway, for a period of five years, Bidder can visit on official website www.ireps,gov.in details of tender documents. Earnest Money Deposit of Rs 63,800/- and Tender Document Cost of Rs 3540/- shall be submitted through net banking or payment gateway. The last date of submission of online tender is 17.01.2022 up to 15.00hrs.

DRM(C)WCR, Bhopal

कोरोना को है हराना, तो टीकाकरण जरूर कराना

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
Follow us on @SCRailwayindia
Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website : www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No.125/2021 dt.24.12.2021
SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS
e-Procurement Tender notice

PUB/0919

The following Tenders have been floated online. Tenderers are requested to visit the website **www.ireps.gov.in** and submit their offers online. The Tender Description, Qty, EMD, SD may be seen in website. Offers submitted manually will not be accepted. Offers by post will not be entertained. Tender Closing time is 14.30 hrs of the Due date of the Tender. "For all indigenous offers, EMD will be accepted only via online system as available on **www.ireps.gov.in**."

Tender No.: 75.21.1209, **Brief Description:** DTBP BLOCK, **Due Date:** 12.01.2022

Tender No.: 90.21.1041A, **Brief Description:** I.S EQUAL LEG ANGLES 40X40X6MM, **Due Date:** 17.01.2022

Tender No.: 80.21.1202B, **Brief Description:** CRANK CASE OIL, **Due Date:** 17.01.2022

Tender No.: 38.21.1006, **Brief Description:** 7/8 INCHES DIA LOCK BOLT, **Due Date:** 18.01.2022

Corrigendum

Tender Notice No.120/2021 dt. 19.11.2021 Tender No.75.21.1152 (CLOTH JUTE) Due on: 15.12.2021. The tender due dt. may be read as Dt.03.01.2022. instead of existing.

Beside above mentioned tenders there are other tenders having value below ₹25 lakhs. For details, please visit Railway website above.

Principal Chief Materials Manager/ Secunderabad.
A1430

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at http://www.ireps.gov.in or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

देव भूमि हिमाचल प्रदेश में सेवा और सिद्धि के 4 साल समृद्धि के

भारत की आज़ादी के अमृत महोत्सव एवं
हिमाचल प्रदेश के पूर्ण राज्यत्व की
स्वर्ण जयन्ती के अवसर पर व राज्य सरकार के
चार वर्ष का कार्यकाल पूरा होने पर

प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी का
27 दिसम्बर, 2021 को प्रात: 11 बजे
पड्डल मैदान मण्डी में सम्बोधन

कार्यक्रम का सीधा प्रसारण: डीडी न्यूज़, डीडी हिमाचल एवं
फेसबुक पेज CMO Himachal पर देख सकते हैं

-:कार्यक्रम के मुख्य बिन्दु:-

शिलान्यास

रेणुकाजी बांध परियोजना

40 मेगावॉट • लागत: लगभग ₹7000 करोड़

- 30 वर्षों से लम्बित परियोजना पर केन्द्रीय नेतृत्व के सतत् प्रयासों से दिल्ली, उत्तर प्रदेश, हरियाणा, राजस्थान, उत्तराखण्ड व हिमाचल प्रदेश के बीच समन्वय स्थापित
- बिजली उत्पादन से अर्जित राजस्व का एक प्रतिशत हिस्सा परियोजना प्रभावित क्षेत्र पर खर्च होगा
- स्थानीय युवाओं का कौशल विकास कर उन्हें रोज़गार व स्वरोज़गार के लिए सक्षम बनाया जाएगा
- राष्ट्रीय राजधानी दिल्ली के लिए परियोजना वरदान साबित होगी, परियोजना से दिल्ली को प्रतिदिन 20 लाख घन मीटर पानी की आपूर्ति होगी

लूहरी स्टेज-1 जल विद्युत परियोजना

210 मेगावॉट • लागत: ₹1811 करोड़

- प्रतिवर्ष 758 मिलियन यूनिट विद्युत उत्पादन
- 20 लाख मानव कार्य दिवस सृजित होंगे
- 6.1 लाख टन कार्बन डाइआक्साइड कम होने से पर्यावरण संरक्षण में मदद मिलेगी
- 40 वर्षों में 1047 करोड़ रुपये की नि:शुल्क विद्युत आपूर्ति हिमाचल को होगी
- आधुनिक एवं भरोसेमंद ग्रिड स्पोर्ट के कारण अन्य राज्यों को भी लाभ मिलेगा

धौलासिद्ध जल विद्युत परियोजना

66 मेगावॉट • लागत: ₹688 करोड़

- 304 मिलियन यूनिट विद्युत उत्पादन होगा
- 8 लाख मानव कार्य दिवस रोजगार का होगा सृजन
- प्रतिवर्ष 2.4 लाख टन कार्बन डाइआक्साइड कम होने से पर्यावरण संरक्षण में मदद मिलेगी
- 40 वर्षों में 461 करोड़ रुपये की नि:शुल्क विद्युत आपूर्ति हिमाचल को होगी
- हमीरपुर जिला की यह पहली जल विद्युत परियोजना होगी

उद्घाटन

सावड़ा-कुड्डू जल विद्युत परियोजना

111 मेगावॉट • लागत:₹2082 करोड

- डैम का डिज़ाइन वाद्य यंत्र पिआनो की तरह है, एशिया में बनने वाला यह इस तरह का पहला डैम
- प्रतिवर्ष इस परियोजना में 386 मिलियन यूनिट बिजली उत्पादित होगी
- हिमाचल प्रदेश को 120 करोड़ रुपये का राजस्व प्राप्त होगा
- 3.50 लाख टन कार्बन डाइआक्साइड उत्सर्जन कम होगा, पर्यावरण संरक्षण में यह परियोजना अत्यन्त मददगार होगी

इन्वेस्टर्ज़ मीट-दूसरी ग्रांउड ब्रेकिंग

- धर्मशाला में ग्लोबल इन्वेस्टर्ज़ मीट के पश्चात् पहली ग्रांउड ब्रेकिंग सेरेमनी वर्ष 2019 में सम्पन्न
- 13656 करोड़ रुपये की निवेश परियोजनाएं धरातल पर उतरीं
- दूसरी ग्रांउड ब्रेकिंग सेरेमनी के माध्यम से 27000 करोड़ रुपये की परियोजनाएं होगीं शुरू
- रोज़गार के अवसर बढ़ेंगे, मजबूत होगी आर्थिकी, प्रदेश बनेगा औद्योगिक हब

आप सभी सादर आमंत्रित हैं

खतरा अभी टला नहीं है
ज़रूरी है दवाई भी कड़ाई भी

www.himachalpr.gov.in HimachalPradeshGovtIPRDept DPR Himachal dprhp

सूचना एवं जन सम्पर्क विभाग, हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार

Ruling Cong wins big in Chhattisgarh civic polls, BJP distant 2nd

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, DECEMBER 25

THE RULING Congress in Chhattisgarh registered a victory in the civic body elections held in 15 civic bodies in the state, with BJP registering a distant second place.

While BJP has accused the Congress of misusing the state machinery, the ruling party believes this is a vote of confidence for the Bhupesh Baghel government

The results declared by the State Election Commission on Friday for 300 of total 370 wards in 15 urban bodies showed Congress candidates emerging victorious in 174 wards, the BJP in 89, the Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J) in six, and independents in 31 wards.

The outcome for the remaining 70 wards, which fall in the prominent Bhilai Municipal Corporation of Durg district, was yet to be officially declared since counting was underway, an official said. After completing three years of power in the state on December 17, the Congress's victory in the civic body elections, it is believed, strengthens Chief Minister Baghel's position amidst what is seen as a power tussle between him and state Health Minister T S Singh Deo.

Reacting to the results declared so far, Baghel said they indicate the success of welfare schemes launched by his government.

The civic bodies which went to polls included four municipal corporations, six municipal councils and five nagar panchayats. Out of 40 wards in Birgaon Municipal Corporation in Raipur district, the Congress has won 19 and BJP 10, while JCC(J) and Independent candidates emerged winners in five and six wards, respectively.

State BJP president Vishnudeo Sai claimed that the good response of voters to BJP in these elections reflects the declining public trust in the Congress government. "We respect the people's mandate and BJP workers will go to the Assembly elections (scheduled in 2023) with full vigour to make the state Congress-free," he said.

Meanwhile, an FIR was registered on Saturday against BJP leaders, including former chief minister Raman Singh's nephew, in Khairagarh for vandalism and destruction of public property. The FIR was registered after the returning officer lodged a complaint at the police station.

"We are investigating the matter. FIR has been registered on the complaint received," a police officer said.

Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, BJP president J P Nadda among top leaders paying tribute to former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birth anniversary, Saturday. *Prem Nath Pandey*

Modi has delivered good governance, taken it to the grassroots, says Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that the Modi government has delivered good governance and taken decisions that are good for the people, not which people would like, even at the cost of political damage.

Addressing a function in New Delhi on the occasion of Good Governance Day, Shah said people have long been waiting for good governance which was delivered by the Modi government in the last seven years. "People kept saying that we got independence long ago but when will we get good governance," he said.

Shah said previous governments took decisions keeping the vote bank in mind. "But Prime Minister Narendra Modi or the Modi government has never taken decisions which the people would like. He has taken decisions which are good for the people," he said. Shah said because of lack of good governance, people's faith in the country's democratic system was gradually eroding. But PM Modi has brought back people's faith in democracy by taking the good governance up to the grassroots level, he said.

According to Shah, people have realised that Modi came to power in 2014 not to run the government but to provide a transparent and welfare administration. "Before 2014, many governments have changed. Many government have come, many have gone. But when Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power, people have realised that his government has come not to run the government but to change the country," he said.

Recalling Sikh Gurus, PM makes 'Ek Bharat' pitch

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, DECEMBER 25

URGING PEOPLE to stay united and ensure that nobody is able to harm the country and its unity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Saturday that the dangers against which Sikh Gurus had alerted people during their lifetime continue to exist even today.

Addressing the Gurpurab celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev at Gurudwara Lakhpat Sahib in Kutch district of Gujarat, the Prime Minister recalled the contribution of the Sikh Gurus to society in times of subjugation and attacks by invaders. "The dangers that our Gurus used to warn against exist in the same form even today. So we have to remain alert and protect the country," he said.

His remarks came two days after an explosion rocked a Ludhiana court complex, leaving one person dead. Punjab is also headed to polls early next year.

Modi said efforts have been made at every level for the message of Guru Nanak Dev to reach the whole world with new energy. The Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, awaited for decades, was completed in 2019. He said the '*Swaroop*' of the *Guru Granth Sahib* was successfully brought from Afghanistan to India. "What can be a greater experience of Guru's grace than this," he said.

PM Modi during the address

He said he had been to the US a few months ago, and more than 150 historical objects there had been returned to India. He said there is also a *peshkabz* or small sword, on which the name of Guru Hargobind, is written in Persian. "It is the great fortune of this government to be able to do all this," he said.

"It has always been a matter of pride for Gujarat that Guru Mokham Singh, who played an important role in establishing the Khalsa Panth, belonged to Gujarat. In his memory, Gurdwara Bhai Mokham Singhji has been built at Bet Dwarka," he said. He said Guru Nanak Dev came with a message of brotherhood when society was ridden with obscurantism and divisions. Similarly, Guru Arjan Dev, by integrating the voice of saints of the entire country, brought a sense of unity. Guru Harkishan, he said, showed the path of service of humanity. He said Guru Nanak Dev and the Gurus after him not only "kept the consciousness of India ignited, but also made a way to keep India safe".

The contribution of our Gurus, he said, is not limited to society and spirituality only. "If our nation, the contemplation of the nation, the faith and integrity of the nation is safe today, then at its core is the great '*tapasya*' of the Sikh Gurus," he said, adding that Guru Nanak Dev was clear in his understanding of the danger that Babar's invasion posed for India.

Similarly Guru Teg Bahadur's entire life, the PM said, is an example of 'Nation First'. Guru Tegh Bahadur's concern for humanity, he said, provides the vision of the soul of India. The way the country gave him the title of '*Hind ki Chadar*' shows the attachment of every Indian towards the Sikh tradition. He said Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice against Aurangzeb teaches people how the country fights against terror and religious fanaticism. Similarly, the life of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, is also a living example of sacrifice, he said.

The whole country, the PM said, is striving for their accomplishment together. He said the mantra of the country today is '*Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat*'. "Today the goal of the country is the revival of a new capable India. Today the policy of the country is service to every poor, priority to every deprived," he said.

Azad: Not fear of sword, people convert on getting influenced

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, DECEMBER 25

REFERRING TO the controversy over religious conversions, senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday said if anyone is converting people, he is not using a sword, which is not in use nowadays. "It is good work and character of individuals which are influencing people," Azad said.

"People convert after getting influenced, as they see this particular religion is serving humanity, taking everyone along and not discriminating," Azad, who joined the Christian community to celebrate Christmas in Udhampur district, said, according to PTI.

He also said J&K was better under the erstwhile "Maharaja" (former Dogra rulers) than it is under the present political dispensation. *"Ek maharaja, jisko hum dictator kehtey thhe, shakshi raj kehtey the, ya autocrat kehtey thhe, woh aaj ke waqt ke hisab se zyada achha sochety thhe logo ke bhalai ke liye. Aj ki sarkar ne to teeno cheeje le li* (A king who we used to call dictator, a dynastic ruler or autocrat used to think much more for public welfare than the present governing dispensation. Today's government has taken away all three things)," he said, referring to removal of safeguards available to local residents on land, jobs and abolition of the Durbar Move practice.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at an event in Lucknow on Saturday to distribute tablets and smartphones to students. *Express*

Yogi launches drive to distribute tablets, attacks 'tired, retired' Opp

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 25

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Saturday launched a programme to distribute one crore tablets and smartphones to students in the state and used the occasion to attack Opposition leaders who, he said, falsely portray themselves as young.

Adityanath kickstarted the drive by distributing the devices to more than 60,000 students at a Lucknow stadium.

"Yeh 12 *baje sokar uthne wale yuva nahin hai. Pradesh ki janta ko corona mahamari me gumrah karke vaccine ka virodh karne wale yuva nahi hain. Yeh sab tired hain aur retired hain. Inse umeed mat karna*," Adityanath said. (Those who wake up at 12 noon are not youths. Those who misled the public during Covid-19 pandemic and opposed the vaccine are not youths. These are tired and retired people. Don't expect anything from them," he said. The ceremony was organised on former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday at a stadium named after him.

The students were from undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and also included those preparing for competitive examinations and undergoing skill development training.

The CM said: "The importance of technology became apparent during the pandemic. Children did not have the facility of online education. That's when we decided that we will connect one crore youth with technology and give out tablets and smartphones."

Chief Minister Adityanath also aimed barbs at previous governments in the state and accused them of promoting "*bhai-bhatijavad*" (nepotism).

Uttarakhand minister threatens to resign; BJP says issue resolved

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, DECEMBER 25

UTTARAKHAND CABINET minister Harak Singh Rawat threatened to resign from his post and walked out of a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Friday, according to sources. A day later, the BJP said his grievance had been addressed and that "no one was going anywhere".

According to the sources, Rawat, who holds the forest, environment, labour and employment portfolios, walked out the meeting as he was upset about the state government's alleged inaction over a proposed medical college in his constituency Kotdwar.

BJP MLA Umesh Sharma Kau, who had been assigned the task of dissuading Rawat, said on Saturday that his grievance had been addressed. He said the issue had been settled with the intervention of the central leadership and Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami.

Harak Singh Rawat

Rawat's proposal for the medical college in Kotdwar has been accepted and he has also been assured that the budget for the project will be released by Monday, Kau said.

Asked whether Rawat had agreed not to resign, Kau, the MLA from Raipur , said: "No one is going anywhere".

"We will all work as true soldiers of the BJP," Kau said.

Pradesh BJP president Madan Kaushik also denied that Rawat had resigned, saying "all is well".

State government spokesperson Subodh Uniyal said Rawat had threatened that he would resign from the post. He said no resignation letter has been received.

Rawat joined the BJP in 2017 from Congress and won from the Kotdwar Assembly seat. He had contested as a Congress candidate from Garhwal in the 2014 general elections. Earlier, he was a minister in the Kalyan Singh government in Uttar Pradesh in the 1990s. The BJP has already changed two chief ministers — Trivendra Singh Rawat and Tirat Singh Rawat — before putting Dhami in charge in Uttarakhand.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, meanwhile, said that he and Rawat they would sort out their issues and that it was common for representatives to think about their constituency during elections. **PTI INPUTS**

After civic poll loss, Bengal BJP rejigs district committees

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA DECEMBER 25

THE BJP revamped its district committees on Saturday and replaced presidents of 30 organisational districts.

"This is part of the party's statewide revamp. Of 42 organisational districts, 30 have new presidents. We will not only have to thwart TMC terror but also prepare for upcoming municipal polls. Fresh faces as head of districts are a welcome move," said a senior party leader.

The BJP has also changed 'Bibhag' in-charges (those overseeing zones) too. For instance Sanjay Singh and Shyam Chand Ghosh will oversee Siliguri and Malda zones, while Arjun Singh and Jyotirmor Singh Mahato will oversee Nabadwip and North 24 Parganas zones. Agnimitra Paul and Jagannath Chatterjee will oversee Kolkata and South 24 Parganas zones. Dipak Burman and Manoj Pandey will oversee Hooghly and Medinipur zones. Locket Chatterjee and Nirmal Karmakar will oversee Bardhaman and Purulia zones.

Just after the Kolkata civic polls, in which the the party did not do well, it announced a new state committee in which a section of old-timers were dropped and fresh faces brought in.

In a new state committee that was announced, the party has let go several of the old guard and brought in new leaders. The new committee has 12 state secretaries and 11 vice-presidents.

A senior BJP leader, who did not wish to be named, said the changes were made keeping in mind the 2024 Lok Sabha general elections.

Under pressure, Nitish sets out on 'social reform' yatra

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, DECEMBER 25

"WHENEVER IN doubt, embark on a yatra". This has apparently been the defining feature of every political yatra Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has undertaken since 2005, when he took over the reins of power in Bihar.

Nitish's ongoing "Samaj Sudhar Abhiyan" (social reform campaign) yatra is his 12th yatra as the Bihar CM. In the run-up to the October 2005 Assembly polls, he had embarked on "Nyay" yatra with promise of "development with justice" that later became his government's tagline. The avowed objective of the JD(U) supremo's current statewide yatra is to create public awareness against alcoholism, dowry and child marriage.

Like previous yatras, the CM kicked off the current one from East Champaran. He will complete its first leg on January 15, covering 12 districts, and will travel to Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Begusarai and Purnia. But the key question is, why Nitish needed to embark on yet another political yatra, at a time when the state Assembly and the Lok Sabha elections are far away? After all, 7 of his 11 previous political yatras had been launched close to the Lok Sabha or the Assembly polls. There seem to be several reasons behind the CM's latest political tour. Of late, he has been under intense political pressure to justify the state's liquor prohibition law enforced since April 2016.

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar at a meeting in Gopalganj on Friday. The district recently saw 14 hooch deaths. *Twitter/@NitishKumar*

Two hooch tragedies in Gopalganj and West Champaran last month shook his government, leading to the Opposition and media asking tough questions on the very need for such a law that cannot be properly implemented.

The CM, who reached Gopalganj Friday in the course of his current yatra, told a public meeting: "It was Gopalganj where the first liquor conviction came when 9 people were sentenced to death and 5 people were given life sentence recently in 2016 hooch case (in which 18 people had died). One should take lesson from it."

The JD(U) has also been under attack, for the first time, from the BJP over Nitish's much-touted "good goverance or sushashan" plank, with Union minister and BJP MP Giriraj Singh saying the state government failed to meet its target in the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana.

The point is not lost on anyone that the JD(U) has been helming the Bihar government despite being the third largest party (45 seats) behind the ally BJP (74 seats) and the RJD (75 seats) in the 243-member state Assembly.

A seasoned leader, Nitish has mastered the art of political manoeuvrings. The BJP has still not projected its leader in Bihar, and its two Deputy CMs, Tarkishore Prasad and Renu Devi, barely pose any challenge to Nitish's leadership. Such a situation is conducive for Nitish to prolong his political supremacy. So, at this juncture, he has hit the ground, at the expense of public exchequer, to feel the pulse of the people, guage his popularity, and activate his cadre at the grassroots level.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

From being a farm stir face, Rajewal set to play a key role in Punjab polls

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, DECEMBER 25

AS 22 Punjab farmer organisations floated their own political front, Samyukta Samaj Morcha (SSM), on Saturday, announcing that it will contest all the 117 seats in the upcoming state Assembly elections, they also declared the 78-year-old Bharatiya Kisan Union (Rajewal) president, Balbir Singh Rajewal, as the face of their front.

These farmer bodies were a part of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) that spearheaded a year-long successful protest against the BJP-led Centre's three farm laws on Delhi's borders that recently ended after these laws were repealed.

Rajewal emerged as one of the most prominent farmer leaders during the SKM's agitation. And, he is now expected to play a significant role in the Punjab polls slated for early next year.

Balbir Singh Rajewal. *File*

Rajewal's outfit BKU (Rajewal) grew rapidly in popularity during the farm agitation, with videos of his speeches circulated widely. An accomplished orator with a sharp political sense, Rajewal has been a farm union leader in Punjab since 1970s. A big farmer, who owns 60 acres of land and two rice mills in and around his native village Rajewal in Ludhiana district, Rajewal joined farmer agitational campaigns after getting associated with the Punjab Kheti-Badi Union in early 1970s. He was with the BKU Lakhowal from 1974 to 1988 and then shifted to the BKU (Mann). Subsequently, in 2001, he floated his own outfit.

Rajewal also runs a school, a college and an "honesty" stationery shop for students, called "Sach Di Dukan", in his village. It is not managed by any shopkeeper: it has a box for customers to take away stationery items and deposit the money as they wish.

A former employee of the Punjab telephone department, Rajewal had also been once in the business of "Arhtiya" (commission agent) in Khanna Mandi in Ludhiana, but withdrew himself from it several years ago to be in sync with farmer union members.

"In 1974, a big farmer movement was launched when restrictions were put on farmers for selling their wheat outside the state and then farmers launched an agitation defying the zonal restrictions on movement of wheat. Rajewal was also a part of that and even went to jail," said Onkar Singh Augar, general secretary, BKU (Rajewal), who has been with him for the past three decades.

Active mainly in Patiala, Sangrur, Mohali, Ropar, Ludhiana, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepur, Nawanshahr, Jalandhar and several districts of the Malwa region, the BKU (Rajewal) was not much organised earlier but during the farm stir against the agri laws in the course of last one year, it rapidly evolved and grew to become one of the leading farmer organisations of Punjab.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

BJP LAUNCHES MICRO DONATION CAMPAIGN, PM DONATES RS 1,000

New Delhi: The BJP launched a "special micro-donation campaign" on the birth anniversary of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Saturday, seeking to raise funds through small contributions from its members and others.

Several BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, made donations and urged others to contribute. "I have donated Rs 1,000 towards the party fund of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Our ideal of always putting Nation First and the culture of lifelong selfless service by our cadre will be further strengthened by your micro-donation. Help make BJP strong. Help make India strong," Modi tweeted. **PTI**

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY RUSH

(*Left*) People gather at Park Street to celebrate Christmas in Kolkata on Saturday; and (*above*) a crowded Marina Beach on the occasion of Christmas. *PTI*

Centre sends teams to 10 states amid rising Omicron cases

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

IN THE backdrop of rising cases of the highly infectious Omicron, the Union Health Ministry Saturday sent multi-disciplinary teams and nodal officers to 10 states that are either reporting a surge or recording vaccination coverage below the national average.

The teams including specialists will be stationed in the states for the next three-five days, assessing the situation, suggesting remedial action, and submitting a report every evening by 7 pm. The teams have been deployed in Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Mizoram, Karnataka, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Punjab.

UP and Punjab, which figure in the list, are headed for Assembly elections, and on Thursday, the Centre had specifically asked poll-bound states to boost their vaccination numbers.

"In view of the rapid surge in cases and deaths because of Covid-19 (as reported by various news channels, state governments and internal reviews, the statement said)... it has been seen that a number of Omicron cases have emerged in some states. It has also been observed that the pace of Covid-19 vaccination in these is less than the national average. In wake of the situation, a decision has been taken to deploy multi-disciplinary Central teams to 10 identified states, some of which are reporting an increase in the number of Omicron cases or slow vaccination pace," the Health Ministry said, in an office memorandum.

Sources said the mention of deaths was largely for Kerala.

The teams will specifically look at five areas: contract tracing, including surveillance, containment operations; Covid-19 testing, including sending of adequate samples from clusters to INSACOG network for genome sequencing; Covid-19 appropriate behaviour and its enforcement; availability of hospital beds, sufficient logistics including ambulances, ventilators, and, medical oxygen; and vaccination progress.

Five of the states selected have more than 5,000 active cases at present: Kerala (26,265); Maharashtra (12,108); West Bengal (7,446); Karnataka (7,280); and Tamil Nadu (6,798).

Maharashtra (57%) and Tamil Nadu (57%) are also reporting second dose coverage lower than the national average. Besides, Maharashtra has the highest number of Omicron cases as of now, 108, picked through genome sequencing.

Mizoram is on the list as it is the only state in the country where two districts are reporting more than 10% positivity rate: Champai (11.72%) and Mamit (13.62%).

The four states with low first dose and second dose vaccination coverage that are on the list are Bihar, UP, Jharkhand and Punjab. In Bihar, 79% have got the first dose, and 54% fully vaccinated. In UP, 83% got the first dose, and 45% are fully vaccinated. Jharkhand has administered the first dose to 69% with first dose, and 41% fully vaccinated. In Punjab, 77% have received first dose, and 41% are fully vaccinated.

EXPLAINED E. India's jab story

OVERALL, 89% of the country's adult population has received the first dose of a Covid vaccine, and 61% are fully vaccinated.

OMICRON CASES DOUBLE TO 43 IN RAJASTHAN

Jaipur: Twenty-one new cases of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 were reported in Rajasthan on Saturday, taking the state's tally of to 43, the health department said on Saturday.

It said in a statement that the information of the 21 Omicron cases was received from the National Institute of Virology, Pune, on Saturday. Among the new Omicron cases, 11 patients are from Jaipur, 6 from Ajmer, 3 from Udaipur and 1 from Maharashtra, said the statement.

As per the health department, out of the 21 cases, five people had travel history to other countries, three were in contact with those who travelled from abroad, and three more were contacts of individuals who earlier tested positive for Omicron. **ENS**

17 STUDENTS OF RAIGARH SCHOOL TEST POSITIVE

Raigarh: At least 17 girls in classes 8 and 10 of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Bhupdevpur in Chhattisgarh's Raigarh district have tested positive for Covid-19, an official said on Saturday.

Raigarh Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr S N Keshari said the 17 girls have been shifted from the hostel to a guesthouse and the entire school has been declared as a "containment zone".

"The reports of the 13 girls returned positive on Friday and the remaining four on Saturday. Samples of 176 girls studying in classes 6 to 12 were tested on Friday and that of 300 boys on Saturday. These results are awaited," he said. "Last Sunday, parents of some of the children had come to meet them. One of the parents was infected." **PTI**

HC suspends sentence, grants bail to former cop in Kathua rape-murder case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DECEMBER 25

THE PUNJAB and Haryana High Court has suspended the remaining sentence and granted bail to dismissed police sub-inspector Anand Dutta, one of the accused in a case related to rape and murder of a minor girl in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district.

On December 21, the bench of Justices Tejinder Singh Dhindsa and Vinod S. Bhardwaj ordered the suspension of Dutta's remaining sentence and granted him bail on furnishing personal/surety bonds.

In 2019, the sessions court in Pathankot had convicted Dutta, along with head constable Tilak Raj and special police officer Surender Verma, and sentenced each to five-year imprisonment for allegedly destroying evidence in the rape case, allegedly after accepting Rs 4 lakh as bribe from a retired revenue official, Sanji Ram, a prime accused in the case.

Following their conviction, all three were dismissed by Jammu and Kashmir administration.

Earlier, on December 16, the sentence of head constable Tilak Raj was suspended. Both Dutta and Tilak Raj have already undergone more than half of the sentence awarded to them by the trial court.

The court had awarded life term to Sanji Ram, along with Deepak Khajuria and Parvesh Kumar, both co-accused.

Reacting to the court's order, former J&K chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday tweeted, "Perturbed that the policeman convicted for destroying evidence in Kathua rape case was granted bail & his jail term suspended. When a child raped & bludgeoned to death is deprived of justice, it becomes obvious that the wheels of justice have completely collapsed."

The eight-year-old girl was raped and murdered in Kathua district in January 2018 and the verdict in the case was pronounced on June 10, 2019, by a court in Pathankot, Punjab, where the case was shifted on the directions of the Supreme Court.

As the then chief minister heading the PDP-BJP coalition government in J&K, Mufti had ordered a Crime Branch inquiry into the case. Two then ministers in her Cabinet – Chander Parkash Ganga and Choudhary Lal Singh — had publicly joined family members and relatives of the accused in their demand for a CBI inquiry into the matter.

Ludhiana court blast: Role of 'Khalistani elements' being probed, says Punjab DGP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 25

PUNJAB DIRECTOR General of Police Siddharth Chattopadhyaya on Saturday said that there were indications that the Ludhiana court blast was linked to Khalistani and narco-terror elements operating from Pakistan.

Addressing a press conference, Chattopadhyaya said the main accused, the dismissed head constable Gagandeep Singh from Khanna Police who was facing trial in a drugs case and who got killed in the blast, got in touch with such elements "most probably while he was in jail in Punjab" where he "transitioned from just narcotics to mafia and terror".

The DGP said the police had leads about persons he was linked with and preliminary investigations revealed that such "links were in jails in Punjab, Khalistani elements abroad, terror outfits, mafia outfits as well as narcotic smugglers".

The DGP said "this is very dangerous cocktail of narco-organised crime and terrorism."

"As per leads with us, we strongly suspect that the person [behind Ludhiana blast] is operating from Pakistan only," the DGP added.

He said the blast was aimed at creating a sense of insecurity in the run up to elections and instilling a sense of fear in the courts. Chattopadhyaya appealed to the people to inform the police about any suspicious activity. The DGP said "police visibility" would be increased and security beefed up at crowded places in the state by pruning security cover of private individuals and deploying them in the field.

"The main challenge which lies ahead of us is the Punjab (Assembly) elections. We will make every effort to get the polls conducted in a peaceful manner without any sense of fear," Chattoapdhyaya said.

