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INDO-PAKISTAN WAR



INDO-PAKISTAN WAR



KARGIL WAR

15th January 1949 was a fresh start towards serving and protecting India's newfound independence, as Field Marshal K M Cariappa took over the Indian Army's reins from General Francis Bucher.

This also marked the emergence of the world's fourth most powerful Military. With every war and every conflict, we saw a reaffirmation of vigour and faith as they entered the battlefields with high spirits of bravery and returned with the sweet taste of glorious victories. Whether it was 1965, 1971 Indo-Pak Wars or the Kargil War of 1999, our bravehearts displayed exceptional valour and camaraderie, when it came to our nation's might and dignity.

Their indomitable spirit of gallantry in the face of adversity has always been extraordinary. Let's raise a toast in honour of their 74-year-young legacy of striding ahead with incomparable courage and patriotism.



SCAN TO WATCH
THE SONG 'SHUKRIYA'
(A MUSICAL TRIBUTE
TO OUR ARMED FORCES)



SCAN TO WATCH
STORIES OF
'REAL LIFE HEROES'

**HONOURING THE MARTYRS & WAR WIDOWS, AND THANKING ALL OUR
SOLDIERS FOR ALWAYS SAFEGUARDING US & OUR MOTHERLAND**

Source: <https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/why-is-army-day-observed-on-15-january-heres-all-you-need-to-know-about-the-historic-day>

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FORWARD IS BACKWARD

*Why rely on borrowed matter
when the original is right here?*



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GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Executive Engineer Public Works Division Bhokar, Dist. Nanded
E-TENDER NOTICE No. 38/2021-2022

ONLINE Tender (e-tender) in B-1 form for the Nanded District total 01 (One) are invited by the Executive Engineer, Public Works Division Bhokar, Dist. Nanded (Phone No. 02467-222658) on Government of Maharashtra Electronic Tender Management System. From the registered contractor in appropriate class of Public Works Department of Maharashtra State. The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Maharashtra e-tender portal <https://mahatenders.gov.in/> on sub portal www.mahapwd.gov.in as under.

Note: 1) Details of the tender documents are available on e-tendering <https://mahatenders.gov.in/> and www.mahapwd.gov.in web site of the Government of Maharashtra.

2) If there are any changes in the tender notice, then the information will be display on the web site.

3) Executive Engineer, Public Works Division Bhokar, Dist. Nanded has reserved the right to accept or reject tenders.

**Executive Engineer
Public Works Division
Bhokar Dist. Nanded**

DGIPR-2021-2022/C-3685



**RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY OF
HEALTH SCIENCES, KARNATAKA**
 4th 'T' Block, Jayanagara, Bengaluru - 560 041.
 Ph No.080-26961928 Fax-080-26961929

No.RGU/ENG/EO/MP/ARC/RAM/18/2021-22 Date: 14/01/2022

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Registrar Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences invites tender for Expression of Interest for Preparation of Master plan to Establish RGUHS Campus at Archakarahalli, Ramanagara by Reputed Architectural Firms. The information is provided in the attached Terms of Reference.

Tender document available for downloaded	14/01/2022 11.43 Hrs
Last date for receipt of Tender	25/01/2022 16.00 Hrs
Opening of Bids	27/01/2022 16.01 Hrs
Place of Opening of Tender	Office of the Registrar, RGUHS, 4th T Block, Jayanagara, Bengaluru-41

More details can be fetched from website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/-
REGISTRAR

DIPR/2872/2021-22

SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/ CORP/AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP/AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	HARYANA POLICE HOUSING CORPORATION PANCHKULA	CONSTRUCTION / RENOVATION/ SPECIAL REPAIR WORKS IN VARIOUS PLACES IN HARYANA STATE	14.01.2022 21.01.2022	1587.81 LACS	www.hphc.org.in	dbpanchkula@yahoo.com

	DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVERNMENT OF N.C.T. OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SDW) XII STP ROHINI SEC-25 ROHINI DELHI- 110085					
PRESS NIT No. 16 EE (SDW) XII (2021-22)						
S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Tender Fee	Earnest Money (EMD)	E-tender ID	Last date/ time for receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Providing consultancy services for Augmentation / Up-gradation of various existing STPs in Delhi	Item rate	1500/-	891000/-	2022_DJB_214751_1	27.01.2022 3:15 PM

NIT along with all terms and condition is available on website:
<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)

Advt. No. J.S.V. 1006(2021-22)

“STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing and Maintain Hand Hygiene”

Sd/-

(Ashok Kumar Sharma)

Asstt. Ex. Engineer (SDW) XII



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER (P) 4
DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF N.C.T. OF DELHI
ROOM No. 29, B-BUILDING, JHANEWALAN, NEW DELHI-110005.
Phone: 09650094325 Email Id: djwbwaterbody@gmail.com



