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SC to hear PIL for probe into Haridwar, Delhi hate speeches

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE SUPREME Court Monday agreed to take up a PIL seeking a probe into alleged hate speeches by participants at two separate events in Haridwar and Delhi on December 17 and 21 last year.

"We will take up the matter," Chief Justice of India N V Ramana told Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal who mentioned the plea filed by Delhi resident Qurban Ali and Senior Advocate Anjana Prakash.

Appearing for the petitioners, Sibal said: "We are living in different times where the slogan has changed from *Satyameva Jayate* to *Sashastrameva Jayate*". The CJI asked if an inquiry into the matter was already underway. "We will look into it. But hasn't some action already been taken?" he asked.

Sibal replied that though FIRs have been filed, no one had been arrested so far.

"We will take up the matter," the CJI said.

The petitioners, in their plea, said they were constrained to approach the court seeking its urgent intervention "in respect of

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MAJOR PROTESTS AS EUROPE TIGHTENS COVID RESTRICTIONS

FORMER SP MP HELD IN UP FOR 'MURDER OVER TICKET'

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PM SECURITY BREACH: RETIRED SC JUDGE TO HEAD COMMITTEE

SC forms new probe panel, questions Centre on notices to Punjab officers

CJI bench acts after state opposes Centre panel, seeks 'independent' probe

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

WITH THE Punjab government opposed to the Centre's committee and seeking an "independent" probe into the security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the state on January 5, the Supreme Court decided Monday to set up a committee headed by one of its former judges to inquire into the matter.

It also questioned the Centre on the show-cause notices served to Punjab officers, and called it

"totally self-contradictory".

Indicating that the composition of the committee will be similar to the one it constituted on January 7 to secure the records of the PM's visit, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, heading a bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli, said: "We are thinking on these lines. One retired Supreme Court judge will head the committee."

Hearing a plea by Delhi-based Lawyers Voice, the bench on January 7 had asked the Registrar General, Punjab and Haryana High Court, to "forth-



PM Modi stuck on the flyover on January 5. File

with seize and secure the records" of the visit. The Registrar General was to be assisted by the Director General of

Police, Union Territory of Chandigarh, and an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), not below the rank of Inspector General, nominated by the NIA Director General.

These officers apart, the new committee, the bench indicated, would include another member, most likely the Punjab Additional Director General of Police (Intelligence).

Earlier, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, urged the bench to allow the Centre's committee to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED

Setback for Centre

THE CENTRE had been swift in moving against Punjab's top officers over the security breach, serving them show-cause notices and warning of action. The new probe panel by the SC Bench also makes the committees appointed by the Centre and Punjab redundant.

28-fold case rise, set to cross 4 lakh Covid high, but hospitalisation low; testing norms relaxed

SHUBHAJIT ROY & KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

INDIA REPORTED A 28-fold surge in Covid cases over the past fortnight but there are indications from the national capital that, at current levels, the number of hospitalisations logged is far lesser than what was recorded during the peak of the second wave in April last year, according to senior government officials.

A senior official said that while the daily case count in Delhi of about 20,000 last April matches the latest numbers, the level of hospitalisation is just about "one-fourth to one-fifth" of that month.

"With the equal number of cases which happened in Delhi, let's say in April, and the number of cases which we have now, of around 20,000 cases per day, the level of hospitalisation is just about one-fourth to one-fifth. And the level of ICU admissions is even lower than that. So it is definitely one-fourth to one-fifth of what was there in the second wave," the official said.

Last year, the daily count in Delhi crossed 20,000 cases on April 17, and was at 28,395 on April 20 and 22,933 on April 25. On Sunday, the capital's case count was 22,751, dipping to 19,166 cases Monday. On December 27, 2021, India's case count was 6,358, which surged to 1.79 lakh on January 9.

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A queue in Ahmedabad as 'precautionary' doses for 60-plus began Monday. Around 9.68 lakh are believed to have received the shots on the first day. Nirmal Harindran

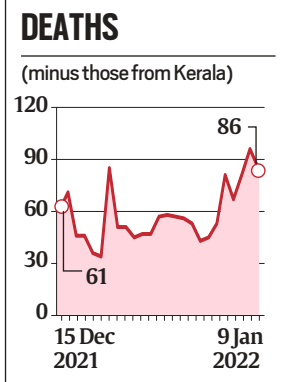
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Omicron surge: uptick in deaths but share lower than second wave

AMITABH SINHA
PUNE, JANUARY 10

TWO WEEKS into the third wave in India, a rise in Covid-linked deaths is becoming visible, though the rate of increase is nowhere as fast as the surge in infections.

These deaths across the country — minus those from Kerala — are inching towards the three-figure mark after remaining in double digits for more than a month. However, com-



pared to the second wave, deaths as a proportion of the infection numbers are still very low, as of now.

During February and mid-March last year, India was reporting over 100 deaths on an average, when the case count was between 15,000 and 20,000. These numbers began to rise sharply after that. But that is also because the rise in daily cases was much slower the previous time — it had taken more than a month for the count to increase

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WEEKLY POSITIVITY MORE THAN 5%

Week Ending Dec 25, 2021
21 DistrictsWeek Ending Jan 8, 2022
202 Districts

As reported by ICMR



same employment rate in December 2021 as it did in December 2016, then an additional 1 crore of its residents would have had a job today.

Similarly, five years ago, in Punjab, the second-biggest state in this group, more than 98.37 lakh of its 2.33 crore working age population was employed. Now, the total employed is down to 95.16 lakh (3.21 lakh less) despite the working age population growing by almost 11 per cent to 2.58 crore.

In percentage terms, Goa saw the sharpest fall in employment rate over the past five years as it fell from just under 50 per cent in

December 2016 to below 32 per cent now. In other words, five years ago, every second person in Goa's working age population

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BIG BLOW TO CONG IN WEST UP

AFTER SLIDE, AAP BACK IN RECKONING IN PUNJAB

DECISION 2022, PAGE 5

A life in Covid: Hotel manager to delivery staff to roadside death

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

IN MANY ways, the life of Salil Tripathi told the story of an entire nation's workforce, its moorings lost in wave after wave of an unrelenting pandemic. And in so many ways, his death summed up the tragedy.

Hailing from UP's Ayodhya, Tripathi had worked in several star hotels before climbing a step up to become a restaurant manager in the heart of Delhi. He was



Salil Tripathi with his wife and 10-year-old son

leading a comfortable life at 36, according to his family, settling down in a bustling suburb in the

national capital with his wife and their son — and so much more to look forward to.

Until 2020 dawned, and the first lockdown came, Tripathi lost his job in the first wave, his father in the second. And within a year, this hotel management graduate had become a Zomato delivery executive.

On Saturday night, the final blow came in the form of an SUV driven by a police constable. The vehicle, police say, knocked him down. The driver, eyewitnesses

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Delhi orders shutdown, restaurants say last blow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

AMID THE continuing rise of Covid cases in the Capital, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Monday ordered restaurants and bars in the city to shut, allowing only delivery services and takeaway.

The order comes as another blow to the industry that is among the worst hit due to the pandemic. After shutdowns during the first and second waves, with home delivery allowed af-

ter a while, and then a long period when they operated at 50 per cent capacity and curtailed hours, restaurants had seen business pick only recently, before the third wave hit.

The DDMA order followed a meeting on Monday where restrictions, cases and bed availability were discussed. "In view of the increase in positive cases it was decided to close the restaurants and bars and to allow 'take away' facility only. It was also decided to allow operation of only one weekly market per day per

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‘Women, irrespective of religion, denied dignity on social media... Must unite, put politics aside on this’

PAGE 1
ANCHOREXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

STATING THAT she has been actively engaged with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Department of Telecommunications regarding security of women on the Internet and social media platforms, Union Minister for Women and Child Development

Smriti Irani said Monday that women, irrespective of religion, have been denied their dignity.

Speaking at The Indian Express e-Adda programme, Irani underlined the need for people to cut across party lines and come together to address this issue.

Responding to a question on the targeting of Muslim women via apps, she said: "Women, irrespective of their religion, have been denied their dignity on social media platforms. I am grateful that the police are investigating this issue. I am absolutely



Smriti Irani at Adda. Express

confident that those who are guilty will be punished. My desire is also this... I had the privilege of engaging with the Supreme Court Justices... to ensure that we expedite cases. The law provides for an expeditious

pronouncement. But there has been laxity given the burden on the courts of our country. But I am hopeful that between the police system and the judiciary, more and more cases where women receive justice are

brought to light. I want to use this platform to say that this is an issue on which, irrespective of our politics, we need to come together."

Irani was in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group, and Vandita Mishra, National Opinion Editor, The Indian Express. The transcript of the programme will be published soon.

In the wake of the 2012 Delhi gang rape and murder incident, there had been conversations,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

“JAI JAWAN JAI KISAN”

Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Delhi

pays homage to 2nd Prime Minister of India

Bharat Ratna

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri

(October 02, 1904 - January 11, 1966)

on his 56th Punyatithi

"The basic idea of governance, as I see it, is to hold the society together so that it can develop and march towards certain goals"

Lal Bahadur Shastri

“मेरी समझ से प्रशासन का मूल विचार यह है कि समाज को एकजुट रखा जाये ताकि वह विकास कर सके और अपने लक्ष्यों की तरफ बढ़ सके”

लाल बहादुर शास्त्री

SC probe panel

continue with its inquiry and place a report before the court. But this was opposed by Punjab Advocate General D S Patwalia who said the state had “no hope” in the Centre’s committee and urged the court to constitute an “independent committee”.

Mehta said since there is concern that the show-cause notices seek to pre-empt the outcome, the Centre can assure it will not take any action till its committee examines the issue and places a report before the court. But the bench then came up with the suggestion of a committee under one of its former judges.

The bench initially wondered if the IG (Intelligence) of Punjab could be part of the committee, but Mehta said the IG “may also be the subject matter of scrutiny as he too is responsible... as per the security Blue Book”.

Responding to a query from the bench, Patwalia said the ADGP (Intelligence) may be included.

The bench said it will pass a detailed order. It asked the Centre and Punjab to put on hold inquiries by the committees they had constituted. It questioned the Centre on the show-cause notices issued to the Punjab Chief Secretary and DGP.

Justice Kohli said the “impression you are giving is that you have already made up your mind... then what’s the point of coming to this court?”.

Mehta said it was not he but the petitioner who had approached the court.

Justice Surya Kant told the Solicitor General “your show-cause notice is totally self-contradictory. By constituting a committee, you seek to inquire if there was a breach and then you hold the state CS and DG guilty. Who heard them?...”

Justice Kohli said that after the court had directed seizure of records, “asking them to reply in 24 hours... is not expected of you”. Mehta said “not expected of you is a little harsh” and “this (show-cause notice) was before the court ordered seizure (of records)”.

At the outset, Patwalia informed the bench that as per its directions, the HC Registrar General had taken control of the records of the PM’s travel.

He referred to remarks made on January 7 against the chairman of the state-appointed committee by Senior Advocate Maninder Singh, who appeared for the petitioner, and said: “We went through the judgment. There is nothing against him” — Patwalia did not mention the judge he was referring to.

On January 7, Maninder Singh had said the name of the chairman of the committee appointed by Punjab had been the subject matter of a judgement of the Supreme Court in 2011. He said the Supreme Court had made adverse remarks on the conduct of the judge. Singh did not name the judge or elaborate on the case.

The reference, however, appeared to be to a 2011 judgement of the Supreme Court which quashed an order by a Punjab and Haryana High Court bench directing a CBI probe against former IPS officer Sumedh Singh Saini in an alleged fake encounter case.

The HC bench included Justice Mehtab Singh Gill (now head of the Punjab committee) but the Supreme Court, in its then order, did not name the judge and mentioned only ‘Mr Justice X’ while stating that “the order impugned (of the HC) has rightly been challenged to be a nullity at least on three grounds” including “judicial bias” and the “entire judicial process appears to have been drowned to achieve a motivated result which we are unable to approve of”.

Pointing out that Punjab officers had been issued notices by the Centre on why action should not be taken against them, Patwalia said there was nothing against the Chief Secretary and “I (Chief Secretary) don’t think I will get any fair hearing... There is some politics”.

“When proceedings are deferred, where is the question of disciplinary action,” he said, urging the bench to appoint an “independent” committee.

Intervening, the CJI asked

Mehta if the notice was issued before or after the court’s January 7 order. “Before,” the Solicitor General said. He said a look at the SPG Act and the Blue Book on VVIP security would make it clear why the show-cause notices were needed.

He said the foundation of the notice is that the DGP is responsible since the rules say so. “The committee will go into individual details, whether the route is protected... We cannot leave it to the state government.”

Mehta said the Centre’s committee could go into details and place it before the court. The CJI asked him “then what remains of the inquiry by the court?”.

Mehta said “this is a matter of the security of the PM”. At this, the CJI said “please don’t be under the impression that we have not taken it seriously”.

Hate speeches

The hate speeches that have been delivered between the 17th and 19th of December, 2021 in two events organized in Haridwar (by one Yati Narsinghanand), and in Delhi (by an organization self-styled as ‘Hindu Yuva Vahini’) (hereinafter collectively referred to as “the events”) with the apparent objective of declaring war against a significant section of the Indian Citizenry”.

It said the “hate speeches consisted of open calls for genocide of Muslims in order to achieve ethnic cleansing... The speeches, thus, pose a grave threat not just to the unity and integrity of our country but also endanger the lives of millions of Muslim citizens”.

They said “no effective steps have been taken”, and though police have registered two FIRs against 10 people who took part in the Haridwar Dharam Sansad, only Sections 153A, 295A and 298 of the IPC have been invoked.

The plea said “it is also relevant to note that no action whatsoever has been taken by the Delhi Police in relation with the event in Delhi”.

It contended that the “recent speeches are a part of a series of similar speeches” and “not only the inaction of the police allows delivery of hate speeches with impunity but also shows that the police authorities are in fact hand in glove with the perpetrators of communal hate”.

“That the contents of the speech feed into an already prevailing discourse which seeks to reimagine the Indian Republic as exclusivist, and that which has no space for other cultures, traditions and practices. Such a discourse is in itself violative of con-

stitutional guarantees provided to minority cultures and religions,” it said.

28-fold case rise

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), meanwhile, revised its testing norms to facilitate early detection of symptomatic cases. It recommended that asymptomatic individuals in community settings, individuals undertaking inter-state domestic travel and contacts of patients, unless identified as high-risk based on age or comorbidity, do not need Covid testing. It specified, however, that the advisory is “generic in nature and may be modified as per discretion of the state health authorities”.

According to Government officials, the case-count peak will cross the 4-lakh mark this time — it had hit a daily peak of 4.14 lakh on May 6, 2021 — but the Government is prepared to handle the rising numbers.

As of January 8, infections appear to have spread rapidly across India. The number of districts reporting a weekly case positivity rate of more than 5 per cent has increased from 21 in the week ending December 25, 2021, to 202 in the week ending January 8 — a 10-fold increase in two weeks.

While Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Noida and Gurgaon are among the cities of concern, at least 40 districts across 13 states and UTs have positivity more than 5 per cent. These include Jharkhand, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Assam, MP and UP.

The ICMR, meanwhile, also recommended that patients discharged from a Covid facility as per policy don’t need to be tested. It said the new advisory is also for early detection in the elderly and individuals with co-morbidities.

In a community setting, the ICMR recommended four categories to be tested: symptomatic individuals; at-risk contacts of lab-confirmed cases; individuals undertaking international travel; and international travellers arriving in India. It said that those who experience at least one of six symptoms — cough, fever, sore throat, loss of taste and/or smell, breathlessness, and/or other respiratory symptoms — should be tested.

The Council also listed at-risk contacts in two categories: more than 60 years of age, and those with comorbidity, such as diabetes, hypertension, lung or kidney disease, malignancy, obesity.

In a hospital setting, it recommended testing according to the

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EXPRESS AUDIO

The challenges in busting India’s narcotics nexus

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Today on the 3 Things podcast, we take a look at how India has become a significant hub on the international narcotics supply map

doctor’s advice with the three considerations: no emergency procedure be delayed for lack of a test; patients should not be referred to other facilities for lack of a testing set-up; asymptomatic patients undergoing surgical or non-surgical invasive procedures, including pregnant women hospitalised for delivery, should not be tested unless warranted.

It further recommended that admitted patients may not be tested more than once a week.

A senior official from the Health Ministry said that “consistent evidence shows the Omicron variant has a growth advantage over the Delta variant with a doubling time of 2-3 days”.

The official said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has informed that the Omicron variant appears to produce less severe disease than Delta but should not be categorised as “mild”.

According to data, 28.79 lakh cases were recorded globally on January 7 this year, the highest since the onset of the pandemic.

Around 62 per cent of the cases in the week ending January 7 — six out of 10 — were reported from the US (31.1%), France (10.3%), the UK (8.4%), Italy (6.4%) and Spain (5.8%), according to data collated by the Health Ministry.

In India, there are 4,033 cases of Omicron, so far. Maharashtra leads the table with 1,216 cases followed by Rajasthan (529) and Delhi (513). There are 2,480 active Omicron cases, while 1,552 have been classified as recovered. There has been only one death, so far.

Officials said that while 67 per cent of the population have been fully vaccinated and 92 per cent have got a single dose, wearing N-95 masks is key. About 31 per cent of the adolescent age group between 15 and 18 years of age have been vaccinated in one week.

Officials also cited a study which showed that without wearing masks, a person can be infected within 15 minutes while with N-95 masks it may take about 25 hours.

Uptick in deaths

from 12,000 to 25,000. In contrast, cases have shot up from less than 10,000 a day on December 28 to nearly 1.8 lakh now.

The trend in death numbers usually trails the infection trajectory by about two weeks. Therefore, the impact of the surge in infections on the death numbers would begin to show only now. Crucially, the trajectory of death numbers from now would reveal how mild the Omicron variant is, how effective the vaccines have been, and how prepared the Government is.

Kerala is an exception since it has been reporting the largest number of Covid-related deaths in India for over four months now, accounting for over 80 per cent. The state has reported an average of 242 deaths every day after September, mainly because of inclusion of uncounted deaths.

Outside of Kerala, the death count in most states had fallen to single digits — on some days, less than 50 deaths. That is changing now. On Sunday, 86 deaths were reported: Maharashtra, Delhi and West Bengal accounted for 16, 17 and 18 deaths, respectively.

A month ago, nearly 20 states were reporting zero deaths. That number has come down to barely a dozen now. In states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat or Jharkhand, very few deaths were being reported over the past three months, sometimes one or two in ten days. More deaths are now getting recorded

in these, and other states.

Fewer have jobs

had a job but now that proportion has fallen to one in three.

The number of employed in the hill state of Uttarakhand has dropped almost 14 per cent or 4.41 lakh to 27.82 lakh over the last five years; that being so, its working age population has increased by almost 14 per cent to 91 lakh. The state’s employment rate has fallen to 30.43 per cent in December 2021 compared with 40.1 per cent in December 2016.

Under normal circumstances, the Unemployment Rate (UER) is a perfectly fine metric to track joblessness, but in India’s case, and especially over the past decade, UER has been ineffective in accurately assessing the true level of job distress. That’s because UER is expressed as “unemployed as a percentage of the labour force” but over the past decade, India’s labour force participation rate (LFPR) itself has been declining.

The LFPR is essentially the labour force as a percentage of the working age population. In most other comparable countries, the LFPR is between 60 per cent and 70 per cent. In India, it has been hovering around 40 per cent. What this means is that in other countries 60 per cent of people belonging to the working age group (ie., 15 years and above) demand a job while in India only 40 per cent look for a job.

While all the four states were below the national average, the fact is India — as a whole — has seen its LFPR and employment rate fall sharply over the past five years. Between December 2016 and December 2021, India’s LFPR has fallen from 46 per cent to 40 per cent, and the employment rate from 43 per cent to 37 per cent. As a result, while India’s total working age population has jumped 12.5 per cent from 96 crores to 108 crores, the total number of employed has dropped about 2 per cent from 41.2 crores to 40.4 crores.

“The Indian economy has been losing its growth momentum since 2016. Between demonetisation, GST and Covid, there has been one disruption after another,” says Himanshu, Associate Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The fall has been steady and spread over five years in UP; Goa saw a rapid fall, with the January-March 2019 quarter witnessing the sharpest. In Punjab, the January-August 2020 period did witness a substantial fall.

Last week, Haryana Chief Minister M L Khattar had refuted the CMIE data showing high unemployment rate in the state. “We shall discuss the issue with the Advocate General and action shall be taken, if required,” he had said claiming that official reports — read surveys of National Statistical Office — showed unemployment rate in Haryana at not more than 6.1 per cent.

While CMIE estimates of unemployment in Haryana are higher than NSO’s, the two data sets are not comparable since they employ different definitions and methodologies. Moreover, even by NSO estimates, Haryana’s unemployment has been in double digits since April 2020.

38-yr-old killed

claim, was allegedly drunk. Tripathi died on the spot, leaving behind his wife and 10-year-old son, and their home in Rohini’s Budh Vihar.

When Tripathi was hit, he was waiting for a food order.

“There was a time when Salil was earning well. He sent money to us. After the first lockdown, everything changed. We were struggling to make ends meet... We don’t know how we will run the house now. I am a farmer, and I don’t have much savings,” said Tripathi’s elder brother, Manoj, who lives in Ayodhya.

According to his family, Tripathi did his schooling in Delhi before joining JP Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology in Meerut. He started

working in 2003, and held jobs at City Park hotel, The Suryaa hotel, Park Plaza Hotels & Resorts, and Rico’s restaurant.

“Salil was a manager at the restaurant in Hudson Lane, but was fired after it shut down during the first wave. He was at home for a few months and used up all his savings. We thought the lockdown was temporary and Salil would get his job back, or find another job soon. He found one at a café but lost that too in 2021 because the owners faced losses due to Covid. Since then, he had only this delivery job,” said Manoj, the brother.

Tripathi’s wife Sucheta said his father, a former mechanical engineer at a printing unit, died from Covid last April. “It wasn’t easy for us... Salil’s employers didn’t even give him his salary. He had to join Zomato to help pay for school fees and other expenses. He worked day and night... the job was exhausting. I always worried for him,” she said.

According to DCP (Rohini) Pranav Tayal, the constable involved in Saturday’s accident, Zile Singh, was arrested the same night. The police are looking at claims by eyewitnesses that he was inebriated at the time.

But all that’s of little consolation to the family. “What do I do now? My son keeps asking questions,” Sucheta said, adding that they might shift to Ayodhya soon.

According to the family, Tripathi worked 7-8 hours every day delivering food, and earned Rs 8,000-Rs 10,000 a month based on the orders and the workload. Before Covid, he was earning Rs 40,000-50,000.

His friend, Sameer, said: “We worked at the same restaurant, but many staffers were laid off. I knew he was struggling, but he was strong. He was an honest man and a great friend. He never complained.”

The family said a Zomato official met them though they are yet to get any financial help.

A Zomato official said: “Our team has collected documents to ensure help is provided with the help of our insurance partners. There could be a delay from the insurance partner’s side.”

The official also said there has been an increase in the number of delivery partners they employ since the lockdown. “Most of them are students or individuals who want to do an interim gig before they can land a better job.”

Delhi shutdown

Kabir Suri, President of the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), said the new guidelines were unsustainable and would impact “over 3 lakh people” employed in eateries in Delhi. “This will lead to widespread unemployment, as no one knows how long this will go on,” he said, adding that over 25 per cent of the restaurants shut last year and more than 24 lakh people lost their jobs nationally.

After the onset of Covid, the restaurant sector was the first to be shut and almost the last one to restart during the first and second lockdowns, Suri said. They were allowed to stay open till midnight only towards the end of August 2021. “We somehow survived so far, but with the new guidelines in Delhi it seems highly unlikely that we can sustain any longer,” he said.

Suri said that dine-out frequency in Delhi was the maximum — “6 times per month compared to the national average of 4.5 times” — whereas takeaway/delivery was meagre.

According to officials present at the DDMA meeting, the sharp increase in the number of Covid cases over the past two weeks, and an uptick in deaths, have authorities worried.

On Monday, one in four persons tested in Delhi was found to be positive for Covid. A total of 19,166 cases were recorded.

Delhi also reported 17 deaths due to the infection for the second day in a row on Monday.

There have been 70 deaths due to the infection in the first 10 days of the year, the data shows. There were only nine deaths in December, seven in November, four in October, and five in September as per the data.

Out of the 1.5 crore adult population in the city, nearly 1.12 crore are fully vaccinated.

‘Denied dignity’

she said, around the impact of pornography on the minds of the youth. “It’s time to revisit that conversation.”

She pointed to a tweet on January 6 by film actor Siddharth who made “derogatory remarks” against badminton champion Saina Nehwal after she tweeted her support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi following the security breach during his visit to Punjab. The National Commission for Women has since taken cognizance of the actor’s tweet and has written to the Maharashtra DGP to investigate the matter, as well as to Twitter India.

“Do women get explicitly objectified only through one app? No. As I came to this conversation, I had a world champion, Ms Nehwal, who was demeaned for her political position, no less by a so-called popular actor, a man who would have known better. We need to look at this issue holistically. Are only the men who are caught the ones we need to be concerned about? Or, those who deny a woman the right to speak?... Ms Nehwal had a point of view. But she was demeaned and objectified. Should such men be brought to justice as well?” she said.

On the targeting of women via apps, she said: “I have been at the political receiving end of it by no less than a Vadra family member. Does the issue enrage me? Absolutely. I had the opportunity of pronouncing that the Ministry of Home Affairs, and I am grateful to the Home Minister who ensured that those who are adjudged criminals in cases of sexual assault of children are brought together as a part of one component where there is a tracking system for such criminals. I believe that the Home Ministry has (a record of) seven lakh such individuals who have been accused of sexual assault and such crimes.”

On the introduction of the Bill to raise the legal age of marriage for women in India, Irani said: “When I spoke about the need for women to have an equal right to matrimony at the age of 21, there was support from across the nation, from women of all communities and all religions. The only naysayers were the men who were in that House, making that noise. What is a matter of great satisfaction for me, particularly as a political representative of my party, is that we spoke in one voice about the need for all women to have that right, across all religions.”

Responding to criticism that the Bill proposes to criminalise a large section of marriages in the country, she said this was misinformation.

“I think that is one of the greatest rumours that is being spread... Those who seek to disenfranchise women from the right to equality are propagating this falsehood. How is it criminal for a woman to have equal rights to enter into matrimony as that of a man? This announcement that marriages will be criminalised is a falsehood... Currently, when you look at all the numbers of the NFHS (National Family Health Survey), you find that close to 7 per cent girls between the age of 15-18 years are already pregnant. When the survey looked at women of 24 years, they found that close to 23 per cent of them were married under the age of 18 years. The fact that for 75 years in our country, men and women did not enter marriage at the same age is a matter of deep regret,” she said.

No. 0191-2579126/2542759
0194-2506067/2506279

socialwelfare.adm@gmail.com

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir
Social Welfare Department, Civil Secretariat, J&K
Advertisement Notice

Subject: Filling up of the post of Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, J&K

Applications are invited from eligible interested persons for appointment of Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir in terms of Jammu and Kashmir Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2001 issued vide S.O. 91 dated 15.03.2021. The application form, terms and conditions and eligibility/qualification etc. for the said post is available within detailed advertisement, which is uploaded on the departmental website www.jksocialwelfare.nic.in. The interested candidates may apply in the prescribed format to the Department within 15 days of publication of the notice.

Sd/-
Under Secretary to the Government
Social Welfare Department

No. SWD/ADM/62/2021-02 Dated:- 07.01.2022 DIPJ-11678

ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
Regd. Office: Jangpali, Bhubaneswar-751022
CIN:U40102OR2004SGC007583

NOTICE TO VENDORS
NOTICE NO.SR.GM-CPC-VENDOR-50/2021-22

Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Ltd, invites Applications from reputed manufacturers or authorised dealers of the manufacturers or authorised dealers of the manufacturers (only when original Equipment Manufacturers do not have direct marketing for their products) to get their firm registered in the vendor list of OPTCL to supply materials/equipment to the contractors awarded with turnkey projects. Interested firms would be required to apply as per the details available at OPTCL's official website <http://www.optcl.co.in>. The closing date of receipt of such application in the requisite format is Date:22.02.2022.