You know too much law: RTI activist recalls attack horror

DEEP MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, DECEMBER 25

"*TU KANOON zyada seekh gaya hai…RTI lagata hai* (you know a little too much about law…you file RTI applications)."

These words of his attackers echo constantly in 30-year-old Amra Ram Godara's head as he lies in an immobile state on a hospital bed in Jodhpur.

Attacked in Rajasthan's Barmer district on December 21, with nails pierced on his legs, and forced to drink urine, Godara has undergone surgery and is recuperating at Jodhpur's MDM Hospital.

"I asked them why they were attacking me; they said I have got a bit too much knowledge of law and that I filed RTIs," Godara told The Sunday Express. "They started to carve out the flesh from my legs with an iron rod and pierced nails inside the legs…they assaulted me for an hour."

With his government coming under criticism following the attack from opposition BJP and human rights activists, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday announced Rs 2 lakh compensation for Godara and said the state CID-CB will probe the case.

"For the past few months, I was staying at a friend's house in Jodhpur, preparing for the Gram Sevak examination. Our family is financially weak. I was supposed to appear for the examination on December 27 (Monday) — now, I am in hospital," said Godara, a father of two.

At times, he said, the pain is so immense that he has to be administered painkiller injections.

Stating that he is "not satisfied by the police action", Godara said the key conspirators, including Nagraj and Manaram — they are among those he accuses — are not being arrested. "There might be political pressure," he alleged.

Nails were pierced into Amra Ram Godara's legs

After the attack, Godara said he heard the assailants talk among themselves that they should "inform Nagraj that their plan was successful".

Superintendent of Police, Barmer, Deepak Bhargava denied there is any political pressure in the case.

The FIR, filed on the basis of his complaint, mentions Godara heard his assailants talking among themselves that he had troubled Nagraj, Bankaram and Manaram. Barmer police have so far arrested four people in the matter, but not one of the trio.

Nagraj is the husband of the sarpanch of Kumpaliya gram panchayat, and Bankaram is the sarpanch of Pareu gram panchayat.

Efforts to reach the two remained unsuccessful.

Additional DGP, Crime, Ravi Prakash said a special investigation team (SIT) formed by CID-CB to probe the attack left for Barmer on Saturday under the supervision of CID-CB SP Gaurav Yadav.

On Saturday, Chief Minister Gehlot said he has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and urged him to frame rules of the Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2011. Gehlot said seven years since the Bill got the President's assent the government has not framed its rules.

The Chief Minister said he has requested the PM that the rules be framed soon to give protection to activists and whistleblowers and strict action is taken against criminals.

Gehlot said that if rquired, the state government will provide the facility of treatment for Godara outside the state.

Godara said he has filed 15 to 20 RTI applications on various issues, including MGNREGS and government housing schemes in the village. "I recently submitted a memorandum against these people on December 15 related to corruption in our village. I was fighting with the pen; this attack was a result of that," he said.

Police had earlier said Godara had complained against those involved in illegal liquor trade.

"I want the main conspirators to be arrested and punished," Godara said.

Police have suspended a constable and removed an SHO following the incident.

"We have arrested four people in the case; they are in police custody. Investigation is going on against those been accused of conspiracy by the victim," Barmer SP Deepak Bhargava said. "If evidence emerges regarding their role in any conspiracy, they will be arrested. We cannot arrest them based only on allegations. We are investigating the conspiracy angle."

The four people arrested have been identified as Bhupendra Singh Jat, Ramesh Kumar Jat, Khartaram Jat, and Adesh Jat.

Chronology of Indian civilisation dubious, says calender of IIT-Kharagpur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, DECEMBER 25

QUESTIONING THE "current chronology of Indian civilisation", the IIT-Kharagpur calendar for 2022 has said the ancient history suffered from "suppression, compromises, contractions, and distortions".

IIT-Karagpur's Nehru Museum of Science and Technology had published a similar calendar for 2021 which focused on subjects — astronomy, law and the arts — studied in the ancient times. The calendar was criticised by experts.

The latest edition, titled 'Recovery of the Foundation of Indian Knowledge Systems', covers subjects such as the Indus civilization, cyclic time, space-time causation, non-linear flow and changes, Aryan sages, unicorn, aeons of time, cosmic symmetry, semantics and semiotics, and world wars.

The introductory note of the calendar reads: "The current Chronology of Indian Civilization and history is dubious and questionable. A long evolutionary sequence of literature, and cultural and spiritual texts are evident prior to the birth of the Buddha and the Mahavira. It must have had taken a few 1000 years to achieve that. From the early Vedic Srutis (oracular form) before it took form of literature to later Vedic Age and Puranic literature, it is definitely few 1000 years. But the long Chronology has suffered suppression, compromises, contractions, and distortions."

Quoting Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, the calendar also seeks to underline that western experts have wrongly explained the Aryan civilisation.

Bengaluru: No public events on MG Road and Brigade Road for New Yr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, DECEMBER 25

AMID CONCERNS over the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, Bengaluru police on Saturday said there won't be any public events to celebrate New Year on MG Road and Brigade Road. There were no celebrations in the city on account of rising Covid cases last year as well.

"There won't be any public events to celebrate new year and people who have prior booking will be allowed to visit pubs, hotel and clubs. The congregation of public on MG Road and Brigade road will not be there this time too," city police commissioner Kamal Pant on Saturday said, after a meeting with the senior police officers to discuss the precautionary measures to prevent celebrations at public places.

According to the police source, a three-day night curfew might be implemented from December 30 and it has been discussed in the meeting but a decision is yet to be made.

The flyovers during night will be closed for vehicles as well, the officer added.

"There won't be any kind of celebration. We have not lit up the streets," Brigade Road Shops and Establishments' Association secretary Suhail Yusuf told *The Indian Express*. Even sales during Diwali were not as great as previous years and we speculated that there would be restrictions this time too because of Omicron variant scare, he added.

Karntaka on Saturday logged 270 fresh Covid-19 cases and four deaths, taking the caseload to 30,04,239 and the toll to 38,309, a health department bulletin said.

Maharashtra: Lockdown only if O_2 requirement touches 800 MT

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 25

IMPOSITION OF a fresh lockdown in Maharashtra will be considered only if the daily demand for medical oxygen touches 800 metric tonne, Public Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Saturday.

The statement comes on a day when Maharashtra reported 1,485 Covid-19 cases and 12 deaths. This included two new cases of Omicron variant reported from Aurangabad, taking the tally of such cases to 110.

Maharashtra Public Health Minister Rajesh Tope

Mumbai, meanwhile, reported 757 new Covid-19 infections, marking a rise in cases for the fifth day in a row, the BMC said.

On Friday, the state government had banned the assembly of more than five persons in public places between 9 pm to 6 am and restricted the number of people allowed at public functions in view of a spurt in coronavirus cases.

Speaking to mediapersons, Tope said: "A total lockdown will be considered only if the oxygen requirement per day touches 800 metric tonne." The minister did not mention the current rate of consumption of medical oxygen in the state.

"The situation is well under control. We firmly believe a complete lockdown is not on our agenda at this moment. We don't want to inconvenience people by imposing such extreme measures," Tope said.

Kashmir welcomes tourists back with week-long celebration to ring in new year

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 25

AFTER TWO years of poor tourist numbers in the winter, Kashmir is now seeing heavy footfall. And the Jammu and Kashmir administration is looking to make the most of this by ringing in the new year with a week-long celebration. This began Saturday, on Christmas, at the twin tourist resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam.

The celebration will end on the night of December 31.

"The idea is to celebrate the winter season of tourism," says Dr Gulam Nabi Itoo, Director of Tourism Kashmir.

"Normally, we would celebrate Christmas for a day and then New Year for a day. But this time, we have a grand weeklong festival. We are organizing it to send a message that we are ready to host tourists in the Valley. It is also our invitation to the tourists, who are planning to visit Kashmir."

The ski resort of Gulmarg wore a festive look on Saturday as it marked a white Christmas. While hotels and buildings were illuminated, a musical programme enthralled the tourists, who attended the celebrations in large numbers.

Christmas celebrations were also held at the Pahalgam health resort in south Kashmir.

After two dismal winter seasons, Gulmarg has witnessed a heavy rush of tourists and winter sports enthusiasts this year. While less than a lakh tourists visited the valley in the three months of summer tourism season, more than 1,25,000 tourists visited Kashmir in November alone — most of them headed to Gulmarg.

While the pandemic played a part in the lower tourism numbers in the Valley, experts say it has helped to revive winter tourism in Gulmarg.

"Last year, most adventure tourists couldn't go to Europe because of the travel ban caused by the pandemic. With no option in India, most of them headed to Kashmir and to Gulmarg," said Rauf Tramboo, a member of the Winter Sports Association. "When they saw that the ski slopes of Gulmarg matched any ski slope of Europe and found it inexpensive also, they became good advertisers. They have returned to Kashmir this year as well."

Expecting a huge rush and congestion at Gulmarg this year, the J-K Tourism department has already planned to open two more tourist destinations — Sonamarg and Dodapathri — for winter tourism this year.

A man dressed as Santa Claus walks outside St Mary's church during Christmas celebrations in Gulmarg on Saturday. *Shuaib Masoodi*

Scroll, *PARI* win in Environment, Science and Tech category

EXPRESS NEW SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

CLIMATE CHANGE may have been the subject of many discourses but the winners of the Ramnath Goenka Awards have shown how it is a lived reality in rural India. They brought out the extent of impact through people's stories.

Team *PARI* (*People's Archive Of Rural India*) is the winner of the Environment, Science And Technology Reporting category in print while Team *Scroll* is the winner in broadcast media. Team *PARI*, led by veteran journalist P Sainath, comprises 14 reporters — Shalini Singh, Sanket Jain, Ritayan Mukherjee, Vishaka George, Kavitha Muralidharan, Medha Kale, Parth M N, Urvashi Sarkar, Namita Waikar, Chitrangada Choudhury, Aniket Aga, Jaideep Hardikar, M Palani Kumar and Subuhi Jiwani. Team Scroll included Nooshin Mowla, Sujit Lad, Omkar Phatak, Swati Ali, Dewang Trivedi, Shibika Suresh and Sannuta Raghu.

The journalists from *PARI* compiled a comprehensive report on climate change through more than 20 stories, covering the length and breadth of India. These stories mapped climate change through the lived experiences of farmers, labourers, fishermen, forest dwellers, seaweed harvesters, nomadic pastoralists and honey tappers, among others. They covered forests, seas, river basins, coral islands, deserts, arid and semi-arid zones, rural and urban areas. The reporters made the crisis relatable to the reader. "It was a challenge to reach out to people — be it the nomadic pastoralists 14,000 feet above the sea-level in Ladakh or diving with the women seaweed harvesters in Tamil Nadu. Another challenge the reporters faced was to interpret the abstract language of climate reports in words that could be understood by the general public," said Singh.

Five of their stories are being used to teach climate change to school and college students in Jharkhand and Odisha. Adivasi children have also retold these stories in their language with their own perspective.

Scroll, through its show *Eco India*, told the story of women farmers of the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, who gradually took ownership of the land and overcame the ravages of drought. They had no land ownership rights, which limited their access to resources like finance, markets, water and government services. But they preserved seeds and learnt to grow a diverse range of nutrient-rich crops using organic farming. Trained by Swayam Shikshan Prayog (a not-for-profit organisation), these women farmers were able to make informed decisions about what crops to grow, what to consume and how much to sell.

The story chronicled how the women-led model of climate-resilient farming helped turn the tide on their marginalisation. Now, over 58,000 women farmers and households practise sustainable farming that has helped them ensure food security, health and basic income. In Maharashtra, 70 per cent of the female workers are involved in agriculture activities, despite which women are perceived as labourers and seldom as decision makers.

"Getting the women to open up about their lives in front of the camera was one of the biggest challenges we faced. It was difficult for them to talk about their problems and achievements without the fear of being judged by their community, especially the men," said Sannuta Raghu from Team *Scroll*.

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ISRO defers launch of three earth observation satellites

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

THE INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has again deferred the launch of three earth observation satellites that were planned for the third and fourth quarter of the year, including the first development flight of what is likely to be a purely commercial small satellite launch vehicle.

The three launches have now been slated for the first quarter of 2022, according to the recently released monthly report of the department of space.

Last month, Union MoS for Department of Space Dr Jitendra Singh had said the first uncrewed flight under Gaganyaan mission could take place as early as January 2022, with the second uncrewed mission also planned for later the same year. The third crewed flight will take place in 2023, he said.

This means, ISRO will have to undertake at least four missions in the first three months of 2022.

There is a gap of usually a couple of months between two launches -- the smallest duration between two launches in the last four years being 15 days with two separate launch pads being used.

"The ISRO chairman previously said the missions were deferred because of the cyclonic storm, which means all systems are already in place. If that is the case, ISRO has the capability to pull off four missions in the span of three months," said Ajey Lele, senior fellow at Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

"Let's take the Chandrayaan-2 mission, for example," he said. "The launch had to be deferred (at the) last minute because of a leakage issue. The launch vehicle was de-fuelled, repaired, and the launch was again conducted within 10 days or so, which shows the agency has the launch capacity.

"Preparedness of satellites and the other systems is the challenge."

Lele also said, "As for the Gaganyaan mission, there is no clarity on the mission plan; ISRO needs two relay satellites in space to cover the dark spots in communication with the space module. However, we do not know whether this would be done before the first uncrewed mission. If they are just testing the components for human survival during the first mission, they would not need it. However, it is always better to have all systems in place and test everything together."

Other than the SSLV mission, the other two satellites will be launched aboard India's workhorse Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle. Of the two PSLV missions, one was initially slated for the second quarter of the year but was deferred after the second wave of the pandemic, which forced the space agency to delay all big-ticket missions planned for the year, including the first uncrewed flight under Gaganyaan mission

EXPLAINED E.
Far behind China

ISRO conducted only two launches this year: the PSLV-C1 mission that carried Brazil's earth observation satellite Amazonia-1 in February, and the GSLV-F10 mission with earth observation satellite EOS-03, which failed. China, meanwhile, conducted at least 47 launches in 2021, setting a global record.

Security forces at an encounter site in Shopian on Saturday. *ANI*

Four militants killed in 2 gun battles in J&K

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 25

HOURS AFTER four militants were killed in two separate encounters in south Kashmir's Shopian and Pulwama, a third gun battle started in Anantnag late on Saturday evening, police said.

Earlier in the day, two Lashkar-e-Taiba militants were killed in Shopian district and two Ansar Ghazwatul Hind militants were gunned down in Pulwama's Tral.

On the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, a joint team of J&K Police, army and paramilitary forces cordoned off the Chowgam village of south Kashmir's Shopian after inputs about the presence of militants in the village, police said.

As the joint team of forces approached the target, the hiding militants opened indiscriminate fire and tried to break the security cordon, police said. The joint team of forces returned the fire leading to a gunfight.

"In the ensuing encounter, two terrorists were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter," Police said in an official release. "As per police records both the killed terrorists were categorized terrorists linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT and were part of groups involved in several terror crime cases," the release stated.

Police have identified the slain militants as Sajad Ahmad Chak of Braripora, Shopian and Raja Basit Yaqoob, a resident of Litter, Pulwama.

Hours after the Shopian gunfight ended, two more militants were killed in a gunfight in Pulwama's Tral.

Police said as the joint team of forces zeroed in on the target, the militants hiding in the village fired at them leading to a gunfight. In the brief shootout, two militants were killed, police said.

Police have identified the slain militants as Nadeem Bhat and Rasool alias Adil. Police said the slain militants were affiliated to Ansar Ghazwatul Hind (AGH), a local affiliate of al Qaeda. Police said that Adil was an IED expert.

On Saturday evening, a joint team of J&K Police, army and paramilitary forces cordoned off the Khush Roi Kalan village of Srigufwara in south Kashmir after inputs about the presence of militants in the village. "Encounter has started at K. Kalan, Srigufwara area of Anantnag. Police and security forces are on the job, further details shall follow," J&K police said in a tweet.

Saturday's encounters come a day after a Hizbul Mujahideen militant was killed in Anantnag.

After 29 years in Pak jail, J&K man returns home to rousing welcome

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAMMU, DECEMBER 25

AFTER SPENDING 29 years in a Pakistani jail, Kathua resident Kuldeep Singh returned home to a rousing welcome on Friday night, following which he asked the youth to "never pull back from making any sacrifice for the country".

Singh, 53, along with Mohammad Gufran from Aurangabad, were released by Pakistan on Monday and they reached Red Cross Bhavan at Guru Nanak Dev Hospital in Punjab after their repatriation.

Singh said Pakistani agencies tortured him for three years after his arrest in 1992. He was produced in a court for alleged espionage and subsequently sent to 25 years of imprisonment.

A resident of Makwal village at Billawar in Kathua, Singh was accorded a warm welcome by the villagers who burnt firecrackers and raised slogans in praise of the country and him.

"My message to all my friends, villagers and especially the youth is to stay away from wrong paths that can harm them. But never pull back when it comes to making any sacrifice for the country," he told reporters.

Singh's family members said they learnt about his whereabouts after his arrest only when he wrote to them from Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail. They said they had lost all hope as there was no contact with him for the past eight years following the killing of Indian prisoner Sarabjit Singh, who was also convicted of spying.

"We are happy that he is back and among us after so many years," a relative said

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WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE
Date: 24.12.2021

Sr. DEN/CO/WCR, Bhopal acting for and on behalf of the President of India, Invites E- tenders against following works, upto 15:30 Hours on the dates mentioned against each Tender. The Complete Tender documents and detail information regarding tender, is available on the website https://www.ireps.gov.in. NIT Can also be seen on the notice board of DRM (W) WCR/Bhopal Office. Manual Offers are not allowed against these tenders. For any Correction, in these tenders, if necessary, corrigendum will be uploaded on website prior to tender opening date and copy of corrigendum will be placed on Notice Board of this office, which may be seen upto the date of tender opening, Tenderers are requested to offer their rates and submit tenders according to the provisions of GST ACT 2017. **NIT No.-** 21-22-C-20-91, **Date** - 23.12.2021, **Name of work including Location-** Vidisha - improvement of Circulating area and other amenities, **Estimated Cost of Tender Rs.-** 5710626/-, **Last Date for Submitting Tender -** 10.01.2022, **NIT No.-** 21-22-C-21-92, **Date** - 24.12.2021, **Name of work including Location-** Heavy repairs of staff quaters and service buildings at Gulabganj and Sorai Station under ADEN/M/Vidisha, **Estimated Cost of Tender Rs.-** 8123720/-, **Last Date for Submitting Tender -** 18.01.2022, **NIT No.-** 21-22-C-22-93, **Date** - 24.12.2021, **Name of work including Location-** Heavy repairs of staff quaters and service buildings at Vidisha and Sanchi Stations under ADEN/M/Vidisha, **Estimated Cost of Tender Rs.-** 8792987/-, **Last Date for Submitting Tender -** 18.01.2022

DRM (W) WCR, Bhopal

कोरोना को है हराना,
तो टीकाकरण जरूर कराना

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India BOI

ZONAL OFFICE, PATNA ZONE
1st Floor, Chanakya Place, R-Block, Patna-800001
Tel.: 0612-2506639

APPENDIX - IV, Rule 8(1)

Possession Notice (for Immovable & Movable Property)

Whereas,
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **BANK OF INDIA** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed in the table hereunder written calling upon the below mentioned borrowers to repay the amount shown in the respective notices mentioned against their names in the table, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrowers/guarantors mentioned below having failed to repay the amount shown in the respective notices issued u/s 13(2) within the stipulated time, notice is hereby given to the aforementioned borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property/ies (Secured Assets) described in the table given below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on the date(s) mentioned against the respective property.
The aforesaid borrowers/guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies mentioned in the table hereunder written and any dealings with the said property/ies will be subject to the charge of the **BANK OF INDIA** for the amount shown in the respective column of the table and interest thereon.

Name of Borrower/ Guarantor	i. Branch, ii. Date & Amount as per Notice u/s 13(2)	Details of property	Date of Possession of Assets
M/s G.S MINI MALL Prop.: Mrs. Sangita Devi, W/o Mr. Dharmendra Kumar	**(i) Arrah Branch (ii)** Demand Notice Date : **04.09.2021, ₹ 23,38,109.18** + interest from 06.08.2021 and other charges.	**Description of the Immovable Property:- Owner of property: Mrs. Sangita Devi** W/o Mr. Dharmendra Kumar, All that part and parcel of land admeasuring area 12 dhur 2 dhurki 04 furki and building thereon situated at Mohalla: Maharana Pratap Nagar, Arrah, Thana No. 236, Ward No. 12, Khata No. 549(Old) 316 (New), Plot No. 1302 (Old) 4411(New), Mauza: Pakri, Ara, P.S.: Nawada Ara, District: Bhojpur, At Maharana Pratap Nagar, New Police Line, Arrah, Bhojpur-802301, Boundary:- North: PWD Road, South: Basudeo Ray, East: Basudeo Ray, West: Part Plot No. 1302. **Description of the Movable Property:-** Stock lying at GS Mini Mall and its Godown at Maharana Pratap Nagar, New Police Line, Arrah, Bhojpur- 802301.	**21.12.2021**
M/s Shankar Furniture Works, Prop.: Mr. Subhas Kumar Singh S/o Hari Shankar Singh **Guarantor:** Mrs. Meena Singh W/o Mr. Subhash Kumar Singh	**(i) Arrah Branch (ii)** Demand Notice Date : **15.09.2021, ₹ 71,74,830.68** + interest from 22.04.2021 and other charges.	**Description of the Immovable Property:- (1) Owner of property: Mr. Subhas Kumar Singh** S/o Hari Shankar Singh, All that part and parcel of land admeasuring 36 Decimal situated at Mauza: Nathmalpur, PS: 53, PS: Barahara, Old Khata No. 109, New Khata No. 126, Old Plot No. 339(Part), New Plot No. 348(Part), Dist.: Bhojpur, Boundary:- North: Road, South: Mr. Pramod Singh, East: Mr. Shiv Kumar Singh, West: Mr. Durga Singh. **(2) Owner of property: Mrs. Meena Singh** W/o Mr. Subhash Kumar Singh, All that part and parcel of land admeasuring 14.5 Decimal situated at Mauza: Basantpur, Thana No.: 256, Khata No. 66, Plot No. 765, Dist.: Bhojpur, Boundary:- North: Road, South: Laxman Singh & Other, East: Mr. Subhash Kumar Singh, West: Mr. Sudheshwar Singh. **(3) Owner of property: Mr. Subhas Kumar Singh** S/o Hari Shankar Singh, All that part and parcel of land admeasuring 14.5 Decimal situated at Mauza: Basantpur, Thana No.: 256, Khata No. 66, Plot No. 765, Dist.: Bhojpur, Boundary:- North: Road, South: Mr. Laxman Singh & Other, East: Mr. Satyadev Singh, West: Mrs. Meena Singh. **Description of the Movable Property:-** Hypothecated stock situated, lying and being at workshop and Godown at Gausganj and Banstal, Arrah, Dist.: Bhojpur (Bihar), Pin- 802301.	**22.12.2021**

*** With further interest at applicable rate till repayment.**
Date: 25.12.2021
Place: Arrah

Authorized Officer
Bank of India

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि०
CIN:U31200UP2003SGC027460

अति–अल्पकाकीन ई–निविदा सूचना

अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा निम्नलिखित दो भागों में दिनांक – 03.01.2022 समय 14:00 बजे तक प्रतिष्ठित एवं योग्य ठेकेदारों / निविदादाताओं से निम्न कार्य हेतु ई–निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है एवं ई–निविदा दिनांक – 03.01.2022 को समय 16:00 बजे खोली जायेगी। विस्तृत जानकारी उ0प्र0 शासन की आधिकारिक ई–प्रोक्योरमैंट पोर्टल http://etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है:– 1. **ई–निविदा विशिष्टीकरण संख्या – 28/SE/EDCM/2021-22:** बिजनेस प्लान 2021–22 में 33 केवी केविल ज्याइनटिंग किट 3x300 mmsq आउटडोर एवं 33 केवी केविल ज्याइनटिंग किट स्ट्रेथ थ्रू 3x300 mmsq की आपूर्ति। **धरोहर धनराशि** – रू0 5400.00, **निविदा शुल्क**– रू0 1180.00 (जी0एस0टी0 सहित)। निविदा में यदि कोई संसोधन अथवा निविदा खुलने की तिथि में विस्तार होता है तो इसकी सूचना ई–टेण्डर वेबसाइट https://etender.up.nic.in पर तथा निगम की वेबसाइट https://www.dvvnl.org पर उपलब्ध कराई जायेगी।

अधी0अभि0, वि0वि0मं0, महोबा
2249 / वि.वि.मं.म. / पी–1(प्रकाशन) / निविदा / 2021–22 दिनांक: 24.12.2021

राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचायें

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Electric Loco Shed, New Katni Jn.
E-Tender Notice - Date:20.12.2021

The senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, Traction Rolling Stock, West Central Railway, New Katni Jn. Katni (MP) for and on behalf of the President of Union of India invites E-tender for below mentioned work, from reputed, experienced and eligible contractors. **Tender Notice No.-** NKJ/TRS/T/15/21 Dtd 20.12.2021 **Name of work -** Repair, rehabilitation, reconditioning, Testing and Supply of Tap Changer Type N-32 (BTIL Make) of BG-AC Locomotives of ELS/NKJ Qty - 08 Nos. **Approx Cost of the work Rs.-** 16250594.16, **Cost of Tender Form Rs. -** Nil, **Earnest Money (Rs.)** Nil, **Completion Period of Work -** 24 Months, **Last Date & Time of submission -** 19.01.2022 upto 15:00 Hrs. **Note - (1)** The complete information of the above E-tender are available in website http://ireps.gov.in. Tenders other than in the form of e-tender will not be accepted against above tenders. This notice also pasted on Notice Board of the Sr DEE/TRS/NKJ Office. **(2)** Tenderers are requested to see for any corrigendum slips issued to this tender up to the date of opening, and to use updated tender form only failing which tender is likely to be rejected. **(3)** EMD : Nil, as per Railway Board's L/No., 2020/CE-1/CT/ 3E/ GCC /Policy dated 30.12.2020 bidders will mandatorily submit bid security declaration along with offer in lieu of bid security / earnest money deposit. The provision has been made in IREPS module for the bidders. **(4)** Cost of Tender Forms : Nil, as per clause No.3 of Part-I under GCC-July 2020, e-tender forms shall be issued free of cost to all.

Asstt. Div. Electrical Eng. (TRS)
WCR, New Katni JN.

कोरोना को है हराना,
तो टीकाकरण जरूर कराना

GOVT. OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INDUSTRIES
UDYOG SADAN, PLOT NO. 419, PATPARGANJ INDUSTRIAL AREA, DELHI-110 092
(Handloom & Textiles Section)
PRESS ADVERTISEMENT

Applications in the prescribed Application Forms are invited from existing and functioning primary handloom weavers cooperative societies and apex handloom cooperative federations of **Delhi** duly registered with RCS Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, and having audit completed for the years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 authenticated by RCS Department for availing financial assistance as Marketing Incentive (MI) Component under the National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP) for the year 2021-22. For the purpose of Marketing Incentive Claim, Handloon, Mark has been made compulsory i.e., the society selling its products should necessarily use 'Handloom Mark'. The MI would be given on the sale of handloom products using Handloom Mark only. The societies should have purchased the yarn from NHDC. For buying yarn from open market, the societies will need N.O.C. from NHDC. **A handloom cooperative agency has to fulfill the eligibility criteria pertaiL household industries as per MPD-2021 to become eligible under the scheme.** The prescribed Application Form and Criteria are available at website **www.industries.delhigovt.nic.in**. Applications fulfilling above CRITERIA WILL ONLY BE ENTERTAINED and other applications will become ineligible. **The last date of submission of application forms, complete in all respects, at the above office address is 10th January, 2022 up to 5.00 p.m.**

Sd/-
Dy. Commissioner of Industries (Handloom/Handicraft)
GOVT. OF N.C.T. DELHI

DIP/Shabdarth/0487/21-22

कार्यालय मुख्य महाप्रबन्धक, निर्माण विंग
उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम)
403 / 1 इन्दिरा नगर, देहरादून –248001 दूरभाष एवं फैक्स सं. – 0135–2764075
e-mail : egmnirmanwing@yahoo.com , gmnirmanwing@gmail.com

Government of Uttarakhand "e" procurement Notice
Bid Identification no : 4876 / Nivida (Garhwal) Dehradun / 279 Dated: 24.12.2021

S.No.	Name of works	Estimated Cost	Period of Completion
1.	CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL & NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS FOR INDIA RESERVE BATTALION- II AT EAST HOPE TOWN, PARGANA PARWA DOON, TEHSIL VIKASNAGAR, DISTT. DEHRADUN	1828.73 Lacs (Including G.S.T.)	18 Months
2.	Name and Address of Officer inviting the Bid :-	Chief General Manager, Construction Wing, Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, 403/1 Indira Nagar, Dehradun.	
3.	Date and Time of Availability of bid documents in the portal	27/12/2021 - 17:00 Hrs.	
4.	Pre Bid Meeting	30/12/2021 - 15:00 Hrs.	
5.	Last Date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal:-	11/01/2022 - 17:00 Hrs.	

Details of subsequent addendum /corrigendum / cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://uktenders.gov.in"
General Manager (Garhwal)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in
Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS/2021-22/253/e-tendering Dated: 24.12.2021

For and on behalf of the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir state, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the **Registered , reputed & experienced firms** as detailed in the NIT for below mentioned works:

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (Rs)	Time of completion (in Days)	Position of AAA/funds	TS No
1	2	3	4	5	6	
Annual Contract for Refilling of fire extinguishers of various Capacities of type ABC, Co2 and Foam at GMC, Srinagar and its associated Hospitals/ other departments within District Srinagar	2.50	200	5000.00	-	46-GMC of 2021, Dt: 13-09-2021 47-GMC of 2021, Dt: 13-09-2021 48-GMC of 2021, Dt: 13-09-2021 62-GMC of 2021, Dt: 01-10-2021	MHCHD/TS/168 Dated 12/21

1. **Downloading of Bids**:- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from **24.12.2021 (18.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 24.12.2021 (18.00 hrs).**
2. **Uploading**: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from **25.12.2021 (18.00 hrs) to 03.01.2022 (14:00 hrs)** in two (02) covers.
3. **Opening of Bids** :- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on **04.01.2022 at 15.00 hrs or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer ,MHCHD , Srinagar.**

No: MHCHD /TS /8736-42
Dt:-24-12-2021

Sd/-
Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar

THE SUNDAY PROFILE

Panth meets Wealth

Scion of one of Punjab's most powerful families, married into another, well-read, and known for both his wit, suave and muscular politics, Bikram Singh Majithia has had everything — and more — going for him. But will the drugs charge that he has so far dodged finally bring him down?

MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA on the *Majhe da jarnail*

OVER THREE years ago, in March 2018, Bikram Singh Majithia, former Shiromani Akali Dal minister and brother-in-law of its party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, had made headlines for extracting a very public apology from Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal, whom he had taken to court for accusing him of drug trafficking. Today, he is back on the front pages of newspapers in election-bound Punjab with police issuing a lookout notice against him after booking him under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

As his party cries vendetta, the state waits with bated breath to see what the man, who has so far managed to fend off every curveball that has come his way, will do next. It's a reputation built in part due to his legal team that has been quick to nix all the unflattering content that has come his way ever since 2014, when an Arjuna Awardee wrestler-turned-cop Jagdish Bhola, dismissed from police service for allegedly running a synthetic drug racket involving crores, hinted at Majithia's involvement in the trade.

Scion of one of the most powerful families of Punjab, that traces its lineage to a general in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army, Majithia joined politics in 2007 when he fought and won his maiden Assembly election from Majitha. His elder sister Harsimrat Badal (brother-in-law Sukhbir Badal was then an MP from Faridkot) went door to door to canvass for him.

Shortly afterwards, the 31-year-old, who has a degree in business management from Delhi St Stephen's College, was installed as a Cabinet minister in the Parkash Singh Badal government, arguably the youngest member in an Akali-BJP ministry dominated by veterans.

In the Assembly, he would lead the party's charge against the Opposition, with wit, vitriol, and some muscle. When it came to giving the Opposition a stinging retort, the party could bank on him as he took on everyone, including the irascible Navjot Singh Sidhu when the latter switched to the Congress.

In Amritsar, where he owns a house, acquaintances call him a deeply spiritual man who enjoys reading and can discuss any subject under the sun. He is also known to be a teetotaller and vegetarian. Sukhbir Badal had once laughingly remarked, "Even their dogs are vegetarian."

It was not long before murmurs started that Majithia, president of the Youth Akali Dal, would one day upstage Sukhbir. People pointed to his hallowed pedigree — his great grandfather was the founding president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in 1920; the family bought its first plane in 1935; his grandfather was the deputy defence minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet from 1957 to 1962, and his father Satyajit Singh not only ran a business empire spread across Delhi, UP and Punjab, but also presided over Amritsar's Khalsa College that his forefathers had helped found in 1892. It was a potent mix of *panth* and wealth.

With his elder brother Gurmehar tending to the Saraya Group of Industries, named after the family estate in Gorakhpur district of UP, Majithia focused on politics, taking a leaf out of Akali patriarch and five-time chief minister Parkash Singh Badal's old school politics — attending every marriage and *bhog* ceremony of his workers, a practice he continues even today.

His marriage in 2009 to Ganieve Grewal, daughter of a Delhi-based industrialist, was a grand affair that dazzled toffee-nosed Chandigarh, with nine different kinds of international cuisine — including Majithia's personal favourite, Italian — and a host of NRIs in attendance. Those days, the Akali government was trying to woo NRI investments with annual meets, and Majithia was the self-appointed hospitality in-charge.

With his brother tending to the family business, Majithia made his way into politics taking a leaf out of Badal Sr's book — attending every marriage, bhog of his workers, a practice that he continues

Along the way, he also made many enemies, some inside the party who disliked his strongman style, abrasive speeches, and his fleet of muscular cars — an avid rallyist, he was a regular at the Himalayan circuit. In 2010, the Akali government claimed he was getting threats from anti-national elements abroad, and the UPA government at the Centre gave him Z-Plus security. Nobody cared to find out why he was under threat. But in the pantheon of post-terrorism Punjab politicians, where your security detail defined your pecking order, Majithia had arrived.

After he won the polls in 2012, it became increasingly clear: You couldn't mess with Majithia or *Majhe da jarnail* (the general of Majha), as his people called him with equal measure of admiration and fear.

There were whispers that Badal Senior was unhappy with the young man who had found his way into the Akali Dal after his sister's marriage to Sukhbir.

Addressing the 2013 NRI sammelan, Badal had said, with Majitha on the dais with him, "Ask him (Majithia) if he has ever gone to jail. He got everything on a platter, I have spent 17 years in jails." It was an apparently light-hearted moment and the audience laughed as Badal went on about how Majithia was angling for the seat of power, but the barbs were unmistakable.

There was shock and secret glee when Bhola, the alleged drug dealer, pointed a finger at Majithia. But the charges didn't appear to stick as BJP stalwart Arun Jaitley, pitted against Captain Amarinder Singh from Amritsar in the 2014 parliamentary polls, handpicked him as his campaign manager. Though Amarinder repeatedly raised the drug charge and won, Jaitley polled more votes than him in the segments that fall in Majithia's Assembly seat.

During this election, Majithia even had a run-in with the Sikh clergy, who accused him of distorting a hymn of the tenth Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh, to favour Jaitley. Majithia submitted to the punishment meted out to him, and cleaned utensils at the Golden Temple.

The 2017 Assembly polls, fought on the twin issues of drugs and sacrilege, had both the Congress and AAP gunning for Majithia. In a popular ditty, "*Kikli kaleer di*", AAP MP Bhagwant Mann went from village to village lampooning him as the man who could get you "what you needed", suggesting drugs. At poll rallies, both the parties promised to put him behind bars on coming to power. While the Akalis posted their worst-ever electoral result in history with a mere 15 seats, Majithia managed to retain his, one of only two seats that the Akalis won in their former bastion of Majha.

As the Congress came to power, Majithia fought and won a defamation suit against political leaders for accusing him of trafficking in drugs. As his influence over the state continued despite the change of regime, Congress MLAs groused that former CM Amarinder was in cahoots with the Akalis.

The Channi government is calling the December 20 case, based largely on a status report on drug charges against politicians and policemen that was submitted in the Punjab and Haryana High Court in February 2018, a big win in its war on drugs, and an apt closure for all the families who have suffered due to drug abuse.

But close aides of Majithia say he will battle it out in court. "He will answer every charge, he will prove his innocence. The game has just begun."

Illustration: Suvajit Dey

TAKE 5
CABLE TV

SANJEET SINGH SUNNY GILL,
PRESIDENT, CABLE TV OPERATORS' ASSOCIATION, PUNJAB

'DTH players ask for Rs 400. How can we only charge Rs 100?'

Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi recently announced a cap of Rs 100 per month on cable TV tariff, saying this will end cartelisation, with "Badals controlling the business"

KANCHAN VASDEV

1 What do you make of the government's decision?
When the government cannot control the price of DTH (Direct-to-Home) services, how can it control cable tariff? The state government has no right to cap the tariff as cable operators are governed by TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) and they have already fixed the tariff at Rs 130 a month for 200 free-to-air channels.

2 The government has not notified its order yet...
That's my point. The government cannot notify the Rs 100 cap. TRAI has fixed a certain tariff and if the government notifies the cap, we will take it up with TRAI. When DTH operators charge Rs 400, how can we be expected to provide services for Rs 100?

3 How feasible is the government's Rs 100 plan?
Even if a consumer opts only for free channels, the bill will come to Rs 130. The CM has been probably misguided. As per the TRAI rules, the Rs 130 that we charge includes 18 per cent GST. This way an operator gets only Rs 65 from each connection. Plus, there are operational costs. A cable operators earns between Rs 15,000 and Rs 25,000 a month.

4 How many cable operators are there in Punjab?
There are around 5,000 of them who deliver services to 18 lakh people. DTH services have around 17 lakh connections.

5 Do you fear the cable TV business will be hit?
We are certain that we will not be able to provide our services at Rs 100 a month. This order will create a conflict between consumers and cable operators. As a result, subscribers will turn to DTH services. This will benefit multinational companies.

india 75
NUMBER PLATE
51,48,000 TONNES

The total quantity of oilseeds produced in India in 1946-47, according to a reply given by then agriculture minister Jairamdas Doulatram in the Constituent Assembly of India on December 21, 1949. During this period, 11,91,000 tonnes of oil was extracted from oilseeds

365.65 lakh tonnes
Oilseeds produed during oil-year 2020-21, according to Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. The oil-year begins in November and ends the following October. During this period, 113.09 lakh tonnes of edible oils were extracted from all domestic sources

134.14 lakh tonnes
Edible oil imported during oil year 2019-20

19.7 kg
Per capita consumption/availability of edible oil in the country during 2020-21, according to a written reply given by Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti in the Lok Sabha on December 1, 2021

Wage no bar

Behind that long line at a job fair in a Gujarat district, pandemic losses, lure of government tag, unemployment

VAIBHAV JHA
PALANPUR, GANDHINAGAR

A LETTER FROM BANASKANTHA, GUJARAT

IT'S A post of 'Gram Rakshak Dal' attached with the Gujarat Police, offering Rs 230 a day for eight hours of duty, Rs 69 less than what the MNREGA pays, and lesser than the minimum wage. However, partly fuelled by the pandemic job losses and partly by the lure of government service, the state has got more than 50,000 applications for the 9,902 posts advertised in October.

A video of the recruitment drive held on November 27, at the Palanpur Police Training Ground in Banaskantha, Gujarat's border district, went viral when over 6,500 candidates turned up for 650 GRD posts. Unprepared for the numbers, police had to threaten a lathicharge to control them.

Among the applicants that day was a 21-year-old from Iqbalgarh village, who dropped out of school in Class 8. It was his first attempt at an entrance examination, the youth, who didn't want to be identified, said. "I started doing *chhutak majdoori* (daily wage labour) from the age of 17 to support my family. After the lockdown, I have been sitting idle at home for more than two years."

He used to earn "at least double" as a labourer on a good day before the pandemic than what the GRD post is offering, he says, adding, "But I want to join the police service now. The honour of wearing a police uniform is what draws me."

Another aspirant, a 30-year-old, also earns much more as a truck driver, ferrying sharecroppers and migrant workers from nearby Rajasthan villages to Gujarat, but wants the security of the GRD job. "A good day fetches me Rs 600-700 a day now, but driving police vans is a much more respectable job." He also hopes that the eight-hour job will leave him time to keep riding trucks on the side.

Over 6,500 candidates turned up for 650 posts at Banaskantha. *Vaibhav Jha*

GRD or 'village defence parties' are volunteers commanded by respective superintendents of police (SP) deployed in all 33 districts of Gujarat, and assist police in night patrolling, bandobast and crowd control. Any village resident between the ages of 20 and 50 can apply, and is selected after a physical test, of height, chest and weight, and a physical endurance test which involves running 800 metres in 4 minutes for men, and 800 metres in 5.30 minutes for women. The GRDs are entitled to Rs 230 for eight hours of duty (since it is considered "volunteer" service), without benefits such as pension, bonus, medical reimbursement and leave travel concession.

Apart from the GRD posts, the Gujarat government is hiring for posts of police sub-inspectors, intelligence officers, assistant sub-inspectors, Lok Rakshak Dal (LRD) personnel, and home guards, to be filled in the next three months.

For the 10,000 LRD constable posts, Gujarat has received more than 8.86 lakh applications. The applicants have to be Class 12 pass and apart from a physical and endurance test, have to clear a written test. The 6,700 vacancies for Home Guard jawans have got 36,000 applications.

The Gujarat Labour Department has 88,933 people registered in the unorganised sector in Banaskantha district, where the rush of applicants resulted in a near lathicharge. An overwhelming 87.39% of them earn below Rs 10,000 a month, while 62.83% of them are in the working age population of 18-40 years. Nearly 80% of those in the unorganised sector belong to either OBC or Scheduled Castes.

A large majority (51,224) are employed in agricultural activities, and the ratio of men to women is 57.5:43.5.

Besides, 10,800 unemployed persons in Banaskantha district are registered as "job seekers" in the offline category alone with the Directorate of Employment and Training.

Jignesh Mevani, who represents Vadgam constituency in Banaskantha as an Independent and is now aligned with the Congress, said the numbers telling the district's unemployment story are not unique to Banaskantha alone. "It is just that at the recruitment drive of the GRD, we saw a sample of the crisis which has been simmering for some time now. You can gauge the situation of unemployment by the number of applications coming even for low-paying jobs like GRD," Mevani said, adding that the pay was "a violation of the criteria of minimum wages".

The "crores of jobs" lost during the pandemic were also reflected in the rising demand for MNREGA, Mevani added.

Among those in the queue for an LRD post is a 21-year-old. Appearing for the physical endurance test at the Gandhinagar SP office in Porbandar, she said she had been preparing for the Mahila Constable job for two months. She is a graduate in Economics from a state university.

"The salary of an LRD constable starts from Rs 19,000 and there are benefits of housing, LTC and medical reimbursement which come with a government job. If I am able to secure the LRD constable post, it will give me financial security. After that I will prepare for the Gujarat Public Service Commission (GPSC) exam," she said.

Another woman applicant, the 20-year-old daughter of a serving police constable, said she wished to follow in the footsteps of her father. Once she had cleared the LRD test, she said, she would study further as she had only studied till Class 12. "I will then try to become a police officer."

Across THE AISLE

P CHIDAMBARAM
Website: pchidambaram.in
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Count the year-end gifts

THIS IS the time of the year when Santa Claus is believed to visit homes with gifts. He may disappoint many, but the belief persists. It is a story to entertain children.

A figure that I am certain does not resemble Santa Claus — but no one knows who — has been visiting India throughout the year that is drawing to a close. He was an unwanted visitor. He brought unwanted gifts. Count them:

Touching New Highs

For households: Retail inflation at 4.91 per cent. Of which, fuel and light inflation at 13.4 per cent. Santa's suggestion: find a job that gives you dearness allowance and house rent, and the employer pays electricity and water bills.

For Farmers: Freedom to lease the land to corporates, freedom to borrow from corporates, freedom to sell the produce anywhere to corporates and freedom to become landless agricultural labour. It is a different story that farmers refused the generous offer.

For all producers and consumers: Wholesale price inflation at 14.23 per cent. It means that nearly all prices are up. If the price of one thing — goods or services — falls, count yourself lucky, because the prices of five other things would have risen, which is why the wholesale price inflation is the highest in 12 years.

For young men and women: Unemployment rate at 7.48 per cent. Of which, urban unemployment rate at 9.09 per cent (CMIE).

For post-graduate and doctoral scholars: Over 10,000 vacant teaching posts in central universities, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). Their objective remains teaching and, going by the outcomes, they do a pretty decent job of teaching. It is fortunate that they have invented a way to teach without teachers.

The New Reservation

For SC, ST and OBC: Over 10,000 teaching posts that are vacant. Of which 4,126 are 'reserved' for SC, ST and OBC. Don't panic, reservation continues. The reservation policy has been tweaked for their benefit: it is no longer reservation in posts, it is reservation in vacancies. The government will create more vacancies and reserve those vacancies for SC, ST and OBC candidates. The reservation policy will be honoured in letter and spirit. The candidate can include in his/her *curriculum vitae* that he/she is currently employed in a vacancy.

For those who pay EMI: Higher interest rate on the EMI (monthly installment). Banks have written off 'bad loans' of Rs 2,02,783 crore in 2020-21. Borrowers must be grateful that banks are offering them loans.

For the poor: A queue. Please wait for your turn (which may never come). Public sector banks (PSB) are busy helping out poor corporates. In 2020-21, just 13 corporates owed Rs 4,86,800 crore to PSBs. Banks settled those dues for Rs 1,61,820 crore. PSBs were happy to do their bit for the welfare of the *people* of India (which, of course, are the 13 corporates) by absorbing the loss of Rs 2,84,980 crore. PSBs are willing to do more — provided you are a defaulting corporate.

For economists and students of economics: A 'V' shaped recovery. At least that is what the government claimed. It did so on the high authority of the Chief Economic Adviser who is, by the way, leaving the government. Dr Krishnmurthy Subramanian brought a great amount of learning from the Indian School of Business to the Government of India, he will take back a great amount of unlearning from the Government of India to the Indian School of Business. Interestingly, Dr Gita Gopinath, Deputy Managing Director-designate of IMF, stopped by in Delhi last week and described the Indian economic recovery as 'K' shaped. Don't agonise, no one is obliged to choose between the two letters, because there are 24 other letters in the alphabet. Based on experience, it can be predicted that eternal optimists will choose the letter 'I' and nihilists will settle for the letter 'O'. Economic geniuses will argue in favour of the letter 'M'.

Witness to Freedom

For the Free Press: A 'bigger' rank for India (currently, 142 out of 180, moving up from 140 of the previous year) in the World Press Freedom Index. India's Minister of Information & Broadcasting may be right when he said that he does not agree with the conclusions drawn by 'Reporters Without Borders' who publish the Index. He should know a thing or two about press freedom. As long as India's 'Reporters With Orders' print or telecast war cries such as '*Goli Maaro*' and '*Hara Virus*', there is ample proof that press freedom in India is alive and kicking. The Minister also reasoned that there was a 'lack of clear definition of press freedom'. Santa suggested that he should invite, among others, the following journalists and attempt a definition of press freedom: Rajdeep Sardesai, Barkha Dutt, Karan Thapar, Sagarika Ghose, Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, Raghav Bahl, Bobby Ghosh, Punya Prasun Bajpai, Krishna Prasad, Rubin, Prannoy Roy and Sudhir Agarwal.

For All the People: Policies that will ensure undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality. They earned India the rank of 101 out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index. As a welcome by-product, patriotic couples ensured that the Total Fertility Rate fell to 2.0, which is below the replacement rate.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

> The government claimed a 'V' shaped recovery. Dr Gita Gopinath, Deputy Managing Director-designate of IMF, described the Indian economic recovery as 'K' shaped. Don't agonise, no one is obliged to choose between the two letters. It can be predicted that eternal optimists will choose the letter 'I' and nihilists will settle for the letter 'O'. Economic geniuses will argue in favour of the letter 'M'

Fifth COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH
Twitter @tavleen_singh

Fanatics take charge

MY INTENTION this week was to write about the lynchings in Punjab gurdwaras in the name of 'sacrilege'. They shamed me and I did not recognise my religion. It should shame our political leaders that they fulminated against sacrilege but were too cowardly to admit that the real desecration was that two men were lynched in places of worship. Then came videos of speeches calling for a genocide against Muslims by saffron-robed 'saints' at a Dharam Sansad (religious parliament) in Haridwar. And, to heighten tensions, political troublemakers released on social media a doctored video of Asaduddin Owaisi that made him sound as if he was threatening all Hindus in a post-Modi era when he was speaking specifically about police atrocities in Uttar Pradesh.

It soon became clear to me that what is happening is a much bigger thing than the horrible killings in those two gurdwaras in Punjab. What we could be seeing is fanatics seizing the religious narrative across the lines of faith. This is the culmination of a deliberate process of stirring religious passions and inter-communal hatred into politics that began after Narendra Modi became Prime Minister. From the moment he began his first term in 2014, he made it clear that he would wear his Hindu faith as a badge of honour, and unlike 'secular' prime ministers would never hesitate to participate in Hindu religious ceremonies in public places. He worshipped on the banks of the Ganga and allowed cameras to record every religious ritual that he performed inside the sanctum sanctorum of temples. It seemed at the time like a necessary correction to decades of disaffection brought about by too much smug and insincere secularism.

Then, when Modi remained silent in the face of Muslims and Dalits being lynched by his supporters, it became plain that the correction had gone too far, and that the consequences of his new anti-secular ideology would be terrible. If political leaders take secularism too far the consequences are usually benign. It means that religion should remain a private matter and that it should never again be given so high a political status that it could cause India to be divided in its name.

Partition was horrible for most Indians but, as the years went by, its wounds were allowed to slowly heal or at least be forgotten. But, this did not happen for the RSS whose idea of nationalism became inextricably mixed up with a hatred of Muslims. So, it was in a sense inevitable that when a man schooled in Sangh ideology became Prime Minister, he would ensure that those old wounds were reopened, and this is what Modi has done in different ways. When Muslims and Dalits were lynched by cow vigilantes directly affiliated to the BJP, Modi said nothing. When his handpicked chief minister in Uttar Pradesh set up 'Romeo squads' in police stations as almost his first act in office and BJP spokesmen defended this on the grounds that 'love jihad' had to be stopped, Modi remained silent again. When BJP chief ministers started passing laws to stop religious conversion, he chose to remain silent, so Christian priests and churches have come under attack in recent months. These attacks have become more frequent and more barbaric. Modi has remained silent.

The only time he spoke out was when his MP from Bhopal, Sadhvi Pragya Thakur, said that Nathuram Godse was in her eyes a 'patriot'. Since his 'patriotism' had led him to assassinate Mahatma Gandhi, Modi was obliged to say something and he did. He said he would never forgive her for what she had said but, after saying this, he has made no effort to take action against her. Meanwhile, after winning his second term he has personally made it a point to make religiosity an essential part of his political messaging, and so we have come to where we are now. Religious slogans are now openly raised at political meetings by senior leaders of the BJP, and at the height of the opposition to the Citizenship Amendment Act, the Prime Minister remained silent when his ministers called Muslim protesters 'traitors' from public platforms.

The consequences of mixing communal hatred, religiosity, and hyper-nationalism into the normal business of political life are now clear to see. To borrow what my friend and fellow columnist, Vir Sanghvi, said in a tweet on the Haridwar event, 'the lunatics have taken over the asylum'. Every religion has its share of extremists and bigots, but despite India's long history of inter-communal violence, there has never been a time when they have been allowed to steer the ship of faith.

So, what happens next? Nothing good. We are likely to see more killings in the name of faith and more fanatics creeping stealthily out of the dark caves in which they have long remained hidden. They have sensed that this is their time, and that they have in some ways become more powerful than the most powerful political leaders. This is not good for India but inevitable when a Prime Minister as popular as Narendra Modi has paved the way for this to happen. At a more mundane level, will this help the BJP win Uttar Pradesh again? Who knows? What is clear is that the 'opium of the masses' is much easier to rely on at election time than promises of shining new highways and vague promises of 'development'.

The one left behind isn't always a pale shadow

she SAID

MANJULA LAL
manjula.lal@gmail.com

IN BOOK publishing, rookie editors used to be trained to look out for 'widows and orphans', an expression used for the single word/words at the end of a paragraph. The 'widows' were longer words and the 'orphans' small ones. The idea seemed to be that these stragglers looked pathetic, lost or unwanted, spoiling the look of the page. They had therefore to be brought out from the cold and pushed into the shelter of the other words in the paragraph, which is easily done by deleting a few dispensable words or using a technical tightening tool.

About 20 years ago, there was a worldwide effort to ban the use of the word 'widows' and we were told to call 'widows and orphans' 'singles and doubles'. In tandem, the Indian Army also started calling wives of martyred soldiers *Veer Nari*, so that their bereavement did not define them forever. No substitute English word was found.

However, old habits die hard. A year or so after losing my husband, I said about a neighbour: 'She's a widow, you know'. And immediately pulled myself up short. What pernicious profiling! Obviously, every time you meet or talk about people like me, the thought of our bereavement should not be uppermost in your mind. I should have said, 'She's a retired teacher', and why she lives alone should be a subject matter of investigation if somebody is sufficiently intrigued about her personal life. No need to produce an instant sketch of loneliness and pathos, on the presumption that her whole persona is now defined by her marital status.

The incident triggered a thought: Do my friends describe me as 'widowed' to a third party? Probably not. I guess they must be saying 'She lost her husband recently'. I don't think, in contemporary circles where we have reached the age when people are popping off one by one, we think of the one left behind as a widow/widower, just as we don't think of those friends whose marriages broke down as 'divorcees'. If you do that, you could be compared to the married woman in the novel by American Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter*. Set in Boston under British rule, it's about a woman who had to go around with a scarlet 'A' pinned on her dress, marked forever as an adulteress. It goes without saying that her paramour suffered no such indignity.

Personally, what has been intriguing six years into single status is how no one rings up with concern asking how I'm doing minus the spouse. I expected friends to ask, 'Do you need anything?' or 'How are you managing?'. Generally speaking, any kind of call was rare, as if the mourning period is some kind of solitary confinement. To be fair, they might have thought the offspring was providing appropriate care. That would be a reasonable presumption, although there is no daughter to provide comfort, only a son — most people know the difference.

This whole scenario came to mind recently when a classmate died of Covid. As he was in the IAS, there was naturally much support from the services to see his wife through this trauma. She herself works for one of India's top five companies. Yet another classmate said with genuine concern, "We must extend all help, as there is no competent male in the family to take care of her."

It brought back to mind the sentence I was often asked by doctors when my mother was lying in a coma in a government hospital three decades ago: "Where is the male member?" Surely, specs and all, at 32 years of age, I looked emotionally and intellectually capable enough to be told about her treatment — at least as much as the worthy doctors. And though I was alone in the room with her when her monitor flatlined, the doctor refused to give me the official word on what it meant. Instead, I was confronted with the same query: "Where is the male member?"I know, youngsters will make a joke of this phrase, with its easy use as a double entendre, but it is a standard phrase in hospital corridors. And should be banned forthwith, just like 'widow'.

To go back to what I thought was my friends' strangely negligent attitude, perhaps they knew that I would be able to cope and therefore were not so solicitous. Which just proves that I have myself internalised stereotypes about widows being helpless. Clearly, they were not defining me by my bereavement, whereas I have been in danger of doing so.

Lal is the author of That's News to Me and In Search of Ram Rajya

National Editor Shalini Langer curates the She Said column

Dalitality

KUNAL KAMRA & SURAJ YENGDE

Caste-less comedy: Time to lift curtains

COMEDY AND caste are perhaps two friends who have never met. They don't know how much they are missing each other. If comedy meets caste, they can make content of the highest quality. Think about it. What is funnier than an arbitrary system that differentiates one from the other merely by their last name. A billion-and-a-half people keep hunting for people's last names like Indiana Jones does treasure, so they can find out how much of a 'worthless' person I am than the other.

Caste is comedy. However, its experiences are not. Any reasonable person will revolt against it. Unlike the visible physical features that race distinguishes, caste doesn't offer that stark difference. Yet, we are so innovative that we have invented mechanisms to part our ways and keep disturbing the unity of society because of caste. Caste is everywhere. We need to be an observer. We cannot be obtuse when we talk about caste. When we go to a restaurant, we can see the person sitting at the counter has a different social capital than the person taking orders. Similarly, the waiter's social capital is different from that of the one wiping the tables or mopping the floor or cleaning utensils in the kitchen. This is because of the caste differences that endow birth-based professional hierarchy.

There are so many issues that liberal, middle-class India can get upset about, but when it comes to caste, they have comfortably skirted the issues in order to protect their privilege. This is an outcome of unpaid labour. It's a problem of unequal distribution of wealth. We justify our position as an outcome of "merit", immediately discarding millennia-old privileges that have produced an accepted caste atrocity.

What can comedy do to engage with caste? Comedians are representative of a class and caste who mollycoddle the audience of the same last names. When a comedian performs, even if they feel like taking up an issue, they fail to do so. The nature of stand-up comedy is urban-centric mainly, and these are the topics that the audience comes to hear. The audience wants to hear about the Uber driver issue, the potholes, the exhausting traffic, our politicians, the mall, Netflix, etc. There is a slight discomfort among the comedians to slip in a joke about something that would upset their set genre of "last name" audience.

We have comedians from diverse genders, sexuality, religion taking on the issues of their concern. The two major themes that go well are gender and secularism. Comedians hark on the established narrative without attempting to create something anew. What will it take for caste to become a narrative that we will commit to, in order to abolish it?

Getty Images

The creators have to find ways to communicate a topic that is ubiquitous to the audience, that everybody can feel, but nobody wants to acknowledge. It is like a fart released during *pooja* at a relative's house.

Isn't it ironic that our influences and culture get shaped by the world around us? In America and elsewhere, black comedy is a theme. It has made a massive mark on the stage. We also laugh at their jokes and admire their commitment. We might even tweet #BlackLivesMatter, but that's where we leave it. Black comedy is possible mainly because of a vibrant black business community, black bars, black clubs, and a market that is run by black people. When Black Americans got TV in their house, Bill Cosby had to appear on their screen. In India, too, the industry is market-oriented. If a stand-up show goes to small towns, the comedians will be forced to bring that experience into perspective.

The market is not secular in India. That is why it needs to be made aware of our immense diversity. India needs consumers who are paying to watch content that is unrepresentative of them.

We can make jokes about topics that we have personally experienced. If we are to speak about caste to an audience that is majorly married within their *gotra*, then they would not appreciate the joke. However, if comedy surrounds the topic of caste and its abolition, we can make a case without indulging into self-aggrandisement. A caste joke need not begin with Dalits and end with them. Caste is a Brahmin; it is a Baniya, a Shudra. If one spends time with one's family, they will pick up ample content in this discipline.

Lately, a few younger comedians have brought the content of caste into their performances. They have done it in a way that the message was sent, and nobody broke their heads. We can now scratch the surface and be original entertainers without plagiarising or borrowing the untended content.

It is about time comedy gets caste on board because it is the original humour that we can collectively fight and riot over.

Comedy has a responsibility. It is a demonstrative medium that doesn't relegate the audience into invisible, insignificant entities. The audience is part of the act as much as the comedian delivering their content.

If stand-up comedy and the entertainment industry, in general, has to prolong its identity, it has to integrate and educate. A workshop of ideas integrating our history with artists and the anti-caste academic sphere can be a good start. The entertainment industry can support a festival of anti-caste. We need to create platforms and spaces for comedians from Dalit backgrounds to take the stage. As a start, whosoever has a space and a dedicated audience needs to start an unapologetic conversation about caste.

If we all laugh at caste, we are laughing at bigotry, misogyny, patriarchy, sexism. Why not begin with laughter as a new armament in the arsenal of anti-caste protest?

Kunal Kamra is a comedian based in Mumbai

Suraj Yengde, author of Caste Matters, *curates the fortnightly 'Dalitality' column*

On the LOOSE

LEHER KALA
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Let's hear it for the school bell

RECENTLY, THERE was a rare day of unexpected merriment during my 10-year-old's class on Zoom. Some mischievous intruders hacked into the software and posted funny cartoons and videos in the middle of science. Classes were suspended for the day while teachers scrambled to figure out what happened. The children, who have had every bit of joy sucked out of their lives in the last two years, were chuckling in delight at this unusual break.