DRINK WATER SAFELY

PRESS NIT No. 19 (2021-22)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Contract Value (ECV)/ Amount put to tender	Earnest Money (EMD)	Tender Fee	Date of Release of tender in E-procurement Solution & Tender Id No.	Last Date/ Time of receipt of tender E-procurement Solution
01	Rejuvenation of Tihar Lake in Tihar Village, Delhi on DBO Basis under EE (WB)-I. (Re-invited).	DBO Basis	₹ 27.00 Lakhs	₹ 1500/-	13.01.2022 2022_DJB_214687_1	04.2.2022 At 03:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 1003(2021-22)

Sd/-
E.E. (WB)-I

"STOP CORONA, WEAR FACE MASK, FOLLOW PHYSICAL DISTANCING, MAINTAIN HAND HYGIENE"

SR .NO	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE
1	PWD B&R SONIPAT	ANNUAL REPAIR OF ADMIN BLOCK AND WORK SHOP BLOCK IN ITI BUILDING AT GANAUAR AND OTHER VARIOUS BUILDING FOR THE YEAR 2021-22.	07.01.2022 28.01.2022
2	PWD B&R YAMUNA NAGAR	SPECIAL REPAIR OF MANDEBAR TO FARAKPUR ROAD (KM 0.70 TO 1.59) (ID 429) BY RELAYING OF EXISTING C.C. BLOCK IN YAMUNA NAGAR DISTRICT (RE-INWITE) + 3 OTHER WORKS	20.01.2022 02.02.2022
3	PWD B&R AMBALA	PROVIDING 80MM INTERLOCKING PAVER BLOCK ON BERMS ON AMBALA BARAULA ROAD AT AMBALA CITY IN AMBALA DISTRICT (AMBALA CITY CONSTITUENCY) (ROAD ID -9)	10.01.2022 31.01.2022
4	PWD B&R AMBALA	SPECIAL REPAIR OF CHC AT LADWIA IN DISTRICT KURUKSHETRA (PDG. INTERNAL EI ONLY)	17.01.2022 24.01.2022
5	PWD B&R SONIPAT	ANNUAL REPAIR OF PWD COLONY RESIDENCE SONIPAT AND OTHER VARIOUS BUILDING IN SONIPAT DISTT FOR THE YEAR 2021-22	07.01.2022 28.01.2022
6	PWD B&R SONIPAT	ANNUAL REPAIR OF PWD REST HOUSE OFFICE AND NON RESIDENCE BUILDING AT SONIPAT IN SONIPAT DISTT FOR THE YEAR 2021-22	07.01.2022 28.01.2022
7	PWD B&R KATHAL	CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD FROM KHURANA ROAD TO KHANOURI (NH-8) ADJACENT TO KATHAL DRAIN IN KATHAL DISTT. UNDER CM ANNOUNCEMENT DRAIN NO. 24810 DATED 13.02.2019)	CLOSING DATE 02.02.2022
8	PWD B&R KARNAL	SET UP OF VULNERABLE WITNESS IN JUDICIAL COMPLEX AT SONIPAT. (PDG. EI ONLY) + 1 OTHER WORK	13.01.2022 24.01.2022
9	PANCHAYATI RAJ KARNAL	1 NO. WORK CONST. AND MANAGEMENT OF GREY WATER PROJECT AND 1 OTHER WORK	10.01.2022 02.02.2022
10	PANCHAYATI RAJ JHAJJAR	CONST. OF 2 NOS. WORKS, SR. NO. 1 IPB STREET & SR. NO. 2 RASTA OF DISTRICT JHAJJAR.	14.01.2022 20.01.2022
11	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING SIRSA	PROVIDING INDEPENDENT CANAL BASED WATER WORKS AT VILLAGE KUKKAR THANA. DISTT. SIRSA (UNDER 11M)	14.01.2022 24.01.2022

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

NDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, JANUARY 15, 2022


State Bank of India
Platform Engineering-I Department, State Bank of India,
Global IT Centre, Sector-11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400614

CORRIGENDUM-II

Please refer to RFP no. SBI/GITC/Platform Engineering-I/2021/2022/809
Dated: 06.12.2021 for Procurement of Comprehensive Endpoint
Security Solution for State Bank Group. Corrigendum-II dated
13.01.2022 can be accessed under procurement news at
<https://www.sbi.co.in> and e-Procurement agency portal
<https://etender.sbi/SBI/>

sdi/-

Place: Navi Mumbai
Date: 15.01.2022

Deputy General Manager
(Platform Engineering-I Department)

RAILWAY BOARD
Yelahanka, Bengaluru – 560064.

EOI NOTICE No: RWF/M/EOI/AMS/2021-22/01 Dtd. 01/01/2022

"EXPRESSION OF INTEREST" :- On behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer invites expression of interest for the following work from reputed and experienced organizations through physical format or through mail.

Sl. No.	EOI No.	Name of the work	Due Date for submission of EOI
1	EOI Number: RWF/M/EOI/AMS/2021-22/01 Dtd. 14/01/2022	Machining of BOXN Axles	28-01-2022

For more details on this, "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST" for the above mentioned work can be viewed on our website www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in.