HIPR-54/2021-22 OIPR-040111/01532122 Sd/-SGM (CPC)

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK/NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / END (APPROX) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	MOBIL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED	TENDER NOTICE FOR PURCHASE OF THE MULTIPURPOSE HALL, TOWN, SEATING LOUNGE AND ACCOMPANY 2 NOS. BEDROOMS AT RAJNLA LAKE, ROHTAK.	17.01.2022 17.01.2022	21.21 LACS	haryanatenders.gov.in	9417173833 haryanatenders@gmail.com
2.	TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED	UPGRADATION/RENOVATION OF 6 NOS. ROOM, 1ST FLOOR TOILETS (2 TO 11 ALUMINIUM GLAZING IN CORRIDOR 1ST AND 2ND FLOOR AT TOURIST COMPLEX, KARLA LAKE, KARLA).	13.01.2022 15.01.2022	END - 1 LACS	haryanatenders.gov.in	9417173833 haryanatenders@gmail.com
3.	TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED	PROVIDING OUTDOOR FURNITURE FOR WOODS/TOURIST COMPLEXES OF HTE KARLA LAKE VARNAL, SAIGONDH, HAZAR, AGRA, KARLA, ROH, SUNDER HOTEL, SARAKUN, BLUE ZERO RESAP, ETWINE, INDERA PARI	13.01.2022 18.01.2022	11.70 LACS	https://tenders.hry.nic.in	9417173833 haryanatenders@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, CENTRAL RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BHUBANESWAR
Phone - 674-2540742 Email- se_ccew@yahoo.co.in
No. 121 /Date:- 10.01.2022

"e" Procurement Notice for Roads Works

1.	Name of the Work	2.	Period works
2.	Total No. of Packages	3.	08 Nos. of roads
3.	Estimated Cost of the Package	4.	Varies from Rs.133.18 lakhs to Rs.539.78 lakhs
4.	Class of Contractor	5.	B Class & A class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities
5.	Period of completion	6.	A Class & Special class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities
6.	Offered rates by bidder	7.	Special Class & Super class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities
7.	Other details	8.	09 (Nine) months for works costing less than Rs. 3.00 Crores
		9.	11 (Eleven) months for the works costing from Rs. 3.00 Crores to Rs. 5.00 Crores
		10.	The offered rate by the contractor shall be excluding GST.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding	Date & Time of opening of tender
		From To	Technical Bid Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, Central Rural Works Circle, Bhubaneswar	Tender-Online-C.C.02 of 2022	17.01.2022 at 11.00 AM	31.01.2022 Upto to 5.00 PM

Further details can be seen from the web site www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer
Central Rural Works Circle, Bhubaneswar,
OIPR-25082/11/00512122

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA CORRIGENDUM

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP./AUTH	OLD REFERENCE/NOT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	MOBIL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	HARYAL	RET NO 46/AM/MS KV BARYAL/2021-22 DATED 23.12.2021	THE TENDER WAS TO BE OPENED ON DATED 07.01.2022. NOW BID SUBMISSION DATE EXTENDED UPTO 20.01.2022 (16:30 HRS) DUE TO HIGH TURNING UP WORKER IN HARYANA. I.E. 3 NOS. WITHIN 25.	www.hrypn.org.in	0173-2563799 pro@hrypn.org.in
2.	HARYAL	RET NO 20/CWB-2/00L XIII/AM/MS/2021-22 DATED 22.12.2021	DATE OF OPENING BID 07/01/2022 (11:00 HRS) LAST DATE OF ONLINE BID SUBMISSION IS EXTENDED UPTO 19/01/2022 (13:00 HRS) (SOCIETIES & CONTRACTORS)	www.hrypn.org.in	0173-2563799 pro@hrypn.org.in
3.	HARYAL	18/RET/MS/MS/2021-22 DATED 26.12.2021 ONLINE TENDER ID 2021_HRC_201233_1	THE LAST DATE OF ONLINE BID SUBMISSION IS EXTENDED UPTO 17.01.2022 (16:00 HRS), DATE OF OPENING 28.12.2021 (13:30 HRS.)	www.hrypn.org.in	0173-2563799 pro@hrypn.org.in
4.	HARYAL	19/RET/MS/MS/2021-22 DATED 28.12.2021 ONLINE TENDER ID 2021_HRC_201238_1	THE LAST DATE OF ONLINE BID SUBMISSION IS EXTENDED UPTO 17.01.2022 (16:00 HRS), DATE OF OPENING 28.12.2021 (16:40 HRS.)	www.hrypn.org.in	0173-2563799 pro@hrypn.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in


**VACCINATIONS IN
LAST 24 HOURS**
25,030
**OMICRON
CASES**
513
PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 1,999
OXYGEN SUPPORT 438
VENTILATOR SUPPORT 65
**DELHI: TOTAL
CASES**
15,68,896

	Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	14,410	12,360
ICU BEDS	4,086	3,634

	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Jan 9	22,751	10,179	17	96,678
Jan 10	19,166	14,076	17	76,670
Total	65,806*	14,77,913	25,177	3,35,60,422

*Total active cases

CASES IN NOIDA*
1,223 (1,149)**
 Deaths 0 (0**)

CASES IN GURGAON*
2,621 (2,338)**
 Deaths 1 (0**)

*Daily figures: Jan 10, **previous day

AMID STAFF CRUNCH IN HOSPITALS

No quarantine after Covid duty for healthcare workers

ANONNA DUTT
 NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

WITH SHORTAGE of healthcare workers looming as more and more test positive—including at least 750 doctors across six major government hospitals in Delhi—doctors will not be required to quarantine after finishing their duties in Covid-19 wards, as per guidelines of the Union Health Ministry.

As per the new guidelines released on Sunday night, under the head, "Regular quarantine of healthcare workers after performing duty in Covid-19 areas", it is stated that any quarantine or isolation of healthcare workers other than "stipulated above" is not warranted. The doctors say this could lead to cross-transmission of the infection.

"Our hospital was treating only Covid-19 patients during the previous wave. This meant that the entire staff was treating only those who already had the infection. Also, there was a five-seven day gap after Covid-19 duty where the staff remained in isolation, thereby, reducing the risk of transmitting the infection to the others," said a resident doctor from Lok Nayak hospital on condition of anonymity.

The doctor added, "Now, with so many doctors, nurses and staff members testing positive, the hospital is strictly following the



At least 750 doctors across six major government hospitals in Delhi have tested positive. *Archive*

new guidelines wherein no quarantine is allowed. Without taking a break, the doctors have to continue working in non-Covid areas where the patients might already have a poor immune system and get exposed to the infection from us."

With Covid-19 spreading like wildfire among the staff members at the hospital, most departments are operating at one-third the capacity. "There are nearly 150 to 200 resident doctors positive in the hospital at the moment, 10-12 persons are positive in each department. The number of cases has exploded. The wards where eight doctors used to be posted are now managed by just two or three people," the doctor said.

Keeping the shortage of staff in mind, the health ministry has

written to the states that residents may be hired from a website with details of eligible candidates created by the Centre. MBBS interns and final-year MBBS students may also be taught clinical management of Covid patients, the Centre has said.

The Indian Express had earlier reported that in several hospitals, doctors have been asked not to quarantine themselves even if they are exposed to a Covid-19 positive person, unless they start developing symptoms and test positive.

In case of a breach in the personal protective equipment (PPE), meaning that the healthcare workers come in contact with a positive person without appropriate masking, etc, they will continue working with

proper PPE and get tested on the fifth day of exposure.

Only if the healthcare workers have symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 will they isolate and get tested. They will receive treatment as per the severity of the disease. "Healthcare workers can resume duties while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment if symptoms have resolved (except mild cough), and they are afebrile (without fever) for 3 successive days," the guidelines read.

A doctor from Safdarjung hospital, which also has nearly 200 doctors positive, said this is not only putting the patients but also families of doctors at risk. "Earlier, the doctors were provided rooms for isolation while they were on Covid-19 duty and for a period of one week after that. Now that the hospital is not arranging for it, doctors have to go back home and put their families at risk," the resident doctor said.

A senior faculty member from the hospital said, "There is a crisis of manpower, there is a need now to rationally deploy the staff to ensure all services are kept running."

The resident doctor from Lok Nayak said, "The way the infection is spreading among the staff, I think the administrators are waiting for everyone to just get exposed and then they will have their entire workforce available in a couple of weeks."

46 deaths in five days this month in capital, 34 had co-morbidities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

OF THE 46 people who died of Covid-19 between January 5 and January 9, 25 were above the age of 60 years, 34 had co-morbid conditions, while 21 tested positive after being admitted to hospital for some other ailment.

Only 11 were vaccinated. According to officials, among those who died were also people who had been injured in accidents, or children born with congenital issues, who happened to test positive for Covid as well.

Data related to deaths of patients was discussed in the Delhi Disaster Management Authority meeting on Monday, where Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lt-Governor Anil Bajjal were present.

The number of Covid deaths has gone up significantly this month, after low numbers were recorded since September 2021. There have been 70 deaths due to the infection in the first 10 days of the year, the data shows. There were only nine deaths in December, seven in November, four in October, and five in September.

Out of the 46, 28 were men and 18 were women. One person was below the age of 15; one below the age of 20; 5 below the age of 50; and 14 were between 41 and 60 years of age.

A significant number—37—had come to the hospital after

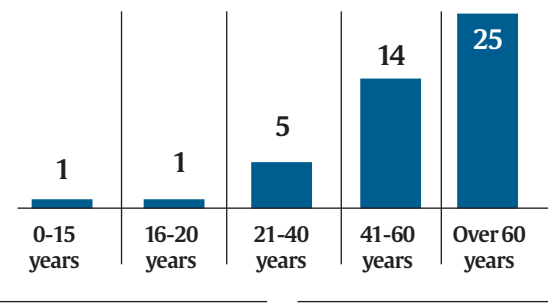


At Shehnai banquet hall Covid care centre, Monday. *Abhinav Saha*

DEATHS THIS MONTH

**COVID DEATHS BETWEEN
JANUARY 5 AND 9: 46**
28
Men
18
Women
**People who tested positive
after admission for
another condition: 21**
**Those who came to
hospital with oxygen
saturation under 94: 37**
**Those with co-morbid
conditions: 34**
Those in ICUs: 32
Vaccinated: 11

AGE-WISE BREAK-UP



their oxygen saturation levels dropped below 94. Doctors have advised people who have tested positive for Covid to check their oxygen saturation levels regularly and go to the hospital in case the levels fall below 94.

Of the 46, 12 died the same day as they were admitted, while 14 died three to seven days after admission. Only three were admitted for longer than a week, data shows.

Govt plan for 1 lakh cases a day

The Delhi government, meanwhile, presented its bed requirement assessment at Monday's meeting. It said that if Delhi sees 1 lakh cases a day, the city will have to prepare 46,000 hospital beds—28,000 oxygenated ones and 18,000 ICU beds.

This is based on the assumption that of all those people who test positive, 5% will be admitted to hospitals.

Assuming a hospitalisation rate of 5%, if daily cases touch the 30,000 mark, 1,500 patients would be in need of hospitalisation; 1,200 would be in need of oxygen support; 300 would need ICU support; and the total hospital beds needed to tackle this magnitude would be 13,800.

At present, there are 65,800 active cases in the city. Of them, only 1,999 persons are hospitalised. There are 438 persons on oxygen support and 65 patients on ventilators.

BRIEFLY

Court grants bail to wife in Rohit Tiwari murder

New Delhi: A Delhi court granted bail to Apoorva Shukla, accused of killing her husband Rohit Shekhar Tiwari, the son of late veteran politician N D Tiwari. Additional Sessions Judge Prashant Sharma granted bail to Apoorva on January 7, noting that the completion of recording of evidence will take time as only 12 out of 56 witnesses have been examined till date. The court said it was a cardinal principle that a person will be treated innocent till he/she is proven guilty and that "bail is a rule and jail is an exception".

Over 1,000 Covid cases in Delhi Police in last 10 days

New Delhi: The Delhi Police reported over 1,129 Covid cases among staffers in the last 10 days. Personnel including Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) and the Delhi Police PRO have tested positive. Anil Mittal, Additional PRO (Consultant), said, "We have recorded numbers from January 1 till now. Most are under home quarantine and stable."

Three from city win at IndiaSkills competition

New Delhi: Three contestants from Delhi won medals at the IndiaSkills competition and will represent India at the WorldSkills competition 2022 in Shanghai. A Delhi team of 22 competitors in 18 different skills had competed. Of them, Abdul Rahim won a silver medal in hair dressing, Pranav Pahwa won a silver medal in hotel reception and Sakshi Kumari won a bronze medal in industry 4.0. **ENS**

Worst-hit during pandemic, feel targeted: Restaurants on dine-in ban

DIVYAA
 NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

WITH DINE-IN at Delhi's restaurants closed from Tuesday in a bid to contain a surge in Covid cases, stakeholders in the industry say they feel singled out and targeted. As per the new restrictions announced by the Delhi government on Monday, only home delivery and takeaways will be allowed.

Kabir Suri, co-founder and director, Azure Hospitality, who is currently the president of the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), questioned how markets can be allowed to remain open while buses and Metros operate at full capacity, even as restaurants—which were already running at 50% capacity—have been asked to shut completely.

"This will lead to widespread unemployment because no one knows how long this will go on," Suri said, adding that the industry employs lakhs of people at various levels, and contributes significantly to the GDP.

"World over, the key is to follow social distancing norms, get boosters and go on with life, but each time there is a surge in infections, the hospitality industry is singled out," he added.

Riyaaz Amlani, CEO and MD of Impresario Handmade



Home delivery and takeaways will be allowed. *Archive*

Restaurants, which runs around 20 restaurants in the capital including Smoke House Deli and Social, said, "I would like to be enlightened on how this is going to help—given that we are already following 50% seating. Restaurants are tired of taking it on the chin just for optics."

Late on Monday evening, the NRAI issued a statement saying: "Right from the onset of Covid, the restaurant sector has been one of the worst-hit. We were the first ones to be shut and almost the last ones to restart during the first and second lockdowns and I reckon that this third wave is going to be even worse than last year. We somehow survived so far, but with the new guidelines announced today in Delhi, it

seems highly unlikely that we can sustain any longer."

There are 95,187 eateries in Delhi. Out of these, 32,777 are organised restaurants (with FSSAI number and GST) and the revenue generated per year from these is Rs 31,132 crore. Also, the dine-out frequency in the city is maximum, six times per month, compared to the national average of 4.5 times, whereas takeaways/delivery are meagre. All of this is going to be at a standstill once again, the statement adds.

Even as the order does not specify any duration for the dine-in restrictions, their only hope is it doesn't last too long. Zoravar Kalra, founder-director of Massive Restaurants, which includes brands such as Farzi Cafe,

Pa Pa Ya and Bo Tai, said, "We are hopeful that if hospitalisations and deaths are not increasing, these restrictions can be quickly removed as they are extremely debilitating for the already beleaguered industry and will result in a major increase in permanent closures and unemployment in the sector."

The financial crunch that such shutdowns lead them to has many stressed. Just two days ago, the NRAI had written to mall owners and landlords to waive off rentals for the duration of pandemic-related curbs.

Suri said that while deliveries are allowed, the issue of e-passes for delivery staff is still to be streamlined and they are going to request the government to reconsider this dine-in ban or not let this carry on beyond a week or so.

Priyank Sukhija, founder of First Fiddle F&B Pvt Ltd, which owns restaurants like Lord Of The Drinks, Warehouse Cafe, Dragonfly and Lazeez Affaire, said, "Ever since night curfew and weekend curfew were announced in Delhi, we have been as good as shut. And we do understand we have to live with it for another month or so. When these restrictions are lifted, I sincerely hope the government comes forward with some kind of tangible support package for the industry."

**ANONNA DUTT &
GAYATHRI MANI**
 NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

OVER 8,000 people in the 60-plus age category with co-morbid conditions received their "precaution dose" as the drive started on Monday. As per data, 18,795 precaution doses were administered till Monday evening, of which 8,040 were given to the elderly. In comparison, 6,212 healthcare workers and 4,543 frontline workers received the shot.

"Those above the age of 60 years were keen on getting their precaution dose; over the last couple of days, I have been receiving several queries about it. We have already told all our vaccinators that they are to give the dose to anyone over the age of 60 who comes to get the shot. There is no need for them to get a doctor's certificate stating that they have co-morbidities," said a Delhi health department official.

As per the Centre's estimate, nearly 20% of those over the age of 60 years would receive the precaution dose. However, the Delhi official said they were planning for more people to come in: "There is a scare because of the high number of cases right now and we expect a high proportion of people over the age of 60 years to get it."



As per data, 18,795 precaution doses were administered till Monday evening. *Abhinav Saha*

Among senior citizens who lined up on Monday was Laxmi Narayan (64), a resident of East Kidwai Nagar. He said: "I am feeling much better now. I had tested positive in the first wave."

Asha Devi (82) said she went through a harrowing experience during the second wave after her family tested positive: "My family and I went through a painful time and I don't want to go through that again... I request everyone to get vaccinated."

Nearly 2.40 lakh healthcare workers, 3.50 lakh frontline workers, and 3.80 lakh co-morbid 60-year-olds are eligible for the precaution dose in Delhi. Persons become eligible only after 9 months of their second dose or 3 months after an infection.

A senior administrator from Lok Nayak Hospital said: "We vaccinated 50 staff members to-

day. Healthcare workers are eager to get the shot because they see that many among them are testing positive."

AIIMS Director, Dr Randeep Guleria, also took his precaution dose on Monday.

Doses were administered at existing vaccination sites by increasing their capacity by 20%. However, there were some glitches in the CoWIN portal. "In the morning, healthcare workers at private hospitals were unable to get the shot as the portal kept prompting that vaccination was to happen at government centres only. There was also an issue with registration of walk-in candidates for 1-1.5 hours, and some people had to be turned away. The glitches have been sorted and we think there will be a higher turnout tomorrow," said the government official.

Hours before wrestler's murder, Sushil fired at dogs, assaulted fellow athletes: Chargesheet

ANAND MOHAN J
 NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

HOURS BEFORE the alleged abduction and murder of 27-year-old wrestler Sagar Dhankar last year, Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar, the main accused, allegedly made his way to Chhatrasal stadium, fired at a pack of barking dogs, assaulted athletes with his pistol, and forced them to leave, the Delhi Police has claimed in its supplementary chargesheet.

The alleged events took place on May 5, as per the supplementary chargesheet filed by the Crime Branch at Rohini court last year against four men, relying on disclosure statements of Sushil's security guard Anil Dhiman and other accused.

In his statement to police, Dhiman, who had been working with Sushil at Chhatrasal sta-

dium since April 2019 and handled "private and official work" related to the wrestler, has claimed he was with him on the night of May 4-5, 2021, when Sushil allegedly called several people to the basketball ground and said he wanted to "teach a lesson to some people".

Co-accused Rahul claimed in his statement that he along with Sushil, who was allegedly carrying a licensed pistol, and another associate reached the stadium and found coaches and wrestlers gathered there.

Just as they arrived, a few dogs started barking and Sushil, "who was very angry at the time", allegedly fired in their direction. Sushil then asked two wrestlers to leave the stadium. When a wrestler, Vikas, asked Sushil, "Pehalwan ji what happened?", he allegedly assaulted Vikas and chased him away after snatching his phone.



Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar is the main accused in the alleged murder case, which took place in May last year. *Archive*

According to Rahul, after chasing away a third wrestler, Sushil said, "Where I go, who I

meet, what I eat—all this information is being leaked by Sagar and Sonu Mahal."

Sushil then asked a fourth wrestler to hand over his phone, and his refusal was met with the former allegedly hitting him on the forehead with his pistol.

Dhiman claimed that "later that night, I, along with Sushil and others, visited Shalimar Bagh and abducted Amit and Ravinder (who were assaulted along with Sagar) around 11.30 pm and took them to Chhatrasal stadium." He told police that the duo were assaulted "on Sushil's instructions".

"At the stadium, we beat them a lot... we then visited a flat in Model Town where we abducted Sagar, Jaibhagwan, and Sonu and took them to the stadium," Dhiman claimed in his statement.

According to the chargesheet, he quoted Sushil as

saying, "Do not leave them alive. Beat them mercilessly."

Co-accused Praveen, a "notorious criminal" involved in four criminal cases including murder, further quotes Sushil as saying, "I am the *gunda* of this area. How can you take over my flat?" as he allegedly assaulted them with a stick.

Dhiman claimed that they "assaulted them with lathi, danda, hockey stick and baseball bat. Our intention was to kill Sagar and Jaibhagwan as that was what Sushil wanted... He was scared that Sagar and Jaibhagwan were collecting information on him and wanted to cause him harm (to his life); that's why Sushil wanted to kill them..."

Advertisement No. 5/2022
Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of
DIRECTOR (PROJECTS)
in
ENGINEERING PROJECTS (INDIA)
LIMITED
Last date of receipt of applications in
PESB is by 15.00 hours on
21st March, 2022.
For details login to website
http://www.pesb.gov.in

CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY, MEERUT (U.P.)
RECRUITMENT NOTICE
 Online Applications are invited from Indian Citizens for appointment against following posts of **Assistant Professors** in the University:

Advertisement No.	Post	Number of Posts & Department	Level
Academic/01/2022	Assistant Professor	Sanskrit (UR – 02 & OBC – 02)	10

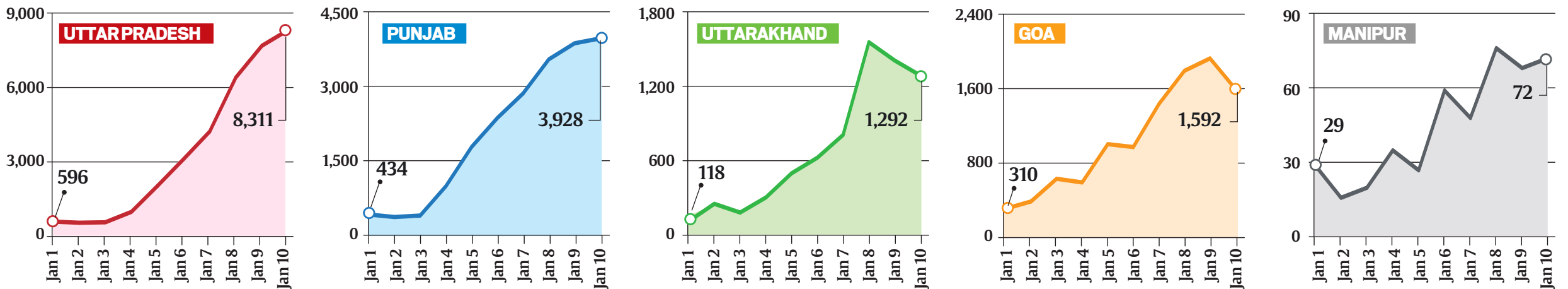
- The Last date of online submission of application form is **30.01.2022**.
- Last date of submission of the printout of online filled form (downloaded) is **05.02.2022**.
- Link for the form and other details: **http://www.ccsuniversity.ac.in/ccsu/recruitment**.

Another set of suggestions was sent by the Clean Air Collective, a network of organisations and individuals across the country who work on air pollution issues. Suggestions included revising the Graded Response Action Plan before peak pollution season in 2022, using the Early Warning Forecasting System proactively to reduce emissions, strengthening agencies like the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, and making all businesses in NCR districts run on CNG.

5 DECISION 2022

UTTAR PRADESH • UTTARAKHAND • PUNJAB • GOA • MANIPUR

TRACKING COVID CASES IN ELECTION-BOUND STATES



Big blow for Cong in west UP: Gandhi camp leader quits party, to back SP

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 10

IN A major setback to the Congress before the Assembly polls, its prominent minority face from Western Uttar Pradesh, Imran Masood, announced on Monday that he was parting ways to support the Samajwadi Party.

Other leaders close to Masood are expected to leave the Congress in his wake.

Masood had a fast rise within the Congress from being an outsider to being part of 'Team Rahul', to a national secretary of the AICC. In 2014, a speech by the leader attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi had run into controversy. However, Masood's popularity in the area, that has a large Muslim population, has failed to translate into electoral success. This is also believed to have prompted the 50-year-old to switch sides at a time when the 2022 polls are heading for a BJP vs SP contest.

Addressing his supporters in Saharanpur Monday, Masood said he was going to the SP for the sake of *jamhooriyat* (democracy). "I have taken this decision... is *sarkar ko harane ke liye* (to defeat this government). We will win all the seven seats here." Saharanpur and neighbouring areas are considered Masood's base.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Masood said his "birth as a politician" was in the SP, and that he was "pained" to have left it in 2011. "Similar is the case now. I am pained to leave the Congress. But the political situation is such that the Congress is nowhere in the fight in UP, and to defeat the BJP, the SP has become the only option." A day before his announcement, Masood said: "I am obliged to Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi for giving me all the re-



Imran Masood

spect. Priyanka Gandhi is also working hard, but the situation demands that if we want to establish the rule of law, we should support the SP." While in the Congress, Masood had more than once expressed his frustration with the party.

The nephew of former MP Rasheed Masood, Imran Masood contested and won his first election in 2007 as an Independent from Muzaffarabad Assembly constituency (now known as Behat). Picked up as a youth face for the Congress in 2012, he lost the Assembly election from Nakur in Saharanpur the same year.

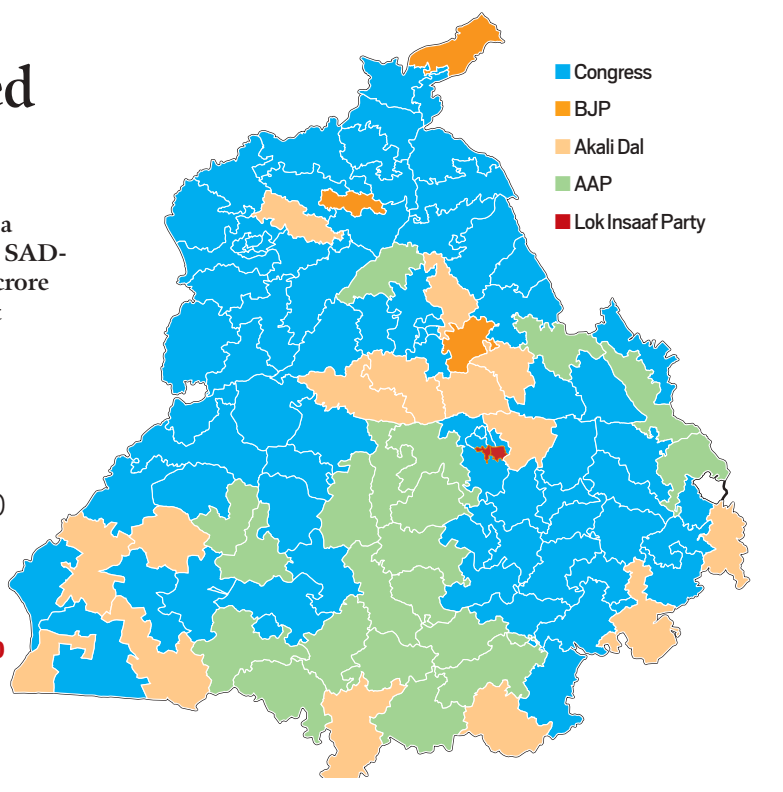
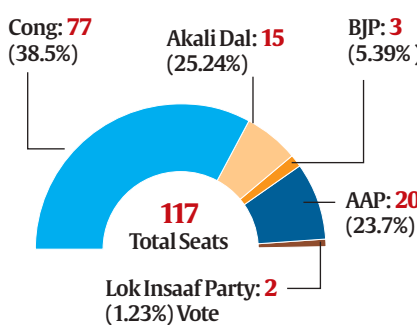
Just before the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, a video clip surfaced, in which Masood was seen threatening Modi, then the PM candidate, as he blamed the BJP and RSS for the Muzaffarnagar riots. His supporters said the video may have polarised voters in the Lok Sabha elections that followed. Masood said: "I have apologised... I am not the person in that video, I was never that person and I will never be."

His ill-luck continued in the 2017 Assembly and 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when he lost to the BJP and BSP, respectively.

Among the Congress leaders considered close to Masood is MLA Naresh Saini, one of the 7 candidates who won in 2017 polls.

How Punjab voted in 2017

The Congress returned to power with a record mandate after two terms of the SAD-BJP combine. On February 14, over 2 crore voters will choose the state's next govt



PUNJAB

A history of coalitions and agitations

MANRAJ GREWAL
SHARMA

CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 10

PUNJAB BEGAN its journey in independent India with a slew of coalitions, short-lived governments born out of fractured mandates, punctuated with spells of President's Rule, as several agitations rocked the state.

It was only after the end of militancy in the mid-1990s that the state enjoyed political stability, with power alternating between the Akali Dal-BJP and the Congress. Next month, Punjab will vote in its first multi-cornered contest — in an election that follows the longest agitation by farmers in independent India.

Post-Partition Punjab

The first Punjab government in independent India was born out of an alliance between the Congress and Akalis under the chief ministership of Dr Gopi Chand Bhargava. But the uneasy relationship came undone in April 1949 after the Constituent Assembly refused to provide the safeguards for Sikhs. The state had its first brush with President's Rule in 1951. The Akalis fought the 1952 elections on the issue of Punjabi Suba (a state on linguistic lines), but the Congress won — and Bhim

Sen Sachar became Chief Minister. In 1956, Sachar was replaced by then PCC chief Partap Singh Kairon, who remained Chief Minister until 1964, a year after which he was assassinated.

Reorganisation

In September 1966, the state was split into Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh on linguistic lines. Coinciding with the advent of the Green Revolution, it led to a new political discourse in Punjab. This era saw four short-lived post-poll coalitions. The first, an alliance of anti-Congress parties led by CM Gurnam Singh, fell after eight months in 1967, but the next government under CM Lachman Singh Gill, could survive for only nine months. After mid-term polls in 1969, an Akali-Jana Sangh coalition government came to power, but it too collapsed soon.

Parkash Singh Badal became CM in March 1970. But his government lasted only 15 months. President's Rule followed. The next elections in 1972 returned a Congress government.

The Emergency led to a strong anti-Congress wave in Punjab. The party was all but swept away in

the 1977 polls, which the Akalis contested under the umbrella of Janata Party in alliance with the CPI and CPM. But soon, the Parkash Singh Badal government fell foul of the Nirankaris and the Jana Sangh.

1980s: The dark decade

In this phase, extremists who favoured secessionism over the demand for autonomy, took the upper hand. Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980 and dismissed nine non-Congress state governments, including that of Punjab. President's Rule was fol-

lowed by elections and the Congress returned to power. The party appeased extremists such as Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The policy backfired, violence spread across Punjab, and the Centre had to impose President's Rule in October 1983. The Centre let the situation drift, leading to Operation Blue Star in June 1984, followed by the revenge assassination of Indira, and the anti-Sikh violence that year.

The 1985 elections were held in the backdrop of the Rajiv-Longwall accord, and the Akali Dal led by Surjit Singh Barnala took over the state. But by then,

the militants were running amok in the countryside. Barnala was removed and President's Rule imposed in 1987.

1990s: Return to peace

After five years of President's Rule, Assembly elections were held in 1992. The Akali Dal boycotted the polls, and only 24 per cent turned out to vote, but it was an important first step. Beant Singh of the Congress, whose term saw a crackdown on militancy, remained CM from 1992 until his assassination in 1995. This period also saw the panthic Akali Dal transform itself into an inclusive Punjabi party. The SAD-BJP combine came to power in 1997, and Parkash Singh Badal became the first CM since Kairon's resignation in 1964 to serve a full term.

Crowded field

In 2002, Badal was succeeded by the Congress-CPI combine headed by Capt Amarinder Singh. The SAD-BJP alliance came back in 2007, and ruled for 10 years, the first full double term in Punjab. In 2017, Amarinder returned with a record mandate — only to be replaced months before the coming elections by Charanjit Singh Channi, Punjab's first Dalit CM.

FULL REPORT ON
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AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal announced schemes that the party will implement if elected in Punjab, at a recent press briefing in Ludhiana. Gurmeet Singh

2022 POLL BATTLE

After downslide since 2017, AAP back in reckoning

Congress infighting and Akali Dal's slump may end up helping AAP

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 10

THE AAM Aadmi Party (AAP) entered the 2017 elections with a lot of hype but ended up with a sub-par performance, following which the party saw a string of desertions and exits. Now, with days left for the Assembly elections, AAP seems to have got its act together and is now back in the reckoning.

While the turnaround is being attributed to deep divisions within the ruling Congress, the failure of the Shiromani Akali Dal to rebuild itself post the 2017 poll debacle, and the desire for change among the public — all of which have ended up making the AAP look good — the party has also worked to claw its way back.

Over the last five years, AAP had been hit by bitter infighting. Having entered the Punjab Vidhan Sabha with 20 MLAs, the party is now left with barely half the numbers after several MLAs quit to join the Congress. While the party still has 17 MLAs to its name in the Assembly, this figure is misleading since those who switched loyalties continue to occupy AAP benches.

While many predicted the party to win around 100 seats in 2017, AAP managed to win only 20, with majority of the seats (18)

coming from Malwa region and two from Doaba. The party failed to open its account in the Majha region. The slide in AAP's popularity continued in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, with the party retaining only one of its four seats — that of its state president Bhagwant Mann. The results were equally dismal in local body polls.