For many weeks now, if not months, life has reverted back to what one might dare to call "normal". Even with the new Omicron restrictions, restaurants are allowed to function at 50 per cent capacity. When social activity is permitted, 200-guest weddings are allowed, airports are buzzing, we desperately need some clarity on one critical issue: will Delhi's schools ever reopen?

All over again, the Omicron variant threatens to keep crores of Indian children restricted to their homes for a third, consecutive, year. Everyone agrees that amid new crises, survival comes first, everything else is a luxury. However, we have reached a stage in this pandemic where the risks of restarting in-person classes are worth it, considering the alternative: having a humungous, misanthropic and unfit generation left behind in so many ways, condemned to struggle with difficult academic concepts that got lost in translation via remote learning. Worryingly, parents across income groups have begun talking of a Zero Year, knowing it's impossible to expect a child to handle calculus in Class 11 after a shaky maths foundation in the 9th and 10th. Equally crucially, parents and children are burnt out by being cooped together, endlessly.

One way to reconcile to the frustration of pandemic-related learning loss is to understand that what students have missed academically, they have gained in life skills. For example, in the last year my daughter has lost a grandparent to Covid, watched a parent soldier through it, led a solitary existence and, for one horrific month, internalised the panic in her household. Our own real-world problems are an excellent starting point for building resilience. The virtues of incessant striving, drilled into every Indian student as the surefire route to success, now sounds like unreliable advice. Because, the real challenge during Covid has been to philosophically embrace uncertainty; to accept, when larger forces are at play, that so much is out of our control. Ultimately, the most valuable education is one that provides training to adapt to whatever googly life throws at you.

Our current education system conspires to kill innovation, to replace wonder with superficial knowledge, that the children can obediently regurgitate via examinations every quarter. Having said that, there is no substitute for the structure and discipline of a regular school day, where children can engage with their peers, play games, compete, and learn their lessons. Well-to-do parents have the privilege of supplementing their children's education, ensuring their kids watch documentaries, read, and while away hours in constructive ways. School closures are deeply unfair for the majority of India's students — whose parents can't engage with them intellectually and lack the resources for tuitions. If this goes on much longer, there will be an unbridgeable knowledge gap between income groups. What Yuval Harari eerily described as the rise of superior humans in his book *Homo Deus*, who can afford bioengineering and artificial intelligence to upgrade their abilities, leaving 90% of the population behind.

The last two years have felt like we're stuck in a waiting room, and the waiting keeps getting extended. Whether we realise it or not, there have been fundamental shifts in our perspectives since 2020. The worries of those early days — the detrimental effects of excessive screen time for children — seem laughable now. My standards have lowered considerably since then. It's a bleak beginning to 2022. Reopening schools will be a challenge, but more can be done to rise to it.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films

SOUTH KOREA

3 BTS MEMBERS DIAGNOSED WITH COVID

Three members of the K-pop superstar group BTS have been infected with the coronavirus after returning from abroad, their management agency said. RM and Jin were diagnosed with Covid-19 on Saturday evening, the Big Hit Music agency said. It earlier said another member, Suga, tested positive for the virus on Friday.

TOP OF THE WORLD

During an Iranian military exercise last week. *Reuters*

IRAN

Tehran: War games in Gulf a warning to Israel

WAR GAMES conducted this week by Iran in the Gulf were intended to send a warning to Israel, the country's top military commanders said on Friday, amid concerns over possible Israeli plans to target Iranian nuclear sites. The Revolutionary Guards' war games included firing ballistic and cruise missiles. State television showed missiles flattening a target which resembled Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor at the conclusion of the exercises on Friday. "These exercises had a very clear message: a serious, real ... warning to threats by the Zionist regime's authorities to beware of their mistakes," Guards chief General Hossein Salami said on state TV. **REUTERS**

BANGLADESH

Ferry fire: Search on for missing passengers

MASSIVE SEARCH operations continued for the second day on Saturday for the missing passengers of an overcrowded three-storey ferry carrying around 800 people that caught fire on the Sugandha River in southern Bangladesh, killing at least 41 people and injuring over 150 others. The fire broke out around 3 am on Friday in the engine room of the *MV Abhijan-10* launch that started a journey from Dhaka. Scores of passengers went missing in the mishap, police and fire service officials said. **PTI**

SUDAN

Internet cut, roads blocked ahead of protest

OPPONENTS OF military rule in Sudan on Saturday planned their tenth major demonstration since an Oct 25 coup as internet services were disrupted in the capital, Khartoum, and soldiers blocked roads, two Reuters witnesses said. Local residents were unable to make or receive calls domestically, the witnesses said. At the same time, soldiers and Rapid Support Forces were out in force blocking roads leading to bridges linking Khartoum with Omdurman, its sister city across the Nile river, they said. **REUTERS**

Surging Covid cases, 'jingle jabs' make for sombre Christmas around the world

UK, France report record new cases

AP & REUTERS
ROME, DECEMBER 25

CHRISTIANS AROUND the world celebrated their second Covid-19 Christmas on Saturday with surging infections in many countries overwhelming hospitals, cancelling flights and curbing religious observances, even as coronavirus vaccines were more available than ever.

While some countries in Asia imposed restrictions to try to contain the highly contagious omicron variant, governments in Europe, the US and elsewhere preached common sense despite reporting record daily cases this week, advising their citizens to use masks and voluntarily limit the size of holiday gatherings.

The head of intensive care at a hospital in Marseille, France, said most of the Covid-19 patients there over Christmas were unvaccinated, while his staff members are exhausted or can't work because they are infected.

Thousands of people across England got a vaccine booster shot for Christmas as new cases in Britain hit another daily record of 122,186. The Good Health Pharmacy in north London was one of dozens of vaccination sites that kept their doors open Saturday to administer "jingle jabs" amid a government push to offer booster shots to all adults by the end of the year.

In the United States, many churches canceled planned in-person Christmas services, and for those that did have in-person worship, clergy reported smaller but significant attendance.

Pope Francis used his Christmas address to pray for some of those vaccines to reach the poorest countries.

"Open hearts to ensure that necessary medical care — and vaccines in particular — are provided to those peoples who need them most," Francis said from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica.

On the other side of the globe, hundreds of thousands of people in the Philippines, Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation, spent Christmas without homes, electricity, or adequate food and water after a powerful typhoon left at least 375 people dead last week and devastated mostly central island provinces.

In South Korea, social distancing rules required churches to limit worshippers to 70% of seating capacity, and service attendees had to be fully vaccinated.

South Korea has been grappling with soaring infections and deaths since it significantly eased its virus curbs in early November as part of efforts to return to pre-pandemic normalcy. The country was eventually forced to restore its toughest distancing guidelines, including a four-person limit on social gatherings and a 9 p.m. curfew for restaurants and cafes.

On Friday, the UK and France reported record numbers of new daily Covid cases. UK government data showed 122,186 new cases, up from 119,789 on Thursday and marking a third day of cases in excess of 100,000. In France, health authorities reported 94,124 new daily Covid-19 cases.

At Paris Gare de Lyon railway station in Paris on Friday. France reported a record 94,124 new Covid cases. *Reuters*

SUBDUED CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS IN BETHLEHEM: A man dressed as Santa Claus outside the Church of the Nativity, traditionally believed to be the birthplace of Jesus Christ, on Christmas Day in the West Bank city of Bethlehem, on Saturday. The biblical town of Bethlehem is gearing up for its second straight Christmas hit by the coronavirus with small crowds and gray, gloomy weather dampening celebrations in the traditional birthplace of Jesus. *AP*

Covid Christmas in French ICU: Fear, fatigue and loving care

DANIEL COLE
MARSEILLE, DECEMBER 25

FROM THE intensive care ward in France where he is spending the holidays, Covid-19 patient David Daniel Sebbagh said he has one overriding regret: that he didn't get vaccinated.

"The vaccine, it's not a danger," the 52-year-old said as he lay in a Marseille hospital. "It's choosing life."

The ICU's chief doctor, Dr. Julien Carvelli, is trying to keep his team motivated as they spend another Christmas tending to patients on breathing machines, periodically flipping them back to front, front to back.

The staff is tired, the Omicron variant is bearing down, and the unit's beds are filling fast. "We're afraid we won't have enough space," Carvelli said.

Doctors and nurses share a Christmas Eve meal together in a Covid ICU at a hospital in Marseille. *AP*

Marseille's La Timone Hospital, one of France's biggest hospitals, has weathered wave after wave of Covid-19. On Christmas Eve, medical personnel decorated a fir tree in the corridor and seized a moment for a communal meal in their scrubs, trying to maintain a semblance of holiday spirit in between rounds.

The hospital allows families to visit gravely ill loved ones in the ICU, as long as they're careful. Amelie Khayat has paid daily visits to her husband, Ludo, 41, who spent 24 days in a coma and on a breathing machine. The couple touched heads as she sat on his bed. Now strong enough to stand, he stood to give her a farewell hug.

In a nearby room, a 40-year-old patient lay unconscious near death, with her young son's winter hat placed on her belly. In another, a relative had left a Christian icon propped on a patient's tray.

Some 90% of French adults are vaccinated against the coronavirus, but most of the Covid patients in La Timone's ICU are unvaccinated. **AP**

China's Communist Party removes top Xinjiang official sanctioned by US

KJM VARMA
BEIJING, DECEMBER 25

THE RULING Chinese Communist Party (CPC), headed by President Xi Jinping, has abruptly replaced its chief in Xinjiang province, Chen Quanguo, who was sanctioned by the US over alleged human rights abuses against Uyghur Muslims in the region.

Chen no longer serves as Secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regional Committee of the CPC, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday.

Ma Xingrui, who was the governor of Guangdong province, has been appointed as new party chief for Xinjiang.

The CPC Central Committee has decided to give Chen another appointment, the news agency said in a brief report.

Chen has been accused by the US, the UK and the European Union of widespread human rights abuses against Uyghurs, but he is tipped for a promotion, Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* reported.

Last year, the US government had slapped sanctions against Chen and several other Chinese officials in-charge of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, stating they were "believed to be responsible for, or complicit in the unjust detention or abuse of Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs and members of other minority groups in Xinjiang".

Chen Quanguo served as secretary of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regional Committee of the CPC

The three Chinese officials banned by the US were Chen Quanguo, CCP Party Secretary of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Zhu Hailun, the then Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Political and Legal Committee and Wang Mingshan, the Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau.

They were sanctioned by the former US government led by President Donald Trump — which pursued a tough policy on China; parts of which have been carried forward by his successor Joe Biden. **PTI**

UK relaxes visa rules for foreign care workers

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, DECEMBER 25

FOREIGN SOCIAL care workers, care assistants and home care workers, including from India, will soon be eligible for a UK Health and Care Visa for a 12-month period as part of temporary measures to meet shortages in the sector.

The UK government said on Friday that thousands of additional care workers could be recruited to boost the adult social care workforce following temporary changes to the scheme, which will make it quicker, cheaper and easier for social care employers to recruit eligible workers to fill vital gaps.

These workers cover work in government-backed care homes and also care assistance for the elderly and disabled in their own homes.

"The care sector is experiencing unprecedented challenges prompted by the pandemic and the changes we've made to the health and care visa will bolster the workforce and helping alleviate some of the pressures currently being experienced," Home Secretary Priti Patel said.

"This is our New Plan for Immigration in action, delivering our commitment to support the NHS and the wider health and care sector by making it easier for health professionals to live and work in the UK," she said.

The change follows recommendation from the UK's Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to make care workers and home carers eligible for the Health and Care Visa and add the occupation to the Shortage Occupation List. Inclusion on the SOL stipulates an annual salary minimum of £20,480 for carers to qualify for the Health and Care Visa. **PTI**

'OVER 30 SHOT DEAD BY TROOPS'

Report: Children among dozens killed in Myanmar

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BANGKOK, DECEMBER 25

MYANMAR GOVERNMENT troops rounded up several village residents, some believed to be women and children, fatally shot more than 30 and set the bodies on fire, a witness and other reports said Saturday.

The purported photos of the aftermath of the Christmas Eve massacre in eastern Mo So village, just outside Hpruso township in Kayah state where refugees were sheltering from an army offensive, spread on social media in the country, fuelling outrage against the military that took power in February.

The accounts could not be independently verified. The photos showed the charred bodies of over 30 people in three burned-out vehicles.

Vehicles smolder in Hpruso township, Kayah state, Myanmar, on Friday. *AP*

A village resident, who said he went to the scene, told The Associated Press that the victims had fled the fighting between armed resistance groups and Myanmar's army near Koi Ngan village, which is just beside Mo So, on Friday. He said they were killed after they were arrested by troops while heading to refugee camps in the western part of the township.

The government has not commented on the allegations, but a report in the state-run *Myanma Alinn* daily newspaper on Saturday said that the fighting near Mo So broke out on Friday when members of ethnic guerrilla forces, known as the Karenni National Progressive Party, and those opposed to the military drove in "suspicious" vehicles and attacked security forces after refusing to stop.

UK: Armed intruder arrested on Windsor Castle grounds

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, DECEMBER 25

BRITISH POLICE arrested a man armed with a weapon on the grounds of Windsor Castle on Saturday.

Thames Valley police said the security breach took place at 8.30 am on Christmas Day. The 19-year-old from Southampton is in custody.

"The man has been arrested on suspicion of breach or trespass of a protected site and possession of an offensive weapon. He remains in custody at this time," Thames Valley Police Superintendent Rebecca Mears said. "We can confirm security processes were triggered within moments of the man entering the grounds and he did not enter any buildings."

Members of the royal family have been informed.

Queen Elizabeth II is spending the Christmas holidays at Windsor, having decided not to stay at Sandringham, the royal estate in eastern England where she traditionally spends the festive season with family.

Largest space telescope launched on daring quest to behold first stars

MARCIA DUNN
DECEMBER 25

THE WORLD'S largest and most powerful space telescope rocketed away Saturday on a high-stakes quest to behold light from the first stars and galaxies and scour the universe for hints of life.

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope soared from French Guiana on South America's northeastern coast, riding a European Ariane rocket into the Christmas morning sky.

The $10 billion observatory hurtled toward its destination, 1.6 million kilometres away, or more than four times beyond the Moon. It will take a month to get there and another five months before its infrared eyes are ready to start scanning the cosmos.

First, the telescope's enormous mirror and sunshield need to unfurl; they were folded origami-style to fit into the rocket's nose cone. Otherwise, the observatory won't be able to peer back in time 13.7 billion years as anticipated, within a mere 100 million years of the universe-forming Big Bang.

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson called Webb is a time machine that will provide "a better understanding of our universe and our place in it: who we are, what we are, the search that's eternal."

"We are going to discover incredible things that we never imagined," Nelson said following liftoff, speaking from Florida's Kennedy Space Center. But he cautioned: "There are still innumerable things that have to work and they have to work perfectly ... we know that in great reward there is great risk."

The Ariane 5 rocket, with NASA's James Webb Space Telescope onboard, lifts off from French Guiana. *AP*

Intended as a successor to the aging Hubble Space Telescope, the long-delayed James Webb is named after NASA's administrator during the 1960s. NASA partnered with the European and Canadian space agencies to build and launch the new 7-tonne telescope, with thousands of people from 29 countries working on it since the 1990s.

With the launch falling on Christmas and a global surge in Covid cases, there were fewer spectators at the French Guiana launch site than expected. Nelson bowed out along with a congressional delegation and contractors who worked on the telescope.

Around the world, astronomers had eagerly waited to see Webb finally taking flight after years of setbacks. Last-minute technical snags bumped the launch nearly a week, then gusty wind pushed it to Christmas. A few of the launch controllers wore Santa caps in celebration.

"We have delivered a Christmas gift today for humanity," said European Space Agency director general Josef Aschbacher. He described it as a special moment, but added: "It's very nerve-racking. I couldn't do launches every single day. This would not be good for my life expectancy."

Cheers and applause erupted in and outside Launch Control following Webb's flawless launch, with jubilant scientists embracing one another amid shouts of "Go Webb!" and signs that read: "Bon Voyage Webb." Cameras on the rocket's upper stage provided one last glimpse of the shimmering telescope, before it sped away.

The telescope's showpiece: a gold-plated mirror more than 21 feet across. Protecting the observatory is a wispy, five-layered sunshield, vital for keeping the light-gathering mirror and heat-sensing infrared detectors at subzero temperatures. At 70 feet by 46 feet, it's the size of a tennis court.

If all goes well, the sunshield will be opened three days after liftoff, taking at least five days to unfold and lock into place. Next, the mirror segments should open up like the leaves of a drop-leaf table, 12 days or so into the flight. In all, hundreds of release mechanisms need to work perfectly for the telescope to succeed. **AP**

S Africa moves to stop auction of Mandela's Robben Island cell key

FAKIR HASSEN
JOHANNESBURG, DEC 25

SOUTH AFRICA has initiated urgent steps to halt the auction of the key to the jail cell on Robben Island where Nelson Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years as a political prisoner before becoming the country's first democratically-elected president.

The online auction on January 28 announced by US-based Guernsey's Auctions is expected to fetch more than a million pounds.

Sports, Arts and Culture Minister Nathi Mthethwa has ordered an investigation into reports that the key had been provided to Guernsey by Christo Brand, who was Mandela's jailer and later became a tour guide on Robben Island as part of reconciliation attempts after the anti-apartheid icon ascended to power.

Mthethwa said it was a serious matter, which is receiving attention at the highest levels.

He said the master key to the Robben Island cells was still there, so the investigation would determine whether Mandela's cell key was duplicated.

"It is unfathomable for Guernsey's, which is clearly aware of the painful history of our country and the symbolism of the key, to consider auctioning the key without any consultation with the South African government, the heritage authorities in South Africa and Robben Island Museum," he said. **PTI**

LA PALMA VOLCANO ERUPTION DECLARED OVER

Spanish eruption's end brings 'emotional relief,' rebuilding

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MADRID, DECEMBER 25

AUTHORITIES ON one of Spain's Canary Islands declared a volcanic eruption that started in September officially finished Saturday following 10 days of no lava flows, seismic activity or significant sulfur dioxide emissions.

But the emergency in La Palma, the most northwest island in the Atlantic Ocean archipelago, is not over due to the widespread damage the eruption caused, the director of the Canaries' volcanic emergency committee said in announcing the much-anticipated milestone.

Lava flows from the volcano on the Canary island of La Palma, last month. *AP*

"It's not joy or satisfaction - how we can define what we feel? It's an emotional relief. And hope," Pevolca director Julio Pérez said. "Because now, we can apply ourselves and focus completely on the reconstruction work."

Fiery molten rock flowing down toward the sea destroyed around 3,000 buildings, entombed banana plantations and vineyards, ruined irrigation systems and cut off roads. But no injuries or deaths were directly linked to the eruption. Pérez said the government valued the loss of infrastructure at more than 900 million euros ($1 billion).

REAL ESTATE

'CHINA VOWS TO TACKLE RISKS'

Shanghai: China's top real estate regulator vowed to resolutely tackle risks stemming from overdue delivery of residential properties by some top developers in a bid to maintain social stability, *Xinhua News Agency* reported. **REUTERS**

AT $635.66 BILLION FOR WEEK ENDED DECEMBER 17

Forex reserves slide for fourth straight week amid decline in currency assets

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

RECORDING A fall of $160 million, the nation's forex reserves declined to $635.667 billion during the week to December 17, according to data from the RBI.

For the previous week ended December 10, the foreign exchange — or forex — reserves had fallen by $77 million to $635.828 billion. The forex kitty had reached an all-time high of $642.453 billion during the week ended September 3, 2021.

For the reporting week ended December 17, the decline was mainly due to a fall in foreign currency assets (FCAs), a vital component of the overall reserves. This is the fourth straight week of fall in the reserves.

FCAs tumbled by $645 million to $572.216 billion, weekly data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed on Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the FCA include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units such as the euro, pound sterling and Japanese yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves rose by $475 million to $39.183 billion in the reporting week.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) remained unchanged at $19.089 billion.

The country's reserve position with the IMF increased by $9 million to $5.179 billion in the reporting week, as per the data.

Falling forex reserves may cause issues for the government and the Reserve Bank in managing the nation's external and internal financial issues.

Higher reserves are a big cushion in the event of any crisis on the economic front and enough to cover the import bill of the country for a year. They also strengthen the rupee against the US dollar.

An increase in reserves also provide a level of confidence to markets that a nation can meet its external obligations, demonstrate the backing of domestic currency by external assets, assist the government in meeting its forex needs and external debt obligations, and maintain a reserve for national disasters or emergencies.

The Reserve Bank functions as the custodian and manager of forex reserves, and operates within the overall policy framework agreed upon with the government. It allocates the dollars for specific purposes.

For example, under the Liberalised Remittances Scheme, individuals are allowed to remit up to $250,000 every year. The RBI uses its forex kitty for the orderly movement of the rupee. It sells the dollar when the rupee weakens and buys the dollar when the rupee strengthens. **WITH PTI**

FALL OF $160 MILLION

	Dec 10 2021	Dec 17 2021
Foreign currency assets	572,860	572,216
Gold	38,709	39,183
SDRs	19,089	19,089
Reserve tranche position	5,170	5,179
Total	635,828	635,667

in million US dollars; source: Reserve Bank of India/Reuters

INTERVIEW: CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, ASIA PACIFIC, ERICSSON

'Smartphones, operators ready for 5G ... now clarity on regulatory side needed'

UNLIKE 4G, 5G is a completely new technology, which should not be viewed just as extension of the old mobile telephony. Not only that, 5G is also likely to stay relevant for much longer, with 6G coming into play only after this decade, MAGNUS EWERBRING, chief technology officer for Asia Pacific at Ericsson, told AASHISH ARYAN in an interview. Edited excerpts:

What is the size of opportunity that you see for Ericsson as a company, especially in the Asia Pacific region, where though it is labour intensive, the role of technology can not be denied?

I would expand it a little bit and see what is the potential for the industry. Indeed it is labour intensive, but technology, when it comes in, transforms some of the work opportunities. Some may sadly go away, but it opens up so many more opportunities of other scale. Technology that eases and drives efficiency for all.

We studied ten different segments in the industry sector and we looked at what is the potential beyond the traditional operator business, which is voice and message related.

We believe that $700 billion in additional revenue can be generated for mobile operators in these ten segments. It is almost 30 per cent additional revenue that what they are anticipated to have from traditional segments. So that is only from mobile operators. Then you have other ICT (information and communications technology) players. So then if you include all the companies, you pretty much double that number.

It is a tremendous opportunity on a global basis. For India, that number translates to $17 billion, which is still a significant amount of revenue only for the mobile operators. Then you have the other players here as well. The value to unleash for the enterprises is plenty by driving safety and efficiency.

How are the 5G trials going on? What is the timing that you see for the launch of this new technology?

The concern is that our country is late and I hear that from many countries, and I have heard it for few years now. I think it is very natural as countries do not want to be too late to lose out on the early mover advantage.

Credit: Company

"We believe that by 2027, there will be 3.9 billion 5G subscribers, which is 49% of all the subscriptions. For India, we expect 500 million 5G subscriptions. In 2035, that is when we may see 6G."

MAGNUS EWERBRING

The trials we are doing in India have been very good. It shows that the technology is very mature. We did trials with (Bharti) Airtel a few months back, showing for commercial cellphones that you buy in shops, which are already 5G enabled, the download speed is up to 100 mbps and higher speeds up to 10 km from the test site.

Likewise, with Vodafone Idea, enterprise healthcare as an example. India is very ripe and mature to go with 5G. Another key thing is to look at the sales of smartphone devices. If you look at the smartphones being sold in India today, that are 5G capable, it is already the third largest in the world. What that tells me (is) that there are many potential 5G users here as soon as operators turn it on. I think there is a big pent-up demand, and there is a great enterprise demand.

The most important thing needed now is clarity on the regulatory side. It is licensing of spectrum to make it available and to make it available on fair and reasonable terms. What that exactly is has to be determined by each country. There has been discussion on whether the spectrum prices are too costly. And I think many things can be done to ensure that there is money to build coverage for the Indian people. As soon as that happens, 5G will go very quickly. The smartphones are ready, the operators are ready. We need clarity on what frequency bands and other terms and conditions.

How much of a challenge will be for countries like India to catch up with countries that have already rolled out 5G?

For India now, in the foreseeable future, if they make sure that licences come out and operators start working on it, there is a great potential to do well. 5G will be around for a very long time. We at Ericsson believe that by 2027, which is five years down the line, there will be 3.9 billion 5G subscribers, which is 49 per cent of all the subscriptions. In five years' time, it is a dominant technology. In 2035, that is when we may see 6G.

If we take 2027, for India, we expect 500 million 5G subscriptions. You have half-a-billion smartphones and add IoT (Internet of Things) devices on top of that. So imagine what kind of a platform it is for local innovation. There will be a lot of consumer-oriented apps, enterprise apps, which are local.

A large chunk of the Indian population is still not online, especially in rural areas. The prices of mobile telephony for these users is still on the higher side. How difficult will it be to bring them on 5G?

As a mobile operator, you want your subscribers to be on the highest possible G (generation), because it gives the best user experience and it also the most efficient way to produce the services. There are a number of things that make it difficult, such as cost reasons or preference. As an operator, you have to give them different incentives to go upwards in terms of technology. Mobile operators in India are aware of that and they are trying that. We estimate that by 2027, 1.2 smartphone users will be in India alone, which is a really large chunk. That cannot be 2G, it will either have to be 4G or 5G. We believe that 4G is larger than 5G as of now.

A large number of new subscribers by 2027 will either by 4G or 5G, not lower technologies. By 2030, a large number of 4G users will come to 5G as the price points will go down. There will also be propositions from operators and better services.

SECTOR WATCH
UNORGANISED LABOUR

e-Shram registration tops 14 cr; most earn below ₹10K a month

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 25

OVER 14 crore workers have registered on the e-Shram portal after registration was enabled on it four months ago, the Labour Ministry said Saturday. "e-Shram portal in just about 4 months 14 crore crossed... Kudos to all those who made it possible," Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav tweeted.

According to the data shared by the minister, as many as 14,02,92,825 informal sector workers registered on the e-Shram portal.

The latest data of the portal shows that the top five states in terms of number of registration on e-Shram are Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand.

In gender terms, 52.56 per cent of those registered are female workers while 47.44 per cent are male.

As per the data, about 42.64 per cent of registered workers are Other Backward Classes (OBC), followed by 26.45 per cent from general category, 22.54 per cent from Scheduled Castes and 8.38 per cent from Scheduled Tribes.

Over 94 per cent registered workers' income is Rs 10,000 per month or below, while over 4 per cent have income in the range of Rs 10,001 to Rs 15,000 per month.

About 51 per cent registered workers are farm labourers, followed by 11 per cent in the construction sector, 10 per cent in domestic and household workers and 6.5 per cent in the apparel segment.

About 61 per cent registered workers' ages range from 18 years to 40 years, 23 per cent in the range of 40 years to 50 years, and 12 per cent above 50 years. About four per cent of registered workers are in the age group of 16 years to 18 years.

The e-Shram portal, which was launched on August 26, will for the first time provide insight into unorganised sector workers including migrant workers, gig workers, agricultural workers, anganwadi workers, street vendors, domestic workers among others. As of now, such a database is available mainly only for organised workers through the registered workers under EPFO. The database will be analysed to check for workers who have had any prior registration with the formal sector through the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) since both registrations have a common format of a 12-digit identification number, Universal Account Number (UAN).

EXPLAINED

To create national database

AIMED AT providing insight into the vast number of unorganised workers in the country, the e-Shram portal was launched on August 26. It aims to create a national database for unorganised sector workers, including those in construction, street vendors, domestic workers, farm labourers, etc.

Post China crackdown, shift in global crypto mining trend

Over three-quarters of the global computing power in use for mining cryptocurrencies came from China in September 2019 at its peak, and this share of China fell gradually before coming to a screeching halt in July 2021 after the country's government conducted a clinical crackdown on cryptocurrencies and their mining

BITCOIN MINING MAP August 2021

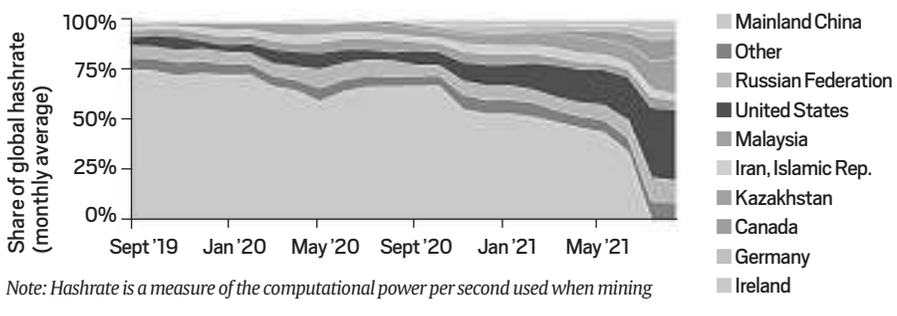
Note: Average monthly hashrate share by country and region for the selected period, based on geolocational mining pool data. Updates are scheduled on a monthly basis subject to data availability (generally with a delay of one to three months)

Nations gaining China's mining computer power share: According to data from the Cambridge University's Bitcoin Electricity Consumption Index, jurisdictions such as the United States, Russia, Canada, and Kazakhstan have replaced China's share in the mining computing power

Activity in Germany, Ireland: Some countries like Germany and Ireland also saw expansion in mining activity according to the index, but the publishers claim that there is little evidence of large mining operations in Germany or Ireland that would justify these figures

Source: Cambridge Bitcoin Electricity Consumption Index

EVOLUTION OF COUNTRY SHARE



Note: Hashrate is a measure of the computational power per second used when mining

"(Germany and Ireland's) *share is likely significantly inflated due to redirected IP addresses via the use of VPN or proxy services" the index said, thereby indicating rerouting of traffic by a small number of Chinese miners that might be operating underground*

COMMUNICATION BY STATE GOVT OFFICIALS TO COMPANY MANAGEMENT ON DECEMBER 23

Improve amenities for staff: TN tells Foxconn

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, DECEMBER 25

THE TAMIL Nadu government on Saturday asked Taiwanese electronic equipment major Foxconn to come up with a slew of measures to improve the working conditions and quality of living of contract employees attached to its operations in Chennai.

The intervention was in the wake of complaints and a protest organised by employees seeking basic amenities at their hostels and other rights.

The communication sent by the Additional Chief Secretary in charge of Industries S Krishnan and Additional Director General of Police P Thamarai Kannan to the top company management on December 23 listed out a number of suggestions including efforts required to improve quality of employees' rooms, washrooms, water, and other basic amenities at the hostel. The communication specified that employee rooms should be properly ventilated.