DY. CME/AP

RAJASTHAN MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking)

Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, Jaipur- 302005, India
Ph. No. 0141-2228066, 2228064 Website: www.rmshc.health.rajabsthan.gov.in
CIN: U24232RJ2011SGC035067 Email: edprmsc@nic.in

Ref.No.F(2)346/RMISCLPROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-03/202250 Dated:06-01-2022

Notice Inviting E- Bid

SHORT TERM E- bids are invited upto 6.00 PM of 17.01.2022 for E-BID FOR
RATE CONTRACT CUM SUPPLY AND EMPANELMENT OF DRUGS
AND MEDICINES Details of NIB may be seen in the Bidding Documents at
our office or at the website of State Public Procurement portal
<http://sppp.raj.nic.in> (UBN- MSC2122GLOB00139 www.dipronline.org,
<http://eproc.rajabsthan.gov.in>, <http://rmshc.health.rajabsthan.gov.in> and may
be downloaded from there.

Senior Manager (Procurement)
RMISCL

Samwad/C/10537/2021-22

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TOLLFREE NO. 18001805129



OPEN TENDER NOTICE

Online Bids (Technical & Price Bid) are invited for supply of item as per details indicated below:

Tender Number	Category of Items	Qty.	Approx Value	EMD (in Rs.)	Due date of Opening
PT/OT/07/AZ	"Design, Fabrication, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Automated Conveyors of Powder Coating Plant" (On Turnkey Basis)"	01 Set	Rs. 1.24 Cr.	3,10,000/-	15.02.2022

Interested Tenderers may download the tender document from ALIMCO website www.alimco.in (for reference only) and CPPP website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Tender Fee of Rs 600/- to be submitted only through online payment gateway available at www.alimco.in. Submit scan copy of the e- receipt of the same along with TC bid. All SSI / MSE/ Vendor are exempted from Tender Cost after producing/submitting Valid Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum/ Udyam Registration Certificate (URC) only.

Interested Tenderers are requested to submit their Offers/Bids through E- Tendering Process only on <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. The Technical Bid will be Opened at 1530 hrs. on the due date as indicated above. ALIMCO reserves the right to reject any or all requests/Others without assigning any reason.

Note: For any corrigendum in the tender, Tenderers may please visit CJPP website and ALIMCO web-site.

For ALIMCO - DGM (SP & C)