However, the last one year has seen hectic rebuilding efforts. While Delhi MLA Jarnail Singh was appointed state in-charge by the national leadership, this was soon followed by the appointment of Raghav Chadha, also a Delhi MLA, as the state co-in-charge. Chadha, who has been leading the rebuilding exercise, has on numerous occasions said that the AAP will fare much better in Majha region than it did in 2017. The party has announced 109 candidates for the 117 Assembly seats. On Sunday, Chadha pointed to infighting in the Congress. "Channi does not get along with Sidhu, Jakhar does not get along with Channi and Sidhu, Sukhjinder Randhawa does not get along with Sidhu..." he said.

The AAP's performance in the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation polls, when it ended up in 14 wards, more than the BJP (12), Congress (8) and Akali Dal (1) — has come as a morale booster for the party.

Saying new leaders hold favour, Goa BJP MLA, minister quit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, JANUARY 10

TWO-TIME BJP MLA Michael Lobo resigned from the Assembly and the party on Monday, becoming the first minister to leave the BJP amid the series of defections ahead of Goa polls. The Port and Waste Management Minister in the Pramod Sawant government, Lobo is likely to join the Congress on Tuesday.

Soon after Lobo's resignation, Pravin Zantye announced his departure as BJP MLA, and said he was headed for the Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP). A former BJP ally, the MGP has entered into a pre-poll alliance with the Trinamool Congress. "My association with the BJP has been 15 years long, so I feel very sad and pained. The BJP does not want a worker like me," Lobo, a political heavyweight in the Bardez taluka, said, adding that he wanted to leave "nicely" and not be thrown out.

What he learnt in the BJP under the late Manohar Parrikar will stay with him, Lobo added, but the party no longer valued its grass-root workers. He said



State minister Michael Lobo

many in the party had told him so. "They said the party has become so big, it has no place for small people like us. It is bringing new leaders." Zantye, a former Congressman who won from Mayem in North Goa in 2017 on a BJP ticket, said he had joined the BJP on Parrikar's appeal and that the party had changed after Parrikar's death. "I am joining the MGP because I want to be in a party that will work for the people."

Playing down the impact of Lobo's exit, CM Sawant tweeted, "A few defections, to fulfil the agenda of greed and personal interests cannot deter our agenda of good governance."

Goa BJP president Sadanand Tanavade said they had been expecting Lobo's resignation. "...all these resignations are due to personal reasons where they are either unlikely to get the ticket or are greedy for more than one ticket in the family," he said.

MALVIKA SOOD

Sonu Sood's sister to debut with Cong; sitting MLA opposes

DIVYA GOYAL GOPAL
LUDHIANA, JANUARY 10

ACTOR SONU Sood's sister Malvika Sood Sachar joined the Congress on Monday in the presence of Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and party state chief Navjot Singh Sidhu.

Soon after the press conference where the two Congress stalwarts welcomed Sachar into the party, its sitting Moga MLA Harjot Kamal indicated he was not happy over the big-banner entry. The only prominent Congress leader from Moga, in fact, who was present to welcome her at Monday's event was former Mahila Congress chief Malhi Thapar.

With the Soods having said earlier that the 38-year-old Sachar, a qualified engineer turned philanthropist, would

like to serve their native Moga, Kamal said he would contest from the seat with or without a Congress ticket.

That the Congress is placing much stock in Sachar — whose brother Sood besides his Bollywood fame made a name for himself for his work for migrants during the Covid-19 crisis — was clear from how Sidhu dropped in to meet the siblings at home before the press meet.

The Sood siblings run a charity in the memory of their late parents. It was in November last year that Sood had announced that Sachar was keen on entering politics. Soon after, she had launched a 'Moge di dhe' (Daughter of Moga) campaign.

While present for Sidhu's visit, Sood skipped the formal entry of Sachar into the Congress. Later, indicating he had no political ambitions for now, Sood said: "My own work



Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu (centre) meets actor Sonu Sood (left) and Malvika Sood Sachar in Moga. Express

as an actor & humanitarian continues, without any political affiliations or distractions."

Asked if the party would give the Moga ticket to Sachar, Channi did not reply in a yes or no, only saying it was clear that she was

the party's choice.

Kamal too stayed away from the event, even as hundreds of his supporters and party workers held a demonstration in his support, and tried to make their way to the Sood residence to

meet Sidhu and Channi.

Calling Sachar a "parachute candidate", Kamal told *The Indian Express* he had nurtured Moga even as the Congress was finished in the seat, and won in 2017 at a time when AAP had swept the rest of Malwa. "I defeated Makhan Singh Brar, the son of Akali Dal veteran Tota Singh. Why should I leave my constituency? Sarpachans of 46 villages, Mayor Nitika Bhalla, councillors and block samiti members are with me."

Sidhu claimed Sachar joining would be a "game-changer" for the Congress. "Malvika is an educated woman, and we will give this family as much respect as we can... We welcome her and thank Sonu Sood, the greatest philanthropist of our times... Malvika is a precious member of our family and we will keep her safe like a jewel," he said. Channi said Sood had made Moga and

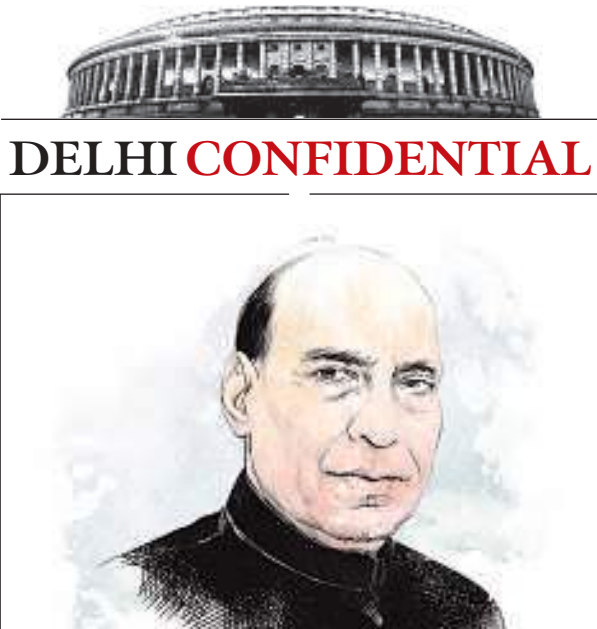
the entire Punjab proud with his acting skills and philanthropic works. "Such a family getting associated with our party is a matter of pride for us."

Sachar said she chose the Congress as it was the oldest national party and because she was impressed with the work Channi had done as CM. "My parents always voted for the Congress," Sachar added that she was a social worker "and the Congress felt I was one of the best candidates for Moga".

On Kamal's opposition, Sachar said: "He is like my elder brother. We will meet and sort out differences."

Channi expressed confidence that the issue will be resolved and said: "We will make adjustments as per requirement. I will go and meet him (Kamal) soon."

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DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

POSITIVE, NO NEGATIVE

WITH DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh testing positive for Covid-19 on Monday, and joining several Union ministers who contracted the virus earlier — Mahendra Nath Pandey, Bharati Pawar, Nityanand Rai and Rajeev Chandrasekhar — BJP strategists are hoping that the wave will subside soon, and by the time candidates are announced in the five poll-bound states, the leaders will be ready to hit the campaign trail. While all the ministers have a hectic campaign schedule, the good news for the party is they have got mild symptoms and will manage with home quarantine. Singh on Monday tweeted, “I have tested positive for Corona today with mild symptoms. I am under home quarantine. I request everyone who have recently come in my contact to isolate themselves and get tested.”

BACK & IN POLL BUSINESS

AFTER A nearly two-week foreign trip, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is back in India. He returned Sunday night and one of his first meetings was with P Chidambaram, party's senior observer for Goa, and K C Venugopal to take stock of election preparations in the state. The meeting was interesting since Congress leaders have claimed that the TMC had been reaching out to it, evincing interest for an electoral co-operation. One central leader said that some of the senior Goa leaders got calls from TMC election strategist Prashant Kishor. But the central Congress leaders strongly rejected any possibility of a tie-up with the Trinamool, arguing that joining hands with the party that has poached several of its leaders would be suicidal. One leader said there was a very strong sentiment in Goa Congress against any association with TMC.

VOTE FOR... CAULIFLOWER

A SYRINGE, a pen nib with seven rays, a hat and a javelin being thrown — these are some of the interesting common symbols allotted by the Election Commission (EC) to eight registered, unrecognised political parties in the poll-bound states of Goa, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur. Former Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh's new party, Punjab Lok Congress, has been allotted 'hockey and a ball' as its symbol. Among other interesting symbols allotted are a TV set, telephone, ship, road-roller, fountain — and even a cauliflower. The EC on Monday wrote to chief electoral officers of the states and said the returning officers may allot these common symbols.

Jharkhand man was lynched for protesting cow slaughter: BJP

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, JANUARY 10

JHARKHAND BJP on Monday alleged that the 32-year-old man, who was lynched and set on fire last week in Simdega district's Besrajara, was murdered because he had protested against the slaughter and sale of cow meat in the area. Soon after the murder, police had said Sanju Pradhan was killed by a mob over allegations that he was involved in tree felling in an area which is considered sacred according to tribal customs. Former CM and BJP legislature party leader Babulal Marandi said after Pradhan's killing a BJP team visited his family members. “We got to know that Sanju Pradhan used to protest against sale of cow meat and always protested against the slaughter. It is due to this fact he received multiple threats... On January 4, he was called in front of police and murdered,” he said. Marandi said the issue is being diluted and demanded for a CBI probe into the killing and compensation of Rs 10 lakh for Pradhan's family. Cow slaughter and sale of beef is banned in Jharkhand. While the police refused to comment on Marandi's allegations, Deputy Commissioner Sushant Gaurav said: “Yes, slaughter of cow and sale of beef in the area remained an issue, but an old one. The murder happened due to culmination of a lot of factors, including felling of trees.” He said an inquiry is being conducted for a detailed report. Meanwhile, police have arrested the prime accused, village headman Subun Bud, taking the total number of arrests to eight. On Saturday, Pradhan's wife had alleged the killing took place in police presence despite her begging them to save her husband.

SFI activist killed in Kerala; YC man held

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 10

AN ACTIVIST of Students Federation of India, the students' wing of CPI(M), was stabbed to death, allegedly by a Youth Congress worker, at Government Engineering College in Kerala's Idukki on Monday. The victim, R Dheeraj, 21, was a seventh semester student of Computer Science and Engineering at the college, the police said. Hours after the incident, the accused, Nikhil Paily, a local Youth Congress (YC) leader, was arrested, police said. According to the police, Dheeraj, a native of Kannur, was killed on the college premises soon after voting for the election to the college union got over. Two other students were seriously injured in the incident. The injured were identified as Abijith and Amal, and condition of one of them is serious, PTI reported. The murder led to a war of words between CPI(M) and opposition Congress. While state Higher Education Minister R Bindu said a gang led by a YC leader attacked students and CPI(M) state secretary Kodyiyeri Balakrishnan told reporters that the murder was planned and this was the 21st Left worker killed in state over last six years, PTI quoted state Congress chief K Sudhakaran as saying, “We all know who is behind all the attacks. It's the SFI which terrorises campuses. They don't have any right to blame us...” Calling the murder “extremely sad and highly condemnable”, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said, “Attempts to create violence in college campuses will not be allowed under any circumstances. Police have been directed to bring Dheeraj's killers to justice as soon as possible.” The SFI called for a boycott of

Panel to manage Uttarakhand's Badrinath, Kedarnath shrines

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, JANUARY 10

THE UTTARAKHAND government, criticised for a previous move to form a shrine Board, on Sunday announced that a reconstituted Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC) will be in charge of managing the two Himalayan shrines. The two temples — Kedarnath and Badrinath — will once again be managed by the BKTC; this time under a new head. The decision comes weeks after the state government disbanded the Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Management Board to manage 51 temples, including the four shrines in the Char Dham pilgrimage, in Uttarakhand. The Char Dham yatra includes Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamnotri temples. A notification issued by culture secretary HC Semwal on Monday appointed BJP leader Ajendra Ajay as president of the

Military meet: India hopes for positive dialogue with China

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

INDIA IS looking towards a constructive dialogue in the upcoming 14th round of military discussions with China on Wednesday. On Monday, security establishment sources said that the Indian side is “looking forward to constructive dialogue to resolve the balance [remaining] friction areas”. This will be the 14th Senior Highest Military Commander Level (SHMCL) meeting to resolve the standoff in eastern Ladakh, now on for more than 21 months. The meeting between the Corps Commanders will take place on the Chinese side of Chushul-Moldo Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) point. This will be the first time that Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta will lead the Indian delegation. Lt Gen Sengupta, who took over from Lt Gen P G K Menon as the commander of Leh-based XIV ‘Fire and Fury’ Corps last

EXPLAINED

The ground report

TILL NOW, the two militaries have disengaged from PP14 in Galwan Valley, north bank of Pangong Tso, heights of Kailash Range in the Chushul sub-sector, and PP17A near Gogra Post. Both sides have more than 50,000 troops each in the region, along with additional air defence assets, artillery, missiles, tanks and other military equipment.

week, was part of the 13th meeting in October as well — Lt Gen Menon had then led the Indian delegation. The last meeting had ended without a breakthrough, even though India had been hopeful of reaching an agreement on disengagement from Patrolling Point (PP) 15 in Hot Springs. Each side has a platoon-sized strength of

soldiers in the area. Apart from PP15, there are two more outstanding issues in eastern Ladakh. In Depsang Plains, Chinese troops are blocking Indian soldiers from accessing their traditional patrolling limits at PP10, PP11, PP11A, PP12 and PP13. The area is close to India's strategically significant Daulat Beg Oldi near Karakoram Pass in the north. In Demchok, some so-called civilians from China have pitched tents on Indian side of the LAC, and are refusing to vacate. The meeting in October had ended with both sides blaming each other for the situation. After the meeting, India had said that during the discussions the Indian side had “emphasised [that] such resolution of the remaining areas would facilitate progress in the bilateral relations”, and had made “constructive suggestions for resolving the remaining areas”. However, “the Chinese side was not agreeable and also could not provide any forward-looking proposals”, it said.

Hate app complainant receives threats; cops looking for callers

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

THE COMPLAINANT in the Bulli Bai app case in Mumbai has received threats from unknown callers, prompting her to submit a written complaint with the cyber police crime branch on Sunday. The cyber police have lodged a non-cognisable complaint under section 506 of the IPC. DCP (cyber) Dr Rashmi Karandikar added that a probe is on to trace the callers. The complainant's FIR led to the arrest of four students. Neeraj Bishnoi, 21, the creator of the app which had obscene content on 126 Muslim women, was confident they will never get caught and he repeatedly communicated this to the three other accused on Twitter groups. A frustrated Bishnoi later took to Twitter to allegedly abuse Mumbai Police for arresting his team mates which eventually led to his arrest by the Delhi Police. Bishnoi, an Assam



Two of the accused in the hate app case at the Bandra magistrate court on Monday. Amit Chakravarty

native and second-year engineering student of Vellore Institute of Technology, Bhopal, was suspended from college after his arrest last week. Mumbai Police said they will seek his custody. A cyber police official said Bishnoi and one of the arrested accused, Vishal Kumar Jha, 21, were on a Twitter group when a similar app, Sullideals, was made last year to target prominent

Muslim women. Jha had then retweeted and liked tweets on Sullideals. Jha, a second-year civil engineering student, told police that he was simply following Bishnoi's instructions. Meanwhile, a magistrate court in Bandra on Monday extended the custody of Singh and Rawat till Friday while Jha, who tested positive for Covid, has been sent to judicial custody.

Ex-MP, kin held for murder of party colleague

Hatched plan to get SP ticket for daughter

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 10

BALRAMPUR police on Monday arrested former Samajwadi Party MP Rizwan Zaheer and five others, including his daughter and son-in-law, in connection with the murder of a 50-year-old local Samajwadi Party leader, Firoz Ahmed alias Pappu. Firoz Ahmed, who joined the Samajwadi Party (SP) last October, was on his way home in Tulsipur on January 4 night when he was attacked by a group of men who slit his neck. “The murder appears to be a fallout of political ambition and domination in the area,” said Superintendent of Police (Balrampur) Hemant Kutiyal. According to police, Firoz was preparing to contest the Assembly election from Tulsipur seat, and Rizwan Zaheer (55), who recently returned to the Samajwadi Party from BSP, was also vying for the party ticket for his 33-year-old daughter Zeba Rizwan. “Rizwan developed enmity with Firoz because of his rising popularity in the area and conspired with others to eliminate him,” Circle Officer (Tulsipur) Kunwar Prabhat Singh said. Besides Rizwan Zaheer and his daughter, police have also arrested Zeba's husband Rameez (40), and their three associates — Shakeel (35), Merajul Haq alias Mama (42), and Mehfooz (20). Merajul Haq and Mehfooz were involved in the killing, while others were involved in

the murder conspiracy, the Circle Officer said. Police said that Rizwan Zaheer, a two-time MP and three-time MLA, has 14 criminal cases, against him. The criminal cases include those of murder and attempt to murder. During the last year's panchayat election, police booked Rizwan for creating nuisance and invoked National Security Act (NSA) against him. However, NSA could not be confirmed against him after the Advisory Board did not approve it, said Singh, adding that Merajul Haq too has criminal cases against him. Firoz Ahmed, a local businessman, had contested the panchayat elections as an Independent candidate, and later joined the SP in the presence of party president Akhilesh Yadav. His wife, Khekasha, is the chairperson of the Tulsipur Nagar Panchayat at present, a post held by Firoz earlier. “During interrogation, Mehfooz admitted they were planning to kill Firoz for last one-and-a-half month and had made three attempts earlier, but failed. He said that Rizwan and others were unhappy with Firoz's rising popularity and suspected that he may get the Samajwadi Party ticket to contest from Tulsipur constituency. Since Rizwan wanted to get the ticket for his daughter, they decided to eliminate Firoz,” said the Circle Officer. Police said they have recovered weapons, iron rods, knives, and cellphones that were used in the crime from the accused.

HC grants interim bail to Majithia

NAVJEEVAN GOPAL
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 10

AKALI DAL got a shot in arm in poll bound Punjab as Akali leader Bikram Singh Majithia was granted interim bail by Punjab and Haryana High Court in drugs case registered against him under sections of NDPS Act on December 20. In the interim bail plea, as per Majithia's lawyer Damanbir Singh Sobti, it was pointed out that Senior IPS officer and former Punjab DGP Siddharth Chattopadhyaya, exercising “special powers” conferred to him in his capacity as Punjab Police chief on December 27 promoted Assistant Inspector General Balraj Singh's son Princepreet Singh from Sub Inspector to the local rank of inspector, as reported by *The Indian Express* on Sunday. Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi reacted to Punjab and Haryana Court directions by saying that “[Majithia got] the bail,



SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia

but the case has not ended. He will have to appear before [the SIT] on Wednesday.” Channi said this while responding to media in Moga where he had gone to induct actor Sonu Sood's sister Malvika Sood Sachar in party fold. SAD spokesperson Daljit Singh Cheema had questioned the promotion of Princepreet on Saturday and told *The Indian Express* that “This is very serious. Right from appointment of DGP Chattopadhyaya who was brought in to register a false case against Bikram Singh Majithia this is all malafide. Another thing has been added.” A Mohali court had turned down Majithia's plea for anticipatory bail in the case following which he moved High Court.

Off Assembly poll heat, BJP raises pitch on Telangana front

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD JANUARY 10

FROM TALKING OF “Dharma Yuddh” to quips that “BJP leaders are not biryaniis who could be eaten”, the BJP has raised the pitch over the recent arrest of its Telangana chief, Bandi Sanjay Kumar (later released on bail), sending a series of former and present BJPCMs to take on the TRS government. The Karimnagar MP was arrested on January 2 night from BJP office in Karimnagar on charges of violating Covid norms, following protests against a government order transferring teachers and state government staff. A local court sent him to 14-day judicial custody, setting off BJP protests. While Telangana High Court granted Bandi bail on January 5, the party has not let off on what it calls Chief Minister K Chandrababhu Naidu's “repressive” tactics. With the Congress listless, the BJP believes it has an opportunity to occupy the vacant Opposition space in the state. The row over



Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar

Kumar's arrest follows criticism the TRS government faces over the paddy crisis in the state, with farmers putting pressure on it to acquire the bumper crop. The issue Kumar was protesting over has been gaining traction since the Telangana government last month passed an order saying the district collector and head of department will decide on postings and transfers for district cadre posts, including teachers and other officials. The government said the transfers were necessary as Telangana had created 23 new districts since its formation in 2014. Teachers and other government staff are protesting that their place of residence and seniority is not being taken into account and that employees are being transferred arbitrarily.

Manipur: BJP worker among 2 killed ahead of Assembly polls

JIMMY LEIVON
IMPHAL, JANUARY 10

A BJP worker close to a Manipur minister, along with his cousin, was gunned down at Samorou in Imphal West district Sunday night in what was termed by Chief Minister N Biren Singh as political violence in the poll-bound Northeast state. Police sources said an unknown assailant shot Abujam John, 57, who was close to Agriculture Minister O Lukhoh, and his cousin Abujam Sashikanta, a havildar in the India Reserve Battalion, near John's house around 10pm at Samorou Bazaar. They succumbed to injuries in different hospitals in Imphal, the sources added. Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, who visited the deceased men's families, termed it an attack on BJP workers and said the attackers will not be spared. And minister Lukhoh called the incident an act of cowardice. “Whatever their faults, they should be given a chance to mend their ways. Killing is not the solution,” he said. Political violence has increased in the Northeast state slated to go to the polls on February 27 and March 3. A college student was shot dead by alleged BJP workers in Heirok Thoubal district in December last year.

‘Ex-Muslims’ launch own party in Kerala

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 10

A GROUP of people “who abandoned their religion” have floated a new organisation called ‘Ex-Muslims of Kerala’, offering a platform and support to those who stopped practising Islam. The organization observed January 9 as ‘Ex-Muslims Day’. The outfit's president, Liyakkathali C M, said this is the first organisation of its kind in India. “We have formed a 10-member executive committee and membership campaign is on. Initially, we have identified 300 Muslims, who have abandoned their religion over the years, who openly come out in support of the organisation,” he said. He said the organisation aims to provide moral support to those who quit Islam. “There are many Muslims who have abandoned their religion but are reluctant to declare it openly as they fear repercussions from society. Many are forced to hide their identity. They fail to get support from even family and are targeted at places of work. We want to give support and courage to people who are willing to come out of the religion. Those who abandon religion should be allowed to live fearlessly,” he said. Liyakkathali said he had abandoned Islam two years ago “after I realized the hollowness of religion.”

The first to fly down to register his protest over Bandi's arrest was BJP president J P Nadda, who came to lead a rally. The plan was later scrapped as police cautioned that the meeting, expected to draw thousands of BJP workers, would be a Covid risk, but in a direct attack on Rao, Nadda accused the CM of being undemocratic and intolerant of any criticism, and of being afraid of the BJP. The tussle, he said, was a “Dharma Yuddh”. Since then, Union minister Bhagwanth Khuba, former Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh, Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma have held meetings, all well-attended, while ex-Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnis is coming Tuesday. Chouhan said CM Rao was “living in fear” and that, “A CM should respond when a senior Opposition party leader raises any issue, not drag and arrest him.” Raman Singh said “Nizam's rule” runs in Telangana.

Ex-DU professor
Saibaba tests
Covid positive
in Nagpur jail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

FORMER DELHI University professor G N Saibaba, lodged at Nagpur Central Jail, has tested positive for Covid-19, his wife said in a statement on Monday. Saibaba had also tested positive in February last year.

He is serving a life term after being convicted for Naxal links by a Gadchiroli court in 2017.

Saibaba's wife Vasantha said that information was received by her that he has tested positive for Covid-19 again. She has appealed that the former professor, who is 90 per cent disabled, should be shifted to a hospital.

"The jail authorities have not contacted us yet. He earlier wrote to us saying that he was feeling extremely weak and was suffering from sleepless nights because of constant back and hip pain. I am very worried how he will endure this Covid attack, as he did not recover properly after the last time he got Covid," Vasantha said in the statement.

She added that his immunity has become worse. "His immunity has become much worse and his body's ability to survive is slowly dwindling. I urge the Nagpur jail authorities and the court to please urgently admit him to a hospital where he can be monitored as his heart issue coupled with Covid can cause serious complications," read the statement.

Bengaluru: Six
dead as tipper
truck topples
onto 3 vehicles

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JANUARY 10

SIX PEOPLE, including four of a family, died and two were injured after a tipper truck toppled onto three vehicles on the Bengaluru-Mysuru road on Monday.

According to the police, the incident took place in Kumbalgodu on the outskirts of Bengaluru city. The deceased have been identified as Nikhita Rani (29), Veenamma (42), Indrakumar (14) and Keerthi Kumar (40), all from a family that lived in Bengaluru's Magadi road; Shivaprakash (40), a native of Mysuru who wroked at Bidadi; and Jatin (30), a native of Kerala and resident of Peenya in Bengaluru. Nikhitha's husband Gajendra (38) and son Siddharth (9) have sustained injuries.

The tipper, carrying gravel stones, was heading towards Bengaluru. The police said as the tipper arrived near Kumbalgodu, the driver lost control and hit the median. The vehicle then fell over on two cars and a bike, crushing them. Nikhita Rani's family was traveling in one car, Shivaprakash was traveling in another and Jatin was on his bike. The tipper driver fled the spot.

Parents, son die
by suicide, act
streamed live on
Facebook; 5 held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JANUARY 10

"INSULTED" BY embezzlement allegations against their daughter, a couple and their son hanged themselves and streamed the act live on Facebook at Bakkhali area in South 24 Parganas district on Sunday. Five women have been arrested on charges of attempt to murder.

The deceased were identified as Shyamal Naskar (53), Rita Naskar (43) and their son Abhishek Naskar (25).

The family was suspected to be upset over allegations that their married daughter Poonam Das misappropriated funds of a self-help group.

According to local sources, a few women from the self-help group protested against Poonam, a resident of Sutanpur in Diamond Harbour, and insulted her in front of her parents on Saturday night. They allegedly beat the family too.

The family lodged a police complaint against the protesters the same day. The next morning, Shyamal, Rita and Abhishek hanged themselves near a temple, police said. Abhishek streamed the incident live from his Facebook page.

Precautionary vaccine jabs rolled
out, 9.6 lakh get 3rd dose on Day 1

EXPRESS NEW SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

AS INDIA rolled out the precautionary dose of Covid-19 vaccines to three priority groups — the elderly with comorbidities, healthcare workers, and frontline workers — 9.68 lakh people were administered the third dose across the country on Monday.

India's active caseload touched 723 lakh cases on the day, and the Health Ministry wrote to states that the need for hospitalisation "may also change rapidly".

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that 5-10% active cases have needed hospitalisation so far in the present surge, compared to 20-23% hospitalisation seen in the second surge last year in May.

Bhushan iterated that "augmenting human resources", particularly healthcare workers, "assumes critical importance".

The communication came a day after the ministry told the states to utilise services of MBBS students, interns, senior residents, junior residents as well third and fourth-year BSc nursing students.

Bhushan wrote: "The situation is dynamic and evolving, the need for hospitalization may also change rapidly. All states are advised to keep a daily watch on the situation of the total number of active cases, cases under home isolation, number of hospitalised cases, cases on oxygen beds, ICU

PRECAUTIONARY JABS:
TOP 5 ON DAY 1

Gujarat	1.55 lakh
Andhra Pradesh	1.21 lakh
Rajasthan	95,540
Karnataka	81,728
Madhya Pradesh	65,165

India began administering Precaution Doses. Kudos to those who have got vaccinated today. I would request all those who are eligible to get vaccinated..."

— NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER, TWEETED

beds, and ventilatory support. Based on this monitoring, the requirement of healthcare workers... must be also reviewed on a daily basis," Bhushan pointed out that it is "important to conserve health workers by initiating staggering, wherever possible, and by restricting elective procedures in the hospitals".

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya reviewed public health preparedness to Covid-19 in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Goa, Dadra & Naagr Haveli, and Daman & Diu.



J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha gets a precautionary dose of Covid-19 vaccine at Government District Hospital in Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, on Monday. Express

Nitish, Bommai test positive for Covid

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday tested positive for Covid-19. He has been in home isolation. Earlier, both Deputy Chief Ministers Tarkishore Prasad and Renu Devi, and six other ministers had tested Covid positive.



Nitish Kumar

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Monday said he has tested positive for Covid-19, with mild symptoms. Recently, his cabinet colleagues — R Ashoka and B C Nagesh — had tested positive.



Basavaraj Bommai

IN V-C'S RELUCTANCE TO OFFER DLITT TO PRESIDENT, KHAN SMELLS INSTRUCTIONS FROM 'SOMEONE'

Kerala Governor slams V-C for defying his direction

SHAJUPHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 10

CONTINUING HIS run-ins with the Pinarayi Vijayan government, Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Monday criticised Kerala University vice-chancellor V P Mahadevan Pillai's reluctance to consider his recommendation for conferring an honorary DLitt on President Ram Nath Kovind, and said that "someone seems to have given him (Pillai) the instructions".

Khan also questioned the "quality" of Pillai as V-C. Referring to the content and style of Pillai's letter to him, Khan said, "My head hung in shame (after reading it).... Pity, the V-C can't write two sentences properly.... This is the quality of a V-C. This university is one of the oldest in the country."

The Indian Express could not get Pillai for a comment despite repeated attempts.

Pillai's reluctance to place the Governor's recommendation before the Syndicate was one of the reasons behind the stand-off between the state government



Governor Arif Mohammed Khan

and Khan. Last month, Khan had written to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, stating that he wants to step down as chancellor of state universities due to "continuous political interference" in universities, and "erosion of their autonomy".

On Monday, Khan said, "I had given him (V-C) direction to

convene the Syndicate meeting to discuss the issue of conferring DLitt on the highest dignitary of the country. He sought the opinion of individual members, but he did not convene the meeting. Somebody else seems to have given him instructions."

Khan said he had suggested conferring DLitt on Kovind, as it would be an honour for the university. "I have given the V-C clear direction to convene the Syndicate. He has defied the Chancellor, who has the power to take disciplinary action. So far, I have refrained from taking action, but this cannot go on," he said.

PM SECURITY BREACH

Got warning calls,
complain SC lawyers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

SHORTLY BEFORE the Supreme Court took up a petition seeking a probe into the breach of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security on Monday, some lawyers of the top court complained of receiving pre-recorded messages from a number registered outside India, accepting responsibility for blocking the Prime Minister's convoy in Punjab and warning the court against doing anything that will help the government.

The lawyers said they received two calls at approximately 10.40 am and 12.36 pm.