Obtaining necessary permission from the district collector for the employees' hostels and taking steps to cook the food served to employees within the place of their accommodation were among the state government's suggestions. It also advised the company to ensure the granting of emergency leave for employees when it is required and suggested an alternative arrangement to ensure the required strength of employees through a manpower agency when there is a section who go on leave.

A TN government statement issued in this regard said Foxconn assured that it will urge their contractors to provide quality food for all its 15,000 employees.

NCLAT stays ₹873-cr CCI fine on UBL, others

New Delhi: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has imposed a stay on the orders passed by the fair trade regulator CCI slapping penalties on several beer makers, including United Breweries Ltd (UBL) that faces a fine of Rs 751.8 crore.

Passing an interim order, a two-member NCLAT bench has directed parties, including UBL to deposit 10 per cent of the penalty amount by way of 'Fixed Deposit Receipt' within three weeks.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on September 24, imposed penalties totalling over Rs 873 crore on UBL, Carlsberg India, All India Brewers' Association and 11 individuals for cartelisation in the sale and supply of beer. This order was challenged before the NCLAT, which is an appellate authority over the CCI. **PTI**

BRIEFLY

Fertiliser subsidy

New Delhi: The government on Saturday decided to make changes to the existing nutrient based subsidy (NBS) policy to promote domestic production of phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilisers amid a sharp rise in global prices. A decision in this regard was taken in a high-level meeting chaired by Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Mansukh Mandaviya.

Protean eGov

New Delhi: Protean eGov Technologies (formerly known as NSDL E-Governance Infrastructure) has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offering. The public issue is purely an offer of sale (OFS) of 1.2 crore equity shares, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). **PTI**

China's offshore listing rules seen easing market uncertainty

REUTERS
BEIJING, DECEMBER 25

CHINA'S PLAN to tighten scrutiny over mainland companies' overseas share sales is likely to ease the regulatory uncertainty that roiled financial markets this year and stalled offshore listings, bankers and analysts said.

But the securities regulator's new filing-based system, designed to rein in once freewheeling Chinese listings in the US market and elsewhere, leaves open questions about rule enforcement and compliance criteria, they added.

"The new rules represent a comprehensive, systemic and market-oriented regulatory upgrade," investment bank China International Capital Corp (CICC) said in a note, but added they contain "some items that need further observation, and clarification".

Draft rules were published Friday requiring filings by companies seeking offshore listings under a framework to ensure they comply with Chinese laws and regulations

The China Securities and Regulatory Commission published draft rules late on Friday requiring filings by companies seeking offshore listings under a framework to ensure they comply with Chinese laws and regulations. Reaction to the new rules will be seen Monday when the U.S stock market resumes trade after closing on Friday for Christmas.

GM, GOOGLE, META ETC ALSO NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Microsoft among cos to cancel in-person presence at CES

VISHAL VIVEK
BENGALURU, DECEMBER 25

MICROSOFT CORP said on Friday it will not participate in person at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2022 in Las Vegas, joining a list of companies opting not to have a physical presence at next month's event on concerns over the rapid spread of the Omicron Covid-19 variant.

The US software giant added that it will continue to participate at CES remotely, according to an emailed statement. The Verge was the first to report on Friday that Microsoft will not participate physically AT CES.

Several other companies including US automaker General Motors Co, Alphabet Inc.'s Google and its self-driving autotechnology company Waymo, Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc, Twitter Inc, Lenovo Group, AT&T Inc and Amazon.com Inc dropped in-person attendance plans earlier this week.

CES officials on Thursday said the event will still be held in person January 5-8 with "strong safety measures in place," which include vaccination requirements, masking and availability of Covid-19 tests. **REUTERS**

Visitors at the 2016 CES trade show in Las Vegas, Nevada. The 2022 edition of the Consumer Electronics Show will be held in person on January 5-8. *Reuters file*

Lira caps historic week with big lift from Erdogan govt

REUTERS
ANKARA, DECEMBER 25

TURKEY'S LIRA closed out its strongest week on record on Friday, spiking more than 50 per cent with the support of billions of dollars of state-backed market interventions and a promise that the government would cover FX losses on certain deposits.

Turks did not sell dollars on Monday and Tuesday, as per official data that suggested they had played little role in the sharpest market gains. The state interventions, meanwhile, cost the central bank more than $8 billion this week, according to traders' calculations. The currency gained for five straight days and touched mid-November levels; it stood at 10.7 versus the dollar at 1919 GMT.

The lira had plunged on Monday to an all-time low of 18.4 per dollar, after a months-long slide due to unorthodox interest rate cuts and fears of an inflationary spiral. But late on Monday President Tayyip Erdogan unveiled a scheme in which the Treasury and central bank would reimburse losses on converted lira deposits against foreign currencies, sparking the currency's biggest intraday rally ever.

In an interview with broadcaster *AHaber*, Erdogan said Turks showed confidence in the local currency and lira deposits increased by 23.8 billion lira after the anti-dollarisation plan announcement. However, data from the BDDK banking watchdog showed that, after heavy accumulation of dollars last week, Turkish individual depositors held $163.7 billion of hard currencies on Tuesday - virtually unchanged from Monday and Friday, when the total was $163.8 billion.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,Urmil @Urmil Rani,D/o Radhy Sham,W/o Surya Kant, R/o. H.No.5/24, Gali.No.3, Nehru-Park Tehsil-Bahadurgarh, Distt.Jhajjar(Haryana),is also known as Urmil Rani both Names are of one person i.e the same person. 0040597155-3

I,Sunil Singh,S/O Mahendra Pratap Singh,R/O I-166,Beta-2,Greater Noida,G.B.Nagar, Uttar-Pradesh-201308,have changed my full-name to Sunil Kumar Singh,for all,future purposes. 0040597155-8

I,Sneha W/o Ajay K Singh R/o E-7, 1st floor Sector-30, Noida (U.P.) have changed my name to Sneha Singh for all future purposes. 0040597107-2

I,Smt.Banita Goel R/o-E-2/82, Sector-16,Rohini, Delhi,inform that in my daughter(Yashwi Goel)'s,school record's,my name Vanita Goel is wrongly-written instead of Babita Goel,both names belong to the same,person. 0040597155-2

I,Simran Anand W/o Gaurav Anand R/o B-75, Surya Nagar, Ghaziabad, have changed my name to Simran Kaur Jassal. 0040597146-10

I,Ruchi Jhanwar,W/o-Rakesh Kumar Jhanwar,residing Plot.No.129-A, Upper-Ground-Floor, Back Side,Santoshh Park,Uttam-Nagar, Delhi,have changed my name to Ruchi Maheshwari,for all purposes. 0040597148-1

I,MOLLY SHANKAR,D/O:SUMIT SHANKAR,R/O:S-906,STELLAR JEEVAN,PLOT.NO.GH03,SECTOR -1, GREATER-NOIDA WEST, GAUTAM BUDDHA-NAGAR,UP-201306,Changed my name to SAURABHI PANDEY. 0040597155-5

I,Rishab Kumar Singla,S/O Sat Paul Singla,R/O.D-186, Ramprastha Colony, P.O.Chander-Nagar,Ghaziabad, Uttar-Pradesh-201011,have changed the name of my son Reyansh Singla aged 5 Years and He shall be hereafter known as Reansh Singla. 0040597146-3

I,Nandini Yadav,D/o- Anil Yadav, Address-C-303,A sushant lok phase-1 gurgaon haryana-122003,Changed my name to Nandini Rao. 0040597146-7

I,Maria Iqbal khan(old name), D/O Mr.Kausar Iqbal,R/O-T-61,khirki-extension malviya-nagar,new delhi.Have changed my name to Maria Iqbal,for all,future purposes. 0040597146-4

I,M K SHARMA,S/O:NARENDRA DUTT SHARMA,House.no.05, MAKHAN-NAGAR, NEAR-RAILWAY-100,QUATERS, SAHARANPUR,UP-247001. Changed my name to MAHESH KUMAR SHARMA. 40597155-4

I,LALMUNNI RAY,spouse of LATE.JWO SUMANGAL RAY,R/O S-182/1,D-block Phase-1, Qutub-Vihar, Goyle Dairy-Qutub Pur,South West-Delhi, Delhi-110071,have changed my name,from LALMUNNI DEVI to LALMUNNI RAY,vide-Affidavit dated 15/12/2021 at New-Delhi. 0040597146-8

I,Karnal Singh S/o Puran Singh, R/o D-13 Vishnu Garden Delhi-110018,have changed my name to Karnail Singh. 0040597146-9

I,Kalpana Sharma W/o-Pawan Kumar Sharma R/o-H.No.186/1, Block-A,New Ashok Nagar, Delhi-110096,inform that Kalpana sharma &Kalpana kumari,both name are same person.My correct,name Kalpana Sharma. 40597155-1

I,JAHAN ARA,w/o GHULAM DASTGIR,RESIDENT OF-123, ZAKIR BAGH ORHLA-ROAD JAMIANAGAR, NEW-DELHI-110025,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO JAHAN ARA DASTGIR(AFTER-MARRIAGE). 0040597146-2

I,Harjeet Singh/Harjeet Singh Chandok,S/o-Jagdev Singh, residing-A-39, Ganesh-Nagar, Near Tilak Nagar,Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Harjeet Singh Chandhok,for all purposes. 0040597148-3

I,Gurman Singh Chandok/ Gurman Singh,S/o-Harjeet Singh Chandhok,residing-A-39, Ganesh-Nagar,Near Tilak Nagar,Delhi-110018,have changed my name to Gurman Singh Chandhok,for all purposes. 0040597148-2

I, Subrata Kumar Singh S/o Late Sh. Nibaran Chandra Singh R/o Bhabha-204, Grihapravesh, Sector-77, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 have changed my name from Subrat Kumar Singh to Subrata Kumar Singh for all future purposes. 40597103-1

I, SHAINA JAYARAJAN, W/O-CHALIYAL VALAPPIL JAYARAJ, R/O-3-45, ANUGRAHA VIHARA, MALALI CROSS ROAD, GANJIMATA, POST BADAGAULIPADY GANJIMATA, DAKSHINA KANNADA, KARNATAKA-574144, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHAINA JAYARAJ For All future purposes. 0070766666-1

I Mohmed Shabaz s/o Md. Afaq r/o B-437, jahangirpuri, Delhi-33, Alisha is my daughter in her school records father name Mohd. Shahbaz siddique and mother name noor jahan siddque wrongly written correct name is mohmed shabaz and noori 0040597120-1

I, Ramesh Bhatia, R/o 701, Emperor-1, Supertech Emerald Court, Sec-93A, Greater Noida Expressway, UP, have changed my name from Ramesh Kumar Kishorilal Bhatia alias Ramesh Kishorilal Bhatia to Ramesh Bhatia for all future purposes. 0070766641-1

I, Rakesh kumar s/o Ram Lal R/o-730 sector-14 Sonipat, have changed my name to Rakesh Baweja for all purposes. 0040597148-5

I, Monika Saini, D/o Mangal Saini and W/o Ram Aggarwal, R/o 175, Gali No-2, Gaushala, Kewal Park, Azadpur, Delhi-110033, have changed my name to Sita Aggarwal. 0070766677-1

I,Ajay Kumar Singh/ Ajay Singh S/o Vijay Kumar Singh R/o E-7, 1st floor Sector-30, Noida(U.P.) have changed my name to Ajay K Singh for all future purposes. 0040597107-1

I, Minoo Bhatia, R/o 701, Emperor-1, Supertech Emerald Court, Sec-93A, Greater Noida Expressway, UP, have changed my name from Minoo Ramesh Bhatia to Minoo Bhatia for all future purposes. 70766642-1

I, Meeshu Anshita D/o Surendra Nath Das R/o- C-116A, Paryavaran Complex, IGNOU Road, Mehrauli, Saidullajab, Delhi-110030 have changed my name to Anshita Das for all future purpose. 70766681-1

I, MANOHAR SINGH, S/o HARDAYAL SINGH, R/o RZ - B - 280, NIHAL VIHAR, NANGLOI, NEW DELHI - 110041, have changed my name to MANOHAR SINGH NAGI. 0070766653-1

I, Kavita Singh W/o Sh. Subrata Kumar Singh R/o Bhabha-204, Grihapravesh, Sector-77, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 have changed my name from Kavita to Kavita Singh for all future purposes. 40597104-1

I, JAYARAJAN CHALIYA VALAPPIL, S/O-KUNHAPPA C.V, R/O-3-45, ANUGRAHA VIHARA, MALALI CROSS ROAD, GANJIMATA, POST BADAGAULIPADY GANJIMATA, DAKSHINA KANNADA, KARNATAKA-574144, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO CHALIYAL VALAPPIL JAYARAJ FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES. 0070766672-1

I, Honey Sharma W/o Sandeep Sharma, VPO- Khairpur, Gurjar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP-201306 after marriage have change my Name from Hirdesh Kumari Sharma to Honey Sharma. 0040597101-1

I, Dharamvir Singh, S/o Sukhdev Singh, R/o E-185, Krishan Vihar, Som Bazar Road, Sultanpuri, C-Block, Delhi-110086, have changed my son's name from Lakshay Kumar to Lakshay Choudhary for all future purposes. 0070766656-1

I, Dharamvir Singh, S/o Sukhdev Singh, R/o E-185, Krishan Vihar, Som Bazar Road, Sultanpuri, C-Block, Delhi-110086, have changed my name from Dharamveer to Dharamvir Singh for all future purposes. 0070766655-1

I, Dhanjal Inderjeet Singh S/o Amritpaul Singh R/o Tower CGD-1, Flat No 1103, Supertech Capetown, Sector-74, Noida-201304, Uttar Pradesh have changed my name as Inderjeet Singh Dhanjal for all purposes. 0040597106-1

I, Daljeet Kaur Chandok,W/o-Harjeet Singh Chandhok, residing-A-39, Ganesh-Nagar, Near Tilak Nagar-Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Daljeet Kaur,for all purposes. 0040597148-4

I Virender Kaur alias Virinder Kaur alias Varinder Kaur W/o Baljeet Singh R/o F-12, Mukhram Garden,Tilak Nagar,New Delhi-110018 have changed my name to Varinder Kaur for all purposes. 0040597099-8

I Sanjay Kumar S/o Mahasingh, R/o-379, VPO-Aterna, Sonipat, Haryana inform that in my 10th Marksheet my Father's Name written Maharam. But my Father's Actual Name is Mahasingh. 0040597102-1

I Sachdev Ruchi Satish alias Ruchi Batra D/o Sh.Satish Kumar Sachdev W/o Sh.Sameer Batra R/o A-15, New Friends Colony, Okhla, South Delhi, Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Ruchi Batra for all purposes. 0040597099-6

I Ruchika Goel W/o Sh.Amit Goel R/o 29/64, Gali No.11,Vishwas Nagar, Shahdara East Delhi-110032 have changed my name to Ruchi Goel for all purposes. 0040597099-4

I Kumari Shivani D/o Sh.Laxman Singh R/o Himalaya House D-273A, Gali No.6, West Vinod Nagar, East Delhi,Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Shivani Negi for all purposes. 0040597099-5

I Ishwa Wadhera d/o Kapil Wadhera r/o 1301-A Tower-13 Beverly Park -II Apartments M.G Road DLF Phase-II Sector 25 Gurgaon Haryana 122002 have changed my name to Meera Ishwa Wadhera 0050189394-1

I Lavina Taneja alias Lavina Arya alias Lavina Taneja Arya alias Lavina TanejaArya D/o Sh. Krishan Kumar Taneja W/o Sh. Vishal Arya R/o A-150, Second Floor, Road No.44, Lok Vihar, Pitampura, Saraswati Vihar, North West Delhi,Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Lavina Arya for all purposes. 0040597099-7

I Ajay Mangla S/o-Radha Kishan R/o-House No.1997D, Mangla Chowk, Railway Road, Narela, Delhi-110040 have changed the name of my minor Son from Keshav to Naman Mangla for all purposes. 0040597124-1

I Ajay Mangla S/o-Radha Kishan R/o-House No.1997D, Mangla Chowk, Railway Road, Narela, Delhi-110040 have changed the name of my minor Son from Ashwani to Daksh Mangla for all purposes. 0040597126-1

I,Vineesh V R/o-Vineesh Bhavanam, Memana, Oachira, PO-690526 declares that in my EPF Service/Office Records My Wife's name is wrongly-mentioned as Swetha Vineesh. The correct name is Swetha N for all Purposes. 0040597133-1

I,hitherto known as Rupali Sharma,D/o Sunil Kumar Sharma,R/O House.No.S- 23,1-Flat.No.11,Near-Sai-Mandir Khirki-Extension,Malviya-Nagar,new delhi-110017,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rida. 0040597146-1

I,HARDEEP SINGH ANAND S/O DALIP SINGH R/O UC-35A, SECOND-FLOOR,USHA-PARK, JAIL ROAD,TILAK-NAGAR, DELHI-110018.CHANGED MY NAME TO HARDIP SINGH ANAND. 0040597146-6

I,GURPREET KAUR W/O HARDIP SINGH ANAND R/O UC-35A, SECOND-FLOOR,USHA PARK, JAIL-ROAD,TILAK-NAGAR, DELHI-110018.CHANGED MY NAME TO GURPREET KAUR ANAND. 0040597146-5

I,M.M.Mehndiratta changed my name to Man Mohan Mehndiratta and my,address. D-II/103,Kidwai-Nagar,West New-Delhi-110023 To CGD-024, Capital Greens,DLF,Shivaji-Marg,Moti-Nagar, Ramesh-Nagar,West-Delhi-110015. 0040597155-6

I,Dr.P..L.Mehndiratta changed my name to Prem Lata Mehndiratta and my,address. D-II/103,Kidwai-Nagar,West New-Delhi-110023 To CGD-024,Capital Greens,DLF,Shivaji-Marg,Moti-Nagar, Ramesh-Nagar,West-Delhi-110015. 0040597155-7

LOST & FOUND

I, Varinder Kumar Magu S/o Sh. Baldev Raj Magu R/o D-1085, New Friends Colony Delhi have lost the original allotment letter of my property of JaypeeGreen Allotment Letter Ref. 25291/338427/STR0050703 0040597105-1

I Meeta Khera D/o Sh.Surinder Kumar Arora R/o C-11/6A, Second Floor, Model Town-III, Delhi-110009 have lost my Original Sale Deed registered as No.7174, Book No.1, Volume No.2816, Page No.144 to 151 registered on 27.05.2010, SR-VI-A, Delhi of above said property. Finders may contact at above address. 0040597100-2

SERVICES

Translation services Marathi Hindi English French Source and Target. Gujarati Bangla Kannada Urdu Source. Abhishek AMBEKAR 9822307887 Pune 0040596903-1

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to you that my clients Mr. Veerendra Pal Upadhyaya, son of Shri Ved Prakash & Smt. Manju Sharma, wife of Shri Veerendra Pal Upadhyaya, both R/o House No-66A, Mandir Wali Gali, Shadi Khampur, Delhi- 110008, have disowned to their younger son Shri Hemant, from their all movable & immovable property. My clients have severed all relations from him & his family.

Sd/- **RAVINDER KUMAR** (Advocate)
Bar Room No. 2, Civil Wing, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-110054

सार्वजनिक सूचना

मेरे मुवक्किल श्री रमेश चंद पुत्र गोर्वधन व विमला देवी पत्नी रमेश चन्द पता- बी-331 गली नं०-16, शनि मंदिर, तोमर कालोनी, कमालपुर बुराड़ी दिल्ली-84 ने अपने पुत्र सुरेन्द्र कुमार शर्मा व उसकी पत्नी मन्जू को उनके दुर्व्यवहार व दुराचरण तथा अवज्ञाकारी आचरण के कारण, उनसे अपने सभी संबंध विच्छेद करके अपनी समस्त चल अचल संपत्ति से बेदखल कर दिया है। भविष्य में वे दोनों अपने सभी कानूनी व गैरकानूनी कार्यों के लिए स्वयं उत्तरदायी होंगे, इसमें मेरे मुवक्किल की कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं होगी।

हस्ता/-
एस के झा (एडवोकेट)
चै.नं. पी-46, पोस्ट, पोस्ट ऑफिस लेन, तीस हजारी कोर्ट, दिल्ली-54

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the public at large that my client Sh.Rakesh Anand and his wife Smt. Harsh Anand both R/o 77-B, Ram Chander Enclave, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi hereby declaring / debarring /disowning their son Dixit Anand and his wife Shilpa Khurana and their daughter Trisha Anand from their properties (moveable or immoveable) situated at Delhi or outside of Delhi because they are not under the control of my clients. My clients and their family members have also severed all their relations with them and my clients are not be responsible/liable for any act, deed and thing done by them since today.

HARGUN SINGH KALRA (ADVOCATE)
Ch.No.L-10 Tis Hazari Court Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of general public that my client Sh.Sukhvir Singh S/o Sh. Narain Singh R/o L-2/55A, New Mahavir Nagar, Tilak Nagar, West Delhi, New Delhi-110018, has severed all his relations and connections with his son MUKESH KUMAR and has debarred and disowned him from all his moveable and immoveable properties, because he is out of control of my client. Anybody dealing with him shall do so at his own risk and responsibility.

M.K. JHA (Advocate)
SR.-II, Authority Building Distt. Centre, Janak Puri,New Delhi-110058

MANGLIK

Working/ Nonworking match for nov 1992 born Manglik Mittal boy Bathinda 5'10" healthy Btech software engineer M nc Noida 15L ctc Bureau excuse contact 9417123741 0050189021-1

RAJPUT

Alliance invited from officers of All India / Central/State Services/Doctors /Engineers /Lawyers/Management Professionals of Kshatriya/Rajput community for beautiful Bhriguvanshi Kshatriya (Savarni gotra)girl, BA(Hons) philosophy from Miranda House, Delhi and pursuing Law from Jaipur.28yrs/5.6 ht.Father Sr.IAS(ACS rank) Rajasthan cadre. Interested persons may send their biodata on email: singh.weds2021@gmail.com 0110026651-1

BRAHMIN

Professionally qualified match for Gujarat based fair girl, 1994 / 170 cm, Masters in CS (Canada), currently working full-time in Kitchener, Canada. WhatsApp +919426023737 (Father) 0050188584-1

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Match for beautiful girl, 1995, 5'-8". IHM Ahmedabad. Working Bangalore. 8 Lacs per annum. Well settled boy from Bangalore preferred .87340-82002 0020431599-1

SIKH/PUNJABI

Suitable Match for Jatt Sikh Vegetarian Girl 1996/5' Gazetted officer in Central Govt. Seeking Class 1 officer. Whatsapp 7726979035 0050189022-1

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known my client ANIL SANDHU S/O LATE SH. MEHAR CHAND RESIDENT OF AK-52, SHALIMAR BAGH, DELHI-110088 have no good relation with his wife namely NEELAM SANDHU and due to her misbehavior, unfamiliar activities, intolerable act, disobey, misconduct and going against my client, my client do not want to give any share to his wife NEELAM SANDHU from his movable and immoveable properties.

KAMAL SINGH (Advocate)
QU-259-A Pitampura Delhi-88

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public at large that my client Ramesh Lal Gupta (Ramesh Lal) Son of Late Shri Chanan Mal R/o 797, Rishi Nagar Shakur Basti Delhi-110034 has severed all his relations with his son Gaurav Bhushan age 44 years, daughter in law Palka (Palk) Age 37 years and/or their dependants. My client has also disowned/debarred his son Gaurav Bhushan, daughter in law Palka (Palk) and/or their dependants from his (all) moveable and immoveable properties/assets due to their disobedience and quarrelsome/abusing nature and my client shall not be responsible/liable for any act of Gaurav Bhushan, Palka or their dependents in any manner whatsoever.

RAKESH DHINGRA (ADVOCATE)
(Enrollment No. D/735/1989)

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that my client Mrs. Anita Rani Wife of Late S. Partap Singh aged 83 yrs Resident of House No. 1091/10, Govind Puri, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019 has disowned her son Sh. Satnam Singh Son of Late Partap Singh and his Wife Smt. Kanwaljeet Kaur from her all moveable and immoveable properties alongwith Property No. 1352-I, Street No. 13, measuring 165 Sq. Yd part of Khasra No. 93, situated in Govindpuri, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019 belonging to Mrs. Anita Rani, with immediate effect. My client is not responsible with any of their actions with people at large. A copy of the above Public Notice is being kept in my office for record and for further action as per law.

R.K. Gupta (Advocate)
Ch. No. 183, Saket Court, New Delhi-110017
Mob.: +91-9811192626

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice CN/12/2021
Dated: 23.12.2021

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following works:

Description in brief

Supply of microprocessor based Station Master Block Panel for Double line Block instrument with Block Telephones as per RDSO/SPN/175/ 2005 version 1 with automatic media change over etc.

Tender No.: 95215688 Qty: 36 Sets

Last date for submission of bids:
Up to 14:00 hrs. of 20.01.2022

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Chief Materials Manager / Construction, Bengaluru Cantonment

PUB/352/AAV/PRB/SWR/2021-22

S.W.Railways SWRRLY SWRRLY

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank
इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD

INDIAN BANK
Zonal Office,
Budh Marg, Patna

POSSESSION NOTICE
(FOR IMMOVEABLE PROPERTY)

Notice is hereby given under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement(Security) Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) and 13(12) read with Rules 8 & 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer issued a Demand Notice on the dates noted against each Account as mentioned hereinafter, calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the under noted borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Sec 13(4) of the said Act read with Rules 8 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned against each Account.

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal

with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Indian Bank for the amounts and interests thereon mentioned against each account herein below:

The attention of borrowers detailed hereunder is invited to the provision of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act,in respect of time available,to redeem the secured assets.

Sr. No.	Name of the Branch	Name of the Account	Name of The Borrower/ Guarantor (owner of the property)	Description of the charged/ Mortgaged property (all the part &parcel of the property consisting of)	Date of Demand Notice	Date of possession Notice	Amount outstanding as on the date of demand Notice
1.	MACHHA-RIYAWA	Shri Akhilesh Kumar	Shri Akhilesh Kumar S/O Sh. Chhatradhari Singh & Shri Rajesh Rai S/O Sh.Ram Ishwar Ram	All part and parcel of Land & Building situiated at Mauza-Rampursingriyawa,P.S- Shahjahapur, Distt- Patna, sub registry office-patna city, Registry office- patna, Thana No-98,Khata No-09,survey Kheshra No-79 part, Area-5.75 Decimals standing in the name of Shri Akhilesh Kumar vide registered sale Deed No-412 dated 22.01.2015, Book No-01., Zild No-03, Page No-198 to 207, CD No-02. Boundary (As per Deed):North: sahayak rasta, South:Lalu Singh,East: Manoj Kumar,West:Mahesh Prasad	29-06-2020	21-12-2021	Rs.1564194.00 (Rupees Fifteen Lakhs sixty four thousand one hundred ninety four only) as on 20-12-2021 with interest, cost & charges till the date of realization
2.	BUDH MARG	Shri Raj Kumar Sharma & Smt. Asha Kumari	Shri Raj Kumar Sharma S/o Late Kamta Prasad Smt. Asha Kumari W/o Shri Raj Kumar Sharma resident of Dalhata, Marufganj, Devisthan,Patna City, Distt- Patna, Bihar-800008	Registered Mortgage of residential land and house vide Deed -6552 dated 25.09.2017 in Book No-01, Volume No-111, on pages 501 to 514 in CD No-18/year 2017 in favour of Indian Bank Budh Marg Branch situated at Mauza/Mohalla- Dalhatta, P.S- Malsalami, Patna city, Municipal survey plot No-1058(P),Ward No-30/5469, circle No-205, Holding No-53/50(O)/60(N), sheet No-264 within the jurisdiction of District Registration office Patna and Sub Registration Office Patna City area admeasuring 616.83 sqft.Bounded as under (as per deed):North- Sri Krishna Kumar Sharma,South- Most. Ram Pyari Devi & Sri Mohan Kumar,East: Lot No-02 (Niz) West- Nagar Nigam Road.	28/06/2021	21-12-2021	Rs.1006627.00 (Rupees Ten Lakhs six thousand six hundred twenty seven only) as on 20-12-2021 with interest, cost & charges till the date of realization
3.	PATNA CITY-2	M/S Kapur Enterprises (Pro- Shri Vinay Kumar),	M/S Kapur Enterprises (Pro- Shri Vinay Kumar), Shi Vinay Kumar, Smt Ruby Kumari & Shri Dheerajk Kumar Nirala	Registered Mortgage executed jointly by Shri Vinay Kumar S/O Shri Sunil Pd Gupta and Ruby Kumari W/O Sh.Vinay Kumar in favour of E-Allahabad Bank now Indian Bank Patna city-2 Branch vide Registered Mortgage Deed No-7474 dated 15.09.2015, Book No-01, Zild No-139 page no 267 to 280 CD no-22 for the following properties Property No-01:All that piece and parcel of land measuring 560 sqft along with three storied constructed old house (Belongs to Vijay Kumar) bearing thana no-20,ward no-31/36, circle no-223, Holding No-24/23 M.S Plot No-1857, Sheet No-274 situated at Mohalla- Nagla, Patna city, P.O- Madho Mill, Dist- Patna-800008 Bounded as follows :North: P/O Ajeet Kumar, South: P/O Dhreej Gupta, East: Road, West: P/O Shatrughan Prasad.	27/07/2021	23/12/2021	Rs.5545623.00 (Rupees Fifty Five Lakhs Forty Five thousand Six hundred Twenty three Only) as on 23.12.2021with interest, cost & charges till the date of realization
4.	PATNA MAIN BRANCH	Mr. Mansoor Ansari Asharfi S/o Late Md.Kasim Ansari Asharfi	Mr. Mansoor Ansari Asharfi S/o Late Md.Kasim Ansari Asharfi & Smt Gesu Praveen W/o Md Mansoor Ansari Asharfi	All that part and parcel of the property situated at Flat No.4A-2, 4th Floor,Kulharia Complex, Mohalla- Moharrampur, PS-Pirbahore, Distt. Sub Registration Office-Patna,Under Survey Thana No.137,Municipal Survey Plot No.29,Ward No.4(Old) and 27 (New),at present Ward No. 29, Circle No.11A,Holding No.17 (As per Municipal Survey Khatian), Admeasuring 2293 Sq.Feet Super Built up Area and Car Parking space at the basement through Sale Deed No.18864 dated 19.11.2008 .Property in name of Md. Mansoor Ansari Asharfi S/o Late Md.Kasim Ansari Asharfi and bounded as follows: North -Flat No.4A-1, South - Open Facing of Kulharia Complex, East - Open to sky facing road and thereafter St.Joseph's School. West - Flat No.4B-4.	04.10.2021	24.12.2021	Rs. 5233914/-(Rupees Fifty Two Lakhs Thirty Three Thousand Nine Hundred Fourteen Only) as on 22.12.2021+ interest and other charges thereon.
5.	PATNA MAIN BRANCH	M/s Infopi Traders, Prop. Mr. Kumar Rahul Anand S/o Sri Raman Kumar Verma	M/s Infopi Traders, Prop- Mr Kumar Rahul Anand S/o Sri Raman Kumar Verma & Sri Mohan Prasad (Mortgagor) S/o Late Rewat Mahto	All that part and parcel of the property situated at Mauza-Kazipur,Nayatola,PS-Kadamkuan,PS No.04,Tauzi No.438,Ward No.12/17/31,MS Plot No.875,Distt-Patna,Ward No.12/17, old 31,New 42,Circle No.29, Municipal Holding No.352/296 (Area 111 Kadi) .Property in name of Mr. Mohan Prasad S/o Late Rewat Mahto and bounded as follows: North - Ram Pyare Mahto & Others South - PMC Lane, East - H/o Ram Pratap Singh, West- Arya Kanya Vidyalaya.	04.10.2021	24.12.2021	Rs. 3670231/-(Rupees Thirty Six Lakhs Seventy Thousand Two Hundred Thirty One Only) as on 22.12.2021 + interest and other charges thereon.