SR .NO	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE
1	PWD B&R SONIPAT	ANNUAL REPAIR OF ADMIN BLOCK AND WORK SHOP BLOCK IN ITI BUILDING AT GANAUR AND OTHER VARIOUS BUILDING FOR THE YEAR 2021-22.	07.01.2022 28.01.2022
2	PWD B&R YAMUNA NAGAR	SPECIAL REPAIR OF MANDEBAR TO FARAKPUR ROAD (KM 0.70 TO 1.59) (ID 429) BY RELAYING OF EXISTING C.C. BLOCK IN YAMUNA NAGAR DISTRICT (RE-INVTITE) + 3 OTHERS WORKS	20.01.2022 02.02.2022
3	PWD B&R AMBALA	PROVIDING 80MM INTERLOCKING PAVR BLOCK ON BERMS ON AMBALA BARAULA ROAD AT AMBALA CITY IN AMBALA DISTRICT (AMBALA CITY CONSTITUENCY) (ROAD ID -9)	10.01.2022 31.01.2022
4	PWD B&R AMBALA	SPECIAL REPAIR OF CHC AT LADWA IN DISTRICT KURUKSHETRA (PDG. INTERNAL EI ONLY)	17.01.2022 24.01.2022
5	PWD B&R SONIPAT	ANNUAL REPAIR OF PWD COLONY RESIDENCE SONIPAT AND OTHER VARIOUS BUILDING IN SONIPAT DISTT FOR THE YEAR 2021-22	07.01.2022 28.01.2022
6	PWD B&R SONIPAT	ANNUAL REPAIR OF PWD REST HOUSE OFFICE AND NON RESIDENCE BUILDING AT SONIPAT IN SONIPAT DISTT FOR THE YEAR 2021-22	07.01.2022 28.01.2022
7	PWD B&R KAITHAL	CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD FROM KHURANA ROAD TO KHANOURI (NH-8) ADJACENT TO KAITHAL DRAIN IN KAITHAL DISTT. UNDER CM ANNOUNCEMENT CODE NO. 24810 DATED 13.02.2019)	CLOSING DATE 02.02.2022
8	PWD B&R KARNAL	SET UP OF VULNERABLE WITNESS IN JUDICIAL COMPLEX AT SONIPAT. (PDG. EI ONLY) + 1 OTHER WORK	13.01.2022 24.01.2022
9	PANCHAYATI RAJ KARNAL	1 NO. WORK CONST. AND MANAGEMENT OF GREY WATER PROJECT AND 1 OTHER WORK	10.01.2022 02.02.2022
10	PANCHAYATI RAJ JHAJJAR	CONST. OF 2 NOS. WORKS, SR. NO. 1. IPB STREET & SR. NO. 2. RASTA OF DISTRICT JHAJJAR.	14.01.2022 20.01.2022
11	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING SIRSA	PROVIDING INDEPENDENT CANAL BASED WATER WORKS AT VILLAGE KUKKAR THANA, DISTT. SIRSA (UNDER JIM)	14.01.2022 24.01.2022
12	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING NARNAUL	AUG. OF DRINKING WATER SUPPLY SCHEME (CB) FOR 122 NO. VILLAGES @ 40 LPCD TO 70 LPCD IN NARNAUL TEHSIL, DISTT. MOHINDERGARH. "SUPPLY, ERECTION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING THE ELECTRIC TRANSFORMERS & DIESEL GENERATING SETS OF REQUIRED CAPACITY AS MENTIONED IN DNIT INCLUDING ALL MATERIAL , LABOUR & ACCESSORIES COMPLETE IN ALL RESPECT FOR VARIOUS VILLAGES. "	13.01.2022 03.02.2022
13	SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE HARYANA FARIDABAD	INDIAN AND FOREIGN JOURNALS FOR CENTRAL AND DEPARTMENT LIBRARY SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE CHHAINSA FARIDABAD AS PER THE ANNEXURE A	17.01.2022 26.01.2022
14	PANCHAYATI RAJ BHIWANI	CONST OF IPB STREET AND VARIOUS WORKS VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK BHIWANI DISTT BHIWANI	17.01.2022 31.01.2022
15	BLOCK DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATS OFFICER BHIWANI	CONSTRUCTION OF VARIOUS WORKS VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BLOCK BHIWANI DISTT BHIWANI	17.01.2022 31.01.2022
16	PANCHAYATI RAJ REWARI	CONST. OF VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTS WORKS AT VARIOUS VILLAGES, DISTT. REWARI	17.01.2022 24.01.2022
17	PANCHAYATI RAJ NARNAUL	4 NO. COMMUNITY CENTRE (CIVIL WORKS+ELECTRICAL WORKS)	14.01.2022 27.01.2022
18	PANCHAYATI RAJ YAMUNA NAGAR	CONSTRUCTION OF SADHBAVNA MANDAP IN DISTRICT YAMUNA NAGAR	17.01.2022 07.02.2022
19	FOREST DEPARTMENT HARYANA PANCHKULA	CONSTRUCTION OF GAZEBO AT BIRD SAFARI, PHEASANT BREEDING CENTER BERWALA DISTRICT PANCHKULA + 1 OTHER WORK	13.01.2022 21.01.2022
20	FOREST DEPARTMENT HARYANA PANCHKULA	LAYING OF PIPELINES AT WLS BIR SHIKARGAH DISTRICT PANCHKULA + 1 OTHER WORK	13.01.2022 21.01.2022
21	FOREST DEPARTMENT HARYANA JIND	WASHROOM AT GATAULI NURSERY + 3 OTHER WORKS	12.01.2022 18.01.2022
22	FOREST DEPARTMENT HARYANA HISAR	CONSTRUCTIONS OF WASH ROOM AT HISAR, HANSI AND ADAMPUR RANGE	12.01.2022 19.01.2022
23	DIRECTOR STATE TRANSPORT HARYANA CHANDIGARH	ONLINE TENDER FOR ARRANGING THE SUPPLY OF HIGH SPEED DIESEL (HSD) OIL REQUIRED FOR VARIOUS DEPOTS AND SUB-DEPOT OF HARYANA ROADWAYS.	14.01.2022 17.02.2022
24	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA KARNAL	RECONSTRUCTION OF D.R. BRIDGE AT RD 80165 OF NARDAK DISTY+3 OTHER WORKS	13.01.2022 24.01.2022
25	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA KURUKSHETRA	CARRYING OUT SURVEY, INCLUDING UNDERWATER SURVEY IF REQUIRED, FEASIBILITY STUDY, APPROPRIATE DIVERSION WORKS REQUIRED, LAYOUT AND PREPARATION OF GADS, COLLECTING HYDRAULIC AND OTHER RELEVANT DATA, GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION AND DETAILED DESIGNING, WORKING DRAWINGS, VETTING OF DRAWING, SITE PLAN, DETAILED ESTIMATES WITH BOQ DNIT FOR "RECONSTRUCTION OF SUPER PASSAGE AT RD 15.808 OF SYL CANAL".	13.01.2022 20.01.2022
26	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA BAHADURGARH	CONSTRUCTING HODI AND FIXING GATE AT RD OF ASAUDHA PUMP HOUSING LINK DRAIN. + 4 LOTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 02.02.2022