Advocate Nishant Katneswarkar, formerly standing counsel of Maharashtra in the apex court, said the call came from a number that on display showed it was being made from the UK. Later in the day, the Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association (SCAORA) wrote to the Secretary General of the court, bringing the matter to his attention.

The letter said "several Advocates on Record" of the court "received an anonymous, automated, pre-recorded call... fastening responsibility for Prime Minister Modi's security breach during his visit to Punjab on 05.01.2022 on Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) from USA".

"...It was stated that SFJ is responsible for blocking PM Modi's

cavalcade at Hussainwala flyover in Punjab. The caller further warned the Hon'ble Supreme Court judges to refrain from hearing the public interest litigation filed by an NGO, Lawyers Voice, seeking probe into the security breach on the ground that the Hon'ble Supreme Court has not been able to punish the culprits of the 1984-anti-Sikh riots," the letter said.

Seeking immediate action, the SCAORA said this amounted to violation of privacy of the Advocates on Record "as their registered mobile numbers are out in public domain and have been compromised as all confidential data and sensitive information pertaining to cases before the SC and banking details are stored on their respective mobile phones and the miscreants may misuse the sensitive data, if the mobile phones are hacked".

Deepak Prakash, an Advocate on Record, also lodged a criminal complaint with the Delhi Police Commissioner in this connection.

The letter said the "callers have claimed themselves to be a group from the United Kingdom and are calling from untraceable numbers..."

It said "all Advocates have been receiving such threatening calls since morning, which indicate that they want to bring hatred, contempt and hostility to disrupt the government and public peace and tranquility if the Hon'ble Supreme Court hears the PM Security breach case".

Tripura violence:
SC restrains cops
from acting on
activist's tweets

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE SUPREME Court on Monday restrained the Tripura Police from pursuing any action on the tweets by an activist, Samiullah Shabbir Khan, on the alleged communal violence in the state last year.

Issuing a notice on Khan's plea, a bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and A S Bopanna directed the cyber cell of the state police not to act in furtherance of its notice asking Twitter to take down the tweets and to also provide details of his IP address and phone number for investigation.

Khan's counsel informed the bench that he had received a notice from Twitter about a communication from the Superintendent of Police (Cyber Crime), Crime Branch, Tripura Police on November 22, 2021 referring to the registration of cases under various sections of Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The communication had also sought removal of the contents of certain twitter accounts and asked for details of their user, their browsing details and phone numbers.

Khan's counsel contended that writing about violence will not attract any of the offences mentioned in the police communication and that it amounted to an invasion of privacy.

NCW wants actor's account
blocked for tweet against Saina

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE NATIONAL Commission for Women (NCW) has asked Twitter to block the account of actor Siddharth for his "lewd and inappropriate" tweet against badminton player Saina Nehwal and also wrote to the Maharashtra police seeking registration of an FIR against him.

A tweet by Siddharth commenting on Nehwal's remark over the alleged lapse in the security of PM Narendra Modi during his Punjab visit had netizens fuming.

The NCW claimed the comment was misogynist, outrages the modesty of a woman and



Actor Siddharth

amounts to disrespect and insults the dignity of women.

Reacting to the row over his remark, Siddharth said, "Nothing disrespectful was intended, said or insinuated."

Nehwal, however, said, "I'm not sure what he meant... I used to like him as an actor but this was not nice. He can express himself with better words but I guess it's Twitter and you remain noticed with such words and comments. If the security of the PM of India is an issue then I'm not sure what is secure in the country."

CHHATTISGARH

Court quashes assets FIRs
against former CM's aide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, JANUARY 10

CHHATTISGARH High Court on Monday quashed FIRs filed against Aman Singh — a Principal Secretary to former chief minister Raman Singh — and his wife Yasmeen Singh in connection with alleged disproportionate assets. The FIRs were filed against the couple by Chhattisgarh Anti Corruption Bureau and Economic Offences Wing.

Aman Singh had moved the High Court against the FIRs filed

by the state government on complaint of social activist Uchit Sharma. The court quashed the FIRs as they couldn't "disclose commission of offence" under the provisions applied in it.

A bench of Justice Narendra Vyas found that "all the allegations levelled against the petitioner are prima facie based upon probabilities and on the basis of probability any person cannot be prosecuted".

Singh was an influential officer under the BJP regime and was close to the then chief minister Raman Singh.

बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda

Lohia Nagar Branch:
PC Colony, Opp. Shalimar Sweet,
Kankarbagh, Lohia Nagar, Patna.
Web: www.bankofbaroda.com
Email: LOHIYA@bankofbaroda.com

POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)
[As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas,
The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Baroda under the Securitization 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 dated 08.07.2021, calling upon the Borrower M/s Narayan Infra Projects, Partners 1. Mr. Hariom Narayan Roy, 2. Mrs. Chanchla Priyadarshini to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being ₹27,02,997.74 (Rupees Twenty seven lakh two thousand nine hundred ninety seven and paise seventy four only) as on 07.07.2021 (Inclusive of interest upto 07.07.2021) together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on this the **05th day of January of the year 2022**.

The Borrower/Guarantors/Mortgagors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Bank of Baroda for an amount of being ₹27,02,997.74 (Rupees Twenty seven lakh two thousand nine hundred ninety seven and paise seventy four only) as on 07.07.2021 (Inclusive of interest upto 07.07.2021) and further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. **Description of the Immovable Property/ies/Stock/Bookdebts charged to Bank of Baroda.**

All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Flat No.404, 4th Floor, Bindeshwar Enclave Apartment situated at Thana No.02, Tauzi No.-5240, Khata No.502 Part of Survey Plot No.1143 and 1144, Mauza-Mainpura, Mohalla Indrapuri, Road No.5, Survey Thana-Phulwari Sharif at Present Thana-Patliputra, Sub and Sadar Registry Office and District-Patna Property in the name of Mrs. Chanchla Priyadarshini W/O-Mr. Hariom Narayan Roy Vide Sale Deed No.3024 dated 18/03/2014, Bounded: North-Common Lobby, South-Open Space, East-Flat No.402, West-Open Space.

Place : Patna
Date : 05.01.2022

Authorized Officer
Bank of Baroda

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
Bank of India

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

APPENDIX - IV, Rule 8(1)

Possession Notice (for Immovable 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
Mr. Ajay Kumar & Nishata Dayal	(i) Retail Business Centre Branch (ii) Demand Notice Date : 04.06.2021 , ₹ 10,30,543.76 + interest and incidental charges w.e.f. 31.03.2021	EQM of Land & Building, Flat No. 301, 2nd floor, A2 Lavisa Town, Mauza: Chakjalal Chharidar, Plot No. 100, 101, 102, 103, 159, 158, 170, Khata No. 3,128,133,100, 90, 73, 169, Thana No. 192 & 201, Patna, Area: 1409 sq.ft., owned by Nishata Dayal vide Title Deed No. 5508 dated 02.08.2019. Boundary:- North: Open Space of the Apartment, South: Flat No. 304, East: Flat No. 302, West: Open Space of the Apartment.	06.01.2022

*** With further interest at applicable rate till repayment.**
Date: 10.01.2022
Place: Patna

Authorized Officer
Bank of India

भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान कोषिकोड
आई एफ् एम् कोषिकोडो कैम्पस - पी ओ, कोषिकोडो-673570, केरल

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT KOZHIKODE
IIM Kozhikode Campus P.O, Kozhikode-673 570, Kerala

FACULTY RECRUITMENT
ADVERTISEMENT NO. A-06/2021

IIM Kozhikode invites online applications from Indian nationals including Overseas Citizens of India for the post of **Associate Professor (OBC-01, SC-01) in the following areas:**

- Marketing Management
- Finance, Accounting and Control

Minimum Qualification: Ph.D. or equivalent degree in appropriate subjects with **first class or equivalent at the preceding degree** and with excellent academic record throughout.

Experience: Minimum 6 years of teaching/ research / industrial experience of which 3 years should be at the level of Assistant Professor or equivalent. Experience gained while pursuing Ph.D. will not be considered.

For more details, please visit the link: <https://iimk.ac.in/recruitment>

Last date of submitting application is 20.01.2022

Sd/-
Date : 24.12.2021

Dean (FA&D)

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,GOURAV KUMAR S/O UMESH, R/O D-3/504, GALI.NO.10, PUSTA -3, SONIA VIHAR, DELHI- 110094, have changed my name to GAURAV KUMAR 0040598855-5

I,hitherto known as Diksha Kumari,D/o Sh.Raj Kumar Gambhir,R/O WZ-112,Gali No.3, Ram-Chowk,Palam-Colony, Palam Village, South West- Delhi,Delhi-110045,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Kirti Gambhir. 0040598863-3

I,YASHITA KHANDNELIYA,D/O SHRI.AMAR NATH KHANDNELIYA, R/O-49-D, GALI.NO. 3,MOHAN-PARK, WEST-GURU ANGAD-NAGAR,LAXMI-NAGAR,DELHI-110092, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME YASHITA TO YASHITA KHANDNELIYA,FOR FUTURE ALL PURPOSES. 0040598858-5

I,Vishal Deval S/o Manoj Kumar, R/o X-123/43, Street.no-6, Near-Shiv Mandir, Bharamपुरi, Delhi-110053, have changed my name to Vishal All Purposes. 0040598855-8

I,Vinod Kumar S/o Sh Manohar Lal,R/O C-43,Raghuvir-Enclave, Najafgarh, New Delhi-110043, have changed my name,from Vinod Kumar Vashisth to Vinod Kumar,for all future purposes. 0040598863-1

I,Sapam Johny Singh,S/o Sapam Angou R/o WP-43/C,Wazirpur Village,Ashok Vihar,Delhi-110052,changed my name to Johny Sapam. 0040598858-8

I,Rutuja Rajendraprakash Sharma W/o Atul S Tambe R/o Santushti, 6099/2, Vasant-kunj, Delhi have changed my name to Rutuja Atul Tambe for all purposes. 0040598817-1

I,Reena,W/o-Rajiv,R/o-1332, Delhi Admn Flats,Type-2,Gulabi Bagh,Delhi-110007,Have Changed my Name from Dolly to Reena both are same person. 0040598858-1

I,Rakesh S/o Omprakash Khanna,R/o H.No-4,Sector-2, Radha Puran Estate,Po- Krishna Nagar, Mathura,have changed my name to Rakesh Kumar Khanna. 0040598855-6

I,Rishabh Malik,S/o Dhamar Pal Singh R/o-T-7, Dewan Estate, Bhagwati Garden,D.K.Mohan Garden,Delhi-110059,inform that in my 10th-Class educational-documents my name was written as Rishab Malik,whereas my correct name is Rishabh Malik. 0040598863-5

I,Sushma Rani, W/O-NK Mukesh Kumar, S/O- Sh. Parkash Chand, No- 13766374H,VPO- Nakroth,Tehsil-Ghanari,District-Una-HP.Declare that in my husband's army records my name being a wife has been wrongly written as Sushma Devi instead of Sushma Rani and my D o B is 16-06-1984 as per my School records, Pan and Aadhar card. All concerned to note please. 0020432537-1

It is for general information that I,AJAY KUMAR,son of,SHRI KAPIL DEV,residing at,11st 817/14, Sangam-Vihar,New Delhi-110080,declare that name of my wife has been wrongly-written as SONU in my son's namely YASH KUMAR SHAH aged-14-years in his birth certificate.The actual-name of my wife is SONA DEVI respectively which may be amended accordingly. 0040598873-10

I,Nem Singh Tarkar also known as Nem Singh,aged about-49 years,S/O Late Sh.Parma Tarkar,R/o 10B,Krishna-Nagar Mathura,Uttar Pradesh-281004,inform that Nem Singh Tarkar and Nem Singh both are same person and that I am the biological father of Radha Rani Tarkar. 0040598855-10

I, Yuvam Tewari S/O Pankaj Kumar Tewari, R/o 1106A Aman Castle, Sector-4, Plot No-22 Vaishali, I.E Sahibabad S/O, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010. Declare that Name of My Father has been wrongly written as Pankaj Tewari in my 10th Class Certificate No-1122167. The actual name of My Father is Pankaj Kumar Tewari, which may be amended accordingly. 0070768224-1

I, Sunil Kumar S/O Tilak Chand bansal, R/o 283, Subhash Khand Gali, Arna, A.N.D.C, Kalkaji, Delhi-110019, Declare that name of Mine & My Wife and My Minor Son has been wrongly written as Sunil Bansal & Preeti Bansal and Jayant Bansal in my minor Son Jayant Vikram Bansal, aged about 14 Years, in his School Record. The actual name of Mine & My Wife and My Minor Son are Sunil Kumar & Preeti Bansal and Jayant Vikram Bansal, which may be amended accordingly. 0070768222-1

I, Ravendra Kumar Sharma S/o Hajari Lal Sharma,R/O Village Post-Surfajwali, Pargna. Tehsil-Khurja, Dist- Bulandshar, confirm that in My Daughter Nidhi Sharma Documents my name has been written-as Ravindra Kumar Sharma instead of Ravendra Kumar Sharma and my wife's name written-as Seema Sharma instead of Pushp Lata Sharma. Correct name of Mine and My Wife is Ravendra Kumar Sharma and Pushp Lata Sharma Respectively. 0070768251-1

I,Parmjeet Kaur W/o-Dalip Singh R/o-B-61,Uday Vihar,Nilothi Extn,Nangloi Delhi-110041,have changed my name to Paramjeet kaur. 0040598858-4

I,Anil Gola S/O Prama Nihal R/o-78 Church Road Bangad New Delhi-110014, have changed my name from Anil Gola to Anil Kumar for all purposes. 0040598734-1

I,SANJEEV KUMAR AGRAWAL S/O Brp Agarwal R/o plot no.322, F-4, Gyan Khand-1 Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010 have changed my name to Sanjeev AGRAWAL for all Purposes. 0040593817-2

I,SWEETY AGRAWAL W/O SANJEEV AGRAWAL R/o plot no.322,F-4, Gyan Khand-1 Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010 have changed my name to SWEETY for all Purposes. 0040593817-3

I,RAGHVENDRA KUMAR,S/O BRIJ MOHAN GUPTA,R/O FLAT.NO. 321, FF-1, SECTOR 3, ONYX-PLAZA, VASUNDHRA, GHAZIABAD,U.P-201012. Changed my name to RAGHVENDRA KUMAR GUPTA. 0040598863-9

I,PRASHANT DAYAL,S/O KESHAV DAYAL, R/O E-701, RAJHANS APARTMENT, PLOT.NO.4/4, AHINSA-KHAND-1, INDIRAPURAM,GHAZIABAD, U.P-201014, Changed my name to PRASHANT DAYAL MATHUR. 0040598863-8

I,Nita W/o Stave Nath,R/o B-30, Shish Ram Park Uttam-Nagar Delhi-59, have changed my name to Neeta Nath. 0040598855-2

I,Narendra Morwal,S/o Sh. Kartar Singh permanent,R/o 225,VPO-Daulat Pur,New-Delhi-110043,have changed my name from Narendra Morwal to Narendar Morwal,for all,future purposes. 0040598863-4

I,Mithu Biswas,W/o-Vinay Biswas R/o-C-121, PratapVihar,Part-II, Kirari SulemanNagar, Delhi-86,inform that, my name,is wrongly-written, in my LIC-policy(No.33332257) as Meethu Biswas instead,of Mithu Biswas which,may be,amended-accordingly. 0040598866-1

I,Rakesh S/o Omprakash Khanna,R/o H.No-4,Sector-2, Radha Puran Estate,Po- Krishna Nagar, Mathura,have changed my name to Rakesh Kumar Khanna. 0040598855-6

I,Rishabh Malik,S/o Dhamar Pal Singh R/o-T-7, Dewan Estate, Bhagwati Garden,D.K.Mohan Garden,Delhi-110059,inform that in my 10th-Class educational-documents my name was written as Rishab Malik,whereas my correct name is Rishabh Malik. 0040598863-5

I,Sushma Rani, W/O-NK Mukesh Kumar, S/O- Sh. Parkash Chand, No- 13766374H,VPO- Nakroth,Tehsil-Ghanari,District-Una-HP.Declare that in my husband's army records my name being a wife has been wrongly written as Sushma Devi instead of Sushma Rani and my D o B is 16-06-1984 as per my School records, Pan and Aadhar card. All concerned to note please. 0020432537-1

It is for general information that I,AJAY KUMAR,son of,SHRI KAPIL DEV,residing at,11st 817/14, Sangam-Vihar,New Delhi-110080,declare that name of my wife has been wrongly-written as SONU in my son's namely YASH KUMAR SHAH aged-14-years in his birth certificate.The actual-name of my wife is SONA DEVI respectively which may be amended accordingly. 0040598873-10

I,Nem Singh Tarkar also known as Nem Singh,aged about-49 years,S/O Late Sh.Parma Tarkar,R/o 10B,Krishna-Nagar Mathura,Uttar Pradesh-281004,inform that Nem Singh Tarkar and Nem Singh both are same person and that I am the biological father of Radha Rani Tarkar. 0040598855-10

I, Yuvam Tewari S/O Pankaj Kumar Tewari, R/o 1106A Aman Castle, Sector-4, Plot No-22 Vaishali, I.E Sahibabad S/O, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010. Declare that Name of My Father has been wrongly written as Pankaj Tewari in my 10th Class Certificate No-1122167. The actual name of My Father is Pankaj Kumar Tewari, which may be amended accordingly. 0070768224-1

I, Sunil Kumar S/O Tilak Chand bansal, R/o 283, Subhash Khand Gali, Arna, A.N.D.C, Kalkaji, Delhi-110019, Declare that name of Mine & My Wife and My Minor Son has been wrongly written as Sunil Bansal & Preeti Bansal and Jayant Bansal in my minor Son Jayant Vikram Bansal, aged about 14 Years, in his School Record. The actual name of Mine & My Wife and My Minor Son are Sunil Kumar & Preeti Bansal and Jayant Vikram Bansal, which may be amended accordingly. 0070768222-1

I, Ravendra Kumar Sharma S/o Hajari Lal Sharma,R/O Village Post-Surfajwali, Pargna. Tehsil-Khurja, Dist- Bulandshar, confirm that in My Daughter Nidhi Sharma Documents my name has been written-as Ravindra Kumar Sharma instead of Ravendra Kumar Sharma and my wife's name written-as Seema Sharma instead of Pushp Lata Sharma. Correct name of Mine and My Wife is Ravendra Kumar Sharma and Pushp Lata Sharma Respectively. 0070768251-1

I,Asarkar Monika Vasant alias Monika Vasantrao Asarkar alias Monika Sanjay Dehran D/O Asarkar Vasant, W/O Sanjay Badriprasad Dehran R/o B-56, Ground Floor, Ardee City, Sector-52, Gurgaon, Haryana-122011, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Monica Dehran. 0070768220-1

It is for general information that I,SHOAIB KHAN,S/O IQRAR KHAN R/O A-76,Gali.No-2, Ziauddin Near New Mustafabad, North East Delhi,Delhi-110094, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly-written as SHOAIB AKHTAR and IQRAR AHMAD in my 10th-Class Marksheet And Certificate.The actual-name of mine and my father are SHOAIB KHAN and IQRAR KHAN respectively which may be amended accordingly. 0040598873-8

I,Mehrehmat Hora,S/o Sh. Harpreet Singh Hora,R/o Road. No-7, House.No.3, Punjabi-Bagh Extension,New Delhi-110026, have changed my name,from Mehrehmat Hora to Mehr Rehmat Hora,for all,future purposes. 0040598858-10

I,Kushagr Arora,S/o-Ashok Arora,R/O-B-36,Ground Floor, South Extension,Part-1,New Delhi-110049,have changed my name to Kushagra Arora(both are same persons) permanently. 0040598882-6

I,Kaushlya,W/o Mahendra Singh,R/O C-1/15,Block C-1, New Ashok-Nagar, Vasundhra-Enclave,Delhi-110096, have changed my name to Kaushlya Devi, permanently. 0040598863-7

I,Jitendra Singh S/O Nanhe Singh Yadav R/O,50-B, Deepak-Vihar Chander Vihar Nilothi Extn,Delhi-110041,have changed my name to Jitender Singh. 0040598855-3

I,Himanshu S/o Sh.Bhagwat Singh R/o-H.No.3/253, Khichripur,Delhi-110091,have changed my name to Himanshu Singh Jhijaria,for all, future purpose. 0040598855-7

I,Gagan Deep Singh S/o Amarjeet Singh R/o B1/185 Upper ground floor,Paschim Vihar, Delhi, have changed my name to Gagan Wadhawan for all future purposes. 0040598838-1

I,Chandan Deka,S/o Parikshit Kumar Deka R/o-G-1/11, Ganga,Triveni Apartment Near, DC,Chowk,Sector-9, Rohini, Delhi-110085, changed my name to Chandan Kumar Deka. 0040598858-9

I,Bharti W/O Ajay Kumar R/O, 101, Swastik kunj-Apartment Sector-13, Rohini Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Bharti Dhawan. 0040598863-2

I, Ravinder Singh Matharoo S/o-Rajwant Singh Matharoo R/o:A-353, Shastri Nagar, New Delhi-52 Have Changed My Name to Ravinder Singh. 0040598826-1

I,AYUSH KRISHNATRY,S/o SH. SANJEEV SHARMA,R/O-4340, NEAR-AMBEDKAR GATE,WALLI GALI, RAM-NAGAR-EXTN., SHAHDARA,DELHI-10032,have changed my name to AYUSH KRISHNATRAY,For all purposes. 0040598855-1

I, Sachin Gupta S/o Krishan Gopal Gupta R/o B-33, New Gupta Colony, Near Nanak Piao Gurudwara, Delhi-110009 have changed my minor Son's name Shorya Gupta to Shaurya Gupta for all purposes. 0040598839-1

I, SAYYED SHAMIRA PARVEEN, D/O SHER ALI, R/O H.NO.B4-1604, S. EMPIRE PANCHSHEEL GREEN2, SEC-16, BISRAKH, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR (GREATER NOIDA WEST) UTTAR PRADESH- 201308, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAYYAD SHAMIRA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE. 0070768225-1

I, NITIN GARG S/o Shri RAM KUMAR GARG R/O H-604, TOWER-A, AJNARA PRIDE, SECTOR-4B, VASUNDHARA, GHAZIABAD, UP-201012 have changed my name from NITIN GARG to NITIN KUMAR GARG forever. 0040598841-1

I,Ajay Dhawan S/O Surender Kumar R/O, 101,Swastik kunj Apartment,Sector-13, Rohini Delhi-110085,have changed my name to Ajay Kumar. 0040598855-9

I, Muhd Nafis,S/O Amiruddin R/O, H.No-687, Pocket-5, Sector-A-6, Narela Delhi-110040, have changed my name to Nafees. 0040598856-3

I, MANNINDER KAUR D/o HARBANS SINGH R/o 24/14-B, Block 24/1 -AB to 24/94-AB, Tilak Nagar, Delhi-110018 have changed my name to MANINDER KAUR 40598828-1

I,BHOORA KHAN,S/O,ALI JAN, ADD-E-2, H.NO.1066, GALI.NO, 18,NEHRU VIHAR MUSTAFABAD, NORTH EAST DELHI-110094. Changed my name to BHURA KHAN, permanently. 0040598858-6

I, Ankit Kumar Sharma/Ankit Sukhdave Sharma S/o Sukhdave Sharma R/o Flat No 802, Ruby-2, Gardenia Glamour, Sector-3, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201012 have changed my name to Ankit Sharma for all future purposes. 0040598815-1

I,AMITA SAXENA W/o Yogendra Prakash Saxena, R/o 106, Charms Solitaire, Plot No-14, Mall Road, Ahinsa Khand-2, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, UP-201014 have changed my name from Amita Saxena to Amita forever. 0040598816-1

I,Yasmeen D/o Jamal Mohammed Nasir Saifi R/o D-2A, Lord Krishna Road, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi-110033, have changed my name to Yasmeen Saifi for all purposes 0070768262-1

I,Rajshekhar S/O Devendra Singh R/O 17 Verma Park, Gali number 12 Gandhi Colony Muzaffarnagar Uttar Pradesh-251001, have changed my name to Rajshekhar Raghuvanshi 0070768255-1

I,Rajesh S/o Sher Singh R/O 19/159 Dakshin puri D Ambekar Nagar, New Delhi-110062 have changed my name to Rajesh Kumar. 70768231-1

I,Prem Kishore S/O Bhagi Rath R/O-B-1168 Transit camp, Govind Puri Kalkaji New Delhi 110019 inform that my correct name is Prem Kishore and not Ram Kishore as mentioned in my driving License No. P03042008573315 40598831-1

I,SUSHIL KUMAR KATULA,S/O BANAK CHAND KATULA,R/O N-1/48-A, SHALIMAR BAGH, DELHI-88,have changed my name to SUSHIL KUMAR. 0040598855-4

I,Nitin S/O, Rajinder Singh R/O Flat On 34 Pocket 6 Site 3 Nasirpur Dwarika New Delhi 110045 have changed my name to Nitin Singh for all purposes. 0040598843-1

I,Minakshi W/o Prashant Kumar R/o 629, Sector-14,Gurgaon, Haryana-122001 have changed my name to Mini Sharma for all purposes. 0040598841-1

I,Mohd Anas S/O, Muhd Nafis R/O,H.No-687, Pocket-5,Sector-A-6, Narela Delhi-110040,have changed my name to Anas. 0040598858-2

I,Prachi Subhash Saraswat D/O, Subhash Chandar Saraswat R/o T-6-Flat -2102 Tata Primanti Garden Estate Sector 72 Gurgaon 122101 have changed my name to Prachi Saraswat 0040598822-1

I,Mahendra Kumar,S/o Nathu Singh R/O C-1/15,Block.C-1, New Ashok-Nagar, Vasundhra-Enclave, Delhi-110096,have changed my name to Mahendra Singh, permanently. 0040598863-6

I,KAUSHAR PARVEEN,W/O. BHURA KHAN,ADD-E-2,H NO, 1066,GALI NO.18, NEHRU-VIHAR MUSTAFABAD,NORTH EAST DELHI-110094, Changed my name to KAUSAR PARVEEN, permanently. 0040598858-7

LOST & FOUND

I,Paramjit Kaur Bindra,W/o Brijinder Pal Singh Bindra, C-89, sector-30,Gautam Buddha Nagar Noida(UP)Lost Demand letter 433/C2,Sec-34, Rohini, application-14063 Proty-17305, finder contact-9711101131. 0040598863-10

I,Sumitra Kaushik,W/o-Janak Raj Kaushik,inform that I,have lost,demand cum allotment letter,possession letter,NOC for,water & electricity,site possession letter of flat-no.443,metro Apartment, Jahangirpuri, Delhi-110033. 0040598866-10

PUBLIC NOTICE
be it known to my clients (1) JAGDISH PRASAD S/O LATE SH. RAM KUMAR AND (2) SMT. BIMALA DEVI W/O SH. JAGDISH PRASAD BOTH RESIDING AT OF B-115, GALI NO. 5, VIJAY VIHAR, PHASE-II, DELHI-110085 have discovered and severed all their relations with their son namely PAWAN KUMAR AND HIS WIFE RENU AND THEIR SON NAMELY KESHAV AND debarred them from all movable and immovable properties/assets due to their misbehavior, unfamiliar activities, intolerable act, misconduct and going against my clients. Anybody dealing with them in civil and criminal matter shall be doing at his/her their own risk, cost and responsibility and my clients family shall not be liable for their any act. Sd/- KAMAL SINGH (ADVOCATE) Enrl. No. D-748/2014

PUBLIC NOTICE
As per instructions/ guideline of my Client Mr. Rakesh Mittal S/o Late Shri Gopi Chand R/o A-30, Nirman Vihar, Delhi-110092, it is stated that his Property's previous Chain document named SALE DEED NO. 802, Ruby-2, VOLUME NO. 913 ON PAGES 172-174 DATED 28-12-1981 REGD. WITH S.R. DADR, GHAZIABAD, U.P. related to Property/ Land measuring 1 Bigha 7 Biswa Pukhtia, situated in area of Village Mashipurpur Kanawani, Noida, Tehsil Dadri, District Ghaziabad, U.P. has been mislaid and not traceable despite of best efforts. If anyone traced this same plot's inform on M.No. 9810030340
Mayur Chauhan Advocate Enrolment No. D87/2019 CHAMBER NO. G-308, KARKARDOMIA COURT, SHAHDARA, DELHI

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the public on behalf of IDFC first Bank Ltd., that Mr. Satish Chand Singhal was the owner of Property No.63, area measuring 40.25 sq. yds, Situated at New Gandhi Nagar Ghaziabad Tehsil and District- Ghaziabad, the said property, by virtue of Freehold Sale deed dated 12/05/2000, registered No. 5451, & after demise of Late Mr. Satish Chand Singhal his legal heirs Mr. Rakesh Singhal & Mr. Rajul Singhal are claiming ownership of the said property on the basis of registered will dated 14/03/2005, & on the basis of mutation letter fr the record of GDA vide mutation letter dated 04/10/2017. All persons including other legal heirs are hereby informed that above mentioned legal heir want to sale the said property, to Mr. Vaidhvir Gupta who is taking Loan facility from IDFC First Bank Ltd. for purchase of the said property, If anybody has any objection/s upon the claiming ownership of Mr. Rakesh Singhal & Mr. Rajul Singhal's sale, Misrepresentation, and any kind of objections kind inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 10 days of the present.
Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants) 200, 2nd Flr, 23 Shwaji Marg, Moti Nagar, Delhi-PF-15 011-41101273, kumarandassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that my clients Shri Manisha Ram Vashisht & his wife Smt. Saroj, Both R/O Plot no.2371, Sunder Nagar Sant Nirankari Sansang Bhawan, Surakhpur Road, Sector-2, Najafgarh, Delhi, have severed all their relations from his son and his wife namely Shri Dhanderam and Mrs. Roopa Sharma, due to their illegal activities, misdeed & misconduct and debarred them from all his movable and immovable properties. My clients have no concern whatsoever with them in any manner and shall not be liable for their any acts & omissions & whoever deals with them shall do so at his/her own risks & responsibilities.
PANKAJ BHARDWAJ(ADVOCATE) CH. NO. 424, LAWYERS BARBER BLOCK, DWARKA COURTS COMPLEX, SEC-10, DWARKA NEW DELHI-75 (M) 09999013024

PUBLIC NOTICE
I hereby notify to public at large that the client Shri Krishan Chand S/O Late Shri Dilip Chand R/o F-40, Gali No.13, Siddhanti Enclave, Bhagwati Garden Extension, Uttam Nagar, Delhi-110059, has disowned & debarred his Son namely Suraj Chand from his movable and immovable properties and assets and severs all relations with him because of his disobedience, misbehavior, indiscipline and for indulging in illegal activities towards my client and from now my client & his family members consisting of his wife and two daughters, would not be responsible for any act and deeds done by Suraj Chand who is residing separately and anybody dealing with him will be doing so at his own risk and responsibility. (MANU SHARMA) ADVOCATE, Enrl. No. D-684/2006

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that my client Sh. Ved Prakash and his wife Smt Madhu Gupta both residing at R/o H.No. 1084, Flat no. 2, Ground Floor, Gali Raja Uggat, Saint, Sita Ram Bazar, Delhi-110006 have served all their relations with their son Sumit Gupta and with his wife Priya Kashyap due to their bad habits. Both my client and named clients have also disowned and debarred his said son from all their movable and immovable properties. Anybody dealing with him shall be doing so at his/her own risk and responsibilities and my clients will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Sh. Sumit Gupta.
Sd/- ANKIT VERMA (ADVOCATE) ENROLLMENT NO. 4572/2017

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is for the information of general public that my client Basant Kumar S/o Late Sh. Lakshmi Narayan Thakur, R/o B-259, 1st Floor, Dharam Shala Road, Punjab National Bank, Sarup Nagar, Sirsa Pur, North West Delhi, Delhi-110014 has severed all relation and connections with his Son Amit Kumar have debarred and disowned them from all his movable and immovable properties because He is out of control of my client and Me will have no claim in his properties. Anybody dealing with him shall do so at his own risk and responsibility.
Sd/- Arvind Kumar Mishra (Advocate) Ch. No. 705, Dwarka Court, New Delhi-110075

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is informed that my clients Sh. Dinesh Gulati S/o Late Sh. Harbans Lal Gulati and his wife Smt. Vasudha Gulati, both R/O H. No. 236, Gajrawala town, Part-3, Delhi-09 have disowned & debarred their son Manik Gulati and his wife Chandni Chugh D/o Jagmohan Chugh from their entire moveable/ immovable properties. My clients shall not be responsible in any way for their acts or claim as they have broken all links whatsoever with them forever.
KARUNA CHATWAL(ADVOCATE) X-16A, CIVIL WINGS, TIS HAZARI COURTS, NEW DELHI-54 MOB.: 958836688

PUBLIC NOTICE
The General Public is hereby informed that my client Sh. Sharafat Ali S/o Sh. Chunna Master R/O B-2/56, Near Madina Masjid, Sewak Park, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 have disowned/debarred His Elder Son Wajahat Ali from his all movable & immovable properties and severed all relations in future due to his misbehavior and out of control of my client. Any person dealing with him shall be doing so at his/her own risk. My client and his family shall not be responsible. PRAVEEN RASTOGI (ADVOCATE)

For All Advertisement Booking
Call : 0120-6651214

**NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
(Through e-tendering)**

Name of work with its location	Replacement of Wi-Fi System in DRM Office, New Delh.
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹ 88,69,901.04/- only
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹ 1,77,400/-only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender	Tender uploading / closing date & time- 02.02.2022 upto 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.rfps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.
Tender No. 558-Sig-16-Tele-OT-941 Dated: 10.01.2022	47/2022

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER, KEONJHAR NOTICE
No. 58 / DWSO Dt. 07.01.2022

The advertisement published vide this office Advertisement No. 58 / Dtd. 07. 01.2022 inviting applications from eligible experienced organisations/ Agencies for submission of proposal for “Selection and Management of Creches in Keonjhar District Under DMF Keonjhar.