Date : 24.12.2021
Place : Patna

(Authorized Officer)
Indian Bank

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक punjab national bank
...भरोसे का प्रतीक ! ...the name you can BANK upon !

CIRCLE SASTRA PATNA NORTH (8297), Patna
R-Block, 2nd Floor, Chanakya Place, Patna-800001

POSSESSION NOTICE

Possession Notice for Immovable Property in case of borrowers (For Immovable property)

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the **Punjab National Bank** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice(s) on the dates mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice(s)/date of receipt of the said notice(s).
The borrower/s having failed to repay the amount, notice(s) is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned each against account.
The Borrower's /Guarantor/Mortagagor's attention is invited to provision of sub-setion (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.
The borrower/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of **Punjab National Bank** for the amount and interest thereon. **(Amount in Rs.)**

Sr. No.	Name of the Account/Borrower /Branch	Owner of the property	Description of the property mortgaged	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice Affixed	Amount outstanding as on date of Demand Notice
1.	**M/s. New Pawan Textile Prop.- Sri Gajendra Prasad**, S/o Late Visheswar Saw & **Smt. Sangeeta Devi** W/o Sri Gajendra Prasad **BRANCH: MURADPUR A/c No. 0394008700003947**	**Smt. Sangeeta Devi** W/o Sri Gajendra Prasad	**Description of Immovable Property:-** EM of Land and Building situated at Municipal Survey Plot No.: 311/312, Mohalla: Park Road, Mauza: Maharampur, Mahal- Salimpur, Bakarganj, Thana: Kadamkuan, Registry Office: Patna Sadar, Distt.: Patna, Thana No.: 137, Computer Code: 392, Tauzi No.: Bihar Govt., Khata No.: 69, Khesra Plot No. 167(p), Ward No.: 5, Current Ward No.: 13/26/38, Circle No.: 13, Sheet No.: 53, Area: 378 Sqft. vide Deed No. 23042 Dated 14.08.2012 in name of Smt. Sangeeta Devi W/o Sri Gajendra Prasad, Boundary:- North: 5 Feet Rasta, South: Sri Chandramali Sharma, East: Part plot of Seller, West: Smt. Monika Devi. **Boundary admeasring North: 19', South: 18'10", East: 18'6", West: 19'8".**	**07.10.2021**	**22.12.2021**	**₹ 8,33,109.00** (Rupees Eight Lakh Thirty Three Thousand One Hundred Nine only) and interest thereon
2.	**Sri Nityanand Singh Guarantor- Smt. Madhu Singh**, W/o Sri Nityanand Singh **BRANCH: NEW MARKET A/c No. 291300nc00235705 291300nc00235857**	Sri Nitya Nand Singh S/o Late Jai Govind Singh	**Description of Immovable Property:-** EM of Flat No. 405, 4th Floor, Sri Hari Appartment, East Patel Nagar, Road No. 10, P.S.: Shastrinagar, Patna, Mauza: Manpura, Sadar Ragistry & Distt.: Patna, Thana No.: 02, Thana Code: 213, Tauzi No.: 5806, Khata No.: 757, Survey Plot No. 1323(p), Ward No.: 13, Hall Ward No.: 07, Circle No.: 249b, Holding No.: 630/12, Under Patna Municipal Corporation Covered by Sale Deed No. 11663 Dtd 11.11.2016 Belonging To Sri Nitya Nand Singh S/o Late Jai Govind Singh, Area: 950 SQF with one Reserve Car Parking and Undivided Proportionate Share in the land & common space, Boundary:- North: Open Space & Private House, South: Passage then Flat No. 401, East: Flat No. 404, West: Open Space & Private House.	**15.06.2021**	**22.12.2021**	**₹ 28,40,551.00** (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Forty Thousand Five Hundred Fifty One only) and interest thereon
3.	**M/s. Apollo Paints Prop.- Sri Binod Kumar**, S/o Late Mundrika Prasad **BRANCH: PATLIPUTRA (OBC) A/c No. 21604011000078 21607011000123**	**Sri Binod Kumar**, S/o Late Mundrika Prasad	**Description of Immovable Property:- (1)** EM of Land and Building situated at Mauza: Lakhna(Abgila), Survey Thana-Masaurhi, Hal Thana: Gaurichak, Sub Registry: Masaurhi, Sadar Registry and Distt.: Patna, Tauzi No.: 15/38, Thana No.: 65, Khata No.: 50, Khesra Survey Plot No. 1386(p), Area: 7 Katha (21.875 dec) covered by Sale Deed No. 22701 Dated 03.09.2013 pertaining to Sri Binod Kumar S/o Late Mundrika Prasad, Boundary:- North: Hal Kharidar Anil Singh, South: Niz Bikraita, East: Smt. Ranju Devi, West: Plot No. 1385.	**01.03.2021**	**21.12.2021**	**₹ 55,08,523.44** (Rupees Fifty Five Lakh Eight Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Three and Paisa Forty Four only) and interest thereon
	(2) EM of Land and Building situated at Mauza: Ahiyapur Lakhna, Tola: Abgila, Thana- Punpun, Hal Thana: Gaurichak, Sub Registry: Masaurhi, Sadar Registry and Distt.: Patna, Tauzi No.: 15/38, Thana No.: 65, Khata No.: 50, Plot No. 1386(P), Area: 2 Katha 7 Dhur (7.34375 Dec.) covered by Sale Deed No. 4878 Dated 01.06.2015 pertaining to Sri Binod Kumar S/o Late Mundrika Prasad, Boundary:- North: Part of Plot No. 1386, Manju Devi, South: Sri Binod Kumar, East: Smt. Manju Devi, West: Pain and Aahar.					
4.	**Sri Kaushlendra Singh**, S/o Sri Ganeshwar Singh & **Sri Vijay Kumar Prabhakar**, S/o Sri Ganeshwar Singh **BRANCH: BARH A/c No. 056900NC20062320**	**Smt. Savitri Devi**, W/o Ganeshwar Singh	**Description of Immovable Property:-** EM of Land and Building vide Sale Deed No. 3502 dated 18.06.2010 situated at Mauza: Langerpur, Thana Sub Registry Office and Sub Division- Barh, Sadar Registry and Distt.: Patna, Tauzi No.: 8271, Thana No.: 71, Jamabandi: Bihar Sarkar, Khata No.: 53, Khesra No. 483, pertaining to Smt. Savitri Devi, W/o Ganeshwar Singh, (Total Area: 1 Katha 12 Dhur 3 Phurki + 1 Katha 12 Dhur 3 Phurki = 3 Katha 4 Dhur 6 Phurki), Boundary of Lot No. 1:- North: Niz, South: Madhusudan Sharma, East: Rasta 8 feet badau Dr. Pankaj, West: Gorakh Singh and others. Boundary of Lot No. 2:- North: Madhusudan Sharma, South: 8 feet Rasta, East: Rasta 8 feet, West: Purchaser of land from Parshuram Babu.	**19.07.2021**	**23.12.2021**	**₹ 30,84,642.00** (Rupees Thirty Lakh Eighty Four Thousand Six Hundred Forty Two only) and interest thereon
5.	**M/s Mamta Hospitality Prop.-** Sri Sanjeev Kumar Sinha, S/o Sri Yamuna Prasad Sinha **BRANCH: BARH A/c No. 304100JH01541184**	**Sri Sanjeev Kumar Sinha**, S/o Sri Yamuna Prasad Sinha	**Description of Immovable Property:- (1)** EM of Land situated at Mauza: Nawada, Thana & Anchal: Barh, Sub Division: Barh, Sadar Registry Office: Patna, Thana No.: 53, Jamabandi No.: 315, Khesra No.: 2646 &2647, Khata No.: 11 & 85, Deed No. 5413 Dt. 23.09.2009, Area: 23.70625 Decimal, Owner: Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Sinha, S/o Sri Yamuna Prasad Sinha. **(2)** EM of Land situated at Mauza: Nawada, Thana & Anchal: Barh, Sub Division: Barh, Sadar Registry Office: Patna, Thana No.: 53, Jamabandi No.: 315, Khesra No.: 2646 & 2647, Khata No.: 11 & 85, Deed No. 6355 Dt. 23.09.2009, Area: 11.50 Decimal, Owner: Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Sinha, S/o Sri Yamuna Prasad Sinha.	**19.07.2021**	**23.12.2021**	**₹1,93,96,520.91** (Rupees One Crore Ninety Three Lakh Ninety Six Thousand Five Hundred Twenty and Paisa Ninety One only) and interest thereon
	(3) EM of Land situated at Mauza: Madhopur, Thana & Anchal: Bakhtiyarpur, Registry Office: Patna, PS: Bakhtiyarpur, Thana No.: 138, Jamabandi No.: 70, Khesra No.: 1661 & 1663 & 1664, Khata No.: 294 & 348, Deed No. 1814 Dtd. 23.03.2012, Area: 66 Decimal, Owner: Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Sinha, S/o Sri Yamuna Prasad Sinha. Boundary:- North: Plot No. 1661, Nabalak Singh & Others, South: Plot No. 1665, East: Plot No. 1662, West: Plot No. 1743, 1744 & 1745.					

Date : 25.12.2021
Place : Patna

(Authorised Officer)
Punjab National Bank

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

eye

POINT OF VIEW

Man of the Moment

How Atal Bihari Vajpayee shaped the lives of many and even inspired one of them to become the President

BOOKS

- Review of Bimal Prasad and Sujata Prasad's *The Dream of Revolution*
- Review of BD Pande's *In the Service of Free India*
- Express Editors Recommend: Books to look out for in 2022

THIS IS THE WAY IT ENDS

The highs and lows of the year on celluloid and OTT, which prove that art is the only thing that can sustain us

SHUBHRA GUPTA

WE STAND on the cusp. Bidding farewell to 2021 which gave us both despair and hope in equal measure. Therefore, the stories we tell will have to be more important than ever, because art is the only thing that can sustain and bolster us. Will they be, as they need to be, warming and life-affirming?

Here are some of the most telling creative cinematic flourishes of the year gone by. Ryusuke Hamaguchi's *Drive My Car*, one of the best films of the year, is a mesmeric rumination on love and loss, life and death, and how the unlikeliest connections between two people can fills their gaps. Denis Villeneuve's masterful *Dune*, based on Frank Herbert's science fiction classic, gives us future worlds stitched together with current-day emotions. And, in Timothée Chalamet 's young, broken-but-brave Paul Atreides, a hero for the ages. Our rapturous response to this saviour tells us that it doesn't matter which era we live in. We will always need heroes. Male, female, and all the other gender spectrums in between.

The creation of a credible trans-person in the Bollywood firmament took a long time coming. Vaani Kapoor's Maanvi Brar, who comes into her own after a painful physical and emotional journey, takes the bar higher in *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*. That Maanvi is a stunner is a mainstream Bollywood imperative. What makes her a character to remember is that she shares her pain and vulnerability with us.

Are we heading towards a confidence among Indian filmmakers, where heroism will not be confined to tried-and-tired tropes? Can we have flawed characters taking centre stage without calling attention to the very act? Look, look, here is our character, and here are her warts? The time when filmmakers demand to be patted on the back for simply venturing down these less-trodden paths is over.

More than ever, we need healing. Well-rounded, well-defined characters, which resonate on several levels, is one of the healthiest ways of making us whole again. Which isn't to say that we need only upbeat characters, or those in whose lives only good things happen. That is strictly reductive. Give us joy and sorrow, all shades of the rainbow.

How many "fxxxs" are given by the siblings in *Succession 3*, continuing its tale about billionaire media baron Logan Roy and his *uttaradhikaris* (successors), that has had us hooked since it dropped first in 2018? Count 'em at your own peril while you revel in their blinding ambition, greed and their jaw-droppingly wealthy lifestyle.

Where does *Family Man* Srikant Iiwari, played by the inimitable Manoj Bajpayee, go next in his quest to weed out the enemies of the state? Why is Akshay Kumar, the lead actor of another racy *desi* spy saga *Bell Bottom*, one of the most popular genres currently, the only one to wear flagrantly wide bottomed pants amongst his compatriots? Do childhood memories impact our future selves? Both these lovely films, Celine Sciamma's *Petite Maman* and Irfana Majumdar's *Shankar's Fairies*, make us believe in elves, and the power of the past. Time is circular, what comes up will also come down. And around.

I haven't stopped talking about Anirban Bhattacharya's *Mandaar*, a Bengali adaptation of *Macbeth*, ever since I caught it a few weeks back. Set in a coastal Bengal village, universal because it is so intensely local, it is as Shakespearean as it can get. It is stylised without being overpowered by its stylistic flourishes, making this series such an intriguing watch. How does an innately decent law-abiding law officer, a good husband and father, turn into something that he isn't? Where do you draw a line between what is morally permissible, and not? Ajitpal Singh's *Tabbar* flings out these tough questions, and provides, much to its advantage, no easy answers.

I went looking for delectation in *West Side Story*. Based on a beloved musical, strongly political, and made by the one and only Spielberg. No brainer. But this dull new version didn't work for me. Except for Ariana DeBose, Mike Faist and the timeless Rita Moreno who was in the 1961 original, no one else leapt off the screen.

Like *Spiderman*, filmmakers have never had greater power and responsibility. Give us more. Hit that sixer like Ranveer Singh's inimitable Kapil Dev. Vanquish evil like *desi* superhero *Minnal Murali*. Drive your car like Yusufe Kafuku. Play it like Paul Atreides.

Keep us going.

LEAVING THEIR MARK

(Clockwise from top) Stills from *Succession*, Season 3, *Dune*; *Tabbar*

In a *Mundu* & a Mask

Among the many films to watch out for is Malayalam actor Tovino Thomas's *Minnal Murali* that makes a superhero of an ordinary man

Alaka Sahani

NOW THAT my daughter Izza believes I'm a superhero, I fear one day she might push me off the balcony to test my superpowers," says actor Tovino Thomas. Weeks prior to *Minnal Murali*'s release on Netflix last week, the actor and its director Basil Joseph showed five-year-old Izza the blockbuster film, where Thomas plays Jaison, a bumbling tailor, who acquires superpowers when struck by lightning. With Izza convinced, they knew they had a winner.

Joseph shared his idea about "a Malayalam superhero movie" with Thomas during a car ride some years ago, the actor came on board instantly. But, the story, set in an imaginary village in Kerala, took a couple of years to be developed. Though Thomas was involved with the process of building *Minnal Murali*'s world and characters, he was still blown away by the final draft. "The writers, Justin Matthew and Arun Anirudhan, worked so hard on it. If you take out the superhero element from the film, it's still a very good script," says the actor.

With *Minnal Murali*, a spectacular home-grown superhero saga, Malayalam cinema continues to push the boundary. In recent years, Malayalam cinema has been in focus for taking risks and experimenting to deliver some of the best Indian titles across genres. Movies such as *Bangalore Days* (2014), *Kammatipaadam* (2016) *Maheshinte Prathikaaram* (2016), *Angamaly Diaries* (2017), *Kumbalangi Nights* (2019), *Moothon* (2019), *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021), *Joji* (2021) and *Nayattu* (2021) have presented different themes and narrative styles to tell stories that are local but resonate to a wider audience.

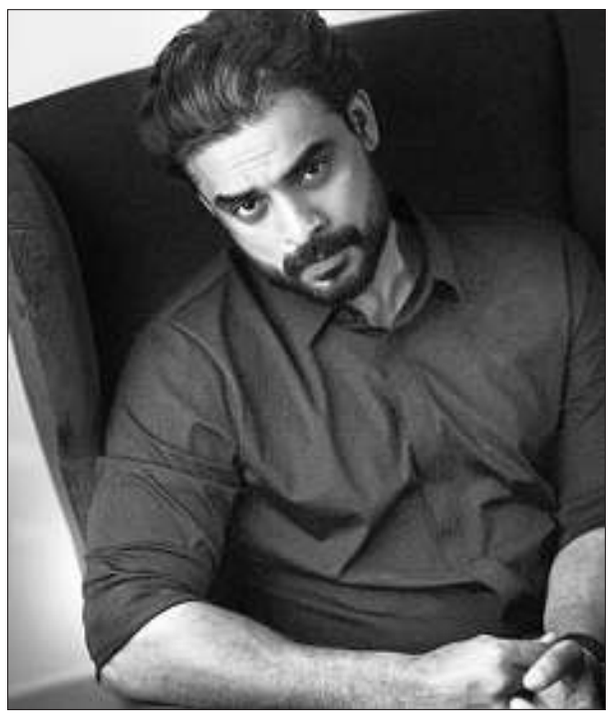
As the protagonist who undergoes an unexpected transformation, Thomas had his task cut out. "In the span of two years, we shot for 111 days through lockdowns and restrictions. Throughout I had to maintain my physique and looks for continuity," says the 32-year-old. The requirements for the role kept changing. "Initially, my character Jaison had to look a bit chubby to be relatable as a common man. My body had to be more athletic as Jaison becomes confident of his superpowers so that people should not say *aaeye* when they see me in a superhero suit," the actor says, about the year-end release. By Thomas's admission, regimented preparation for the role has changed his life.

Thomas, however, took a life-altering step much before this, in 2012. Though he didn't have any industry connection or experience in acting, he decided to quit his job as a software engineer at an MNC in Chennai. "Before resigning, I called my father. Being a lawyer, he came up with several points on why I should not quit my job. I countered his points. He got tired and said: 'Do what you want'," recalls Thomas. Today, his proud father cries every time he watches his movies.

During his early days in the industry, Thomas found a "godfather" in his elder brother Tingston Thomas, who supported him financially. Finding a foothold in the film world was not easy. "I faced rejections, even insult. Initially, I played small roles. Then, graduated to supporting roles. It's *ABCD* (2013) that gave me visibility. But I consider *Ennu Ninte Moideen* (2015), for which I got a lot of appreciation, to be my first big break," says the actor, whose talked-about movies include *Guppy* (2016), *Godha* (2017) and *And The Oscar Goes to* (2019).

Over the years, Thomas has consolidated his position as a dependable actor who doesn't shy away from playing a range of characters. While he plays the protagonist in *Mayanadhi* (2017), an exploration of intense love, he is a compassionate multi-billionaire in *Uyare* (2019), and in *Kaanekkaane* (2021) his character grapples with guilt. His choice of roles and dedication to his craft, irrespective of screen time, has been instrumental to carving a space for him in contemporary Malayalam cinema which has several fine actors such as Fahadh Faasil and Dulquer Salmaan and Nivin Pauly.

Since *Minnal Murali* is expected to win him pan-India visibility, is he open to acting in other language movies than Malayalam? "I don't want to do other language films just for the sake of it. The character I play should be important. My roots are in Malayalam cinema, which will continue to make good movies," says Thomas and adds, "If audiences enjoy a Spanish or Korean movie, why can't they watch a Malayalam movie?"



POWER ACT

(Above) Tovino Thomas; a still from *Minnal Murali*

To a Screen Near You

From murky murders to finding lost love, 2022 promises to be a year of genre-bending sagas, dark comedy and suspense thrillers

Son Rise

Babil *(above)*, son of powerhouse actor Irrfan Khan, will make his big-screen debut in Anvitaa Dutt's sophomore directorial outing *Qala*. The film, described as a "heart-breaking story about a daughter who craves her mother's love", is shot in gorgeous snow-covered locations of Jammu and Kashmir.

New Pair

The trailer of Shakun Batra-directed *Gehraiyaan*, which releases on Amazon Prime Video on January 25, has created much excitement with the pairing of Deepika Padukone and Siddhant Chaturvedi. It explores the intricacies of modern relationships.

Border Tales

The on-screen reunion of Sanam Saeed and Fawad Khan, the lead pair in the popular television series *Zindagi Gulzar Hai* (2012-13), has their fans on both sides of the border excited. Khan described the upcoming Zee5 show, directed by Asim Abbasi, as "a genre-bending saga of familial traumas and reconciliations, a tale of love and loss set in a world of magic and mystique".

Dark and Devious

After Vasan Bala's quirky humour in his directorial debut *Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota* (2018), he brings us *Monica, O My Darling*, in which black comedy and white-collar crime collide. It's a story of a young man who "desperately tries to make it big with some unlikely allies and a dastardly diabolical plan to pull off the perfect murder". It features Rajkummar Rao, Radhika Apte, Huma Qureshi and Sikandar Kher, and will release on Netflix.

Truth Matters

After the power-packed performances delivered by Sushmita Sen and Raveena Tandon in digital shows *Aarya* (Disney+ Hotstar) and *Aranyak* (Netflix) respectively, the stage is set for Madhuri Dixit-Nene to make her web series debut with *Finding Anamika*, to be released on Netflix. This suspense family drama is about a global superstar, wife, and mom who suddenly vanishes without a trace.

Web of Stories

After co-directing a riveting docu-series, *Break Point*, about Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi in 2021, Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari is working on her first web show — a SonyLIV original titled *Faadu*, an intense love story.

All Things Chocolate

Laal Singh Chaddha, a remake of *Forrest Gump* (1994), brings back Kareena Kapoor Khan and Aamir Khan together on screen. With this movie, adapted in Hindi by Atul Kulkarni and directed by Advait Chandan, Khan will return to the screen in a leading role.

Alia Reigns

Alia Bhatt's much-anticipated projects — SS Rajamouli's *RRR*, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Gangubai Kathiawadi* and Ayan Mukerji's *Brahmastra* — are scheduled to be released in 2022. Adding to the buzz are speculations regarding her wedding with actor Ranbir Kapoor. Bhatt also turns producer with *Darlings*, which will feature actor Shefali Shah.

ALAKA SAHANI

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND

Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

Scales of Beauty

When scientists filmed the inner sanctum of a chrysalis

EVERY CHILD knows that if you pick up a butterfly and let it go, it will leave a faint calling card of the finest dust imaginable on your fingers. That "dust" is actually magic dust, and under powerful microscopes has revealed itself to be scales, one of the most important components of the butterfly's wings and beauty. (The scientific name of the family of butterflies and moths is Lepidoptera, meaning "scale-wing".) Researchers have figured what happens when a caterpillar turns into a chrysalis and what happens inside the chrysalis — the caterpillar dissolved into a gooey "soup" and with the help of beautifully choreographed hormones and enzymes taking their cues precisely, the dormant butterfly cells, deliberately held back from maturing, now began to develop into the various parts of the insect, nourished by the rich caterpillar soup.

Here, inside the chrysalis, the wings of the butterfly develop. Researchers have long compared them to the fine tiling on a paper-thin roof. But while they had stills of various stages in the formation of the wing and its scales, frustratingly, they didn't have a continuous timeline as to how they grew and developed, until recently. Researchers at MIT got to work. First, with surgical precision, they cut out small squares from the cuticle (outer layer) of the chrysalis of one of the most popular butterflies, the Painted Lady, and peeled it off. They sealed the tiny "window" with thin glass panes affixed with a bio-adhesive. But they couldn't just shine a wide beam of light at their subjects and peer down the microscope just yet: that would damage it. They used many tiny needle-points of light to illuminate their delicate subject and were able to construct a detailed three-dimensional image of the wing's structure. As one of the researchers, rather poetically put it, "a speckled field is like thousands of fireflies that generate a field of illumination points".

RANJIT LAL

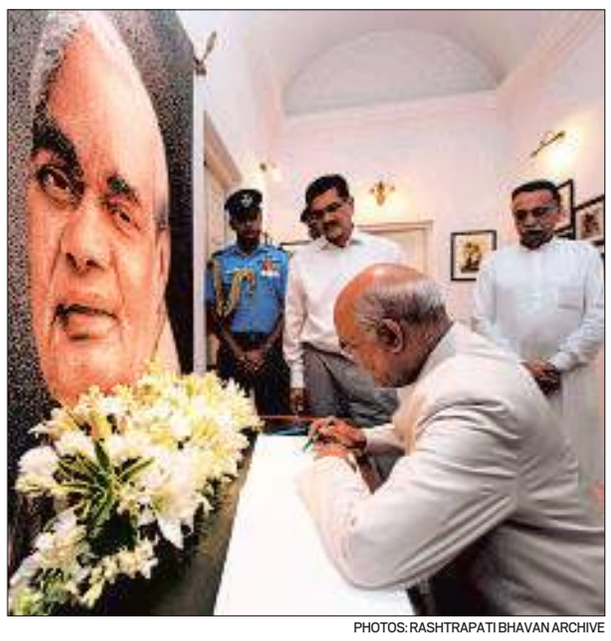
SHIMMER AND SHINE

The wing shield is like a speckled field lit up by fireflies

When they finally put their eyes to their microscopes, what they saw was astonishing. The wing formed, the cells, (made of chitin, a sugar molecule, the same as what the exoskeletons of insects comprise of) on its surface — both on the top and bottom; dorsal and ventral — began lining up neatly and quickly like cadets on parade. Then they began to differentiate: alternately, they grew on the top and bottom surfaces (called cover and ground cells), overlapping each other like shingles on a roof. As the scales grew to full size, they developed irregular ridges, growing in neat parallel lines, all along their length, rather like rain gutters — and partially serving much the same purpose — letting water run off, and controlling temperature (thermoregulation). Researchers thought that as the scales grew, they would squeeze against one another like the pleats of an accordion but that didn't happen; they continued to grow as the ridges appeared. Some other mechanism was at work, which they are yet to figure out.

These ridges were also responsible for much of the butterfly's beauty. In addition to pigments, responsible for reds, browns and blacks present in the wing membranes, these irregular ridges bounced and scattered light prismatically giving rise to wonderful iridescent sheens and shades: blues, emeralds, violets and mauves and a million tints in between. These colours mix, merge and change as the butterfly opens and closes its wings. A wing may have both, pigmented colours and prismatic ones. Being detachable, scales also enable a butterfly to escape from spiders' webs. They simply shed them and flee. (But no, lost scales do not re-grow). Scales also help the butterfly to generate lift during flight. By changing colour and patterns as the butterfly opens and closes its wings, they help it camouflage from predators.

It is truly amazing to watch the way these delicate wing-scales form. We are already thinking up uses of this wondrous technology: from iridescent windows and solar cells, to waterproof textiles, rain and heat resistant surfaces and hard-to-counterfeit currency. But what's most amazing is how this astonishing procedure evolved in the first place: how many millions of years did it take until Mother Nature figured it all out, one miniscule step at a time. The process of evolution is the best engineering system in existence. We need to study it in detail — not recklessly destroy its products. So, the next time you reach out to catch a butterfly, pause. That fine faintly-coloured ultra hi-tech powder it will leave on your fingertips is best left on the insect it was made to serve.



PHOTOS: RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN ARCHIVE

An Inspired Life

The indelible impact left on the highest constitutional seat of the republic by Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Praveen Siddharth

WHEN ATAL Bihari Vajpayee was born on December 25, 1924, in Gwalior, the Viceroy House was being built at Raisina Hill, 350 km away. As a young leader keen to see India free from the shackles of foreign power, his brush with the imperial seat of power was bound to be antagonistic. Once we attained freedom and Rashtrapati Bhavan became the highest constitutional seat of the Republic, Vajpayee's unconditional deference to constitutionalism and his respect for the successive occupants of the Rashtrapati Bhavan is an unmatched saga of exemplary public conduct.

As a parliamentarian, his association with the Rashtrapati Bhavan began in the second term of Rajendra Prasad. Over the following decades, Atal*ji* made several visits, each imbued with a different emotion reflecting the twists and turns of his political career.

May 5, 1996, was a momentous day for Vajpayee as he stepped into President Shankar Dayal Sharma's study. Atal*ji* was nervous and anxious. The elections had seen the BJP become the single-largest party for the first time but it held only 161 seats, short of the majority. Before the elections, Vajpayee had announced he had no desire to form the government unless his party had the majority. Now, he was apprehensive the President would ask him to do precisely what he was loathe to do. The President had invited him to the Rashtrapati Bhavan to ask him to take oath as the prime minister.

Living History

AN INDIAN EXPRESS COLLABORATION WITH THE RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

The oath-taking ceremony on May 16 in a packed Durbar Hall, was historic for the BJP that had barely a decade ago only two members in the Lok Sabha. The government lasted for only 13 days. On May 27, he delivered a momentous speech in the Parliament, before saying, "Respected Speaker, I am now leaving to tender my resignation to the President."

Vajpayee's visit to the Rashtrapati Bhavan, his third that month, was symbolising victory, not defeat. He had been given a responsibility, a task he knew he was bound to fail at. Nevertheless, he stoically performed his duty. He stepped down instead of facing a vote of confidence that would have embarrassed the Parliament and the President.

In 1998, the BJP secured 182 seats. He put together the National Democratic Alliance and went to meet President KR Narayanan to stake claim to form the government. Unusually, the President insisted on seeing the letters of support from all the allies. One letter was missing — that of AIADMK. The next few days were spent in securing it. On March 15, Atal*ji* met the President again. Coming out, he quipped with his characteristic smile: "*Chitthi aayee hai*", quoting a Bollywood song and evoking laughter from media persons.

The swearing-in ceremony took place on March 19, in the forecourt — only the second time that was the venue instead of the Durbar Hall. (Chandra Shekhar had taken oath as prime minister in the forecourt in November 1990.) The government would survive only 13 months, but during this period, Vajpayee made one more historic visit to the Rashtrapati Bhavan. On May 13, 1998, he announced the successful test detonation of five nuclear bombs. Incidentally, the chief project coordinator for the tests was a future President: APJ Abdul Kalam.