TENDER NOTICE			
AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL	
15.55 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0130-2200575 pwd-eeepd2-sonepat@hry.nic.in	
277.18 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	97290-63221 pwd-eeepd-yamunanagar@hry.nic.in	
223.56 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9417362462 pwd-eeepd1-ambala@hry.nic.in	
16.78 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0171-2630877 pwd-eeed-ambala@hry.nic.in	
8.15 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0130-2200575 pwd-eeepd2-sonepat@hry.nic.in	
17.35 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0130-2200575 pwd-eeepd2-sonepat@hry.nic.in	
1304.35 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9896070157 pwd-eeepd-kaithal@hry.nic.in	
5.9 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01842265696 pwd-eeed-karnal@hry.nic.in	
58.43 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9813805200 prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in	
231.37 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9812544460 prexeeng.jjr@hry.nic.in	
145.83 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01666-221925 ee2srsa@phedharyana.gov.in	
92.21 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01282260091 ee2narnaul@phedharyana.gov.in	
EMD 60000/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0129-2840600 dirsabvmc-fbd.dmer@hry.gov.in	
78.68 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9416087780 bdpobhiwani@gmail.com	
60.47 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9416087780 bdpobhiwani@gmail.com	
163.33 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9416421261 prexeeng.rwr@hry.nic.in	
752.06 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	8529595662 prexeeng.nrl@hry.nic.in	
148.11 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9812037976 prexeen.ynr@hry.nic.in	
4.65 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9466467787 pcpcfwhry@gmail.com	
11.65 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9466467787 pcpcfwhry@gmail.com	
7.40 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01681255458 dfjoind2009@rediffmail.com	
4.5 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9416181526 dfohisar.t@gmail.com	
1400 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	09728774433 jstchry@gmail.com	
68.2 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01842255291 knldivn335@gmail.com	
EMD 15000/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9996608432 xenwsdivnkkra@gmail.com	
57.36 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9416283306 wsdivisionbgarh@gmail.com	



BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY



With SP, Maurya targets Yogi, his 80-20 remark: 85 ours, 15 too divided

Says Dalits, backward form govt, time's up for Gorakhpur Skylab



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav with ministers and MLAs who defected from the BJP, in Lucknow on Friday. Vishal Srivastav

Anti-CM rally: 100 detained, 25 booked under strict Arunachal law

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, JANUARY 14

OVER A hundred people were put under preventive detention in Arunachal Pradesh on Friday over a 36-hour strike called by the All Nyishi Youth Association (ANYA), a major tribal youth group of the state, seeking Chief Minister Pema Khandu's ouster.

Around 25 members allegedly involved in calling the strike, declared illegal by the authorities, were booked under a stringent state law, also called the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, which gives the authorities sweeping detention powers. They were sent to 12 days in judicial custody.

In the evening, after the strike had ended, police alleged a "deep conspiracy" to destabilise the state BJP government, create lawlessness in the state and divide it along communal lines, as well as to cause loss of lives.

ANYA, which represents the Nyishi tribe, among the largest tribal groups in Arunachal, has alleged Khandu's involvement in a Rs 2,000-crore scam of government funds.

Police claimed those detained had confessed to having brought in "weapons" to be used during the strike, such as catapults and local daggers called daos.

The local administration had earlier shut down Internet services in Itanagar and neighbouring areas starting Wednesday to deter the protest plans, and these came back on after the strike ended.

However, the ANYA strike was successful, with normal life hit in Itanagar and nearby areas such as Naharlagun.

In a press briefing at Itanagar, Inspector General (Law and Order) Chukhu Apa said: "For the first time, we noticed that bandh callers hired anti-social elements on payment from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 14

SWAMI PRASAD Maurya and Dharam Singh Saini, who re-signed as ministers from the Yogi Adityanath government earlier this week, joined the rival SP Friday along with 5 MLAs who also quit the BJP and a sixth from Apna Dal (S).

An OBC leader, Maurya launched a broad-side against the BJP government, saying "sarkar banavein Dalit aur piche aur malai khavein woh log agde, 5 per cent log (Dalits and backward form the government but the cream goes to five per cent of the forward castes)".

Targeting Chief Minister Adityanath and his remark that the Assembly election contest will be an '80 per cent vs 20 per cent' fight — in political circles, the 20 per cent has been inter-

GOVT & POLITICS

NOTICE PERIOD FOR REGISTERING NEW PARTIES CUT FROM 30 TO 7 DAYS
PAGE 11



DECISION 2022

preted as a reference to the population of the minorities in the state — Maurya said: "You are giving the slogan of 80 and 20 (per cent), but I say it will now be between 15 and 85... 85 toh hamara hai, 15 me bhi batwara hai (85 per cent is ours and there is division even in the remaining 15 per cent)."

Dara Singh Chauhan, the third minister to resign from the ruling party, was not present at the SP headquarters where his chief Akhilesh Yadav welcomed the BJP rebels into the party fold.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



BOMB SCARE IN DELHI

A bomb squad member attempts to defuse an IED found inside a bag at the Ghazipur flower market in Delhi on Friday, just days before Republic Day. National Security Guard personnel later destroyed the device using a controlled explosion. PTI

REPORT, PAGE 8

Outrage as bishop acquitted in nun rape, court blames 'rivalry'

VISHNU VARMA & APURVA VISHWANATH
KOCHI, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

HOLDING THAT "in-fight and rivalry and group fights of the nuns, and the desire for power, position and control over the congregation" were evident in the case, a trial court in Kerala Friday acquitted Franco Mulakkal, the former Jalandhar Bishop of the Catholic Church, of all charges in the alleged rape of a nun.