The detail, Terms and conditions along with the RFP documents can be downloaded from the district website www.kendujhar.nic.in.

The proposal complete in all respect should reach the undersigned before, 31.01.2022 by 5 P.M Via means of courier / speed- post only.

The undersigned reserves the right to reject or cancel any or all the tenders, without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
District Social Welfare Officer, Keonjhar, Odisha
OIPR - 26060/11/0005/2122

कार्यालय, अधिशासी अभियन्ता, यांत्रिक शाखा, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल संसाधन विकास एवं निर्माण निगम
अवगत नगर, अधिकाधिकारी उत्तराखण्ड के सम्मने हेतुद्वारा, (उत्तराखण्ड)- 248001
Office no:- 0115-2759886 E-mail:- mechdivdelhi@gmail.com

पत्रांक: 16 / (पत्र) / 01 दिनांक: 07 / 01 / 2022

अवगत, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्यो हेतु एवं पत्रों से महत्वपूर्ण निविदाएं दिनांक 28.01.2022 को अथवा 1500 बजे तक जापोयत अधिसूचना अधिनियम, यांत्रिक मन्त्रालय, उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, निगम- अखण्डपुराण के अंतर्गत में आमंत्रित की जाती है, जो कि उनी निम्न को अथवा 1500 बजे अधिसूचना अधिनियम महत्वपूर्ण अथवा अन्य कृत अवधिपूर्वक प्रतिलिपि द्वारा इच्छुक निविदादाताओं को समक्ष रखी जायेगी।

क्र.सं.	कार्य का विवरण	निविदा पत्रों की लागत	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	विद्युत सोलर पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों के अन्तर्गत विद्युत कार्य।	Rs. 1500/- + 18% G.S.T.	06 माह
2	विद्युत सेंटर पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों के अन्तर्गत विद्युत कार्य।	Rs. 2000/- + 18% G.S.T.	06 माह
3	विद्युत सोलर पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों के अन्तर्गत विद्युत कार्य।	Rs. 2000/- + 18% G.S.T.	06 माह
4	लेकवुड पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों के अन्तर्गत विद्युत कार्य।	Rs. 2000/- + 18% G.S.T.	06 माह
5	बाजाला-बुधन नाला पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों के अन्तर्गत आधुनिकीकरण कार्य।	Rs. 1000/- + 18% G.S.T.	06 माह
6	लेकवुड नाला पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों के अन्तर्गत आधुनिकीकरण कार्य।	Rs. 1000/- + 18% G.S.T.	06 माह
7	जलनर दिहरी नाला पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों के अन्तर्गत पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों को नाला पम्पिंग में परिवर्तन कार्य।	Rs. 2000/- + 18% G.S.T.	06 माह
8	जलनर दिहरी नाला पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों के अन्तर्गत पम्पिंग प्लेण्टों को नाला पम्पिंग में परिवर्तन कार्य।	Rs. 2000/- + 18% G.S.T.	06 माह

निविदा प्रवृत्ति:-
1. निम्नी अथवा समस्त निविदाओं को बिना कारण बताये निरस्त किया जा सकता है।
2. निविदा पत्रों को दिनांक 27.01.2022 तक किसी भी कार्य दिवस में कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, यांत्रिक शाखा,



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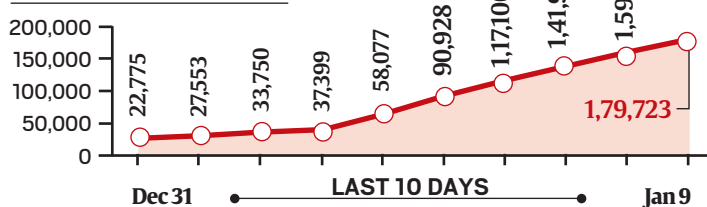
If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

DASHBOARD, AS ON JAN 9

679 DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN	New cases 1,79,723	Active cases 7,23,619	Deaths 327
	Weekly CFR: 4.39%	Overall CFR: 1.39%	Total deaths: 44,83,936

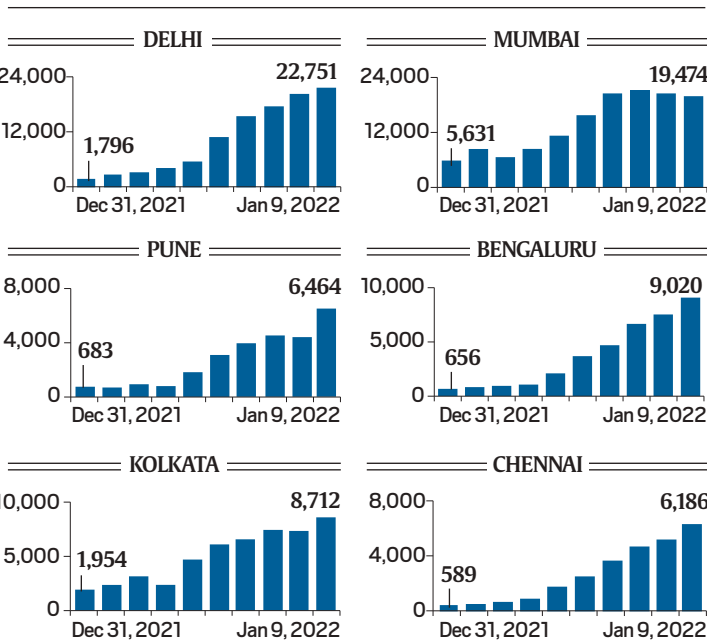
NEW CASES, DAILY



SURGE IN THE STATES

State	ON JANUARY 9			Weekly positivity
	New Cases	Active Cases	Deaths	
Maharashtra	44,388	2,02,259	16	17.13%
West Bengal	24,287	78,111	18	26.07%
Delhi	22,751	60,733	17	15.56%
Tamil Nadu	12,895	51,335	12	5.60%
Karnataka	12,000	49,631	4	4.29%

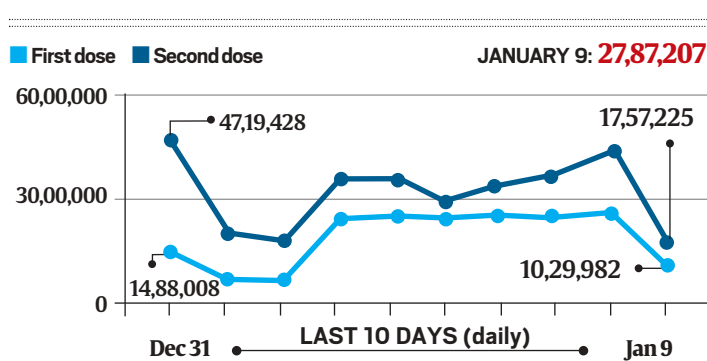
SURGE IN THE CITIES, LAST 10 DAYS



TOTAL TESTS

TESTS ON JAN 9 15,40,827	WEEKLY POSITIVITY 7.39%	OVERALL POSITIVITY 5.16%
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INDIA TOTAL DOSES
(1st DOSE: **86,18,42,021**; 2nd: **63,37,56,051**)



SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Selecting the booster shot

'Precautionary' doses for vulnerable groups have begun, using the same vaccine the beneficiaries were previously given. What is the rationale behind this, and the arguments for and against mixing vaccines?

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, JANUARY 10

ON MONDAY, the government began administering an additional "precautionary" dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to vulnerable groups — those over age 60 and with comorbidities, and healthcare and frontline workers. The two vaccines most prevalently in use in India, Covishield and Covaxin, are given in two doses; so the "precautionary" or "booster" dose is the third one for those eligible.

Over 63 crore Indians have received both doses of their vaccine until Sunday, out of nearly 150 crore doses administered overall. For those eligible for the booster, the Centre has not allowed mixing of vaccines as of now: If someone has received two doses of Covishield, she will be given the same vaccine for the third shot, and so also for Covaxin. Once more data is available, a heterologous approach (using a different vaccine for the third jab) will be taken later, the Centre has said.

What purpose does a booster serve?

The immunity provided by a regular course of vaccines is known to wane over time. Various studies in India and elsewhere have reported a decline in antibodies of vaccinated people, recorded at various points of time after the last dose. This decline happens not only with antibodies, but even memory T-cells.

A booster dose is given so that people can maintain their level of immunity for longer. In the past, boosters were recommended for smallpox prevention every three to five years. Tetanus toxoid boosters are also recommended today for adults and pregnant women after childhood vaccination.

Regulators in some countries, such as the United States' Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the United Kingdom's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), have looked at booster dose data and given approvals.

In India, a recent study found that six months after the second Covaxin dose, a booster using the same vaccine led to neutralising T cell and B cell responses. This suggests good immune memory responses and long-term protection from severe disease, manufacturer Bharat Biotech said in a statement.

Why has the Centre chosen to use the



"Precautionary" dose given at Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi. *Abhinav Saha*

same vaccine for the booster shot?

There are regulatory and clinical aspects. From a regulatory and legal perspective, according to Dr Gagandeep Kang, one of India's best-known vaccinologists, it makes sense to give the same vaccine as the previous two doses until there is sufficient data to make a policy decision on using a different vaccine as the third dose.

"These vaccines are under emergency use authorization (EUA) which means that they are not fully licensed. For instance, in the national programme on immunisation, we have off-label recommendation for the rotavirus vaccine... For the inactivated polio vaccine... the licence is for a full dose given intramuscularly. What this means is that off-label use for products that are licensed is one thing, but the same for ones that are under EUA is another issue," Dr Kang said.

"We also have to consider the issue of indemnity. What if something goes wrong when you use another vaccine: then who is responsible?" she said.

From the clinical standpoint, leading virologist Dr V Ravi noted that the fundamental attribute of the immune system is memory. "If you shoot with the same vaccine one will boost the memory. Boosting with a homologous vaccine [the same one given earlier] will

also fetch a good response," Dr Ravi said.

Immunologist Dr Vineeta Bal said many traditional vaccines are used as a second or third dose as the primary vaccination regime followed by a booster of the same a few months or years later. For instance, tetanus toxoid is part of the childhood vaccination programme and is recommended at a later age too, including pregnant women.

What have studies on mixing of vaccines shown so far?

In India, there is no clear data yet on mixing the two vaccines that make up the bulk of the doses being administered: Covishield and Covaxin. Efforts are being taken up to generate and analyse data. A recent pilot study by the Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG) examined the safety profile of mixing Covishield and Covaxin and also checked antibody response by comparing small homologous and heterologous vaccine groups. It found that mixing vaccines was safe.

Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman, AIG Hospitals, has said that the most important finding of the study was that antibodies neutralising the coronavirus spike protein were significantly higher in the mixed-vaccine groups than in the same-vaccine groups. "We have communicated details of the study to

ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research)," Dr Reddy has said.

The Christian Medical College in Vellore, too, has taken up a study on the feasibility of the mixing of Covid-19 vaccine doses. The results are likely to be out by February this year.

Although heterologous boosting appears to be safe, data on long-term safety is yet to be generated.

But why look at mixing vaccines?

According to the World Health Organization, homologous vaccine schedules are standard practice based on substantial safety, immunogenicity and efficacy data. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has said that a heterologous booster vaccine strategy may be considered as an alternative strategy to improve vaccine protection and provide flexibility in vaccine supply and availability issues.

Dr Sanjay Pujari, member of the ICMR national Covid-19 task force, referred to studies that have demonstrated higher immune responses with heterologous schedules. However they are limited by short-term data. "Understanding of how immunogenicity data translates into vaccine effectiveness is still evolving and immune correlates for absolute protection are still unclear," Dr Pujari said.

Dr Bal said noted, however, that in general, in many contexts (including Covid-19), a mix-and-match strategy has been visualised or used. For example, for DNA vaccines, protein-based vaccines were considered in prime-boost situations.

If and when India decides to vaccinate the adult population, what about supply?

Experts have stressed the importance of achieving a right balance between effectiveness and safety concerns and the availability of vaccine platforms and supplies. "Apart from the absence of Indian data in the public domain on how mix-and-match vaccination would benefit, there could be supply chain, vaccine availability issues," Dr Bal said.

Of the nearly 150 crore vaccine doses given until Sunday, over 130 crore are of Covishield (5 in every 6) and over 19 crore are of Covaxin. Experts noted that since Covaxin is the only one in use for under-18 vaccination, there could be a possibility of a shortage of the vaccine for heterologous boosting of the Indian adult population.

Omicron & immune response after vaccination

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, JANUARY 10

WITH ITS multiple mutations, the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 significantly reduces the neutralising ability of antibodies — those induced by vaccines as well as by hybrid immunity, a study has found. This might explain its rapid spread even amid widespread vaccine coverage, suggests the study, conducted by the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI). The researchers have stressed, however, that reduced neutralisation may not translate into drastic reduction in vaccine effectiveness.

The study, 'Sub Optimal neutralisation of Omicron (B.1.1.529) variant by antibodies induced by vaccine alone or SARS CoV2 infection plus vaccine (hybrid immunity) post six months', is currently published as a preprint (bit.ly/31Jht92).

The comparison

Researchers tested the ability of antibodies to neutralise Omicron among people with vaccination alone, and among vaccinated people who also had had a prior natural SARS-CoV-

2 infection. "We included a total of 80 participants — 20 each with ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 (Covishield) and BBV152 (Covaxin) vaccination alone, and 20 each with ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine plus natural infection and BBV152 vaccine plus natural infection," said Dr Pramod Garg, Executive Director of THSTI.

The study compared the extent of neutralisation using a measure called geometric mean titre (GMT). For antibodies against the original virus strain, the GMT was 384 in those vaccinated with Covaxin alone, and 383 in those vaccinated with Covishield alone. For the hybrid groups, the values were 795 and 1424 respectively.

Against Omicron, only 5 out of 20 in both vaccine-only groups, 5 out of 19 in the Covaxin-plus-infection group, and 9 out of 20 in the Covishield-plus-infection group exhibited neutralisation titres above the lower limit of quantification. This suggested better neutralisation in those with prior infection.

The proportion of neutralisers was significantly reduced against Omicron compared to the original strain and Delta. Among those

without prior infection, GMT was significantly lower against Omicron than against the original strain and Delta. Among those with previous infection, the titres followed the same pattern — but the neutralising ability was better in them than in those without previous infection.



Vaccination does help

"However, reduction in neutralisation may not translate into drastic reduction in vaccine effectiveness. We have to give a balanced message to people, that in general, the body's own defence mechanism even before vaccines were good enough to prevent symptomatic infections in a large majority of people. Among those clinically infected a large majority had mild disease, due to natural immune defence mechanism in humans," Dr Garg said. Even if Omicron is spreading, being vaccination prevents severe disease in 80%-90% of the people, Dr Garg said. "Boosting may be required in a sub group of people which is allowed from today onwards."

There was no difference in the neutralisation levels between the two vaccines.

Antibodies, T cells & boosters

A recent study by THSTI published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* has shown that besides neutralising antibodies, T-cell immune responses are important for controlling SARS-CoV-2 infection. The researchers said this seems to be true for Omicron too, as demonstrated by South African researchers.

"From a policy perspective, a significant correlation between serum IgG titres and neutralisation GMT against the omicron in the face of immune escape by this variant would lend support for an additional dose of vaccine to augment antibody response. This is being implemented in a few countries including India and has the potential to offer better protection in vulnerable people..." the study said.

Lead author Guruprasad Medigeshi and other researchers have said in the study that the drop in neutralisation might be alarming, but the real-world impact of these reduced neutralisation titres on hospitalisation rates and mortality rates have to be interpreted along with other factors such as pathogenicity of the variant, immunisation uptakes and seroprevalence from natural infection in different geographical regions and the expected role of cellular immune responses to the variant.

Valour of the Chhote Sahibzaade, and PM's political outreach to Punjab

DIVYAGOPAL GOPAL
LUDHIANA, JANUARY 10

THE NATION would henceforth observe December 26 as 'Veer Baal Diwas', Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Sunday (December 9), the Parkash Purab (birth anniversary) of the tenth Sikh Guru Gobind Singh.

What is the importance of December 26 in the history of Sikhism, and the political context of the PM's announcement a month ahead of elections in Punjab?

Courage and sacrifice

Veer Baal Diwas — a tribute to the bravery of children — is dedicated to the Chhote Sahibzaade, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, the youngest sons of Guru Gobind Singh, who were bricked alive on the orders of Wazir Khan, the Mughal faujdar of Sirhind, for refusing to renounce their faith and become Muslim. Zorawar Singh was 9 at the time, and Fateh Singh only 7. Soon after they were walled up alive, their grandmother Mata Guji (Guru Gobind Singh's mother) died of shock.

Today, Gurdwara Sri Fatehgarh Sahib stands on the site where the two Sahibzaadas were executed on December 12, 1705, which translates to December 26 in the calendar now in use.

It is believed that after no one in Sirhind town agreed to spare land to cremate the Sahibzaadas, a rich Hindu trader named Diwan Todar Mal purchased a small piece of land by covering it with at least 7,800 gold coins, and performed the last rites after getting their bodies released from the Mughals. Later, Gurdwara Jyoti Sarup was built at this site in Fatehgarh Sahib.

Prof Paramvir Singh of the Department of Encyclopaedia of Sikhism at Punjabi University, Patiala, said: "Guru Gobind Singh had four sons, the Chaar Sahibzaade, all of whom sacrificed their lives to uphold the identity and dignity of the Khalsa Panth against the Mughals. Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh died in the battle of Chamkaur Sahib. But the bravery and sacrifice of Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh is considered unparalleled not just because of the tender age at which they chose death, but also for the cruel and barbaric conditions that the Mughals had cre-



Gurdwara Sri Fatehgarh Sahib. *Harmeet Sodhi*

ated for them and their grandmother before their execution."

The Sahibzaadas and their grandmother were held captive at the open-air Thanda Burj (Cold Tower) of the Mughal fort for days in chilly weather, during which they shivered endlessly but refused to convert, Prof Singh said. "They were pressured and threatened with death if they did not accept Islam, but

they refused to renounce their faith," he said.

Jujhar, Zorawar, and Fateh were the sons of the Guru's first wife Jito Ji, and were cared for by their grandmother after Jito Ji died.

A long-pending demand

For long, the Sikh community has asked that December 26 be marked as a special day in memory of the Chhote Sahibzaade. For

Mela, a religious fair, is organised from December 25-28 every year in memory of the Sahibzaadas and their grandmother at Sri Fatehgarh Sahib, which is attended by lakhs of devotees from Punjab and elsewhere.

Current political context

The BJP is going into the Assembly election of February 14 without its old ally Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), a panthic party that puts religious and gurdwara affairs on top of its agenda.

For the Modi government and the BJP, which have lost significant political capital during the year-long standoff with farmers protesting against the three farm laws that the Centre was ultimately forced to withdraw, the announcement is in the nature of a peace offering.

It is seen as an effort to placate angry and upset Punjabis — not just Sikhs, but people from all communities who revere the sacrifice of the Chhote Sahibzaade.

The SAD has objected to the decision being taken without consulting the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

SAD spokesperson Dr Daljit Singh

Cheema said, "We appreciate the PM's move to honour the sacrifice of the Chhote Sahibzaade, but the name of the day should be decided after consultation with the SGPC to do justice to the history behind this unparalleled sacrifice. The Sikh religious literature and gurbani should be consulted to name this day."

SGPC member Kiranjot Kaur tweeted, "I strongly oppose naming Shaheed Diwas of Sahibzaade as Veer Bal Diwas. Babas are being reduced to children. Govt has no business reinterpreting our beliefs in a reductionist way."

Prof Paramvir Singh said that even though Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh were only 9 and 7 respectively at the time of their martyrdom, they are referred to as "Baba Zorawar Singh" and "Baba Fateh Singh" because according to Sikh faith, they were not merely 'children'.

"Their actions and wisdom were beyond their age and hence they are referred to as 'Babas', not children. We consider them our revered elders who made the supreme sacrifice for the Sikh faith, so limiting them to the word 'Baal' might be objectionable," he said.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

FORTIFY THE SHIELD

Omicron variant adds a new dimension to discourse on booster shots. Precautionary shot regime must become more expansive

THE TURN TAKEN by the pandemic in the past two weeks has made the smooth conduct of the “precautionary” inoculation drive for the elderly, healthcare professionals and frontline workers, that commenced from Monday, imperative. While the virus seems to have assumed a milder form during the current wave, some of the caveats issued by the WHO late November after South African authorities alerted the world about the pathogen’s newest variant, Omicron, remain salient. The global health agency had warned that Omicron’s high transmissibility could offset its less virulent character and stressed the need for protecting the aged and the immunocompromised. Reports of large numbers of doctors in Delhi and Mumbai being afflicted by Covid should also be a matter of concern. While these medics do not have a severe form of the disease and hospitalisation rates have, so far, been low, the healthcare sector can ill-afford the absence of large numbers of doctors, nurses, and paramedics. There are already reports of hospitals in Delhi having to cut down on routine consultations and surgeries. That’s why a section of experts believes that the country would have been better prepared to take on the current outbreak had it planned the drive for additional doses earlier.

Last week, the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation ended speculation about the vaccines to be used for “precautionary” doses. Given the lack of consensus on a mixed vaccine approach, the expert body did the right thing in recommending that the precautionary dose would be the same as the first two jabs. Moreover, evidence from the UK shows that the third dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine — Covishield in India — reduces severe Covid and hospitalisation by 88 per cent. Conversations on mixing vaccines must, however, continue. Unlike in the US and Europe, there have been very few studies in India on vaccine effectiveness and experts rightly believe that more data on the duration of the immunity offered by the vaccines in use in the country will help in the quest for developing more potent boosters. The propensity of the virus to mutate into variants like Omicron that can undermine vaccine performance and cause breakthrough infections has added a new dimension to this discourse. Preliminary studies show that a broad booster approach can bring down the R number — the number of people infected by a Covid positive person — to less than 1 during the Omicron-driven surge. The government’s next task, therefore, should be to make the coverage of the additional doses more expansive. It must also begin planning to extend the inoculation drive for children.

Omicron has once again underlined that the virus is a moving target. We are, however, much better prepared to take on the contagion’s newest avatar compared to the despair-filled days of the second wave. In the coming weeks and months, the government and scientific bodies must endeavour to strengthen the shield provided by vaccines.

INSECURE STATE

Weaponising ED, tax authorities to expand counterinsurgency umbrella in Kashmir is a fraught move

COUNTERINSURGENCY (COIN) OPERATIONS ARE usually understood to target weapon wielding militants, their organisations and their leaders. As reported in this newspaper, in Kashmir, where the sweeping changes of 2019 have failed to end the militancy, COIN operations appear to have changed tack to fold in an increasingly wider swathe of the population. They now cover funders and financiers, and “over-ground workers”, a term that was recently used at an Army-organised seminar at Srinagar’s Badami Bagh garrison, as a description that fit young and old, man or woman, scholars, doctors, teachers, businessmen, lawyers, and anyone else “from gunners to runners”. Now it is not just the police, the army and the paramilitaries but a plethora of other organisations such as the Enforcement Directorate, and others included in the Terror Monitoring Group such as the two Central Boards dealing with direct and indirect taxes and customs. On the face of it, a case can be made that instead of focussing on the numbers of “kills” of militants, which may end up pushing more young people to take up arms and declare war against the Indian state, focussing on breaking their networks, whether financial, logistical or ideological, is a more intelligent way of dealing with an insurgency. Far too many recent encounters have led to the killings of barely adult teenagers with no training and armed with nothing more than a pistol. Instead, if a crackdown on those who give them money and shelter, and other types of support can lead to arrests and save lives, this new approach may even win community support.

However, the danger in the ever-widening definition of overground workers is that it can end up profiling or labelling an entire population as such, and lead back to the same undesirable result — alienation and a simmering militancy. After thousands of arrests under draconian laws such as the Unlawful Activities and Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Public Security Act over the last three years, the government is no closer to making friends with the people in Kashmir. Add the new rules of conduct for government employees, and several dismissals under constitutional provisions that require no reason to be given, a muzzled press, the barring of dissent to the extent that even the police force says its actions must not be questioned, this feels more like the hatchet arm of a security state bent on othering the people of the Valley.

This heavily securitised approach to bringing back “normalcy” and zero community outreach, the continuing absence of a political process with restrictions on the movement and activities of the former state’s political leadership even as the rest of the country is forever in election mode has only served to emphasise the difference.

A SMALL HOPE

The story of a lost baby being reunited with his family in Kabul offers a glimmer of positivity in a tumultuous time

A PAIR OF arms reaches upwards, passing a wailing baby over a barbed-wired wall into the hands of a US soldier. This photo was flashed around the world as a symbol of the desperate straits that the Afghan people found themselves in after the Taliban forces entered Kabul on August 15 last year. The arms belong to the infant’s father, Mirza Ali Ahmadi who was at the airport of the Afghan capital on August 19 with his family — along with hundreds of others — hoping to get evacuated. In the tumult, he handed baby Sohail across the airport wall to a soldier, fully expecting to be reunited with his son almost immediately on the other side. What followed, however, was a five-month long separation, with the baby finally being returned on January 8 to members of his family who had stayed on in Kabul. His parents and siblings, who managed to get evacuated to the US, watched the reunion on video.

Following the Taliban takeover of Kabul and the ensuing chaos, approximately 1,300 Afghan children were evacuated to the US without their parents or legal guardians, according to the US Department of Health and Services. Most are still waiting to be united with their families. Unlike in the case of Sohail, who was found in Kabul — where he had been “adopted” by a local taxi driver as his own son — the outlook for these children appears bleak due to the lack of a clear legal mechanism that can reunite them with families who are still stuck in Afghanistan.

This is why Sohail’s story is so rare and precious right now. At a time when Afghanistan grapples with a massive humanitarian crisis and an economic meltdown, in addition to the Covid pandemic, to know that a lost baby has been returned to his family is warming. From a symbol of desperation, Sohail’s story has become one of hope.



YASHOVARDHAN AZAD

ON THE BITTER cold wintry afternoon of January 5, under a smoky grey sky, the prime minister’s convoy came to a grinding halt on an overbridge along the Moga Ferozepur Highway, 30 km short of Hussainiwalla, a village by the river Sutlej on the Indo-Pak border. For a full 20 minutes, the PM, one of the most threatened protectees in the world, sat in his bulletproof vehicle with the Special Protection Group commandos as the last frontier of protection. Meanwhile, a few metres ahead, protesters were being persuaded by police officers to lift the road blockade.

Those who argue that such lapses have occurred in Varanasi and other places too, fail to see the vulnerability of the PM being trapped on an overbridge in a sensitive state right on the border. Frequent droppings of arms and drugs by drones from across underline the grave threat. Even more lethal is the free reign given to rogue terror brigands by the ISI to create mayhem along the border from Punjab to Jammu.

Three wars have been fought around Hussainiwalla. The road linking Pakistan is closed and the border outpost organises the beating retreat border ceremony every day. Shaheed Bhagat Singh with his comrades was cremated here in 1931 by the harried British, fearing an uprising over their hanging. It is his memorial that the PM intended to visit that day, along with attending a public meeting.

The security breach has two glaring aspects. First, the PM was too close to the confrontation point and second, the police was not clearing the protesters but negotiating with them, while the convoy was stationary. Both would be the main issues for enquiry later.

Why was the PM not kept away at a safe distance from the road blockade? Why was the road journey undertaken? Why was the road not cleared? Was there any prior intelligence?