In April 1999, as the AIADMK withdrew its support, the question was whether Vajpayee should be asked to prove his majority in the Parliament. On April 12, in his meeting with the President, Vajpayee insisted that his government held the majority and the President could not direct it to seek a vote of confidence as the Parliament was still in session. But two days later, President Narayanan wrote to Atal*ji* asking him to seek a vote of confidence. He justified his action by claiming that he was following precedence. In October 1990, President R Venkataraman had advised Prime Minister VP Singh to seek a vote of confidence after the BJP withdrew support. On April 17, 1999, the BJP lost the vote of confidence by a single vote.

MAN OF HONOUR

(Clockwise from top left) Atal Bihari Vajpayee with APJ Abdul Kalam; President Ram Nath Kovind paying homage to Vajpayee; Vajpayee's swearing-in ceremony as Prime Minister with President Shankar Dayal Sharma in 1996

With the enemy incursion and war in Kargil, his caretaker government was kept busy mobilising the resources and the courage of the nation to fight back. Fearing that the war would increase his popularity, the Opposition began to petition the President to call for a special session of the Rajya Sabha to question the government (as the Lok Sabha was already dissolved). The President forwarded the petitions to the Prime Minister, but ultimately nothing would come out of it.

The 1999 elections gave Vajpayee the majority he needed to become the first non-Congress PM to serve full term. The five years saw Vajpayee make numerous trips to the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The visits, though largely ceremonial and customary, were not all uneventful. Vajpayee and his government had toiled hard to woo the US to remove the post-Pokhran sanctions. One result of these efforts was the visit of President Bill Clinton in 2000, the first since President Carter's visit in 1978. In the official banquet hosted for President Clinton, President Narayanan went off the script in his toast, much to the surprise and consternation of Vajpayee. He chided Clinton for proclaiming South Asia as the "most dangerous place in the world".

Vajpayee also oversaw a transition at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. On June 10, 2002, he announced the NDA's intention to support Kalam in the Presidential elections. Atal*ji* then wanted to inform Kalam, but could not find where he was and had to press the Intelligence Bureau. The future President was traced to a small town in south India where he was addressing Class XII students.

On May 13, 2004, Vajpayee resigned following the NDA's poll defeat. In December 2005, he retired from active politics, his visits to the Rashtrapati Bhavan ending abruptly.

But in 2015, the Rashtrapati Bhavan went to Vajpayee. The Bharat Ratna, the nation's highest civilian honour, was to be conferred on him. The ceremony is usually held in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, but he was ill. So, in a departure from tradition, President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to his residence and conferred the award on Atal*ji*. This was also the last time he was photographed publicly. The photo later released by the Rashtrapati Bhavan shows his health condition. He received the award seated, with his eyes covered by tinted glasses.

Vajpayee passed away on August 16, 2018. President Ram Nath Kovind, who went to his home and also attended the state funeral, wrote in a moving letter to his adopted daughter Namita: "Atal*ji*'s death is also a personal loss for me. It was his stature and dignity that attracted me to public life." The relationship between the Rashtrapati Bhavan and Atal*ji* was, in the end, not one-sided. The Rashtrapati Bhavan had an impact on the course of his political life. But through the sheer weight of his personality and conduct, he also shaped the lives of people across our vast nation — even inspired one of them to become the President.

Praveen Siddharth is private secretary to the President

ADD and Reclaiming Preferred Identities

A letter to young people living with ADD

IMAGINE

BY SHELJA SEN

SUVAJIT DEY

SEE ME AS I AM

Far too often, society crushes the agency of young people by slotting them into narrow labels. It is easy to locate the problem in young people rather than seeing that, maybe, it was the only option for their survival

Dear You,

I have to admit at the outset that I have a difficult relationship with the label Attention-Deficit-Disorder (ADD). I do not think it is just the problem of attention (or the H for hyperactivity that sits in the middle at times), nor am I comfortable with the deficit lens, and I definitely do not think it can be explained as a disorder. But, for the lack of a better word, I will use ADD.

I might have a difficult relationship with the label, but I have an intimate, long-standing relationship with people with ADD. Having a son and husband who struggle/thrive with it and working with children for more than 30 years has helped me gain lived experience and hard-won knowledges that no degree or books could have ever offered me.

If you have met one person with ADD, you have met one person with ADD. Nevertheless, I would like to share some themes that have really stood out to me while living and working with ADD.

ADD is neurodivergence, not a deficit: Society has built these iron casts expectations that it wants all children to fit into — to sit still, pay attention and do as they are told. In my understanding, struggle with time, attention, and conformity are the biggest challenges that children with ADD face, the very things that are seen as high currency for success in our hustling culture. For example, take Krishna, whose ADD in school had earned him the labels of being "lazy," "unmotivated," and his curiosity misinterpreted as "defiance." But what was being missed out was that Krishna was trying a lot, he was doing all that he could to please his teachers, but the school's assembly line learning with timetables, classwork, homework, exams, went against his wiring. He liked to question, ponder, discuss, connect dots to make sense of his world in his own time. He was a scuba diver in a herd of jet skiers.

ADD like an X-ray reveals the fault lines: A single story of "has potential but does not try" would follow Krishna through his school life, robbing him of his sense of agency, leading to despair with, "What's the point anyway?" He would internalise society's idea of success/failure and shut himself off from the world. He would not be alone in this isolation as we are seeing this trend in millions of children, youth across the world. They stay in their rooms, refusing to go to school/college and spend their time sleeping, numbing their pain with screens, various addictions and other self-harm. The Japanese have also named this phenomenon as *Hikikomori*. It is so easy to locate the problem in these young people rather than seeing that, maybe, it was the only option for their survival. As Rahil explained to me, "My room is the only place I feel safe."

ADD highlights issues of social injustice: Children are obviously blamed and judged for ADD or even *Hikikomori* and intense treatment planned and mapped out to fix them. But are they the problem? To draw a parallel, suppose during the peak of Delhi's pollution, we only focused on treating children's lung problems without looking at the polluted air that was inflicting damage. No amount of chest specialists, medication, nebulising would help us get anywhere. Where and what is the problem? Is it residing in the children's lungs or in the belching industries, crop burning, heavy traffic and negligent governance?

I met Krishna when he was 21 years old and was struggling with depression and suicidal experiences. I learned from his parents that as a little boy Krishna was an extremely curious child who loved to read, learn about space, marine life. But over time, his stories were not seen as newsworthy enough and did not make headlines. They are lost in the fine print of society's definition of a good student until he became invisible and withdrew to his room.

We explored, together, how it was not ADD as such but the stringent and oppressive ideas of success that had robbed him of a sense of agency and meaning. In our discussion, we talked about what he called the "i3" work:

Internalisation of the problem — "I am the problem."

Invisibilising the issues of social injustice — "I am to blame."

Isolating themselves — "I am unworthy, unlikeable, and I do not belong."

Reclaiming preferred identities and future

Collective: Feminist, LGBTQ, civil rights movements have taught us that nothing can be achieved at an individual level. We have to come together to raise our collective voices through protest campaigns, spoken poetry, dance, writing, podcasts. Various forms of acts of resistance to our cultural standards of "normality" and "worthiness." I asked my husband what had helped him, and he said, "Doing what I love doing, choosing to be with people who have faith in me and advocating and never apologising for my ADD." So, for all the parents out there, let's keep the faith and stand up for our children.

Agency: Think of the recent time when you did something, no matter how small, that you entered with a sense of curiosity, joy, and which aligned with what you value. *What made you decide to do this? What intention or purpose did you have? Do you remember a time in the recent past, maybe two to three years ago, when you did something like that? Or maybe even as a little child? What are the common threads you see in all of them?* It has been fascinating for me to see how many young people with ADD find a sense of agency with work that is connected to nature or requires hands-on skills for e.g. deep-sea diving, sports, mountain trekking, wildlife photography, conservation. The very activities that are diminishing in our school curriculum.

Value and hopes: As you went through the questions and reflected, *did they throw light on what matters to you? Do they tell you something about what sustains you and what is important for you? If you continue taking these steps forward, what possibilities might open up?* And, as you answer these questions, there might be a voice that might dismiss these steps you are taking, or even your hopes as "worthless," "will make no difference." Observe it, give it a name and watch out for it. In our conversation, Krishna shared with me, "I had let my worth be decided by some random social expectations. The steps that I am taking might seem trivial to the world but they matter to me."

So, grow your tribe, hold on to what is most precious to you and do what it takes to reclaim your preferred life. One micro-step at a time.

In solidarity,
Shelja

Shelja Sen is a narrative therapist, writer and cofounder, Children First. In this column, she curates the know-how of the children and the youth she works with. She can be reached at shelja.sen@childrenfirstindia.com

EXPRESS ARCHIVE

WINDS OF CHANGE
Jayaprakash Narayan.in 1974

Revolution is a Constant Struggle

A biography throws light on the singular, often surprising political life of Jayaprakash Narayan

Raghu Karnad

I SPENT my childhood in a quiet part of outer Bangalore once called Sarakki Layout, but later renamed JP Nagar. My father liked to complain about losing the warm, vernacular 'Sarakki', and I was never curious what lay behind 'JP'. A decade later, I could draw a hazy relation between those initials and a handful of parties across the country, relics of an older political force that went by the same initials.

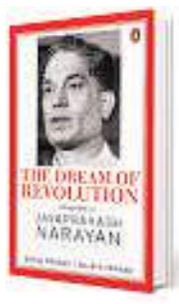
Today, the ruling party is working hard to turn legends of the anti-colonial Left, like Bhagat Singh and Subhas Bose, into heroes for the Hindu right. Still JP is out of the picture. Nobody in power seems to want him, and as I finally read his story, I could see why. Revolutionaries are either buried deep or hidden in plain sight, as JP was in the place where I grew up.

In a crisp 200 pages, *The Dream of Revolution* — a biography begun by the late historian Bimal Prasad, a close associate of Jayaprakash Narayan's, and completed by his daughter, art historian Sujata Prasad — narrates the singular, often surprising political life, which bridged the era of Bhagat Singh and civil disobedience with that of George Fernandes and the Janata Party. For five decades, Narayan had a hand on the wheel of the national project, always pulling it left, from the grip of powerful classes. His aim was always a more complete revolution; even in the end, when his compass betrayed him.

For most of his twenties, Narayan was a student in the US, brilliant and broke, sustained by menial jobs and the Marxist canon. He returned to India in late 1929, determined to "join the Congress and try to radicalise it" on the lines prescribed by Lenin — which was not unusual. Already the story has surprises, at least for my generation, who largely have no idea that in the decades before independence, the real challenge to Gandhi's Congress was from the Left. Young and hungry hearts opposed Gandhi's philosophy, coterie and organisation as too right-wing, for accommodating the interests of *zamindar*s, capitalists, and even viceroys along with those of the masses they exploited.

In time, Jawaharlal Nehru, too, would be called right-wing, by younger firebrands drawn to Bose. But for now, in the early thirties, it was Nehru who represented the socialist dream — "romantic, undogmatic, deeply personal and even poetic". JP was soon at his side. His wife Prabhavati, however, was a disciple at Gandhi's *ashram* at Sabarmati, and was so committed to the Mahatma's ascetic ideals that she took a vow of celibacy (The book does not dwell on JP's opinion of this). Thanks in part to Prabhavati, Narayan both lived and articulated, as a theorist, the tension between loyalty to Congress leadership and longing for revolutionary progress. He had a strong way with words, and every excerpt in *The Dream of Revolution* is a new delight.

His writing swayed many younger workers, showing how "Socialism was superior to Gandhism, the parliamentary path, as well as individual terrorism — three ideological approaches which were contending for ascendancy in the Congress," according to one young Congressman in Kerala, EMS Namboodiripad. In 1934, with Nehru's blessing, Narayan and others formed the Congress Socialist Party: a medium between Gandhi's movement, which was nationalist but not socialist enough, and the Communist Party of India, who were socialist but not nationalist enough. As a leader of the CSP, Narayan could try to pull the Congress to the left, encouraging labour and peasant militancy, and facing down the fury of conservative generals like Vallabhai Patel and Rajaji (C Rajagopalachari). From then on, for the next four decades, every governing regime — Congress ministries or the Raj at war, Nehru's republic or Indira's — would have JP at its flank, ready to prod or to attack.



THE DREAM OF REVOLUTION: A BIOGRAPHY OF JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN
BY BIMAL PRASAD AND SUJATA PRASAD
Vintage Books
272 pages
₹799

First, though, the war years held in store an almost unbelievable series of adventures. Over long stints in prisons, Narayan advanced increasingly radical plans. Prabhavati smuggled letters to him in the binding of books — with code words and all — until they were caught in the act. The secret letters were splashed across major newspapers, but oddly, not excerpted in this book. Desperate to participate in the Quit India uprising in 1942, Narayan and five friends escaped over the wall of Hazaribagh Central Jail on the night of Diwali. They survived on forage in the jungle, and travelled in disguise. The suppression of the August *kranti* left Narayan deeply dismayed, and he promised young Indians an ongoing revolution. He then formed a band of guerillas to operate from across the border in Nepal. He was captured, engineered an ambush of his prison camp, escaped again, was captured again and finally imprisoned, this time with a vengeance.

The Dream of Revolution fits all this action into less than 10 pages, without many citations, which is a shame for at least two reasons. It reduces wildly intriguing events to a few heady statements, like these about JP and his guerilla comrade Vijaya Patwardhan: "Their escapades were legendary, evocative of an erotic complicity that was tender and intimate. The camaraderie survived the tumult and turmoil of their stormy lives but ended when the police got wind of their secret location." It also makes short work of a pivotal period — a period after which Narayan stepped back from the political fray, but still yearned for a revolution which would not be cut short.

If Narayan's life had ended at this halfway point, just past the age of 40, we might remember him better. But unlike Bose, Gandhi or Patel, or even Nehru, he had more than three decades of public life ahead of him. From 1946, however, as his colleagues prepared to take the reins of power, JP began turning away, heeding Gandhi's call to *sarvodaya*, social transformation in the countryside. From a Gandhian viewpoint, as from a Marxist one, the transfer of power in 1947 was an unfinished revolution. Narayan, now fully reconciled with Prabhavati, put his energy and resolve into reforming its rural society, through the *bhoodan* campaigns of Vinoba Bhave. From his *ashram* in rural Gaya, he continued to weigh in on national affairs, advocating for the poor and marginalised, and against Hindu communalism (which could, he noted wisely, "easily masquerade as Indian nationalism, and denounce all opposition to it as being anti-national"). His monumental stature only grew, along with his dismay at India's new leaders, whom he saw becoming more venal, communal and undemocratic.

So it was that in the late years of his life, when rioting students fired up general protests across Gujarat and then Bihar, JP cast his lot with the storm. He gave them his moral authority and his leadership, and they gave him his long-awaited chance at *sampurna kranti*, "total revolution". Through Narayan's life, his revolutionary impatience had warred with political prudence (urged by Prabhavati) and loyalty (to Gandhi and Nehru). Now Prabhavati, Gandhi and Nehru were dead. Riding on surges of mass protest, riots and bloody reprisals, the JP Movement assumed the form of an insurrection against Indira Gandhi herself. The socialist legend grappled bitterly with the socialist prime minister — and helped precipitate the Emergency, the Janata front, the end of Congress dominance and the dawn of the Hindu right.

"Revolution has come, but now, when I have grown old," Narayan said, poignantly, in 1974. At the end, he was the left-wing saint so intent on seeing revolution that he failed to see among his followers the upper-caste reactionaries, opportunists, the RSS, the ABVP, and the young men who would climb from his coat-tails to build their own cult of power. His life, and what he stood for, is the last thing they want us to remember today.

Karnad is a journalist and author. He is the recipient of the 2019 Windham Campbell Prize for non-fiction

For The People

Civil servant BD Pande's memoir offers an insider's account of some defining moments in Indian politics

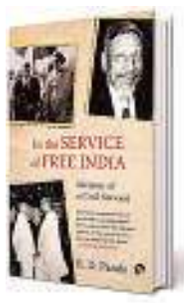
Deb Mukharji

BHAIRAB DATT Pande, known to his generation as BD, served in the Indian Civil Service from 1939 to 1977. His memoirs, written largely by hand, in 1986, two years after he demitted his last government assignment, carried his instructions that they should not be published before January 1, 2001, or five years after his death, whichever was later. BD Pande died in 2009. His daughter Ratna Sudarshan has painstakingly edited and published the memoirs in 2021. We must be grateful to her for making available within the covers of a book an insider's perceptive account of economic and political developments in India in her first four decades after independence. By extraordinary happenstance, BD was in the midst of the maelstrom of the fraught years of the Emergency and the period leading to the storming of the Golden Temple

A shy boy who had felt lonely in his early years in school in Almora was taken away for studies to Allahabad by his father who resigned his government job in the postal department to be with his son. BD's brief comment later, "his sacrifices for my welfare cannot be put in a few words", encapsulates the bonds between father and son. After a fine academic record in school and university, BD was sent to study in Cambridge to appear for the entrance examination to the Indian Civil Service. In 1939, BD signed the covenant inducting him into the ICS and was allotted Bihar as his cadre.

Pande's 20 years in Bihar saw him in multiple administrative posts in the districts and in Patna, often dealing with food scarcity and development issues. An exposure to tribals in Jharkhand left a deep impression about the cleanliness and the honesty of the people. He notes the resentment against the exploitation by outsiders and comments, " this undercurrent of hostility remains to this day and is at the bottom of the uprisings in the northeastern part of India". He is witness to the Bihar communal riots of 1946 in Hindu retaliation for the Great Calcutta Killings of 1945 and the Noakhali riots which "practically made Pakistan a certainty". Recalling in this context the attacks on Sikhs in northern India in the '80s, he is dismayed at how minorities are attacked and feel threatened. "I have never understood why 85 per cent of the population of India, namely the Hindus, should feel threatened by several communities which themselves constitute less than 15 per cent of the population... the greatness of Hinduism and the reason for its survival is its catholicity, its large heartedness in religious matters, its recognition of all faiths and the unity of mankind and Godhead".

In Delhi, BD held charge of several departments and his wry account gives outsiders a glimpse of the whimsical nature of postings and transfers in government. One Cabinet Secretary tells him, he is not classified as a "high flyer" as some others but "a high, above average officer, solid, unruffled but with little brilliance".



IN THE SERVICE OF FREE INDIA : MEMOIR OF A CIVIL SERVANT
BY BD PANDE
SPEAKING TIGER BOOKS
320 pages
₹699

With these qualities, and though not the seniormost, BD was appointed Cabinet Secretary in October 1972 as there are concerns about inflation and increasing industrial unrest. But perhaps the most important issue was decline in political rectitude and resentment against Sanjay Gandhi's growing influence. As the author recalls, "... Democratic norms were being thrown overboard. Resistance was met with an array of criminal charges. Office bearers at all levels were nominated from the top. Corruption and unethical practices were increasing manifold".

Even as disaffection grew and political opposition was mobilised under the guidance of Jayaprakash Narayan, the Allahabad High Court judgement of June 11, 1975, disqualifying Indira Gandhi from Parliament precipitated matters. BD was present when an internal Emergency was declared early on June 26, the Cabinet only informed after Presidential assent. In the months that followed " actions were not taken through the official machinery or official channels", and were unknown to the Cabinet Secretariat or even the PMO as orders were issued directly by Sanjay Gandhi. Ironically, following Congress defeat in the elections in March, 1977, BD attended also the Cabinet meeting withdrawing the Emergency and obtained the signature of the Acting President, BD Jatti in the early hours. In the author's view, ordering the elections "was the greatest decision she took which helped in strengthening of the Indian Constitution and India's nascent democracy".

BD was recalled from retirement to assume the governorship of West Bengal in September, 1982, to be moved to Punjab when President's rule was declared there in October, 1983.

History of Punjab, history of Sikhs, Hindu-Sikh relations and the events leading up to and including Operation Bluestar at the Golden Temple on June 5 and 6, 1984, take up a third of the volume. The author's scholarship is evident as are his meticulous accounts of the series of events and meetings that led to the assault on the Golden Temple by the Indian Army to flush out terrorists. He may not have been a participant in the decisions taken by the coterie around the prime minister and his advice consistently ignored, but, as governor, he had a ringside view. BD lays out for us step by step, date by date, the centre's thwarting all efforts to find a political solution to the issues confronting Punjab. It is a sorry tale of the pursuit of party interests with utter disregard for the national and, in the author's judgement, Indira Gandhi was unwilling to come to a political solution which might be to the detriment to the Congress. Perhaps her mind was already made up, for she stressed to the newly-appointed governor "her determination to stamp out these terrorists... she added that she would not hesitate to bomb the Golden Temple if she had to", leaving BD spellbound. The author's recall of the events of those times confirms the depiction in GBS Sidhu's *The Khalistan Conspiracy* (HarperCollins) published recently and would be invaluable for current and future historians.

If Indira Gandhi paid a heavy price for her misjudgement, the nation, Sikhs in particular, have paid a heavier one. Unfortunately, the fecklessness which characterised the political leadership at the time is still in evidence, as we saw in references to farmers who agitated against farm laws as Khalistanis and terrorists.

One must agree with the editor that these memoirs "bring out some of the challenges that faced civil servants, and the commitment with which these were resolved, in the years following Independence".

Deb Mukharji is a former Indian ambassador to Nepal

EXPRESS EDITORS RECOMMEND

Words' Worth

Books to look out for in 2022

REBELS AGAINST THE RAJ
RAMACHANDRA GUHA
(PENGUINRANDOM HOUSE, NON-FICTION)

Historian Ramachandra Guha's new book looks at the lives and legacy of seven foreigners who joined India's struggle for freedom. To be published in January, *Rebels Against the Raj* tells the story of four men and three women — of them, four British, two American and one Irish — each drawn to Mahatma Gandhi, either as disciple or in opposition, who became involved with the Independence movement and left indelible marks on their chosen fields.

THE IMMORTAL KING RAO
VAUHINI VARA
(HARPERCOLLINS, FICTION)

One of 2022's most anticipated literary-fiction releases, writer Vauhini Vara's *The Immortal King Rao* will be published in May by WW Norton in the US and with Grove Atlantic in the UK. Through the story of King Rao, a visionary Dalit man who realises his technological wizardry, and that of his daughter Athena, the ambitious novel explores the arc between an agrarian past to a techno-corporate totalitarian future and throws up questions about the future of the digital age and where it might lead us.

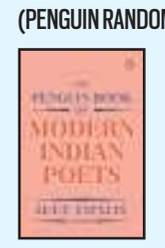
COMMISSIONER FOR LOST CAUSES
ARUN SHOURIE
(PENGUINRANDOM HOUSE, NON-FICTION)

Journalist and former minister of Communications and Information Technology in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, Arun Shourie goes back in time to recall his encounters with those in power — administrators, members of the judiciary and the fourth estate — and the pioneering work that his colleagues and he did during his tenure as a journalist.

THE LIVING MOUNTAIN
AMITAV GHOSH
(HARPERCOLLINS, FICTION)

Amitav Ghosh returns with a pandemic fable with *The Living Mountain*. To be published in January under HarperCollins' Fourth Estate imprint, it tells the story of Mahaparbat — the Living Mountain — and the indigenous valley dwellers it nurtures and the destruction and havoc created by the assault of the Anthropois — humans interested in exploiting natural resources for commercial benefits. One of the first writers to recognise and reflect on the climate crisis, the abuse of natural resources for financial gains and the consequent environmental collapse it has led to has been a running theme in Ghosh's recent work. The book will be simultaneously available in translation in Hindi and also as an ebook and an audiobook.

THE PENGUIN BOOK OF MODERN INDIAN POETS
JEET THAYIL
(PENGUIN RANDOMHOUSE, POETRY)



Covering Indian poetry since the time of Independence, this anthology, to be published in January, includes 94 of India's finest poets writing in English — from Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes and Arun Kolatkar to little-known ones such as Gopal Honnalgere and Srinivas Rayaprol and a range of contemporary poets, based not just in India but across the world. One of the standout features of the book is the inclusion of 49 women poets.

SOLI SORABJEE BIOGRAPHY
ABHINAV CHANDRACHUD
(PENGUINRANDOM HOUSE, NON-FICTION)

The astonishing life and career of former Attorney General of India, Soli Sorabjee, who passed away in April at the age of 91, is the subject matter of advocate Abhinav Chandrachud's new book. The book captures Sorabjee's various influences — his fascination with Roman Catholicism, his admiration for India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, his criticism of the Bharatiya Janata Party, despite being chosen by the party to represent their government in court, and his repeated defence of the fundamental right to free speech and expression throughout his long, eventful career.

WHAT'S LEFT OF THE JUNGLE: A CONSERVATION STORY
NITIN SEKAR
(BLOOMSBURY, NON-FICTION)

Conservation scientist and WWF India's national lead for elephant conservation, Nitin Sekar, disentangles the complicated relationship between rural India and the wild through the story of Akshu Atri, who lives in West Bengal's Buxa Tiger Reserve. Atri is among the half a million families who lose their crops and livelihood to wild elephant rampages every year. Yet, through his story of struggle and survival and eventual prosperity, Sekar shows the symbiotic relationship that Atri and people like him share with wildlife.

THE BIRTH OF A NATION
JOSY JOSEPH
(CONTEXT, NON-FICTION)

New Delhi-based journalist Josy Joseph's new book is a first in an investigative series that presents the findings of an eight-year research project by a team of historians who have accessed historic documents, including archival letters, files, reports and telegrams from different government departments, to put together an account of how India came to be a democratic republic. This volume looks at the period between 1947 and 1956, examining erstwhile princely states and the role of government officials working directly under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to bring them under the aegis of the newly-independent country.

The Pandemic year locked them in quarantines and threw away the keys but athletes around the world found resilience to call time on people-pleasing and discovered their moral voice to say NO. Gymnast Simone Biles, tennis star Naomi Osaka and Virat Kohli spoke their minds and defied convention. The year also saw athletes discover the full potential of social media - not just the big names but even the hitherto unknowns from small towns became stars in their own right. There were also some breakthrough performances that will stand the test of time. The hockey captain who reawakened a country's nostalgic pride, a badminton star who finally learnt how to marry art with commerce, and the man who launched his gold-plated javelin to quench a nation's thirst.

Medallica: Nothing else matters

He is a former World No.1, but the Worlds silver was an important pit stop in Srikanth's journey as he finds ways to pull off victories again

YEARENDER 2021

SHIVANI NAIK

MARK CALJOUW might be the mildly interesting Dutchman in the footnotes of Kidambi Srikanth's story of the World Championship silver. The quarterfinal opponent who lasted 26 minutes, had earlier this year, undergone a surgical procedure to reduce the rate of his heartbeats.

But Srikanth's 2021 journey might best be told by mixing palettes of two other Dutchmen: artists, Vincent van Gogh and Piet Mondrian. Srikanth always had the dramatic thick brush strokes of a van Gogh canvas, right down to undertones of tragic losses. But imagine bringing the geometric simplicity of a Piet Mondrian, breaking down an image into grid-squares bit by bit to recreate a canvas, while not veering away from basic colours. 2021 for Kidambi Srikanth was seeing life and shuttle in inlays of red, blue and yellow.

His art on the badminton court was still abstract and holds a universal aesthetic - from lifelong shuttle connoisseurs of Istora Senyan in Jakarta to first-timers at the Palace of Carolina Marin arena, all have broken into spontaneous applause when he flicks at the net or lays it thick and bold on a smash. But Kidambi Srikanth now deals in the modernist ideal of Winning. And winning only.

Try getting him to boast about his feathery touch-play at the net as against the accuracy-tyrants, the automatons, Kento Momota, Chen Long or big-bashing by the towering Viktor Axelsen, and he waves away the gush. "Look, no matter what strokes you have, no matter how stylish your game, you have to win those 42 points. These people (Momota, etc) have mastered the act of getting those 42 points. If you play well for that 1 hour and are consistent, then I'm good," he explains.

Always a quiet one letting his court-craft do the talking, winning the silver at the December World Championship, gives him a faint definition of happiness.

"What else can there be to happiness when playing on the court, than winning? There's nothing else to it, except winning a match. Obviously losing can never make you happy, that's for sure," he says.

Plummeting confidence and missing the Olympics forced a recalibration of his goals thereafter (he's still a tad cross about not making the Olympics despite what he reckoned was a good ranking). "At the end of the day, what's really important is how you play in that 1 hour given to you - 1 hour on average for a match. Whoever plays the best then, wins," he asserts.

Pros and confidence

Reams have been written diagnosing Srikanth's confidence crisis, given the giddy results between 2014 and 2017 on the circuit, and the torrid ousters from tournaments, with a World rank No 1 for a week thrown into the flux. What Srikanth did conclude though was that confidence lost on the court, could only be found back on the court.

At a particularly tricky point of non-clarity during the pandemic time Olympic qualification, Srikanth had posted a picture alongside a garden statue of those life-sized laughing Buddhas - this one nodding to sleep. Srikanth would pose next to it, mimicking the mock sleep and caption it: 'Wake me after everything is done.' Indian badminton was going through one of its many snipings and counters between its acrimonious (but civil) rival camps, when Srikanth posted that hoot of a hibernating polar bear vibe, drawing chuckles on social media.

"I was just looking at old pictures, and pulled this one out to post. I think it was clicked at the China Open in 2019 and I just posed next to the figure...." he laughs, unwilling to divulge what the cryptic message meant.

Srikanth's real surge of confidence for the finals came after converting the match point against Lakshya Sen in the World semifinals. Though he can trace it back to playing Kento Momota in the first round at French OpenIt was a real wringer 21-18, 20-22, 19-21. But Srikanth crystallises his confidence down to that week. He had earlier lost 23-21, 21-9 at Denmark to the Japanese allergic to unforced errors. That one week's progress really bolstered him in the mind. No placebos off-court, real performance on it.

"Confidence is more about believing in yourself, and usually I don't have to specifically think of anything. Things fall into place. Against Momota I played well that week, and it's not a particular stroke that I'll say is my confidence stroke. It's about shot selection - when to play which stroke in the rally. It's different against different players. That match I wasn't thinking too much about the result. But I didn't give easy points. I didn't give up against Momota. That's confidence," he says.

Srikanth's oeuvre over the 2021 season has seen him lose the opening set, and in distinctly unSrikanth 2019.0 fashion, turn it around in the next two. Asian Games champ, Jonatan Christie took the first set 21-13 in the first of three Indonesia tournaments last month. "I had to really focus in the third. Concentrate on the long rallies. I was happy with my overall fitness and how I was playing," he says of the deciders he's won.