The high-profile case had led to an unprecedented public protest in Kerala more than three years ago by other nuns in support of the complainant.

"This is a case in which the grain and chaff are inextricably mixed up. It is impossible to sep-



Bishop Franco Mulakkal leaves a Kottayam court after his acquittal. Express

arate the grain from the chaff. There are exaggerations and embellishments in the version of the victim. She has also made every attempt to hide certain facts. It is also evident that the victim was swayed under the in-

fluence of others who had other vested interest in the matter," Kottayam Additional Sessions Judge G Gopakumar wrote in a 289-page order.

"The in-fight and rivalry and group fights of the nuns, and the desire for power, position and control over the congregation is evident from the demand placed by PW1 (Primary Witness) and her supporting nuns who were ready to settle the matter if their demands for a separate region under the diocese of Bihar is accepted by the church," the order stated, while referring to the complainant.

Referring to a previous judgment delivered by the Supreme Court, Judge Gopakumar stated in the order that "when it is not

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Rid friend's parents of evil spirits via chants: IIT Mandi director in video 'Ghosts exist...science can't explain all'

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

A VIDEO clip showing IIT Kanpur professor Laxmidhar Behera, who, days ago, was appointed Director of IIT Mandi, speaking about his apparent act of exorcism to rid his friend's apartment and parents of "evil spirits" through the chanting of holy mantras has sparked a controversy.

Behera, according to the IIT Kanpur website, is a professor in

the Department of Electrical Engineering. A PhD from IIT Delhi and a post-doc from German National Center for Information Technology, his areas of specialty are robotics and Artificial Intelligence.

During the Covid-induced lockdown in 2020, he reportedly ran a community kitchen on campus to feed over 800 street children daily. His act of philanthropy was recognised by Education Minister Dhamendra

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

GEN RAWAT, 13 OTHERS DIED

Probe into CDS chopper crash blames weather, says no sabotage

Unexpected change in weather led to pilot disorientation: Court of Inquiry

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

A TRI-SERVICES Court of Inquiry into the December 8 helicopter crash which killed Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat has attributed the crash to unexpected change in weather, resulting in pilot disorientation and the helicopter hitting a surface.

This is the main preliminary finding of the Col which ruled out mechanical failure, sabotage and negligence.

The Col was instituted to probe the crash near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu that claimed the lives of General Rawat, the country's first CDS, his wife Madhulika and 12 armed forces personnel.

On January 5, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal V K Chaudhari, along with Air Marshal Manvendra Singh, the head of the probe committee, had briefed Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on the findings.

On Friday, the IAF said: "The Court of Inquiry has ruled out mechanical failure, sabotage or negligence as a cause of the accident. The accident was a result of entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley."



At the site of the chopper crash in Coonoor. PTI/File

It said this led "to spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in Controlled Flight into Terrain" or CFI.

It is considered one of the primary causes of aircraft crashes globally — when an aircraft, in this case the helicopter, is considered airworthy, and there is no negligence on the part of the pilot, but due to disorientation, the pilot hits a surface unintentionally, causing a crash.

The IAF said that based on its findings, "the Court of Inquiry has made certain recommendations which are being reviewed".

The tri-services inquiry, including one-star officers from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

ONE YEAR SINCE COUP, IMPACT IN N-E

Concern in Delhi over Myanmar conflict, PLA 'links' with junta

To secure Indian interests, officials call for engagement with Naypidaw

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
CHENNAI, JANUARY 14

ALMOST A year since the February coup in Myanmar, as its army battles armed pro-democracy resistance groups across the country, including in regions bordering India, New Delhi is concerned that the instability could impact security in the North-East.

To secure India's "vital interests", officials are of the view that there is "no option but to engage with those in power in Naypidaw", and continue pressing for a return to democracy, as Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla did on his December 22 visit to Myanmar, the first Indian official to visit since the coup.

With many governments favouring engagement with the Taliban in Kabul, sources in Delhi said the same yardstick should be applied to the military regime in Myanmar, though in order to cover its bases, the government has also sought to convey that it



Shringla at an event in Yangon in Dec. @IndianMyanmar



"could not be business as usual" until a return to democracy.

It was not just Delhi that sent a high-profile visitor to Myanmar — Bill Richardson, a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE WORLD



OMICRON SPREADS: HOSPITALS FILL UP IN 2 DOZEN U.S. STATES

U.S. ALLEGES RUSSIA PREPARING PRETEXT TO INVADE UKRAINE
PAGE 16

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

PRATYUSH RAJ
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

MUZAMIL SHERZAD'S journey to the U-19 World Cup in the Caribbean is like no other.