Intelligence regarding protests by farmers was known even to the common man, let alone state and central intelligence agencies. Specific intelligence regarding the blockade point perhaps would not have been available. Most PMs, however, do decide on travelling in such situations because protests are a part of our democratic culture.

Due to inclement weather, a road journey was the alternative, and this contingency was

Fix responsibility for the glaring gaps behind the PM’s security lapse, don’t use it for propaganda

Political grandstanding over the matter has led to the obfuscation of the real issues. As soon as the PM came back to Delhi, the Centre let loose a battery of ministers, levelling preposterous charges against the Punjab government of conspiracy and deliberate plans to thwart his visit to the state. The state of Punjab countered, stating that the road journey was a last-minute decision and the real reason for aborting the visit was a low turnout at the PM’s rally. BJP and Congress spokespersons traded charges on TV channels, leaving the common man groping for the truth.

already planned, and rehearsals were done. Then, why didn’t the state police keep the road clear? The route clearance was given by the police, but in practice, no route of 111 km can be fully sanitised. But, with modern communication systems available, as well as a state police contingent scouring the terrain in advance, the route is cleared way ahead of the PM convoy. According to Punjab authorities, the farmers suddenly came on the road and blocked it. Even if that is true, it was the task of the advance police party to clear the blockade much before the PM arrived at the point.

The glaring lapse is the hesitancy to clear the blockade, even with force, if required. The PM’s carcade cannot be stalled for even 20 seconds, let alone 20 minutes. Dithering and not taking action was a grave lapse on the part of the district SP and collector.

It is crucial to know exactly when the carcade got information of the roadblock and why immediate evacuation drills were not put in place to move the PM to the nearest designated safe house. The SPG officer should have decided in consultation with the central and state representatives in the carcade. This is the second grave lapse — allowing the PM’s car to reach so near the confrontation point.

Where, then, lies the blame? It is laid down clearly that while the SPG is responsible for the PM’s proximate security, the overall responsibility for his protection lies with the state in whose jurisdiction the PM is. While the Ferozepur collector and SP have to answer why the blockade was not removed, IG SPG should face an enquiry over why the PM’s car could not be pulled away from the overbridge.

Why the police leadership is hesitant to take action is a larger question. The posting of the right leaders is sacrosanct. While the Punjab police chief position has seen yet another change, the SPG chief’s tenure, nearing six years, has been inordinately long.

Political grandstanding over the matter has led to the obfuscation of the real issues. As soon as the PM came back to Delhi, the Centre let loose a battery of ministers, levelling preposterous charges against the Punjab government of conspiracy and deliberate plans to thwart his visit to the state. The state of Punjab countered, stating that the road journey was a last-minute decision and the real reason for aborting the

visit was a low turnout at the PM’s rally. BJP and Congress spokespersons traded charges on TV channels, leaving the common man groping for the truth.

The tendency of shying away from bringing professionals in such matters is perhaps more prominently seen in India than in any other country. Instead of ministers airing their views, the Centre should have asked the secretary, security, cabinet secretariat, an IPS officer, to give out the facts before the press. It would have been professional and sans politics. Punjab could have done the same, but the panel announced by the state did not even have a police officer.

Some retired police officers have written to the President alleging a conspiracy by the border state against the PM. They see a sinister design behind the poor security arrangements. Some others have referred to farmers’ angst being expressed through the blockade. Both miss the truth. A professional cannot abdicate his responsibility. Clearing the route and keeping the PM away from the hotspot was the job of professionals and should have been done despite any pressure or external influence. Also, the farmers’ angst is much appreciated, but the sanctity of democratic protest cannot be stretched to the point of blocking the PM’s or President’s convoy anywhere and everywhere.

It is critical now to pinpoint the lapses and not allow the matter to be shrouded in propaganda and controversies. The guilty need to be punished and it should be ensured that such a grave lapse is not repeated.

India’s federal structure is sacrosanct. Ideal security arrangements for the PM in any state require full cooperation between the Centre and the state. The largest democracy in the world deserves to have a harmonious relationship between the Centre and states to tackle internal security matters objectively and expeditiously. Synergy is the need of the hour to address the issue of security holistically, to prove that our nation as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The writer is chairman, Deepstrat, a former Central Information Commissioner, and a retired IPS officer who served as secretary, security and special director, Intelligence Bureau

ERRATIC INTERPRETATION

Supreme Court has been inconsistent about customary international law in India



PRABHASH RANJAN

AN IMPORTANT report on “India and international law” by the parliamentary committee on external affairs was recently presented to the Lok Sabha. Among other things, the report discusses how Indian courts have dealt with international law. The committee observed that India follows the principle of “dualism”, that is, international law does not automatically get incorporated into the domestic legal regime. An act of Parliament is necessary to transform international law into municipal law as recognised by Article 253 of the Indian Constitution. However, the committee believes that the Supreme Court has digressed from the principle of dualism and moved towards monism by holding that customary international law (CIL), unless contradictory to domestic law, is part of the Indian legal regime even without an enabling legislation enacted by the Parliament. CIL refers to international law norms derived from a custom that is a formal source of international law.

India has indeed moved away from the principle of dualism towards monism by judicially incorporating not just CIL but also international treaties including those treaties that India has not signed. As regards customary norms, the Supreme Court in *Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India* held that CIL which is not contrary to the municipal law shall be deemed to have been incorporated in India’s domestic law. This principle has been affirmed in subsequent decisions. The apex court in *Research Foundation for Science v. Union of India*, relying on the *Vellore Citizen* case, declared that the precautionary

principle, an environmental law concept, is part of CIL and thus part of Indian law.

Several facets of this judiciary-led transition from dualism to monism require elucidation. First, the apex court incorporating CIL as part of the domestic legal regime is consistent with the practice of other common law countries. However, the sticky part is the ease with which CIL is accepted as part of Indian law. For instance, the Supreme Court’s willingness to readily accept the precautionary principle as part of CIL flies in the face of international law debates where the acceptance of this principle as a customary norm remains contested. Determination of whether a particular provision indeed constitutes a binding customary norm under international law requires the double requirement of state practice (the actual practice of the states) and *opinio juris* (belief that the custom is part of the law). The apex court rarely conducts such an analysis.

Second, the apex court hasn’t been consistent in incorporating CIL. In a 2021 case, *Mohamad Salimullah v. Union of India*, the court apportionally refused to rule against the deportation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar despite the principle of non-refoulement being part of CIL. The principle of non-refoulement prohibits a country from returning refugees to countries where they face a clear threat of persecution. But curiously the court did not incorporate this principle into Indian law.

Third, international law-making is often critiqued for democratic deficit. Arguably, judicially incorporating international law with-

out parliamentary scrutiny legitimises such a democratic deficit. Accordingly, judicial incorporation of international law is questioned because it amounts to the judiciary riding roughshod over the Parliament. The committee too feels that this could become a bone of contention between the judiciary and the other organs of the state.

Fourth, the bright side of judicial incorporation is the progressive development of law when the executive and the parliament for ideological or political persuasions fail to enact laws transforming a liberal international legal norm into domestic law. India’s spectacular failure to enact a refugee law incorporating the principle of non-refoulement is a classic example of this. The apex court squandered the terrific opportunity in the *Mohamad Salimullah* case to incorporate non-refoulement as part of the Indian legal regime.

The committee’s recommendation that the executive should take note of the vacuum in domestic legislation on customary norms in international law and develop adequate domestic laws is an important one. However, this should not mean expanding domestic law that rejects binding customary norms in international law. On the contrary, India should enact domestic laws that are harmonious with CIL. The judiciary, on its part, should demonstrate greater analytical rigour in interpreting and applying CIL as part of the Indian legal regime.

The writer is professor and vice dean at Jindal Global Law School, O P Jindal Global University. Views are personal

JANUARY 11, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

ASSAM PROTESTS

THE FIRST DAY of the 36-hour civil disobedience passed off more or less peacefully with reports of only minor acts of sabotage and sporadic attempts at ticketless travel from different parts of the Brahmaputra valley. About 200 persons were arrested from all over the region. Of these, about 70 were preventive arrests and the remaining for attempting to travel ticketless. The All Assam Students Union and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad had given a call for a 36-hour ticketless travel in government buses, trains and ferries, non-payment of entertainment tax in cinema halls and boycott of fi-

nancial transactions in post offices.

PANEL ON EVMS

A ONE-DAY COUNTRYWIDE general election and introduction of electronic voting machines within three years are among the major recommendations made by an expert panel constituted by the election commission. The six-member panel has also recommended that the chief secretary of a state be its chief electoral officer.

POPE BREAKS SILENCE

POPE JOHN PAUL, breaking a nine-day silence

on the crisis in his homeland, said Poles were forced to sign declarations that go against their conscience. “Under the threat of losing jobs, citizens are being forced to sign declarations that go against their conviction,” the Polish-born Pontiff said. He added that European and world concern over the situation in Poland was justifiably intense.

HOCKEY FINALS

PAKISTAN AND MUNICH Olympic champions Germany will meet in the finals of the fifth Hockey World Cup. In the semi-finals, Pakistan defeated Netherlands 4-2 while Germany beat Australia 11-8 in the tiebreaker.



New Delhi



THE IDEAS PAGE

The Eurasian turmoil

Current crises in Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Kazakhstan are reshaping the geopolitics of the region. Russia, with its geographic spread across Eurasia, is at the very centre of that restructuring



BY C RAJA MOHAN

THE UNEXPECTED VIOLENT protests in Kazakhstan and the crackdown that followed last week, which saw more than 160 deaths and 6,000 arrests, are part of a larger turmoil that has enveloped Eurasia that runs across the great steppe from Central Europe to Manchuria.

Each of the current crises in Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Kazakhstan might have a specific logic and trajectory of its own, but together they are reshaping the geopolitics of Eurasia. Russia, with its geographic spread across Eurasia, is at the very centre of that restructuring. Moscow's military intervention in Kazakhstan and its negotiations with the US this week on European security underline the Russian centrality in Eurasia. Five broad themes stand out in the potential for re-arrangement of Eurasia — the bumpy internal political evolution of Eurasian states, the weaknesses of economic globalisation, the limitations of regional institutions, the constraints on powers to shape the post-Russian space, and Russia's shifting great power relations.

First, the idea that the post-communist states have settled into a stable and sustainable political path has been increasingly tested in recent years. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the failure of the grand project for the socialist modernisation of the Eurasian landmass, opening the door for new political models in the region. In Central Europe and the Baltic states, the transition to liberal democracy appeared quick while many of the former Soviet Republics drifted into rule by strong men. Both models are coming under some stress. "Democratic backsliding" in Hungary and Poland is a major concern for the West as the governments in Budapest and Warsaw challenge the presumed norms of the European Union.

In Kazakhstan, the anger of the protestors was directed against the autocratic rule of Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has led the country since the breakup of the Soviet Union. He formally stepped down in 2019 but has sought to retain control. In Belarus, mass protests last year challenged President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled the nation since 1994; he has survived with Kremlin's support.

If the Western project of promoting democracy in the post-Soviet space has run into multiple problems, the Islamist agenda for the transformation of Central Asia may have a great filip with the triumphant return of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, religion has returned with some force in Europe as well — orthodox Christianity in Russia and the Roman Catholic church in central Europe exercise considerable political influence.

Second, although much of Central Asia embraced economic globalisation, it has failed to prevent massive economic inequality and curb the kleptocratic elites. For a country with large natural resources, especially hydrocarbons, and a small population of 19 million, Kazakhstan could have easily ensured an equitable society. But Nazarbayev chose otherwise, and the consequences are now playing out. The problem is not exclusive to Kazakhstan or Nazarbayev. Autocracies inevitably breed corruption and erode the capacity for self-correction that is so critical for any society.

Third, the hope that regional institutions



CR Sasikumar

would contribute to the stability of the post-communist states has not been fully met. Two decades after former communist states joined the EU — the world's most successful regional institution — the eastern and western halves of Europe continue to look vastly different and are ill at ease with each other. Although the post-communist states embraced the EU wholeheartedly, several issues today — relating to rule of law, migration, refugees, energy, and geopolitics — divide the two halves. There is deep resentment in the eastern half about the domination of the western half on EU policymaking. While the West European leaders talk of European "strategic autonomy" from the US and China, many in east and central Europe speak of claiming greater autonomy; if not national sovereignty, from Brussels.

The struggle to develop credible regional institutions has been harder in the former Soviet space. Moscow has launched the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation to reestablish its primacy in Eurasia, but it is some distance away from making these into credible institutions. Moscow has also joined Beijing in setting up the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation that was to jointly stabilise the Central Asian region.

Many former members of the Soviet Union value their newfound sovereignty and are not ready to hand it back to Moscow. It is for that reason most countries have sought to pursue variants of what Nazarbayev called "multi-vector diplomacy" — engaging all major powers to strengthen their strategic autonomy. At the same time, geography, history, and institutional inertia continue to bind them to Russia. When the crisis erupted in Kazakhstan, Almaty inevitably turned to Moscow for help. But the tension between dependence on Russia for security and the political aspiration for autonomy is an enduring one.

That brings us to the fourth theme — the constraints on the ambitions of other powers to shape the post-Soviet space. Two great forces that have risen since the dissolution of the Soviet Union — the EU and China — have been unable to shape the political and security dynamic in Eurasia.

Despite their massive economic power,

Despite their massive economic power, Brussels and Beijing have not been able to lead in the resolution of the regional crises next door — Europe in Ukraine and China in Kazakhstan and Afghanistan. In Ukraine, Moscow prefers to negotiate with Washington rather than Brussels. In Kazakhstan, Russia has shown it remains the main security provider despite the considerable economic salience of China.

Brussels and Beijing have not been able to lead in the resolution of the regional crises next door — Europe in Ukraine and China in Kazakhstan and Afghanistan. In Ukraine, Moscow prefers to negotiate with Washington rather than Brussels. In Kazakhstan, Russia has shown it remains the main security provider despite the considerable economic salience of China. Several other powers, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, India, Korea, and Japan have sought to develop some influence in Central Asia. They all bring some unique advantages, but none of them has been able to transcend their multiple limitations.

That brings us to Russia's great power relations that have complicated Moscow's capacity to reinforce Russia's natural primacy in Eurasia. The rapid deterioration of Russia's relations with the West in recent years can't be compensated by Moscow's growing political warmth and economic depth in relations with Beijing. This week's talks on European security between Russia and the West signal a fresh attempt at finding common ground.

Although pessimism pervades the outlook for the talks, the Eurasian turmoil presents new imperatives for both sides. The West can continue to challenge Moscow's efforts to reclaim regional primacy, but it is not in a position to secure Russia's Eurasian periphery against the Kremlin. Cutting Russia some political slack in Eurasia might help the West to stabilise Europe and focus on multiple other challenges, including those from an increasingly assertive China.

Although Russia is the weightiest actor in Eurasia, it can't simply reconstitute the former Soviet space unilaterally. An accommodation on European security with the West — covering such areas as Ukraine's independence and neutrality, the de-escalation of the military confrontation in the heart of Europe through arms control, and the development of a cooperative agenda on global security — would significantly improve Moscow's chances of leading a new Eurasian geopolitical order.

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"As the Afghan Taliban regime tries to win international recognition, it must confront one plain truth: is it willing to take firm action against foreign terrorist groups based in Afghanistan working actively against neighbouring states?" — DAWN, PAKISTAN

A crowded field of defectors

The silent voter may hold key to Goa verdict as parties battle defections and dissent



RAHUL TRIPATHI

WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT of assembly elections, political analysts in Goa are running for cover. At a time when they would have been most sought after by the media to share their wisdom on party arithmetic and prospects, they are waiting for the slog overs to begin. Goa has always been known for political defections, with individual politicians holding more influence than parties and elected MLAs often violating the party line. The "aaya Ram, gaya Ram" phenomenon, in the words of Justice (Retd.) Ferdino Rebello, is witnessing a resurgence in Goa and keeping poll pundits quiet for the moment.

What is different this time? The pace and intensity of the switching of loyalties across political parties and opposition within parties to the defections have complicated the political carnival that is unfolding. Consider the following. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) paratroops into the state and its volunteers spread across the 40 constituencies looking for "influencers". The party ropes in Luizinho Faleiro, a former Congress chief minister and general secretary in charge of the Northeast states, and gets him elected to the Rajya Sabha. The TMC also occupies the advertisement space in local newspapers and on hoardings across Goa indicating that it is flush with funds. The party also manages to rope in an unlikely ally in the Maharashtra-led Gomantak Party. A day before the announcement of polls, the TMC says it is open to allying with the Congress to defeat the BJP.

The ruling BJP, basking in the comfort of a fragmented opposition, is suddenly jolted by allegations of corruption in the government by its own ministers. "Babush" Atanasio Monserrate, known as the kingmaker in Goa's politics and part of the pack of 10 Congress MLAs who switched to the BJP in 2019, makes accusations of corruption against the PWD minister in job recruitments and seeks Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's intervention. There is disquiet in the party following the induction of MLAs who had earlier been bitter critics of the government, leading to block karyakartas threatening to revolt and putting up their own candidates. Meanwhile, a BJP cabinet minister, Michael Lobo, has quit to join the Congress.

The Aam Aadmi Party would be trying its luck again in Goa after failing to open its account in the 2017 elections. With little to show on the ground, the

party has been showcasing the "Delhi" model of education and electricity and promising to clamp down on corruption. The latest kid on the block, Revolutionary Goans (RG), too has entered the fray under the banner of Goa Su-Raj Party, with the objective of "ending the slavery of Goans to people from other states" — an apparent reference to the large number of outsiders who occupy the economic space in Goa. While the RG does strike a chord with the youth because of its campaign that "outsiders" are taking away Goans' business and jobs, it needs to reflect more on why this is happening to make a difference to Goa's politics.

That leaves the Congress, the party that won the highest number of seats in the 2017 assembly elections. It has been spectacularly consistent in its downslide ever since. With two resignations in 2017, 10 defections in 2019 and three resignations in 2021, the Congress Legislative Party now comprises just two MLAs. The Congress's decline is also an important case study in how political leadership, ideology and communication, when mismanaged, can lead to the destruction of a political party. With the Nationalist Congress Party, which used to be an ally, set to tie-up with the TMC, the Goa Forward Party (GFP) appears to be the only ally left for the Congress to rope in, unless it takes up the TMC's offer.

The above scenario reminds observers of the turbulent 1990s when Goa saw a series of unstable governments, with frequent defections of MLAs causing governments to fall. The justification offered now is that defections "stabilise governments". The standard argument by an opposition MLA defecting to the ruling party is that it is done in the "interest of the constituency and the people". The corollary of this argument is that an opposition MLA cannot work for the development of his/her constituency because he is not with the ruling party. "Party loyalty, party politics and party ideology are more for political science textbooks so long as political moolah keeps coming," according to an eminent Goan political commentator. Is the voter really bothered about which party his leader belongs to so long as his work gets done, implying a more transactional nature of Goa's politics, asks another. The fact is, in a small constituency, a small number of votes is enough to swing the verdict, which in turn allows an individual leader to exercise more influence in the constituency than his party.

In the midst of this uncertainty, the silent voter holds the key to the poll outcome. In the stories of Damodar Mauzo, the eminent Konkani author, a common Goan often introspects and reflects with reason and compassion. Perhaps, he or she would do the same at the time of vote.

The writer teaches political science at Goa University. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ARREST THE SLIDE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The Haridwar challenge' (IE, January 8). Hate speech against any religion can serve only to debilitate the public order and social peace. The coronation of those vying to disturb communal harmony in the country by certain heretical cynics is a bellwether of a harrowing trend on India's socio-political stage. It's only a matter of time before it starts meeting up with retaliation of an equally appalling measure from the pugnacious groups on the other side of the spectrum. To this effect, the reticence by the high ranking officials and the holders of the constitutional offices is untenable. A welcome step would be for the legislature to enact a dedicated, comprehensive and well-nuanced law to stymie hate speeches, rather than relying upon the current inadequate and sporadic provisions inserted here and there. Also, at the grassroots level, lessons in communal harmony and concord should be made an integral part of the school curricula to ingratiate our children with the values of compassion, brotherhood and fraternity.

Vinay Saroha, via email

POLL TEST

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Political surge' (IE, January 10). The Election Commission's ban on physical rallies by political parties in the five poll-bound states will test many hypotheses of commentators. First, which parties have the wherewithal and are better prepared for the virtual and digital campaigns, and could this be a surrogate if not a substitute for conventional meetings. A leader's lack of proficiency in speaking the local language could be mitigated in the digi-

tal forum. There is a flip side to the theory of "double-engine growth", when the state and central government are run by the same party. First, regional parties could denote this as a de facto admission of discrimination by the Modi government. Second, they could highlight the poor health indicators revealed in the FHS-4 and FHS-5, and NITI Aayog reports, particularly for UP. The omission of reference to communists in the editorial despite their presence in the farmers' agitations is rather conspicuous.

LR Murmu, Delhi

NO DIFFERENT

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Views about Mayawati and what they tell us' (IE, January 9). While the comments and observations of high-caste feminists about Mayawati's working style may be biased and even depict their casteist slant, her conduct and dealings whether in or out of power were not different from her opponents. She refused to play it straight. Despite this, the writer is a bit hyperbolic about Mayawati's contribution to the Dalit cause in the country. Though she is not different from other Dalit leaders in any respect, he tries to project her as so. For example, she is a monopolist. This is evident from her reluctance to fight elections in alliance with other Dalit parties. Mayawati is also yet to prove that she does not believe in caste politics. But what is very unusual about her play is that Brahmins not only occupy high positions in the party but also represent it in Parliament. Surely, she seems to continue with this practice only to show her "generosity".

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur



VRINDA SHUKLA

A 13-year-old girl was 12 weeks pregnant when it was found that her 16-year-old brother had been raping her for months and had silenced her with threats and blackmail.

During the registration of the First Information Report (FIR), the doctor on duty, at the time of medical examination, made no mention to the victim of the option of terminating the pregnancy. She quietly recorded "pregnancy" in the relevant medico-legal documents. The police team, handling the case, attempted to convince the victim and her family to opt for medical termination of pregnancy (MTP). They were made to understand, with persistent counselling, about the potential birth defects in the child-to-be-born because of the incestuous abuse. With the parents and the traumatised victim convinced, it was, shockingly enough, the attending doctor who proved to be the major challenge. Working at an over-stretched public health facility, she believed that her duty ended with the medical examination, a mandatory component of medico-legal cases. She perceived the abortion procedure as an additional burden thrust on her. Having made the victim visit the hospital a few times, she finally casually pronounced the victim "too weak" for an abortion. She appeared unconcerned as to how this "too

weak" victim would survive pregnancy and childbirth.

There are thousands of such minors from low-income low-literacy backgrounds, who become victims of sexual assault at the hands of family and acquaintances. Pregnancies resulting from such violation remain undetected for long, either due to ignorance of the victims or due to fear of the perpetrators and their own families. There is, thus, an inevitable delay in reaching the health facilities. Medical termination is legally permissible up to 20 weeks of pregnancy. This limit was recently revised to 24 weeks for victims of sexual assault, rape, incest and minors, subject to the approval of a state-level medical board. The permission to abort beyond this duration is provided by the courts.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 and Section 357C of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) require all registered medical practitioners, both public and private, to render emergency medical care to the children and women who have been subjected to rape, including access to abortion. The statute, however, is weakened due to the persistent refusal of the authorities concerned to treat MTP as a matter of right and to accord it due urgency and promptness. Doctors often avoid taking a de-

cision on the matter until 20 weeks are over, compelling victims to knock at the doors of the courts. The subject being a medical one rather than legal, is then referred by the courts to a medical board. The boards can take weeks to review the case and give their decisions while the pregnancy clock ticks on. The boards often lack experts to advise on third trimester abortions. They rarely include mental health experts to assess the trauma of sexual violation, unwanted pregnancy and the lifelong psycho-social impacts of delivering such children. There is also a tendency to gloss over the increased medical risks in minor girls of carrying a pregnancy and of obstructed labour.

It is time it was made mandatory for the doctor conducting the first medico-legal examination, to educate the rape victim and her family about the option of MTP. The doctor must record compliance with this requirement, in writing, in the medical examination form itself and a column must be earmarked in the form for this purpose. A follow-up date for assessment of the case, upon receiving written concurrence from the victim or her guardian, could also be recorded on the medical form. Such entries made on the permanent police and court record of the case would place accountability on the at-

tending doctor. Permanent medical boards could be constituted at state level, consisting of expert obstetricians, representatives from NGOs/civil society, and mental health specialists for a thorough timebound assessment of MTP petitions made by rape victims.

In cases where the crime is reported to the police within 72 hours of the occurrence of rape, the examining doctor must mandatorily offer the victim the emergency contraceptive (EC) pill to prevent pregnancy, and compliance, to this effect, must also be recorded in the medical form. At present, many emergency care facilities fail to even inform the victims that such a remedy is available. Lastly, doctors must be sensitised on the long-term psycho-social impacts of an unwanted pregnancy following rape. They should also be trained in WHO-recommended international best practices for providing abortion care, including in advanced pregnancies.

Overburdened public systems must not trivialise the trauma of a sexual violation. To compel a survivor of such brutalisation to nurture a life borne out of it adds insult to injury.

The writer is an IPS officer serving as DCP Crimes against Women & Children in Noida, UP. Views are personal

12 The World

TOP OF THE WORLD



Bob Saget

USA

Bob Saget, TV dad & comedian, found dead in his hotel room

BOB SAGET, an actor and comedian best known as the jovial dad on the television sitcom *Full House*, was found dead in a hotel room in Orlando, Florida, at age 65, authorities and his family said on Sunday. The cause of Saget's death was unclear. Emergency responders found the actor unresponsive on Sunday afternoon in a room at the Ritz-Carlton in Orlando and pronounced him dead at the scene, the Orange County Sheriff's Office said. Detectives found no signs of foul play or drug use, the department said. Saget had just started a comedy tour and performed near Jacksonville, Florida, on Saturday night. **REUTERS**

NEPAL

Former king: No political system relevant if people suffer

GYANENDRA SHAH, former king of Nepal, said that calling any political system a republic or a democracy meant nothing if people continued to suffer and the nation's unity was in "peril". In a message on the eve of the 300th birth anniversary of the warrior king Prithvi Narayan Shah, who founded modern Nepal, Gyanendra Shah said: "Let us keep our national unity intact and take the country towards progress." He said the happiness of the people should be the objective of "a system that we can call democracy". **YUBARAJ GHIMIRE**

KAZAKHSTAN

Nearly 8,000 detained amid unrest

AUTHORITIES IN Kazakhstan said Monday that nearly 8,000 people were detained by police during protests that descended into violence last week and marked the worst unrest the former Soviet nation has faced since gaining independence 30 years ago. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev described the events of last week as a "terrorist aggression" against the country and said reports of authorities fighting peaceful demonstrators were not true. **AP**

BACKLASH AFTER NEW VACCINE REQUIREMENTS

Major protests as Europe tightens Covid restrictions

THE NEW YORK TIMES
JANUARY 10

CITIES ACROSS Germany braced for major protests against coronavirus restrictions on Monday, and a tough new vaccine requirement came into force in Italy as governments across Europe continued to tighten their rules in a struggle to contain the Omicron variant.

The developments in two nations where cases are rising fast — up 91 per cent over the past two weeks in Germany, and more than 300 per cent over the same period in Italy — encapsulate the tensions in European countries where leaders are doubling down on Covid vaccinations and boosters, beginning to make them all but mandatory.

More than 69 per cent of people in the European Union have been fully vaccinated, according to official data, and the numbers are higher in the western part of the bloc, where Italy has vaccinated 75 per cent and Germany

Protesters in Magdeburg, Germany, on Sunday. **Reuters**

72 per cent. With studies showing that the vaccines provide protection against severe illness and death from Omicron and other variants, governments increasingly see those who remain unvaccinated as an obstacle to avoiding more painful measures, such as reverting to lockdowns.

The challenge was expressed in harsh language last week by President Emmanuel Macron of France, who said in a newspaper interview that he wanted to "piss off" the millions of his compatriots who have declined the shots by barring them from public

spaces. On Saturday, thousands of protesters took to the streets in opposition to a government proposal that would effectively ban unvaccinated people from public areas.

Vaccine sceptics also came out in big numbers in Vienna, where Covid shots will be mandatory for the entire adult population starting next month.

In Germany, where a strident anti-vaccination movement has ties to the far right, social restrictions and rules that shut the unvaccinated out of much of public life have prompted large protests on Mondays, a day that holds special resonance since weekly demonstration walks helped bring down the Berlin Wall in 1989.

In Italy, where opposition to vaccines is less fierce, a rule goes into effect Monday that requires all public and private sector employees age 50 and older to be vaccinated or be able to show that they have recovered from the disease. The Omicron variant has fuelled a doubling of the case rate over the past week.

UK puts private health firms on high alert as Omicron variant threatens NHS

GUY FAULCONBRIDGE & ALISTAIR SMOUT
LONDON, JANUARY 10

BRITAIN ON Monday put the biggest private health companies on high alert to deliver crucial treatments such as cancer surgery should Omicron overwhelm National Health Service hospitals in England.

The United Kingdom's death toll from the Covid-19 pandemic stands at 150,154, the world's seventh worst official Covid toll after the United States, Brazil, India, Russia, Mexico and Peru.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has bet on refraining from lockdowns to deal with the Omicron variant which in recent weeks has swept across the United Kingdom, albeit with death rates significantly lower than previous waves.

In a sign of just how stretched the National Health Service could become, Health Secretary Sajid Javid ordered England's NHS to strike a 3-month deal with private health companies to allow patients to get treatments such as cancer surgery outside.

"Millions of patients have already got their tests and treatment quicker thanks to our existing deal with independent providers," said David Sloman, NHS England chief operating officer and Covid incident director. "It also places independent health providers on standby to provide further help," Sloman said.

There is still pressure on British hospitals and the country is not yet in a position to say it can live with Covid-19, Housing Secretary Michael Gove said on Monday. **REUTERS**

Minorities in India being targeted: Imran

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 10

PAKISTAN PRIME Minister Imran Khan on Monday alleged that minorities in India were being targeted by extremist groups and warned that it "is a real and present threat" to regional peace.

Khan took to Twitter to make the allegations in the wake of alleged inflammatory and provocative speeches against Muslims at an event in Haridwar in Uttarakhand held in December.

On his Twitter handle, Khan also asked whether the BJP government supports the call for violence towards minorities.

"It is high time international community took note and acted," he tweeted. In another tweet, Khan accused the BJP-led government of targeting minorities, adding that the extremist agenda "is a real and present threat to peace in our region". **PTI**

19 killed, including 9 children, in fire at New York City high-rise

DAVID PORTER, BOBBY CAINA CALVAN & MICHELLE L. PRICE
NEW YORK, JANUARY 10

DOCTORS WORKED Monday to save the lives of several people gravely injured when smoke from a fire knocked them out or trapped them in their apartments in a New York City high-rise building. Nineteen people, including nine children, died in the blaze.