Srikanth has a 6-0 record against fellow Indians on the international circuit this year - he's beaten Sameer Verma, Ajay Jayaram, Sai Praneeth once, HS Prannoy twice and of course Lakshya Sen in the highly watchable semifinals.

"There's no personal rivalry," he stresses, though winning match point against Sen ranks as his favourite moment of the year. "There were no other thoughts at the winning point. But yes, winning that will stay with me forever."

As will the tap into the net at 20-all against Loh Kean Yew in the final, something to push him to improve if he's ever short on motivation.

The Decider Insider

Against Chinese Li Shifeng, Srikanth saw it all coming together, albeit a tad late if Srikanth's recollection is to go by. "I was trailing against him in the second set as well. I figured out a little late how to play," he says. Against Lakshya, 3 errors from 17-16 up threatened to throw him back in that choking quagmire. His comebacks are more gratifying than his dominant displays because of the myriad times during the nightmare Olympic qualification when he crumbled like a brittle cookie. At Hong Kong two Decembers ago from a staggering 20-15 match point up.

Srikanth's World's run might've come against unseeded opponents, but he's done well on the circuit even in losses against the top players. "I'm not exactly sure what's changed. I'm just able to analyse well in the match and understand what an opponent's trying to do and change accordingly. I feel I'm a step ahead of the opponent."

Deciders will still go this way or that, he says. "Win some, lose some. But in deciders I've learnt how to play well from 15-all or 16-all," he says. His final opponent Loh Kean Yew though threw his inadequacies into sharp relief. "He's aggressive and dominates on the net, just like me," Srikanth says of the man the world calls a speed demon. "But if I was at my absolute best, I think I could've...." he lets that linger.

"Yes, the net follow-up shot has worked well in the last few tournaments. But I'll still try and bring more variety into smashes and net. I want to become a better player," he promises, the right sort of takeaway from a silver medal, a trophy and two souvenirs from Huelva. Srikanth got his visa for the World Championship at the very last moment. In a sign of what was to come he played it calmly. "I didn't really think about how I had prepared, or how I would play. I didn't get court practice or a feel of the tournament shuttles. I played directly. I knew if I play my best, it will be sufficient," he says. With that mind frame, he had confidence in a bottle. "I knew I'm experienced enough, I've played many tournaments, and if I stay in the match enough I have the experience and will manage," he says.

Frequently dubbed the over-thinker of Indian badminton, Srikanth chanted to himself the only reality he knew these last few years, which shook him while not making the Olympics: that he might not get another opportunity to play. "I told myself, think of the first round as if it's my last match of the year and play my best." It was just the right dosage of desperation, not too less, nor more.

"I told myself it's my last match before every match and played as if there's nothing to lose," he recalls. Until, he had actually reached the last match of the World Championships - and he was contesting the starry night of the final.

BRIDGE

Dealer: South Vulnerable: None

NORTH
♠ K8762
♥
♦ KQJ2
♣K652

SOUTH
♠
♥AJ106542
♦ 8A7
♣QJ10

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1H		
Pass	1S	Pass	2H
Pass	2NT	Pass	4H
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the nine of clubs, taken by East's ace. East returned a spade, which South ruffed. Just one heart in dummy would have been nice. Can South cope with North's being heartless?

The West Hand: S-AQ953H-Q3 D-964C-984
The East Hand: S-J104 H-K987D-1053C-A73

If South does the traditional thing, he goes down. He did lead the ace and jack of hearts. West, who had started with the Q3 of hearts won the second heart with the queen. East later took two more heart tricks. Down one. Can you see a way to succeed?

South does not have enough spot cards that he can toss them out like confetti. The winning play is to lead the ace of hearts and follow with a little one.

If the suit is three-three, it does not matter what South does. If the suit is four-two with both heart honours being in the hand with four trumps, it does not matter what South does. He will have to lose three tricks in all cases. But if trumps are four-two and one of the opponents has the Kx or the Qx, leading the ace and a little one causes the defenders to spend one of their honours on air. South will then force out the other honour and game will succeed.

Dealer: South Vulnerable: Both

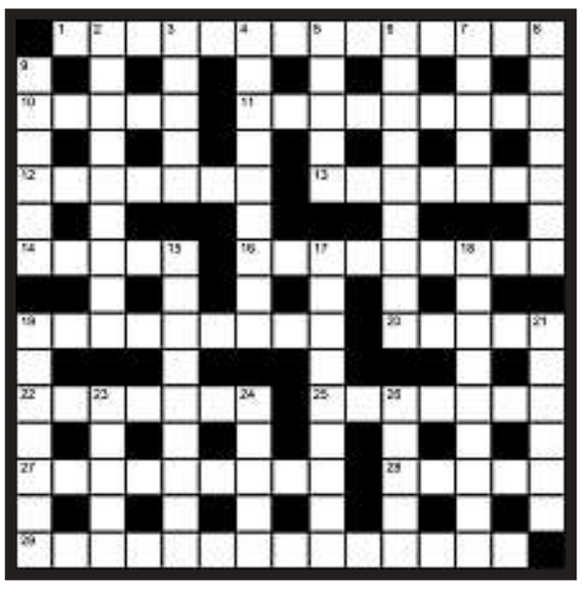
NORTH
♠ J983
♥AK72
♦ 52
♣863

SOUTH
♠ Q
♥QJ106543
♦ AJ
♣ AQ4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1H	Pass	4H
dbl	2NT	Pass	4H
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the king of spades and switches to the ten of diamonds. East's queen forces your ace, leaving you with a diamond loser and two possible club losers. Given that West has the king of clubs from the bidding, is there a way to make ten tricks?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2353



QUICK CLUES
ACROSS
1. Basis of a sandwich (5,3,6)
10. SF writer Asimov (5)
11. Beautiful youth of Greek myth (9)
12. Inconsistent, uncertain or mercurial (7)
13. Capital of Tamil Nadu (7)
14. New Zealand native (5)
16. Decline; down-turn (9)
19. Annoying, harassing or hassling (9)
20. Pertaining to the moon (5)
22. Jealous, covetous or resentful (7)
25. In place of (7)
27. Gum trees (9)
28. Thicket of trees (5)
29. In addition to what is necessary? (3,4,7)

DOWN
2. Prepared and all set for a journey, perhaps? (5,2,2)
3. Ghanaian capital (5)
4. C.N. ___ : founder of DMK? (9)
5. Architectural style (5)
6. All over (9)
7. Mike ___ : ear-biting boxer? (5)
8. Putin's compatriot (7)
9. N. American Indian tent (6)
15. An intricate plot? (9)
17. Having power to perceive or know (9)
18. Publican (9)
19. From that cause or origin (7)
21. Repossess; buy back (6)
23. Clergyman (5)
24. Savoury or palatable (5)
26. Cults (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES
ACROSS
1. But Hazel to ride out for Henry's daughter (9,5)
10. Give a name to first-class city of Arabia (5)
11. Killer whale concealed its disguised florist who specialises (9)
12. They allow sailors to make steady progress (3,4)
13. So I don't misbehaviously get appointed as somebody's deputy (5,2)
14. Try to look smart as a mischievous little publicist (5)
16. Cheese melt, mean and hot, being cooked (9)
19. Entered to get and took up (4,2,3)
20. Warning! This woman is dangerous (5)
22. The French fellow to import legal measure of milk (7)
25. One who stands up to problem at work ? (7)
27. Iona sloop's wreckage contains the makings of a keyboard entertainment (5,4)
28. A girl with good ones will attract a lot of them (5)
29. Middle-aged gentleman Briton on the house may escape without penalty (3,3,4,4)

DOWN
2. Balance against rain bespattered book keeper (9)
3. Unknown river in renamed African area (5)
4. Your literary choice may get support here (4-5)
5. VAT, say, for nails (5)
6. Attempts to carry grain in some hats (9)
7. Doctor to die in agony, having no water left (5)
8. Unhappy relation without a supply of vitamin A (7)
9. A theologian to drink tots (4,2)
15. Put two and two together (6,3)
17. A famous explorer or a cool M. P. perhaps (5,4)
18. What's to become of you? All the signs are here! (9)
19. Very angry boar (4,3)
21. Restlessness among tenors (2,4)
23. Plan church with skill (5)
24. Reel around in circles (5)
26. French singer eats bit of leftover rice dish (5)

Solutions to 2352

QUICK CLUES Across: 9 Rat-race, 10 Karaoke, 11 Suffers, 12 Nonagon, 13 Obeisance, 15 Crate, 16 Saviour, 19 Primest, 20 Oboes, 21 Litterbug, 25 Goading, 26 Against, 28 Prefect, 29 Mastiff. **Down:** 1 Presto, 2 Stifle, 3 Fate, 4 Nelson, 5 Skin-deep, 6 Transcribe, 7 Long face, 8 Lean meat, 14 Shop-soiled, 16 Stopgaps, 17 Violates, 18 Relegate, 22 Trauma, 23 Bankim, 24 Get off, 27 Also.
CRYPTIC CLUES Across: 9 Iranian, 10 Inhabit, 11 Hibachi, 12 Nomadic, 13 Hide-bound, 15 Evade, 16 Hungary, 19 Napkins, 20 Regin, 21 Sportable, 25 Catcher, 26 Fervour, 28 Revolve, 29 One-step. **Down:** 1 Eighth, 2 Barbed, 3 Zinc, 4 In situ, 5 Lion's den, 6 Chimney-pot, 7 Abu Dhabi, 8 Stickers, 14 Brain-child, 16 Hard-core, 17 Negative, 18 Yestreen, 22 On foot, 23 Boosts, 24 Enrapt, 27 Reek.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday December 26
You are ripe for a fresh start. There's a chance that you can blow opportunities, so the best advice is to be calm and collected and pay attention to detail.

Monday December 27
If you try to hang on to the past, you may miss some fabulous opportunities. But, if you push forward with courage and confidence, then you'll be opening up some amazing prospects.

Tuesday December 28
Skilful organisation is the answer if there are conflicting calls on your time. Today's events will encourage changes; it's a fine time to look around for extra support.

Wednesday December 29
Partners have to have their say. But to look at it from the other side, it could be positively to your advantage if partners are permitted to express themselves as and when they wish.

Thursday December 30
All the varied parts of your personality are playing different, and positive, tunes. Emotionally, you're a little sensitive, but elsewhere you're totally confident.

Friday December 31
You are into a period of more harmonious planetary aspects now, so there's no need to complain.If anything goes wrong it's likely to be a result of your lack of foresight.

Saturday January 1
Passion hovers in the background, yet you're still keeping your thoughts and desires to yourself. The next twelve months could be ambitious ones.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
The fact that you may face one or two surprises at work doesn't change one simple fact, namely that this is a period which favours friendship, travel and adventure. There is a great deal to achieve in the sporting and leisure fields, perhaps an award is on the way.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
Hiccups at work will be more than compensated for by the smooth path of love. At least, that's the theory. If you forget old regrets, focus on fun and pack your diary with trips to the theatre, dance hall, night club or some other place of pleasure and entertainment, you'll have the time of your life. That's a promise.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Everything is moving on, though not necessarily at the anticipated pace. You've not experienced such excellent stellar influences for a very long time indeed. Yet, do watch out for a few tricky moments, especially if there are obstacles at work or breakages at home.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
There are moments when you come first, but this might not be one of them. You may as well accept that this is no time for self-interest. You'll feel so much better inside if you go along with the tide and put yourself at others' disposal.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
This is one of those weeks when you can take control and play your trump cards. Partners will have to be patient, and if they don't like it, then that's tough. They'll just have to learn to accept that they can't always do what they want when they want.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
You've cut it fine and have probably had a narrow escape. Why don't you take a deep breath, mop your brow and resolve never to expose yourself to such embarrassment again? You have a few weeks to plan your next move in love, and you'll use them well.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Your power lies in your silver tongue and your poetic command of language. In plain terms, that means you'll be persuading people who don't want things, that they really do need them. In fact, the best way to deal with troublesome children and awkward adults is probably to convince them that you're the best thing since the world was invented.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
Let's face it, things can only get better. You should be making a profit before the week is out, buoyed up by a very pleasant little windfall. If you fancy a flutter take care, for you're bound to pick a lame dog or a blind horse. Oh, and at home your ideas are the best.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)
Let's get one thing straight. The first part of the week brings some very lively and sympathetic stars, so make the most of any advantages that sail past. They might not be repeated. This is a truly historic moment for your personal affairs.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
You're ready to spring a few surprises on complacent colleagues. In fact, you may be cutting a dash this week, setting the cat among the pigeons and generally drawing attention to yourself. At the first sign of danger, though, take cover and wait until an emotional whirlwind has passed by.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
You're part human, part walking encyclopaedia. The fact is (and you know all about facts) that you are the brightest of the bunch, and people who refuse to accept your advice will end up shooting themselves in the foot. You have everything to gain from an unlikely invitation after Tuesday.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Nobody can pretend that life is easy. Indeed there is no reason why it should be. After all, daily ups and downs are perfectly normal. You are growing in confidence, acquiring new skills and discovering a dimension to human relationships which will transport you to the stars and beyond.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Search ___ for their virtues, ____ for thy vices - Benjain Franklin (6,.,7))

EDGER
EEFLTT
SSCRO
MRTHHY

SOLUTION: CREED, CROSS, FETTLE, RHYTHM
Answer: Search **others** for their virtues, **thyself** for thy vices - Benjain Franklin

SUDOKU 4696

Difficulty Level 3s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

	2						9	
				3				
6		9				4		1
		4	7		6	2		
	3		5		8		1	
		2	1		3	7		
5		8				6		2
				7				
	6						5	

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4695

3	8	1	7	5	6	4	2	9
9	2	7	4	8	3	5	1	6
6	4	5	1	2	9	3	8	7
2	6	8	5	7	4	9	3	1
4	1	9	2	3	8	6	7	5
7	5	3	6	9	1	2	4	8
1	7	2	3	6	5	8	9	4
8	3	6	9	4	7	1	5	2
5	9	4	8	1	2	7	6	3

PELE TO SPEND CHRISTMAS AT HOME

Brazilian football great Pele has been discharged, Sao Paulo's Albert Einstein hospital said on Thursday, and will spend Christmas at home after months of medical issues following an operation to remove a colon tumor. On Instagram, the 81-year-old Pele posted a picture of himself smiling. The photo, he wrote, was "not for nothing." **REUTERS**

BCCI to rope in KPMG for media rights bid process

DEVENDRA PANDEY
DECEMBER 25

THE BCCI has hired accounting firm KPMG to advice them on the IPL media rights. It is learnt that this has been decided by Board secretary Jay Shah's office.

The BCCI, according to an official, expects around Rs 30,000 crore from media rights for the next five-year cycle from 2023-2027, while KPMG would guide them on tender process. The current IPL media rights with Star India, TV and digital, is worth Rs 16,347.50 crore. The current deal expires next year.

The IPL media rights tender is expected to be put out soon, although the BCCI at the moment is weighing up options about whether to go for e-auction or choose closed bid. The IPL governing council meeting on Sunday is set to make KPMG's name official.

In its press release after the IPL governing council meeting on September 28, the BCCI had stated: "The IPL Media Rights tender for the cycle 2023-2027 will be released immediately after the appointment of two new IPL teams which is scheduled to be announced on 25th October 2021."

CVC to stay

The BCCI is also going to discuss the report submitted by a committee that had looked into CVC's IPL franchise ownership competence. The Indian Express understands that the committee has given the go-ahead to Irelia Company Pte. Ltd (CVC) to own Ahmedabad franchise, one of the two new franchises in the tournament from next year onwards. CVC was the second-highest bidder when two new IPL teams were auctioned in October, winning the rights to own the Ahmedabad franchise for Rs 5,625 crore. Sanjiv Goenka's RPSG Group bagged the Lucknow franchise for Rs 7,090 crore.

A day after CVC was announced as the successful bidder for the Ahmedabad franchise, reports emerged that it has links with betting companies abroad. However, the committee has found no reason to scrap CVC.

CVC has two funds and while its European fund is linked to betting companies, where sports betting is legal, its Asian fund is said to be "clean". The company has invested into the IPL franchise ownership from its Asian fund.

We have upper hand in our backyard: Elgar

SOUTH AFRICA are "wary" of India's overseas success but home conditions provide the hosts the edge going into the three-Test series beginning on Sunday, said Proteas skipper Dean Elgar.

India had claimed a 2-1 win on Australian soil to qualify for the World Test Championships final, which they lost to New Zealand. Virat Kohli's men also grabbed a 2-1 result in England before the fifth Test was postponed.

"I think it's pretty even-stevens. Us playing at home, obviously, gives us a little bit of an upper hand," Elgar said ahead of the Boxing Day Test in Centurion. "They are ranked No. 1 in the world; we can't not look at that. That's something they have been for quite some time, in my opinion - just my being a cricket watcher and a cricket fan... But the mere fact that we're playing in our backyard still gives us the upper hand going into the series."

PTI

Test within the Test

Starting from Centurion, Kohli and his team will be under scrutiny in the aftermath of the white-ball captaincy change

SANDIP G
DECEMBER 25

THE SERIES against South Africa, which starts from Sunday at Centurion, could either mark the final stretch of Virat Kohli's ascent to immortality or the slow slope into the sunset.

His batting form has been at the lowest ebb since the tour of England in 2014 — just 599 runs have arrived in his last 23 innings. His average (26), strike-rate (43) and conversion rate (0 hundreds, five half-centuries) has been the worst in his career. Hushed whispers of dropping him will gather volume, if he fails to replicate his vaunted form. Pragmatism could fade out romanticism when selectors get together.

The aftertaste of the white-ball captaincy change still lingers. There will be hawkish eyes trained on Kohli, keen to swoop on his tiniest misjudgement, or his slightest misfortune. His challenges are two-fold — to show that he is still the best choice as red-ball captain of his country as well as to reimpose that he is still one of the best batsmen in the world.

Nearly four years ago, India lost the series here, but offered a precursor of their collective and individual capabilities, exhibiting a distinct streak of indefatigability that has come to symbolise both the captain and his team.

In the intervening four years, they scaled great heights — two series wins in Australia and leading a Test series in England, besides reaching the World Test Championship final.

Four years on, Kohli would not just wish to win a series in South Africa for the first time but in search of personal redemption, as captain and batsman. South Africa are weak on paper — their batting comprises more rookies than seasoned hands, one of their lead bowlers is injured, there is chaos in administration, head coach Mark Boucher and cricket director Graeme Smith are under probe of allegations of racism, and they've have lost five of their last eight Tests at home. But India have landed in Johannesburg after a turbulent build-up.

The microscopic lens of scrutiny on Kohli's leadership is cruel, because it was not too long ago that his side took a 2-1 lead in England, registered a comeback victory against the same opposition and handsomely defeated New Zealand. But the white-ball captaincy drama has somehow spilled over and made his Test captaincy look no longer inscrutable. Even if his captaincy shines, his form with the bat too will be under fierce watch.

Bizarrely, he has not been so much out-of-form but there have been lapses in concentration. A stray poke outside the off stump, a flush of adrenaline to drive expansively, or taking on the short ball when the snare is carefully laid for the pull — he has contrived to get himself out in unseemly fashion. But Kohli, most believe, will turn the slump into a stream of runs sooner than later. But the longer it takes, the more pressure he will have to cope with, and the looser the sand beneath his feet will be.

Worryingly, he is not travelling alone in the slump. His middle-order colleagues, Cheteshwar Pujara (average 27 in last 32 innings) and Ajinkya Rahane (24 in 29 outings), are waddling through a dark alley themselves. At least for Rahane, this is some kind of a last-chance saloon, assuming that he gets picked for the first Test. Shreyas Iyer and Hanuma Vihari are breathing down his neck, and it will not be a surprise if he's ignored altogether, or is not afforded a longer rope.

Pujara's approach will be interesting — whether he'll wear down bowlers as is his nature or continue the bolder approach he embraced towards the latter stages of the tour to England. If both fail, the middle-order transitioning phase will be ushered in earlier than expected. Worse, they couldn't have countenanced a more challenging set of conditions to reverse form in. Green-tops, poisoned with pace, bounce and lateral movement will likely greet them in all three venues. Even more so in Centurion, where South Africa have won 21 of 26 Tests, where the balls tends to bounce awkwardly and seam wickedly.

It was Dale Steyn's favourite home ground — his 59 wickets there came at 17.94; his successor Kagiso Rabada too has harnessed the helpful conditions to supreme effect (35 wickets have arrived in five Tests). Green-tops, though, will also gee up India's skilled pace-bowling squadron. Now that Mohammed Siraj too has blossomed into a match-winning force, India, led by Jasprit Bumrah, could land the killer blows on what is South Africa's weakest batting unit since readmission.

Barring Dean Elgar, Aiden Markram, and Quinton de Kock, their batting is callow. Temba Bavuma continues to struggle to add to the hundred he scored six years ago; Keegan Petersen, Rassie van der Dussen and Wiaan Mulder have only 18 Tests between them. The combined century tally of their batsmen is two less than Kohli's count of 27.

In effect, seam bowlers, though both sides have a fine spinner apiece in Ravi Ashwin and Keshav Maharaj, could decide the outcome of the series. Or rather, inversely, how well batsmen of both sides counter the seamers and conditions. On that note, this expedition to South Africa is as significant for Kohli as the last one. Maybe, even more. For seldom in his career has the scrutiny been so equally hard on both his captaining and batting.

LIVE: *India vs South Africa, 1st Test from 1:30pm on Star network and Hotstar;* ***South African Weather Service forecasts thundershowers for the next two days***

Virat Kohli's batting form has been at its lowest ebb since the tour of England in 2014 — just 599 runs have arrived in his last 23 innings. *BCCI*

Kohli's challenges are two-fold — to show that he is still the best choice as red-ball captain of his country as well as to reimpose that he is still one of the best batsmen in the world

'Not the place, time:' Dravid dead-bats questions about Kohli-Ganguly saga

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
DECEMBER 25

TWO EXPECTED events happened at the India's pre-game press conference in South Africa. The absence of Virat Kohli and the ability of Rahul Dravid to wriggle out of a tight spot. In a departure from the conventions of pre-Test media interactions where the captain usually attends with the coach, Kohli chose not to attend.

Perhaps, because the last time he fronted up the media, he had had his say against Sourav Ganguly led BCCI over the way he was dethroned from the ODI captaincy, and since there has been no official response yet from the board, it would have been more of the same. Last time around, he was urging the media manager, who was intent on ending the conference, to carry on and read out questions from the chat window on the *Zoom*.

Unsurprisingly, Dravid didn't bite the question about his role in the Kohli vs Ganguly saga.

"To be honest that's the role of the selectors and I am not going to get into conversations that I might or might not have had," when asked if he had given his opinion on change of white ball captaincy. "It's not the place and the time to be doing that and discussing that. And what internal conversations I have had is certainly not going to come out in the media and I am not going to start telling people what conversations I have had."

Team selection could be tricky, Ajinkya Rahane or Shreyas Iyer to start with. Also, without Ravindra Jadeja, India will have to strike the right balance, five bowlers or an extra batsman to be precise. Dravid's answers aren't tricky. He spoke about Rahane training well. As regards to team combination, he said: "In terms of picking and dropping players, we have to make decisions. I don't expect everyone not to be disappointed. We are very clear within our group what kind of team combination we want to play with. I would like to keep it that way."

> **It's not the place and the time to be doing that and discussing that. And what internal conversations I have had is certainly not going to come out in the media and I am not going to start telling people what conversations I have had."**
>
> **RAHUL DRAVID,** INDIA COACH WHEN ASKED IF HE HAD GIVEN HIS OPINION ON CAPTAINCY CHANGE

The former India captain once again turned to the team-effort factor, when he was asked about Cheteshwar Pujara's lean run. "These kinds of series are won by team performances. It's not right to focus on an individual name."

Dravid has sat through tenser media interactions during his captaincy, handling controversies ranging from Ganguly vs Greg Chappell, his declaration with Sachin Tendulkar just short of a double hundred, World Cup debacle, decisions at toss and whatever else that was the rage of the day. He wouldn't come close to biting any tempting apples from the reporters' questions.

Only once in 2004 in Pakistan, when a reporter had asked a question after a ODI whether the game was fixed, did Dravid stir with: "Someone get this guy out of the room. It's ridiculous. These sort of statements are just bad for the game." Inzamam Ul Haq too was asked the same question and had responded with a long angry stare and a crisp "Shut up!".

A question about Kohli's leadership in Tests popped up and Dravid eased into a cover drive.

"Virat as a leader, as a captain, he's been fantastic. We are certainly looking to him to carry that forward and really pushing and challenging this team. The Test team; we want to keep improving, we want to get better as a group and Virat plays a huge role in that, in taking the Test team forward. He is one of those players who loves Test cricket, who looks forward to Test cricket. Hopefully he has a great series and that will benefit the team as well," Dravid said.

In a *bcci.tv* interview a couple of days ago, the head coach had spoken about supporting Kohli along the way. "Being in part of the environment and supporting him (Kohli) along the way is something I'm looking forward to."

For India, the immediate goal would be to win the series. The World Test Championship points are there to be collected as well. Dravid said as much. "From a Test team's perspective, there are series to win and it obviously starts with this one. It's really an important series, a challenge away from home. We look forward to play some good cricket. Obviously in the larger scheme of things, the World Test Championship points, that's a goal as well."

Going by the training session video clips posted on the BCCI's website, the mood in the camp looks pretty jovial. But it won't be easy in South Africa, even in Anrich Nortje's absence.

"It's a great challenge... a great opportunity for anyone, whether you are in-form or out-of-form. It's always something that you look forward to as a batsman. A lot of your career is defined by those kinds of performances," he said.

THE METHOD MAN

How trainer Rajamani helped Ashwin beat his body into shape

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
DECEMBER 25

"IN INDIA, we think that we have to do Olympic lifting, we have to do squats, we have to do this or that exercise. But the number one goal is that you have to be available for all games and net sessions," says AT Rajamani Prabhu, who trains the Rajasthan Royals and the Karnataka teams but has been in the news after R Ashwin credited him for reviving his flagging body.

So what had Ashwin been missing? "I am not against Olympic lifting," Rajamani tells *The Sunday Express*. "It is a very good tool to develop vertical force. But if you are not doing it properly... it is from a completely different sport after all. If you do normal exercise with emphasis on explosiveness and safe movements, you will get better result. That is one thing I changed in him."

Ashwin's fitness had let him down most glaringly on the big tours of Australia and England in 2018 and 2019, where he couldn't even get close to making himself available for all games. The injuries had become so chronic and so debilitating that Ashwin even contemplated retirement during that period, as he told *The Cricket Monthly* in an interview recently.

Rajamani and Ashwin, both from Chennai, first started working together a decade ago. So important was this particular client to become that Rajamani divides his career into "before Ashwin" and "after Ashwin" phases. He worked with the off-spinner for about three years until Shanker Basu became the India trainer. Basu's methods, according to Ashwin, were "completely left field." They also pushed Rajamani to study further in order to upgrade himself.

If Ashwin felt Rajamani had taken the loss of probably his most high-profile client "personally", he was right. "When big players leave you, it impacts a lot. People say, 'oh see, Ashwin has left Rajamani.'"

Getting Ashwin back was to turn into a mission for Rajamani. "I don't think I slept more than five hours a night through those three years. I kept studying, kept improving myself to prove that I'd be the best.

"I kept telling my team that Ashwin will call one day, and that is the day we will have achieved everything. Suddenly one evening Ashwin called. I was in the gym. Before picking up the call, I told my people, 'you see, Ashwin is going to work with us. This is the day for us.'"

It was 2019. Ashwin had been out of the India white-ball set-up for a couple of years. He hadn't been able to get through Australia and England, and was feeling he wasn't getting enough support from the team management despite breaking down repeatedly. He wanted to try to repair his body one final time before he gave it all up.

Enter Rajamani for a second stint. In the first 2-3 sessions, Ashwin, typically, was full of queries. "He is the most intelligent athlete I have worked with. As a professional, he will never take an emotional decision. Even today, if he finds out there is someone better than me, he will go to him. He asks all sorts of questions. But once he is convinced, he will never ask again.

> **Everybody thinks (Ashwin) is not a natural athlete but when they take a 2K test in the team, he will be the third. He is a good aerobics-based athlete. He has developed himself like that after a lot of hard work."**
>
> **AT RAJAMANI PRABHU,** TRAINER, ON THE INDIA SPINNER'S ATHLETICISM

"Within a week, he could see the difference, that this is the energy I want, that I was missing all this." Ashwin has said he now does mobility, strength and running – in addition to skill – ahead of a series. Earlier, he wasn't focussing as much on speed and what Rajamani calls "smaller" exercises.

"If he was doing power exercises, he was not doing strength. If he was doing strength, he was not doing unilateral [exercise using a single arm or leg]. If he was doing unilateral, he was not doing some upper-body exercises. If he was doing upper-body, he was not doing some ancillary ones like shoulder or bicep or tricep. These muscles are involved a lot in cricket but we can forget to do all these isolated exercises. So weight training is one component. Energy system development is there too. If you then forget speed… in cricket, speed is the number one criteria. He was not doing much speed."

Pushing a cricketer hard in training during off-season is one thing, Rajamani feels, but making them lift weights while they are playing series is counter-productive as it adds to their already considerable workload.

"Trainers make you do weight training when you are already fatigued. So you slow down further. I told Ashwin that if you are not doing weight training for a week, it will not derail you, but if you miss three days of speed sessions, you will lose 10 per cent of your speed which will make a huge difference when you are playing. Because of his experience of those three years, Ashwin felt the same thing."

Of course, it is critical to build trust first with a player if you want buy-in. "If somebody is not playing a game and you immediately go and tell him to do training, it hurts the player. Strength and conditioning for team sport is totally different, because each individual is different." Ashwin's body is certainly different from that of a Virat Kohli or a Ravindra Jadeja, but Rajamani stresses he can hold his own now.

"Everybody thinks he is not a natural athlete but when they take a 2K test in the team, he will be the third. He is a good aerobics-based athlete. He has developed himself like that after a lot of hard work."

The hard work paid off with a Man of the Series performance against England at home earlier this year, when Ashwin got through all four Tests and also made his fifth Test hundred, in addition to taking 32 wickets. "He called me then and said we have achieved something," says Rajamani.

Soon thereafter, Ashwin was ignored for all four Tests on the England tour in favour of Jadeja. With the left-arm spinner out injured now, Ashwin's next goal may well be to keep himself available for all three Tests in South Africa.

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