Irrespective of runs and wickets, the story of the one-time casual tape-ball street cricketer in Afghanistan's Jalalabad, who is now an Ireland pacer and among the best junior players from around the world, is already worthy of a book, a documentary — or even a feature film.

Five years ago, when Sherzad was just 14, his mother paid a tout to take him to Ireland where

Severely injured Alwar girl stable after surgery, Opp slams police for no arrests in rape FIR

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, JANUARY 14

STANDING IN the driveway of a Jaipur hospital where a mentally challenged girl is being treated for severe wounds caused by an alleged sexual assault, her uncle says, "We want justice. Humko insaaf milna chahiye aur jo darinde hain unko saza milni chahiye, jaldi se jaldi pakad mein aana chahiye (We should get jus-

tice and those evil men who did this should be caught and punished as soon as possible)."

In the two days since the girl was found lying on a bridge in Alwar bleeding profusely from near her private parts, the 15-year-old's plight has set off a political firestorm as well, with the BJP accusing Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of ignoring the assault in a state ruled by the Congress, even as she fights on a pro-women plank in Uttar Pradesh.

BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa, who visited the hospital where the girl is admitted, said: "Doctors say what happened with 'Nirbhaya' (the 2012 Delhi gangrape victim), the barbarians have committed the same atrocity with her." He was critical of police not being able to apprehend those behind the assault.

The Alwar police has lodged a case under the POCSO Act and the IPC Section for rape. On Friday evening, Alwar SP

Tejaswani Gautam said while they were still investigating, medical reports and technical evidence indicated "ki ismein dushkarm ki sambhavana nahin hai (that there is no possibility of rape in the case)".

She said an expert panel including doctors who performed surgery on the girl, as well as paediatricians, medical jurists, forensic medicine experts, and gynaecologists, had submitted a

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INSIDE



BUDGET SESSION BEGINS JAN 31, IN SHADOW OF COVID

MAHARASHTRA: FOETUS BONES BURIED IN HOSPITAL
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in Milan," he said.

At Cherbourg in France, he got into another truck that was on a ferry. "It was cold and dark. I was now on my own, this was the scariest night of the long journey. After a few hours, I could make out that the truck was not on the ferry anymore and was moving. I banged on the side. The driver stopped, and when he opened the back door, I jumped out," he said.

Good fortune would see him finally reach Ireland but the ordeal was far from over. His first night in Dublin was spent in a park because he didn't know where his uncle stayed. In an-

other stroke of luck, the boy who couldn't speak English met an Asian man who gave him directions to a refugee centre in Dublin. "A child protection agency placed me with a family, until they found my uncle. I then went to live with him in Tipperary," he says.

Sherzad's brush with cricket happened two years ago when he saw a Cricket Ireland advertisement about a fast-bowling talent hunt, and quickly signed up through Facebook.

Albert van der Merwe, Cricket Ireland's talent pathway manager, says he and his colleagues at the talent hunt, with

50 aspirants, were impressed by Sherzad's natural talent.

"The first time I met Sherzad was at a Cricket Ireland Talent Identification Programme in October 2019. They bowled at some of the academy batsmen, and we liked what we saw in Muzamil. We took some videos and showed it to the academy manager, and Muzamil was invited to some sessions. At this stage, we didn't really know the backstory," says van der Merwe, who is in Guyana with the Ireland U-19 team.

To fund his cricket equipment, Sherzad joined his uncle

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

From Afghan street to Irish U-19 team, an 8,000 km-long story



Sherzad was 14 when he got to Ireland from Afghanistan. He is now among the world's best junior players. Cricket Ireland



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WHY THE EAST INDIA COMPANY OPPOSED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN INDIA

The foundation of the opposition was both religious and political, and rooted as much in the East India Company's territories in India as in their home country

IN PICS



CIRCUS RETURNS TO KOLKATA

But Covid adds to struggles

SCIENCE



TOOTH OF AMERICAS' OLDEST-KNOWN DOMESTICATED DOG

Fossil record dates to ~14,690 to 11,000 years

EXPRESS AUDIO

Why you should avoid catching Omicron just to 'get it over with'

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

On 3 things today, we breakdown why you shouldn't take the current Covid-19 wave lightly, and the consequences of doing so

FROM PAGE ONE

BJP rebels

Saying Maurya's support has encouraged workers, the SP chief claimed that the meeting of "Samajwadis and Ambedkarwadis" will help their alliance win 400 seats in the Assembly elections.

Accompanied by a large number of supporters, Maurya and Saini reached the SP headquarters where the other rebels MLAs were present — Bhagwati Sagar, Vinay Shakya, Roshanlal Verma, Mukesh Verma, Brajesh Kumar Prajapati (all from BJP) and Chaudhary Amar Singh of Apna Dal (S). Addressing the gathering, Maurya accused the BJP of securing power by "cheating the backward castes, Dalits, oppressed and minorities", and said "today's programme" spells the "end of the BJP". "Senior BJP leaders, who had been sleeping like Kumbhakara and had not had the time to speak to MLAs, MPs and ministers, are unable to sleep after our resignations," he said.