Dozens of people were hospitalized, and as many as 13 were in critical condition after Sunday's fire in the Bronx, already the city's deadliest in three decades.

Investigators determined that a malfunctioning electric space heater, plugged in to give extra heat on a cold morning, started the fire in the 19-storey building. The flames damaged only a small part of the building, but smoke escaped through the



MEANWHILE

TRAIN HITS CRASHED PLANE; PILOT SAFE

Police in Los Angeles, California, pulled out the pilot from a crash-landed Cessna seconds before the aircraft was hit by a train on Sunday, sending debris flying in all directions. The plane had crashed onto the railway tracks shortly after takeoff. The pilot was treated for bruises and is in a stable condition. No one on the train was injured, local media reported.

US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and her Russian counterpart, Sergei Ryabkov, at the US Mission in Geneva on Monday. **Reuters**

US, Russia diplomats meet in effort to avert war in Ukraine

ANTON TROIANOVSKI & STEVEN ERLANGER
GENEVA, JANUARY 10

WITH RUSSIAN troops massing along Ukraine's borders, American and Russian diplomats made clear after an intense round of negotiations on Monday that while the two sides would keep talking, they remain far from agreement on meeting each other's security concerns.

Russian officials said they told their American counterparts they had no plans to invade Ukraine, in a series of talks that lasted nearly eight hours. "There is no reason to fear some kind of escalatory scenario," Sergei Ryabkov, a Russian deputy foreign minister, told reporters after the meeting.

"The talks were difficult, long, very professional, deep, concrete, without attempts to gloss over some sharp edges," Ryabkov said. "We had the feeling that the American side took the Russian proposals very seriously and studied them deeply."

Wendy Sherman, the lead American diplomat, said the US was "pushing back on security proposals that are simply non-starters for the United States," including Russia's demands that Ukraine not be admitted into NATO, and that the alliance end its security cooperation with Ukraine.

"We will not allow anyone to slam closed NATO's open door policy, which has always been central to the NATO alliance," Sherman said on a conference call with reporters. "We will not

EXPLAINED US raises the stakes for Russia

JUST BEFORE the talks started, US officials made it clear what punishment Russia would face in the event of an invasion of Ukraine. The unusual move is seen as a ploy to raise the stakes for Moscow ahead of the talks for which Russian President Vladimir Putin had made a number of demands the US sees as nonstarters. The potential punishments include cutting off Russia's financial institutions from global transactions, imposing an embargo on US-made tech needed for defence and consumer industries, and arming insurgents in Ukraine.

forgo bilateral cooperation with sovereign states that wish to work with the United States. And we will not make decisions about Ukraine without Ukraine, about Europe without Europe, or about NATO without NATO."

Both sides tamped down any expectations for a diplomatic breakthrough.

"Today was a discussion, a better understanding of each other and each other's priorities," Sherman said. "It was not what we would call a negotiation."

The tone of the talks "makes one more optimistic," Ryabkov said, "but the main questions are still up in the air." **NYT**

'Third country' should not interfere in China-Sri Lanka ties: Wang Yi

KJM VARMA
BEIJING, JANUARY 10

CHINESE FOREIGN Minister Wang Yi, who held talks with Sri Lanka's top leadership on Sunday, has said that no "third country" should "interfere" in their close ties, in an apparent reference to India's concerns over Beijing's big-ticket strategic projects in the island nation in the Indian Ocean.

Wang, who travelled to Colombo during the weekend from the Maldives on a two-day visit, in his meeting with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa said that the friendly relationship between China and Sri Lanka benefits the development of both countries and serves the fundamental interest of both peoples, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

"It does not target any third party and should not be interfered with by any third party," Xinhua quoted Wang as saying, in a thinly veiled reference to India.

China is seeking to deepen its ties with Sri Lanka making billions of dollars of investments in ports and infrastructure projects amid criticism that they are debt traps.

China's takeover of the Hambantota port on a 99 years' lease for \$1.2 billion debt swap drew international concerns over Beijing acquiring strategic assets far away from home by providing heavy loans and investment to smaller nations.

The Hambantota port together with Colombo port city project where China is building a new city with reclaimed land in the sea were viewed with concern, especially in India as Beijing seeks to increase its presence in the Indian Ocean. **PTI**



China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi

Former Xinjiang official takes charge of Hong Kong garrison

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, JANUARY 10

CHINA'S MILITARY said the former head of internal security in the Xinjiang region will lead the People's Liberation Army's garrison in Hong Kong, in the latest of a series of moves aimed at bringing the semiautonomous city under Beijing's tight control.

A brief report on the Defence Ministry's website Monday said Major General Peng Jingtang's appointment had been signed by president, Communist Party leader and PLA commander Xi Jinping.

It said Peng had pledged to "perform defence duties in accordance with the law, resolutely defend national sovereignty, security and development interests, and firmly safeguard Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability."

Peng met Monday morning with Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam, who told him her government would work with the garrison to "jointly safeguard the sovereignty, security and development interests of the nation and help maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong," according to a government news release.

The move follows China's stamping out of political opposition and curtailing free speech in the city, a former British colony that was promised it would keep its civil liberties and independent legal system intact for 50 years following the handover to Chinese control in 1997.

China imposed a National Security Law on Hong Kong following anti-government protests in 2019, resulting in the imprisonment, intimidation and exile of opposition voices. Independent media outlets have been raided and forced into closure through seizure of assets or threats.

Golden Globes event takes place without stars or cameras; winners announced on social media

KYLE BUCHANAN
JANUARY 10

WHAT DO the Golden Globes do after a year of scandals so severe that NBC dropped the broadcast? They tweet through it.

On Sunday night, members of the embattled Hollywood Foreign Press Association announced the winners of this year's Golden Globes, but they read those names to a ballroom at the Beverly Hilton devoid of stars, then posted the results to Twitter in real time. Those tweets — strewn with emojis and bad puns and often lacking key information about what movie any-

2022 GOLDEN GLOBES: KEY WINNERS

BEST MOVIE, DRAMA
The Power of the Dog
BEST MUSICAL OR COMEDY
West Side Story
BEST DIRECTOR, MOVIE
Jane Campion, *The Power of the Dog*
BEST ACTRESS, DRAMA
Nicole Kidman, *Being the Ricardos*
BEST ACTOR, DRAMA
Will Smith, *King Richard*
BEST SCREENPLAY
Kenneth Branagh, *Belfast*

BEST TV SERIES, DRAMA
Succession
BEST TV SERIES, MUSICAL OR COMEDY
Hacks
BEST LIMITED SERIES, ANTHOLOGY SERIES OR TV MOVIE
The Underground Railroad
BEST ACTRESS, TV DRAMA
Michaela Jaé Rodriguez, *Pose*
BEST ACTOR, TV DRAMA
Jeremy Strong, *Succession*

body was winning for — came in for more ridicule on social media.

It's a stunning downgrade for what used to be one of the glitziest awards shows in Hollywood. But after investigations by *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* revealed a series of ethical lapses within HFPA and a membership devoid of Black voters, Hollywood's major publicity firms cut off the show's access to stars.

That means Sunday's ceremony lacked in-person presence from winners such as Will Smith (*King Richard*) and Nicole Kidman (*Being the Ricardos*), who took the lead-acting drama trophies, or their counterparts in

musical/comedy categories, Andrew Garfield from *Tick, Tick... Boom!* and Rachel Zegler of *West Side Story*.

Since the scandals came to light, the HFPA has since announced a new slate of rules and admitted 21 new members, including journalists of colour. Still, it remains to be seen if Hollywood will even acknowledge Sunday's ceremony, or whether the stars who won will pretend that nothing happened.

If that cold shoulder continues, the Golden Globes may become the first awards show to itself be the victim of a major snub. **NYT**

Israel ex-PMs face off in court in defamation case

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, JANUARY 10

FORMER ISRAELI Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on Monday repeated his assertion that his successor and former rival, Benjamin Netanyahu, exhibited "crazy behaviour" as a high-profile defamation lawsuit between the two political heavyweights got underway.

The two fallen prime ministers faced off in a largely empty Tel Aviv courtroom in the opening of Netanyahu's defamation suit against Olmert. Netanyahu was joined by his wife, Sara, and oldest son, Yair. Olmert, the only Israeli prime minister ever to go to prison, sat alone on a bench, his legs crossed, across the room. Netanyahu is suing Olmert for

remarks he made last year, during the aftermath of a series of inconclusive parliamentary elections.

In an interview with an Israeli news site last April, Olmert levelled criticism at Netanyahu and said that "what is irreparable is the mental illness of the prime minister, his wife and his son".

The Netanyahus have sued Olmert, seeking nearly \$270,000 in damages, according to Hebrew press reports.

During the proceedings, Olmert defended his remarks on Democracy24 last year.

"I followed their actions, I heard recordings of members of the family, I consulted with experts..." Olmert said. "They detailed to me behaviour that in common parlance is abnormal behaviour, crazy behaviour."



GOLD

₹46,448



RUPEE

₹74.05



OIL

\$81.09



SILVER

₹59,217

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of January 7

SENSEX: 60,395.63 ▲ (1.09%) NIFTY: 18,003.30 ▲ 190.60 (1.07%) NIKKEI: 28,478.56 ▼ 9.31 HANG SENG: 23,746.54 ▲ 253.16 FTSE: 7,481.32 ▼ 3.96 DAX: 15,917.16 ▼ 30.58

International market data till 1900 IST

SECTOR WATCH
INTERNATIONAL TRADEAt WTO, China a
'developing' country:
Why many nations
are raising concernsKARUNJIT SINGH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

CHINA'S STATUS as a 'developing country' at the World Trade Organization (WTO) has become a contentious issue with a number of countries raising concerns over the upper middle-income nation deriving benefits reserved for developing countries under WTO norms. Moreover, concerns have been raised over the 'least developed country' (LDC) status, with Bangladesh potentially losing this tag after surpassing India in terms of GDP per capita.

EXPLAINED

What are the
benefits of 'developing
country' tag?

Certain WTO agreements give developing countries special rights through 'special and differential treatment' (S&DT) provisions, which can grant developing countries longer timeframes to implement the agreements and even commitments to raise trading opportunities for such countries.

WTO pacts are often aimed at reduction in government support to certain industries over time and set more lenient target for developing nations and grant them more time to achieve these targets compared to developed ones.

The classification also allows other countries to offer preferential treatment.

How is a 'developing
country' decided and why
are some against China
being classified as one?

The WTO has not defined 'developed' and 'developing' countries and therefore member countries are free to announce whether they are 'developed' or 'developing'.

However, given the rise in China's per capita income to become an upper middle-income country according to the World Bank and the country's alleged use of unfair trade practices such as preferential treatment for state enterprises, data restrictions and inadequate enforcement of intellectual property rights, a number of nations have called on China to either refrain from seeking benefits available to developing countries or forego its classification as a developing country altogether.

"One way for China to show leadership would be by

WTO member
nations are free to tag
if they are 'developed'
or 'developing'

refraining from claiming benefits that would correspond to a developing country in ongoing negotiations," the European Union said in a statement on the latest review of China's Trade Policy conducted in October 2021. The United States Trade Representative also released a similar statement.

Australia too had recommended that China relinquish "its access to special and differential treatment". China's per capita income was \$10,435 in 2020 according to the World Bank while that of India was \$1,928.

How has China responded?
What would be the impact
of China losing this status?

China has consistently maintained that it is the "world's largest developing economy" but has recently indicated that it may be willing to forego many benefits of being a developing country.

Li Chenggang, China's Ambassador to the WTO, has reportedly said that the country may forego all exemptions available to developing countries in negotiations aimed at cutting fishing subsidies to curb overfishing.

Biswajit Dhar, professor of economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, said a change in status for China to a "developed country" would impact negotiations in future agreements. "In effect China has (like developed countries) reduced its tariffs on most products to quite a significant extent."

What are the benefits of
LDC classification?

The WTO recognises LDCs relying on a classification by the UN based on a criteria that is reviewed every three years. LDCs are often exempted from certain provisions of WTO pacts. Bangladesh, currently classified as an LDC, receives zero duty, zero quota access for almost all exports to the EU. It is, however, set to graduate from the LDC status in 2026 as its per capita GDP has risen sharply surpassing that of India in FY21. *Full report on www.indianexpress.com*

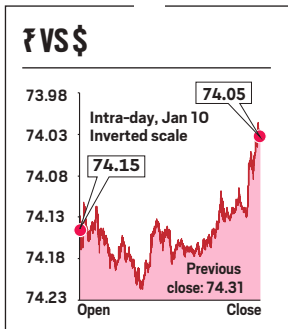
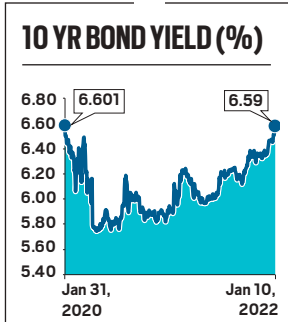
SURGING CRUDE OIL PRICES WEIGH ON SENTIMENT

Yield hits 2-yr high as RBI mops
up liquidity, US Treasuries surgeENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

THE BENCHMARK 10-year bond yield on Monday rose by five basis points and hit a fresh two-year high of 6.59 per cent as it tracked an uptick in US Treasury yields and global crude oil prices. The rupee strengthened to its highest level of 74.03 against the dollar in nearly two months aided by capital inflows.

The US 10-year treasury yield rose to a two-year high of 1.808 per cent following a mixed jobs report and as investors start pricing in earlier-than-expected rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve. Crude prices surged by 5 per cent amid supply constraints despite concern on the spread of Omicron variant.

With Monday's rise, highest since January 2020, the benchmark bond yield in India has risen 22 basis points in the last one month and 71 basis points in the last one year amid indications that the RBI is likely to reduce liquidity in the system to tackle inflation. Further weighing on market sentiment is the RBI's intermittent OMO sales in the secondary market (Rs 15,500 crore since late



October). The devolvement of the 5-year bond (5.74% GS 2026) further confirmed the rising stress.

Meanwhile, the rupee surged 29 paise to close at 74.05 against the US dollar on Monday amid robust buying in domestic equities.

'Renewable energy capacity
addition to touch 16 GW in FY23'

India's renewable energy (RE) capacity addition is estimated to hit 16 GW in FY23, an ICRA report said

RE CAPACITY ADDITION TO INCREASE FROM 7.4 GW REPORTED IN FY2021 TO:
12.5 GW in FY22 | **16 GW** in FY23

INVESTMENT PROSPECTS
are further strengthened by
the commitment to climate change
goals announced at the recent
COP26 summit, including:

- Increasing non-fossil power capacity to 500 GW
- Meeting 50% of energy requirement from renewable sources by 2030

STRONG RECOVERY IN
CAPACITY ADDITION was
seen in first eight months of

FY22 (April to November 2021), with 8.2 gigawatt (GW) added against 3.4 GW added in the year-ago period

BACKLOG OF PROJECTS awarded by central nodal agencies and state distribution utilities remains large with under-development solar, wind and hybrid capacities of more than 55 GW

Source: Icra Ratings/PTI

Anchor investor exits, Paytm
shares spiral to hit all-time lowENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

SHARES OF One 97 Communications, which owns the Paytm brand, fell sharply by over 6 per cent on Monday to hit its all-time low of Rs 1,151 before closing at Rs 1,157.9. The shares of the came under pressure following news that HDFC Mutual fund, one of the four mutual funds that were anchor investors in its IPO, significantly reduced its holding of Paytm across two schemes in the month ended December 2021.

The fall

Paytm fell 6 per cent Monday and they have lost 13 per cent since December 31, 2021. While MFs

WHAT HAPPENED

■ Paytm's shares came under pressure following news that HDFC Mutual fund significantly reduced its holding of Paytm across two schemes in the month-ended December 2021

held 0.81 per cent in the company as of November 17, 2021, disclosure of reduction in holding by HDFC Mutual fund in the company, weakened sentiment. "When the fund manager believes the stock may continue to trade low over the near to mid-term, they book losses

and exit," said a fund manager. A HDFC MF spokesperson declined to comment as fund houses do not comment on stock-specific investment decisions. Macquarie cut its price target by 25 per cent to Rs 900 from around Rs 1,200, retaining its 'underperform' rating.

Paytm responds

The number of loans disbursed through the Paytm platform rose 401 per cent year-on-year to 4.4 million loans in the third quarter of FY 2022. "... In Q3FY22, value of loans disbursed via our platform during the quarter was Rs 2,180 crore (run-rate of \$1.2 billion), an increase of 365 per cent. We have seen stellar growth in ... lending products..." Paytm said. *Full report on www.indianexpress.com*

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

WITH RETAIL investors stepping up their investments, equity schemes of mutual funds received record inflows of Rs 25,076 crore during December even as foreign investors pulled out of Rs 35,000 crore from the stock markets.

According to data from the Association of Mutual Funds of India (AMFI), equity schemes received Rs 11,614 crore in November and Rs 5,214 crore in October. Index funds and ETFs also received Rs 18,702 crore in December. However, debt funds witnessed outflows of Rs 49,154 crore. AMFI said SIP (systematic investment plan) numbers have

Equity schemes get ₹25,000 cr in
Dec, SIP inflows at record high

The BSE, Mumbai. File

grown from each month in the past one year of 2021. For the month of December 2021, monthly SIP contribution stood at a record high of Rs 11,305.34 crore, up from the November 2021 monthly SIP contribution at Rs 11,004.94 crore.

"The number of SIP accounts for December 2021 are 4.90 crore,

up from 4.78 crore in November 2021. SIP assets as at the end of the December 2021 month is Rs 5.65 crore as against Rs 5.46 crore in November.

NS Venkatesh, chief executive, AMFI said: "2021 has been a momentous year, with mutual funds emerging as the preferred investment destination with continued record equity flows through NFOs and ongoing investment into existing schemes. The year has seen remarkable growth in mutual funds with hike in inflows across all categories of funds."

"SIP has been the favourite medium of consistent investing and disciplined mode of savings by the common man. This is evident from the number of accounts rising," he said.

BRIEFLY
Gold exchange

New Delhi: Sebi issued a framework for operationalising the gold exchange, wherein gold will be traded as electronic gold receipts (EGRs).

India, SKorea ties

New Delhi: Trade deficit, market access and non-tariff barriers will figure in the meet of India and South Korea trade ministers Tuesday.

Startups' role

New Delhi: At Startup India Innovation Week, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said startups can play a key role to socialise and democratise healthcare availability.

Ola pricing

New Delhi: The NCLAT rejected pleas by Meru and Fast Track Cab against Ola alleging predatory pricing. *PTI*

Airbus deliveries

Paris: Airbus remained the top commercial airplane supplier in 2021 with 611 deliveries. *REUTERS*

Omicron dents
demand, airlines
reduce capacityPRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

RISING COVID cases and the consequent fall in air travel demand has forced airlines to cancel flights and offer waivers on changes being made to existing bookings. Airlines are conducting planned reduction of capacity mounted on domestic routes to prevent last-minute cancellations.

Airlines reduce capacity

On Sunday, IndiGo announced the withdrawal of 20 per cent of its scheduled flights due to reduced demand. Vistara said it is adjusting capacity in sync with changing demand. An Air India official said some flights on routes with multiple daily services are being merged based on the load factor.

Demand for air travel

As per data from Ministry of Civil Aviation, domestic air passenger numbers have been witnessing a fall since the past two weeks.

T-3 terminal of Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi. *PTI* file

Waivers

IndiGo has waived change fees and is offering free changes for all new and existing bookings made up to January 31, for flights up to March 31. A Vistara spokesperson said: "We are also trying to minimise the inconvenience to our customers by offering them various options such as rescheduling or refund etc as applicable". GoFirst also waived off change fee for new tickets booked up till January 31 for travel till March 31. *Full report on www.indianexpress.com*

Auto PLI
scheme
draws 115
applicantsENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

THE HONEY Industries Ministry on Monday said as many as 115 companies, both domestic and global, have filed applications to take advantage of the Rs 25,938-crore production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the automobile and auto component industries. While the ministry didn't reveal the names of investors, sources said Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, Mahindra Group, MG Motor, Bajaj Auto, Hero Motocorp and TVS Motor were among the applicants. Similarly, companies, including Toyota Auto Parts, Minda Group and Lumax, have applied for incentives for component manufacturing. It wasn't immediately known if Tesla Inc had also sought to tap the scheme. Bulk of the applications (86) are meant for component manufacturing and the rest (29) for the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) category, the ministry said. *FE*

'1,157 hrs of govt-ordered net outages in 2021'

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

INTERNET SHUTDOWNS, ordered by central, state and district level authorities in India, lasted a total 1,157 hours, resulting in a loss of \$583 million in 2021, according to a research by internet firm top10vpn.com. These internet shutdowns impacted 59.1 million people across the country.

The total duration of domestic internet shutdowns in India was the third longest globally, behind Myanmar and Nigeria, where

As per a top10vpn.com
research, 59.1 million
were impacted in India

these blackouts were for 12,238 and 5,040 hours, respectively. The total loss caused by internet shutdowns last calendar year stood at \$2.8 billion in Myanmar and \$1.5 billion in Nigeria, the research by top10vpn.com showed.

Globally, government-ordered internet outages in 21 countries lasted for over 30,000 hours in total and cost the global economy

Apple: Workers to return
to Foxconn plant graduallySAJAN C KUMAR
CHENNAI, JANUARY 10

APPLE ON Monday said the workers at its contract manufacturing firm Foxconn's plant at Sriperumbudur, near Chennai, will return to work gradually. The operations will be resumed in a step by step manner at the factory as hostels and dormitories get ready and certified as per local requirements and Apple's audits.



Foxconn plant, near Chennai. File

The plant was shut last month after a food poisoning incident affected over 200 workers. *FE*

Insurers told to clear Covid
cocktail therapy claims

Mumbai: Irda has asked insurance companies to accept claims towards "antibody cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) has been given emergency use authorization (EUA) in May 2021 by CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organization) in our country," it said.

"Insurers are advised to review the claims denied/ deductions made in such claims and take appropriate action for ensuring that the claims are settled as per terms and conditions of the policy." *ENS*

to insurance firms.

"It may please be noted that the antibody cocktail (Casirivimab and Imdevimab) has been given emergency use authorization (EUA) in May 2021 by CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organization) in our country," it said. "Insurers are advised to review the claims denied/ deductions made in such claims and take appropriate action for ensuring that the claims are settled as per terms and conditions of the policy." *ENS*

NORTHERN RAILWAY

NOTICE

Sub:- Open Tender notice for appointment of Halt Agent at various halt stations of MB Division.

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager Northern Railway/ Moradabad for and on behalf of president of India invites applications for appointing agents for booking of passengers ticket at following halt stations :

S.N.	Name Halt	Serving Station	Lying in between
1	Sisona Halt	Haldour	Haldour-Chandpur
2	Atwamuthia Halt	Beniganj	Beniganj-Balamau
3	Arsaini Halt	Balamau	Gaju-Atwa muthiya
4	Nisoli Halt	Aonla	Aonla-Visharatganj
5	Bagarpur halt	Chandpur	Chandpur-Mandi dhanaura
6	Chhaprawat Halt	Burral	Burral-Gulawati
7	Baradev Halt	Safipur	Safipur-Methitukur

Applications completed in all respect shall be receive in this office on 31.01.2022 in the Box placed in the chamber of Assistant commercial Manager Northern Railway, DRM Office, Moradabad from hrs to 14.00 hrs, which will open 15.00 hrs. on same date in presence of the applicants or their Representative. Applications received after 14:00 hrs not be considered. In case . 31.01.2022 happens to be holiday, the applications shall be received & open on next working day at same timings. The application notice, Terms & condition can be seen downloaded from Northern Railway website www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in 45/2022

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER DRINKING WATER & SANITATION DIVISION, CHATRA			
e-Procurement Short Tender Notice (SBD)			
Tender Reference No. – DWSD/JIRWAKHURD/RPWS/CH/28/2021-22 (1st Call) Dated – 08.01.2022			
Sl. No.	Name of Work	Detailed survey, designing and drawing, Construction of RCC Intake Well -Cum- Pump House, RCC Gangway 50 M long and 3.00 Mtr Wide, 5.50 MLD Capacity Conventional Water Treatment Plant, RCC Elevated Service Reservoir -04 Nos, Approach Road, NH Crossing, Staff Quarter, Compound Wall, Supplying and laying Raw and Clear Water rising main and Distribution Network, House Connection Supplying and Installation of VT and Centrifugal pump motor and Five Years Operation & Maintenance with allied works etc. all complete job for Jirwakhurd & Adjoining Village Rural Pipe Water Supply Scheme "On Turnkey Basis" Under D.W.&S Division, CHATRA for the Year 2021-22 under (State Plan)	
1	Estimated Cost	Rs. 47,15,34,000/- (Rs. Forty Seven Crore Fifteen Lac Thirty Four Thousand Only)	
2	Earnest Money	Rs. 47 16 000/- (Rs. Forty Seven Lac Sixteen Thousand Only)	
3	Cost of BOQ	Rs. 10,000/- (Rs. Ten Thousand Only) in Shape of B.D. issued by Nationalized Bank in favour of Executive Engineer, D.W.&S. Division, CHATRA	
4	Time completion	24 th Month + 03 Months (Trial and Run)	
5	Date of Uploading BOQ on Website	15.01.2022 at 05:00 P.M.	
6	Pre-bid meeting	21.01.2022 at 12:30 P.M. in the Office of Eng.-in-Chief, DWSD, Nepal House, Doranda, Ranchi.	
7	Last Date/Time for Receipt of Bid	27.01.2022 up to 5:00 P.M.	
8	Last Date & Time of Receiving EMD/Cost of BOQ (Hard Copy)	28.01.2022 up to 3:00 P.M. In the Office of (1) Executive Engineer, D.W.&S. Division, CHATRA (2) Regional Chief Eng., DW&SD, Ranchi Zone, Ranchi AND (3) Eng.-in-Chief, DWSD, Nepal House, Doranda, Ranchi.	
9	Date of opening of Tender	29.01.2022 at 11:30 P.M.	
10	Name & address of Office Inviting Tender	Executive Engineer, D.W.&S. Division, CHATRA, Jharkhand	
11	Name & address of Opening Office	Eng.-in-Chief, D.W.&S. Department, Nepal House, Doranda, Ranchi (Jharkhand)	
12	Contact No. of e-procurement Office	+91-9835068475, +91-8002093156 or 06541-253273	
13	Help No. of e-Procurement Cell	0651-2480345	

i. Further details can be seen on website <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>
 ii. Estimating cost may be changed i.e either it may be increased or decreased.

Executive Engineer
D.W.&S. Division, CHATRA

 CHANDIGARH HOUSING BOARD A CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION UNDERTAKING			
E-TENDER NOTICE			
Notice for inviting e-tenders for allotment of Built-up Dwelling/ Commercial Units on Free Hold and Lease-Hold Basis in U.T. Chandigarh.			
<p>"It is hereby notified for the information of general public that e-tenders are invited for the sale of Built-up units. All the Commercial Units are being sold on Lease-Hold Basis. However, specific Residential Units are being sold on Lease-Hold while other specific units are being sold Free-Hold basis. E-Tenders are invited individually for each of Built-up Unit.</p>			
<p>1. The E-Tender Process is open for all the citizens of India as well as NRIs/PIOs above 18 years of age. The persons already having any property (Residential or Commercial) can also participate in the E-Tender.</p>			
<p>2. The Built-up Units shall be allotted to the highest eligible bidder, quoting above the reserve price of the Built-up Units. The GST will not be applicable on the consideration/ premium of the units. However, in case of allotment on Lease-Hold basis, GST will be applicable on Lease Money/ Ground Rent payable annually.</p>			
<p>3. All willing participants may visit the official website www.echbonline.in to understand the detailed procedure for submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and e-bids. The Terms & Conditions and the detailed List mentioning localities/ sectors of Built-up Units and reserve price can be downloaded from the official website of the Chandigarh Housing Board i.e. www.echbonline.in</p>			
<p>4. In order to submit e-bids, every prospective bidder is required to get himself/herself registered at https://etenders.chd.nic.in</p>			
<p>5. Stickers have been pasted at each of the Built-up Unit for better identification and Site Offices have been provided at different Sectors/ Location to facilitate inspection by the prospective bidders. The Location of each of the unit on google map, address of the Site Offices and contact details of the officers are available on the official website www.echbonline.in. The days specified for the inspections of the units are as under:-</p>			
Sr. No.	Built-up Units	No. of Units	Days for inspections (10.00 AM, to 5.00 P.M.)
1	Residential Units on Free-Hold Basis	13	Every Saturday
2	Residential Units on Lease-Hold Basis	24	Every Wednesday
3	Commercial Units on Lease-Hold Basis	109	Every Friday
Total		146	
<p>6. Schedules of dates for E-tender of the Units:-</p>			
1	Starting date and time for bid submission	From 11 th January 2022 (10.00 AM)	
2	Closing date and time for bid submission	Till 26 th January 2022 upto 10.00 AM	
3	Opening of e-bids	28 th January, 2022 (10.15 AM)	
Chief Accounts Officer Chandigarh Housing Board, Chandigarh			
WEAR MASK, WASH YOUR HANDS, WATCH YOUR DISTANCE.			

4th floor, Jeevaan Tara Building,
Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

O.A. No. 431 / 2021
CANARA BANK
Versus
MR. CHANDRESH JAJOO
& ORS.
Applicant
Defendants To

4. M/s Kay Jay Leasing Ltd., Regd. Office:
Sachidanand Farm House Krishnagarh
Village, in front of swimming pool (near
DDA Sports Complex) Lane Green Avenue,
Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110070

Whereas the above named applicant has
instituted a case for recovery of **Rs. 64,62,78,179.88** (Rs Sixty Four Crore Sixty
two lakh Seventy Eight Thousand One
Hundred Seventy Nine and Paise Eighty
Eight only) 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 before Ld. Registrar on
07-02-2022 at 10.30 A.M. (for further
details kindly visit DRT website
www.etrbnl.gov.in) Phone No. 011-
23748473)

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' 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. 011-
23748473.

Given under my hand and seal of the
Tribunal on this **05th January, 2022**

**by order of this Tribunal
for Registrar**

Respondent may contact under mention
phone number for further enquiry.
Amit K. Dar, Ld. Registrar, DRT-I, New
Delhi, Phone: 011-23748473
E-mail: drt1delhi-dfs@nic.in

New world champion’s India challenge

With Kean Yew in backyard, Srikanth has chance to take revenge

SHIVANINAIK
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

LOH KEAN Yew received a ‘water salute’ when the men’s singles World Champion’s plane bringing him back from Spain, taxied between two high-powered water tank hoses – the gush forming a welcoming arch for the returning winner at the Changi airport.

Singapore was honouring its first ever badminton world-beater, a rare phenom in a country that loves the sport. After applauding the behemoths from China, Malaysia and Indonesia for years, this was their moment to celebrate by putting up a spectacle.

Later, half a dozen business heads from ‘the little red dot’ city-state set up a trust fund for \$550,000 (INR 27 lakh 30 thousand), after they realised the World Championship carried no cash rewards, to support Kean Yew’s future ambitions. “It’s just a new beginning for me because I’ve been the underdog, but now I’m gonna be one of those that people want to beat....like very badly,” Kean Yew would say at the airport reception.

Delhi’s KD Jadhav hall at the IG Stadium will give the freshly minted World Champion his first taste of those men, waiting to beat him – like, very badly at the Super 500 India Open.

With his goofy grin and easy charm, Kean Yew doesn’t exactly elicit fierce appraisals of a formidable opponent, reserved for those like Kento Momota or Viktor Axelsen – both of whom he’s beaten in the last two months. No matter how much that crown of his slick gelled pompadour pushes him to 6 feet making him a prized scalp, there’s always a polite smile waiting to light up his sunshine face, and take away the menace of his lightning speed that fetched him the world title.

Memories of World Championship final where Kean Yew trumped Kidambi Srikanth are fresh – never mind the change of calendar. Yet, both Srikanth and HS Prannoy whom he set aside on way to the title, will fancy their chances of reversing their scorelines, should they run into the surprise, breakout gold medallist, Lakshya Sen who has beaten him in the last 12 months, while carving his own reputation on debut, won’t be faulted for believing he could’ve gone the distance had he had a shy at the Singaporean in the final.

“I ended the year on a high so it was a good year. ... Nobody will always win. The pressure is always there. I just hope that I can play the best and I can perform,” Kean Yew told BAI.

Fitness worry

Yet, a gold medal is undeniable. Ask Lee Chong Wei, inarguably far more legendary than anyone who made the last 8 at Spain, just

Memories of World Championship final where Kean Yew trumped Kidambi Srikanth are fresh - never mind the change of calendar. Yet, both Srikanth and HS Prannoy whom he set aside on way to the title, will fancy their chances.

how elusive the gold can be. And perhaps the biggest folly of the Indian pack at Delhi – despite playing in their backyard – might well be, in getting too bullish about their own forms, when pitted against the new one on the throne. The right ankle of the fresh regal, was a tad iffy post the World title, so those lunges and jumps might be a little wobbly when stomping. But the draw that might bring him up against Srikanth in the semis, might turn tricky even earlier.

Those wanting to win badly, and taking aim at the scalp, can be rank new names – Canadian Xiadong Shen and Malaysians Soong Joo Ven and Cheam June Wei. A new season will always have the boisterous unknown, upstarts.

For Kidambi Srikanth, who won at Delhi in 2015 and soon became No 1 and also reached the finals in 2018, this season-starter will be about unfinished businesses: he’s not won a title for eons – 3 years. The World’s finals miss keeps him famished for title glory. And there’s the Singaporean grinning at him from under his playing mop from across the court, should both line up for the rematch revenge.

Yet, for a first seed, Srikanth has himself some speedbumps – a bunch of ambitious Indians spoiling for flight. Siril Verma in Round 1, Subhankar Dey in Round 2 and Sameer Verma / Kiran George in quarters. Each has an opportunity to overtake the challenger. Targets come embossed on all sizes of torquing backs.

HS Prannoy will have to shrug off rustiness against Pablo Abian, and could run into Mithun Manjunath, a talented Bangalorean, trying to lose the Lakshya Sen shadow. Prannoy – Lakshya going head to head in quarters can be a nice little Friday domestic blockbuster.

Young and strapping Priyanshu Rajawat, rated highly in Hyderabad, will be peppered with a French challenge first up, but can quickly make headlines if he beats veteran Tommy Sugiarto. India’s wily fox Ajay Jayaram, with that bamboozling limby game, missed out on Olympic qualification – albeit at Siri Fort – by a whisker a decade ago. Fitness permitting – and he was in good touch over the European swing, he might want to exploit a gentler bottom half of the draw and surprise the world.

Loh Kean Yew is the world champion. But for a gaggle of Indians, starved of world class competition, this India Open might well be the time to grab the attention of the Badminton world.



PV Sindhu had first won the India Open in 2017.

For once, Sindhu’s path isn’t a minefield

SHIVANINAIK
MUMBAI, JANUARY 10

PV SINDHU, India’s tallest badminton player, isn’t accustomed to having things easy before the medal hangs off her neck. Her 2019 World Championship crown might’ve come in domineering fashion, but for the perennial high performer, operating in women’s badminton’s toughest eras, not one podium has come without one or the other Top Tenner dragging her into those taut, punishing three-setters. That she stubs out nervousness for her followers by pulling out these tricky leadups to the big final day are a testament to her consistency. But once in a while, Sindhu deserves a breather. An on-court breather where she is served up opponents who don’t arrive stomping, commanding a minimum 45-minute engagement full of giddy retrievals.

The India Open of 2022 gives Sindhu, a five time World’s and double Olympic medallist, that rare title opportunity, on a platter. With the circulating virus depleting competition draws, the Indian will get a few slow-paced opening rounds, including a few aspiring Indians.

That India has no women’s singles player of note after Sindhu, is not a secret. Forget snapping at her heels, the next Indian crop can’t be

said to be even a length’s distance behind her in horse-racing terms. To put it brutally, they might not feature in the same frame as her. This gap turns yawning – not only because Sindhu’s achievements are stupendously other-worldly in a very mediocre shuttle universe, but also because none of the younger players have stepped up in time, to command any attention.

Perhaps India got spoilt silly after Saina Nehwal and Sindhu hit the highest notes in their teens, and didn’t dawdle around in juniors or lower rung tournaments. The follow-up flurry, hasn’t been very sparky though. Yet, the likes of Sri Krishna Priya Kudaravalli and Ira Sharma will earn themselves the show court to leave an impression – never mind the gulf in class that may show up.

Ashmita Chaliha, the Assamese left hander, is a classic case of what ought to have been India’s second-string with her rafty southpaw game. But has drifted away from the top competition, partly due to the pandemic, but also from want of precise planning, given she continues at Guwahati, and is barely on the circuit.

Ritupama Das, the elegant player with pitiful fitness, and the spirited Riya Mookherjee, who have done the national level criss-crossing, have not managed to make a mark internationally. And this India Open, is that one

chance to play the main draw, like their lives depended on it, because rarely will a field be so thinned that India’s domestic players get a shoo-in.

Aakarshi Kashyap, training as Sindhu’s understudy at the Suchitra academy, has been in good form in the ranking tourneys domestically. While Malvika Bansod and Samiya Farooqui might be the most intriguing first-round faceoff – with the awaited prize being, facing Saina Nehwal, the original domineer.

Nehwal’s fitness has massive persistent question marks, but besides first round opponent Tereza Svavikova, she gets an entire quarter filled with young Indians gunning for a win against her. Beating Saina Nehwal will set them up for a season, should any of themselves find the courage within to show the original some healthy disrespect nicking kill points off her.

For Sindhu though, the only two names that can potentially challenge her are Singaporean Yeo Jia Min in semis (beware of the Loh Kean Yew effect) and Thai second seed Busanan Ongbamrungphan in finals. But really, it is PV Sindhu’s title to lose. Early pickings in a season that can start with a good workout at home after all the near-misses and aggravations of 2021. A title is a title, and if India is opening the season, then Sindhu might as well pocket the first one in many months.

Latham, Boulton put NZ on course for B’desh win

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CHRISTCHURCH, JANUARY 10

TOM LATHAM scored 252, Devon Conway banked another century and Ross Taylor likely played his last Test innings as New Zealand declared at 521-6 on Monday before bowling out Bangladesh for 126 on the second day of the second cricket Test.

Trent Boult took 5-43, including his 300th Test wicket to join Richard Hadlee, Daniel Vettori and his new ball partner Tim Southee among New Zealanders who have taken 300 wickets in Tests. The milestone came in Boult’s 75th Test at an average of 27.35, along with his ninth five-wicket hauls in Tests.

“It definitely means a lot,” Boult said. “I suppose as a team we’re not about the milestones but it definitely means a lot to join an exclusive club, tough to get a membership.” Latham declared New Zealand’s first innings halfway through the middle session on day two at Christchurch, and Boult and Southee raced through the Bangladesh top order to leave the tourists’ 11-4 in the seventh over – challenging their Test low score of 43.

Latham took two catches at second slip among those four early wickets to keep up his outsized influence on the match which represented a massive shift in fortunes of the series after Bangladesh shocked World Test Champion New Zealand by winning the series-opener by eight wickets.

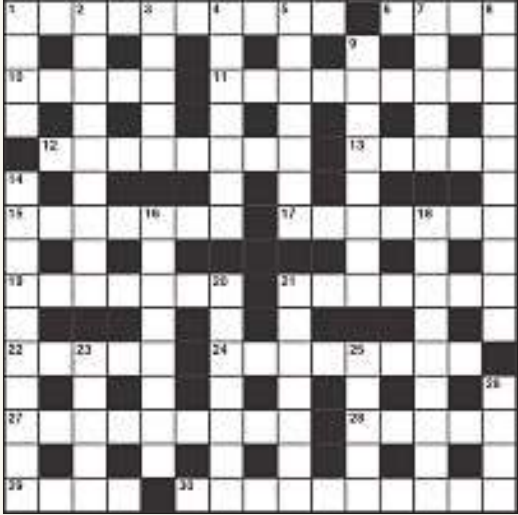
Latham’s second double century in Tests was a mammoth innings which began when he lost the toss Sunday for the sixth time as New Zealand’s stand-in captain. It ended 552 minutes, or 5 1/2 sessions, later after Latham had shared partnerships of 148 for the first wicket with Will Young and 215 for the second wicket with Conway.

BRIEF SCORES: Bangladesh 126 (Yasir 55, Nurul 41, Boult 5-43, Southee 3-28) trail **New Zealand 521** for 6 dec (Latham 252, Conway 109, Blundell 57*, Shoriful 2-79) by 395 runs



Tom Latham scored his second double century in Tests while Ross Taylor likely played his last Test innings. AP

CROSSWORD 4634



ACROSS

- 1 Shorts designed for hill climbing? (6,4)
- 6 Composer drops in for a bit of pork (4)
- 10 Times by the score (5)
- 11 It provides an easy let-down for the dropouts (9)
- 12 Flag and sail hung incorrectly (8)
- 13 Well-equipped place for caravans en route (5)
- 15 Beasts retiring with broken toes (7)
- 17 Some soldiers a philosopher gets on with (7)
- 19 Where pedestrians are in danger in attacks (7)
- 21 Person on the make? (7)
- 22 Provide proper directions first (5)
- 24 State of California if left in chaos (8)
- 27 He can cut quite a figure in the garden (9)
- 28 Key material for instrument makers (5)
- 29 Pay attention or bend over (4)
- 30 Sums up the scrambled egg as great (10)

DOWN

- 1 Scraps for horses (4)
- 2 Novel young American (3,6)
- 3 To be paid nothing to fly (5)
- 4 They have no settled occupation (7)
- 5 But for inflation it would never have gone up (7)
- 7 Some time we hear is due to us (5)
- 8 Requests put with an attempt at jocularly (10)
- 9 Royalty’s own touch of honour (8)
- 14 Fortuitous bit of scoring? (10)
- 16 The difference between imports and exports (5,3)
- 18 Emphatically not at home (3-3-3)
- 20 Laying off wholesale destruction (7)
- 21 He looks after our cart when damaged (7)
- 23 They are defrauded of a penny in fees (5)
- 25 Prone to mendacity (5)
- 26 They see and show audible approval (4)

Solutions Crossword 4633: Across: 1 Reaches, 5 Hotel, 8 Dareddevil, 9 Ernu, 10 Reel, 12 Animated, 14 Retail, 15 Lovely, 17 Gardenia, 18 Stow, 21 Out, 22 Abstainer, 24 Posed, 25 Derides. Down: 1 Radar, 2 Air, 3 Hide, 5 Half-moon, 6 Treatment, 7 Laundry, 11 Enteritis, 13 Sixes and sevens, 14 Regroup, 16 Biased, 19 Worms, 20 Parr, 23 Nod.

JUMBLLED 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.

Most people have to ____, so they won’t ____ - May Sarton (4,.,4)

KNOAE



FGHILT



AMOAR



ACTWHK



SOLUTION: OAKEN, AROMA, FLIGHT, THWACK

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4711

Difficulty Level 4s

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4710



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Mars, a planet whose two and a half year cycle regulates your general affairs, is now urging you to assert your interests, but in a rather inefficient manner! You should avoid pushing yourself forward at the risk of taking the wrong direction. It’s much better to slow down and think more.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Your mood will change around early afternoon. Your relationships are likely to be affected first, and the chances are that you’ll tend to withdraw yourself from people you were formerly happy to mix with. Everyone must recognise that you need your privacy.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You may have cut off your nose to spite your face, or turned the clock back in one important area. But, then, that may not be a bad thing. Who knows? You might actually have avoided a whole heap of trouble by bailing out of a commitment. A friend may need reassurance, though.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

You are showing a strong tendency to over-work. You may also be feeling under the weather, perhaps as a result of past strain. On the other hand, your general stellar and celestial influences today are positive and you could therefore do much to remedy the situation.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Your current planetary patterns seem to be making you more energetic and self-confident. If you have any role models, they should be found amongst children and younger people or, at the very least, those friends who make a point out of being light-hearted.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Of all the signs of the zodiac, yours may find itself most sharply squeezed between contradictory pressures and irreconcilable options. In addition, your range of possible actions could be limited: there may be nothing to choose between total commitment and a complete break.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

It’s clear that you can’t carry on forever in the same old groove, and you must be prepared to cut out a great deal of dead wood if you are to get your point across. Others must be able to see that you are not hung up by beliefs which are nothing if not irrelevant.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

There are a number of adverse planetary patterns, but it would be a mistake to imagine that life must be difficult. When challenging events accumulate, it is possible to search for, and find, the grain of gold which can transform your future. Make your own success.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

Everything depends on what you expect. If you continue to believe that other people will let you down then they probably will. However, one way to deal with personal squabbles might be to recognise others’ independence, just as you insist that they respect yours.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Any current restlessness is likely to be born out of frustration. The way to live positively at the present is to be thoroughly self-sacrificing and utterly charitable in all your dealings with your fellow humans. Mind you, if you are going to abandon your own interests, make sure you do it for a deserving cause.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

There are still far too many uncertainties and loose ends, but that is often the way you like it, so don’t complain. Memory is a funny thing and, if you look back to a time when life was more secure, you are almost certainly deluding yourself. You have as much in your favour now as you did then.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

If you are precise and painstaking in your dealings with loved ones, you will escape any blame for anything that goes wrong on the emotional level. However, the odd breakage around the house is almost inevitable, so lock your valuables away! And try to soothe angry friends.

Djokovic takes first set vs Australia

World No. 1 wins court battle to move out of detention, government eyeing another move to deport him

ROD MCGUIRK & MARK D. BAKER
JANUARY 10

NOVAK DJOKOVIC returned to the tennis court Monday for training, having won a legal battle to stay in Australia and play in the Australian Open after his exemption from strict coronavirus vaccine rules was questioned. But the government is still threatening to cancel his visa and deport him.

Federal Circuit Court Judge Anthony Kelly reinstated Djokovic's visa, which was pulled after his arrival last week because officials said he didn't qualify for an exemption to a rule that all non-citizens be fully vaccinated. Djokovic's lawyers say that since he recently recovered from COVID-19, he didn't need to be inoculated, and court documents say he is not.

The judge ruled the No. 1 player had not been given enough time to speak to his lawyers before the decision was made and ordered the government to release him from a Melbourne quarantine hotel where he has spent the last four nights. But government lawyer Christopher Tran told the judge that the immigration minister "will consider whether to exercise a personal power of cancellation."

That would mean that the nine-time Australian Open winner could again face deportation and could miss the tournament, which starts on Jan. 17. It could also bar him from the country for three years.

The back and forth has gripped the world and caused a furor in Australia, where many initially decried the news that Djokovic, who has been a vocal skeptic of vaccines, had received an exemption to strict rules to compete in Melbourne. Many felt the star was being given special treatment since Australians who aren't vaccinated face tough travel and quarantine restrictions. Melbourne, in particular, has faced severe restrictions and is one of the world's most locked down cities.

But when border police then blocked the 34-year-old on arrival, others cried foul, saying he was being scapegoated by an Australian government facing criticism for its recent handling of the pandemic. The tennis star's brother, Djordje Djokovic, told television network Prva in Belgrade, Serbia: "This is definitely politics, all this was politics."

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative government is seeking re-election for a fourth term in polls due by May.

While his government was widely praised for containing the nation's COVID-19 death toll at the start of the pandemic, he has recently loosened some rules, just as omicron cases have been rapidly surging. He has been criticized for that strategy as well as for shortages of rapid antigen tests and for refusing to make the tests available to all for free.

Minister Andrews did not immediately responded to a request for comment. But a spokesperson for Alex Hawke, minister for immigration, citizenship, migrant services and multicultural affairs, acknowledged the court's decision, adding the minister's personal discretion remains in play.

Still, at a news conference in Belgrade, Serbia, Djokovic's family declared victory.

"This is his greatest victory, greater than all the Grand Slams that he has won," his mother, Dijana Djokovic, said. **AP**



Hundreds of fans gathered on Monday outside Novak Djokovic's lawyers' office in Melbourne, chanting 'Free Nole'. *AP*

'What more could this man have done?'

The verdict, reasoning and the possible aftermath of the ruling which released Djokovic from detention

THE VERDICT

The ruling voided the government's decision to cancel Djokovic's visa. Furthermore, judge Anthony Kelly ordered the government to pay Djokovic's costs as agreed or assessed, to "take all necessary steps" to immediately release Djokovic from detention, and return Djokovic's passport and all other personal effects to him.

THE REASONING

According to judge Kelly, Djokovic had not been given sufficient notice of his visa cancellation or enough time by the government to prepare materials.

The government lawyers conceded that the decision to proceed with interviewing Djokovic in the early hours of Thursday and cancel his visa before he could contact Tennis Australia or his lawyers was unreasonable.

On Thursday, Djokovic was told at 5:20 am that he had until 8:30 am to respond to a notice of intention to cancel his visa. His comments, however, were sought instead at 6:14 am and his visa was cancelled just over an hour later. Kelly also said that the status of Djokovic's medical exemption "preoccupied" him, describing it as a



"relatively significant fact" that Djokovic had obtained an exemption from "a professor and eminently qualified physician", further approved by an independent expert panel established by the Victorian state government.

"The point I'm somewhat agitated about is: what more could this man (Djokovic) have done?" Kelly said.

THE IMPLICATION

After the ruling, government barrister Christopher Tran said that the

RETURN TO TRAINING

Late Monday night, Djokovic tweeted out a photo that showed him, coach Goran Ivanisevic and the rest of his team standing on one of the main show courts of the tournament. He was already back to training, his brother told reporters in Serbia.

"I'm pleased and grateful that the judge overturned my visa cancellation. Despite all that has happened, I want to stay and try to compete @AustralianOpen," Djokovic said in the post.

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs would consider "whether to exercise a personal power of cancellation."

Hawke — who in December 2020 threatened to deport backpackers at a Sydney beach party — was said to be "considering the matter" and can personally decide to cancel the visa on new grounds. That again could prompt a court hearing as Djokovic would face being banned from Australia for three years. **ENS**

Unfazed India bid to conquer S. Africa's Newlands citadel

SANDIP G
JANUARY 10

THE SERIES-DECIDER in Cape Town is replete with symbols. It's where, four years ago, Virat Kohli embarked on world conquest; it's where Jasprit Bumrah made his Test debut four years ago; it's where India have twice come close to securing their first series win in South Africa. Should they achieve it this time — the only outpost of the cricketing globe they have never conquered — it could end up defining Captain Kohli and his generation. But should they lose, the series could signal the end of an era. Conversely, if South Africa sustain their turnaround after losing the first Test, it could herald a much-needed resurgence.

There is a sense of heightened anticipation. South Africa's tenacity has breathed life into what was forecast as a one-sided series, more so after the visitors steamrolled the hosts in the first Test. South Africa suddenly seem buoyant; they have shed anxiety and fear. "We have a great record here. We are looking forward to it. South Africa's pacers have always enjoyed themselves here," skipper Dean Elgar said before the match.

The record attests: South Africa have lost only five of their 34 games here since readmission. The extra bounce the surface abets as well as the lateral movement it provides in the first session turbocharged their pacers of the past as well as the contemporary inheritor of their mantle, Kagiso Rabada. Against India, they have been invulnerable here — beating them in three of the five duels. Only Australia (four times) and England (once) have managed to beat them here in 29 years. That in itself would be enough to raise home spirits.

But fortresses no longer daunt India. They have breached a few over the last six years, from Galle at the tip of the Indian Ocean to Brisbane, a few miles off the Coral Sea, from Kingston on the banks of the Caribbean Sea to Centurion on the banks of the Hennops River. Rather, the sight of citadels has only reinvigorated Kohli, who would be returning to helm the side at an arm-stretch of destiny.

Fond memories

It's not like Cape Town has been utterly unkind to India's cricketers of the past either. India have had their moments here, and each of their expeditions has produced an immortal memory or two. Javagal Srinath was adjudged man of the match in India's first-ever tour to South Africa; Sachin Tendulkar penned two of his majestic hundreds here (169 in 1997 and 146 in 2011, his last in Tests, besides averaging 81.50); Mohammad Azharuddin stroked a glorious hundred too, as did Wasim Jaffer. Harbhajan Singh and S Sreesanth once put India within touching distance of a series win, but for the dourness of Jacques Kallis. Harbhajan's seven-wicket haul (7 for 120) is still the best bowling figures by a bowler here since South Africa's reintegration. In fact, finger-spinners have enjoyed bowling here — Saeed Ajmal and Paul Harris too have six-fors.

On his YouTube channel, Harbhajan exhorted Kohli to pick two spinners. "Every time I have played here, my best analysis have come at this venue. I picked up seven wickets in an innings in Cape Town. Even other spinners have



India captain Virat Kohli has recovered and will play the final Test. *BCCI*

performed well. So India too should field two spinners at this venue," he remarked.

India picking two spinners is highly doubtful, but Ravichandran Ashwin could be a more influential figure here. He has been largely peripheral — bowling only 43.4 overs across four innings — as both Wanderers and SuperSport Park overwhelmingly allied with seamers. Newlands would no doubt assist them again, but the extra bounce and dryness could benefit Ashwin. Whereas he was deployed as a defensive option — Kohli duly pointed out his containing job in the second innings at Wanderers, where in a 10-over spell he leaked only 19 runs — Newlands could present a more colourful palette for his attacking brushstrokes.

Track record

The bounce here is different — less spongy, more linear and truer. It implies that batsmen could play more freely once they bed in. Little surprise then that the top two highest scores ever at this venue have been essayed by overseas batsmen — Stephen Fleming (262) and Ben Stokes (258).

Though there have been bizarre days when teams have lost wickets in clusters — like 18 wickets India and South Africa lost on Day 4 in 2018 — Newlands has a reputation of being kinder to visiting batsmen. Not to be misconstrued as a flat track — fast bowlers are the expected protagonists, as there would be some lingering lateral movement throughout the day and some extra zip if they bend their backs. A reason full-length bowlers enjoy the condition more than back-of-length prowlers.

Should it live up to its history, there wouldn't be a better venue for the out-of-runs trio of Cheteshwar Pujara, Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane to rediscover run-making touch. Both Pujara and Rahane showed signs of revival in the second innings at the Wanderers before a red-hot spell from Rabada, while Kohli said he was "at peace with how I'm playing".

Kohli and Co would do well to summon history to discover solace and confidence in their bid to make history themselves.

LIVE: South Africa vs India 3rd Test from 1:30pm on Star network and Hotstar

BRIEFLY

Cooch Behar knockouts postponed after Covid outbreak

New Delhi: A day after *The Indian Express* reported around 60 positive cases of Covid-19 among players, support staff and others involved in the upcoming Under-19 Cooch Behar Trophy knockout stage matches, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced its postponement. The eight teams to have qualified for the Cooch Behar Trophy knockouts are Mumbai, Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Bengal. They were scheduled to play four-day knockout games in Pune starting Tuesday. Among the persons found infected, 30 are players, nine support staff, and the rest groundsmen and match officials designated for the tournament. **ENS**

Hardik set to lead new Ahmedabad franchise

New Delhi: The CVC-owned Ahmedabad franchise will be appointing senior India all-rounder Hardik Pandya as captain for its maiden season in the Indian Premier League, for which it has got the all-clear from the BCCI. One of the world's leading venture capitalists, who bought the Ahmedabad IPL team for INR 5,625 crore, the owners had to wait longer for the BCCI to give them the Letter of Intent as legal vetting was required. The delay in getting the green light was due to CVC's investments in betting firms in Europe and although they have no such operations in India where betting is illegal, the country's cricket board wanted to be sure about the legal ramifications before giving them the go-ahead. **PTI**

Golfers Lahiri, Aditi; equestrian Mirza included in TOPS

New Delhi: Golfers Anirban Lahiri, Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar, Olympian equestrian Fouaad Mirza and alpine skier Mohammed Arif Khan were among 10 athletes who have been recently included in the Sports Ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS). While Lahiri, Aditi, Diksha, Mirza and Khan were included in the core group, golfers Shubhankar Sharma and Tvesa Malik and judokas Yash Ghangas, Unnati Sharma and Linthoi Chanambam have been placed in the development group. According to a statement issued by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), after these additions the total number of athletes under TOPS rose to 301. **PTI**

Barty pulls out of Sydney event ahead of Aus Open

Sydney: World number one Ash Barty pulled out of the Sydney Tennis Classic on Monday to give her time to recover for the Australian Open, which starts next week. Barty won the Adelaide International singles title on Sunday with a 6-3 6-2 victory over Elena Rybakina before partnering Storm Sanders to the doubles title. "I'm sorry I won't get the chance to play in front of the Sydney fans this year. I hope to see you all again soon. I wish the players and the tournament team all the best for the week ahead," Barty said in a statement. Meanwhile, Nick Kyrgios said on Monday that he had pulled out of the Sydney Tennis Classic after testing positive for COVID-19, but hoped to be at the Australian Open next week "if all goes well". **REUTERS**

Roots in Punjab, blooming in England, Australia

PRATYUSH RAJ
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 10

ONE IS a teacher in the UK, the other a cab driver in Australia. Both are immigrants from Punjab with a dream that is now becoming real. Their sons are taking the first big step in cricket at the U-19 World Cup starting in the West Indies this week.

Gurj Singh Landa's son Fateh Singh is an all-rounder for England, and Baljit Singh's son Harkirat Bajwa is a "mystery spinner" for Australia. And the team lists that feature their names is the answer to every challenge that Fateh and Harkirat had to surmount on this journey so far.

Fateh's grandfather moved to Patiala from Lahore during Partition, leaving "everything" behind, and his family shifted to the UK in 1965. Seven years ago, the 17-year-old developed Alopecia, an autoimmune disorder that led to complete hair loss. A few months later, he saw his mother Jaswinder Kaur being shifted to a nursing home.

"Fateh has experienced a lot of difficulties over the last couple of years," Gurj Singh told *The Indian Express* over phone from Nottinghamshire. "His mum has become disabled because of complications with her diabetes and lives in a nursing home. He has Alopecia. And all that has happened over the past few years. It's very difficult for him... Cricket has helped him gain a lot of confidence. He's a very talented cricketer and I'm very proud of him," Gurj, a high school teacher, said.

Harkirat was seven when his family moved to Melbourne from Mohali. "Both my brothers live in Australia. Since we are a joint family, we decided to move, too," Harkirat's father Baljit told *The Indian Express* over phone from Melbourne. "I would not say it



Teacher Gurj Singh Landa's son Fateh Singh (left) is an all-rounder for England, and cab driver Baljit Singh's son Harkirat Bajwa is a "mystery spinner" for Australia. *Express*

was a smooth transition for Harkirat as he took some time to settle down."

Apart from their roots, the other similarity between Fateh and Harkirat is their admiration for Indian spinners R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja. Fateh, who bowls left-arm spin, idolises Jadeja. Harkirat, a right-arm offspinner, is an Ashwin fan. In 2017, Fateh won a Champions Trophy prize draw ticket for the India-Pakistan game and, along with his father, got the chance to see his hero in person for the first time.

"I would say he has developed his game on Ravindra Jadeja. He is a very economical bowler, hardly gives anything away. A solid power-hitter and a gun fielder. In the England cricket circuit, they call him England's Jadeja because of all these attributes," said Gurj.



While Harkirat's friends call him 'Melbourne's Turbanator', the 17-year-old is fascinated by Ashwin. "Look, any Sikh boy bowling spin will be compared to Harbhajan Singh. In Australia, Harbhajan has a great fan following. But Harkirat likes Ashwin a lot. Watching Ashwin's videos is his favourite pastime," said Baljit.

By their own admission, Baljit and Gurj never thought that their sons would get selected for their countries so soon.

"His career graph has surprised me. He has even signed a professional contract with Nottinghamshire," said Gurj. Fateh featured regularly for the Nottinghamshire Second XI in 2021 and made his first-team debut in the Royal London Cup 50-over competition, mak-

Apart from their roots, the other similarity between Fateh and Harkirat is their admiration for Indian spinners R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja. Fateh, who bowls left-arm spin, idolises Jadeja. Harkirat, a right-arm offspinner, is an Ashwin fan.

ing three List A appearances for his club. He was also named Academy Player of the year in 2021 for taking 32 wickets from 13 matches for the U-18s and averaging 25.89 with the bat.

Harkirat, Australia's youngest player in the U-19 World Cup, has also had a rapid rise.

"He debuted in the top grade this season only. He claimed 14 wickets from six matches at an average of 13.93, and immediately caught the selectors' attention," said Baljit.

"During the Women's T20 World Cup, Harkirat was a net bowler. His prowess impressed then India coach W V Raman (former India opener and ex-India women's team head coach)," Baljit said, adding that he will never forget Raman's prediction about his son. "Raman sir told me that your son will get the Baggy Green by 2023. I was shocked, but how can one argue with someone with such a fine cricketing brain."

According to the team lists, there are several others with a Punjab connection at the World Cup. They include Canada's Anoop Chima, Gurnek Johal Singh, Harjap Saini, Parmveer Kharoud and Ramanvir Dhalival; UAE's Shival Bawa; and of course, India's own Hamoor Singh Pannu from Jalandhar and Raj Angad Bawa from Chandigarh. In all, they virtually make a global Punjab XI.