"Who does not know that BJP had formed the government with support of the backward... Discussions were held that the Chief Minister will either be Keshav Prasad Maurya or Swami Prasad Maurya. But an attempt was first made to drop a Skylab (US space station which disintegrated in the atmosphere during its re-entry in 1979) from Ghazipur. But that Skylab had a blast before reaching here. Another Skylab was picked from Gorakhpur and placed on the Chief Minister's chair to hoodwink the backward classes," he said.

"Yogiji, are Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and 54 per cent population of backward classes not Hindus? If they are Hindus, why did you give their share to others," Maurya said, adding that as cabinet minister he had opposed a proposal of the medical education department for recruitment of general category candidates against vacant reserved category seats. He said the Chief Minister had agreed with his objection but did not stop the recruitment process. He said resignations from the BJP will continue and on March 10, the day of the counting, it tally will be down to double digits. "This tsunami will drown the BJP in the Hind Mahasagar (Indian Ocean)," he said.

Akhilesh Yadav, referring to the resignations in the BJP, said: "Baba Mukhya Mantri has dropped catches... 80 per cent of the people are in support of the SP and its alliance. After seeing this stage and listening to Mauryaji, the remaining 20 per cent will also be against the BJP now. It is clear that the BJP will be wiped out." "Since Samajwadis and Ambedkarwadis are together, it is possible for the alliance to win 400 seats. The public is ready for change," he said.

Bishop acquitted

feasible to separate truth from falsehood, when grain and chaff are inextricably mixed up, the only

available course is to discard the evidence in toto".

The order said that "this court is unable to place reliance on the solitary testimony of PW1 and to hold the accused guilty of the offences charged against him".

Mulakkal was present in the courtroom when the verdict was pronounced. He later broke down in the corridor outside, hugged his lawyers, and told reporters before leaving the premises: "Daivathinu sthuthi" (Praise the Lord)."

However, one of the nuns who had spearheaded the protest against Mulakkal, Sister Anupama, expressed disbelief at the verdict.

Speaking to reporters with tears in her eyes, she said: "We cannot believe this verdict. We will continue this fight until the day our fellow sister gets justice, even if it means we have to die. All the testimonies were in our favour so we don't know what happened in court. We will definitely appeal in the higher court."

S Harisankar, the former Kottayam district police chief under whose leadership the investigation was conducted, described the verdict as "extremely unfortunate". "We had fully expected a conviction. This verdict will be a surprise for the entire Indian legal system," said Harisankar, who is currently posted in the state police headquarters. He said "it was after suffering huge psychological pressure that the survivor disclosed the assault to her fellow nuns" and the verdict would "send a wrong message to society".

In a statement, the Jalandhar diocese of the Church thanked all those "who believed in the innocence of the bishop and assisted him with legal aid".

The allegations against Mulakkal (57) came to light in June 2018 when a senior nun, belonging to the order of Missionaries of Jesus, submitted a complaint to the Kottayam police chief, accusing the bishop of raping her and subjecting her to unnatural sex 13 times between 2014 and 2016 at a convent in the district.

Subsequently, an FIR was filed against Mulakkal on charges of rape at the police station in Kuravilangad, where the convent is located. Mulakkal denied the charges and described the complaint as a "retaliatory act" for disciplinary action taken earlier against the complainant in an unrelated incident.

U-19 team

at the fast food joint. Van der Merwe says he got to know about Sherzad's journey after he joined the academy. "It has given me a glimpse into what he must have gone through. His journey to Ireland is something I struggle to wrap my head around. The furthest I went from home on my own as a 14-year-old was to the shop or to school," he said.

Sherzad, a die-hard fan of Virender Sehwag and a Bollywood follower, is ready to make a name at the World Cup. He says the presence of many Afghanistan players,

Probe: CDS chopper crash blames weather

the Navy and the Army, headed by Air Marshal Manvendra Singh, who is the most senior helicopter pilot in the IAF, was instituted soon after the crash.

"The inquiry team analysed the Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder besides questioning all available witnesses to determine the most probable cause of the accident," the IAF said.

The helicopter was de-

scending to land when it ran into sudden clouds which resulted in pilot disorientation.

The Mi-17 V5 was carrying General Rawat, his wife Madhulika and 12 other armed forces personnel including Brigadier LS Lidder and Lt Col Harjinder Singh, Wing Commander Prithvi Singh Chauhan, Squadron Leader Kuldeep Singh. While 13 of the 14 on board died in the crash,

Group Captain Varun Singh succumbed to injuries a week later.

On December 9, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh informed Parliament that the helicopter had taken off from the Sulur Air Base at 11.48 am and was expected to land at Wellington by 12.15 pm. The Air Traffic Control at Sulur Air Base lost contact with the helicopter at approximately 12.08

pm.

Local residents spotted a fire in the forest near Coonoor and rushed to the spot where they observed the wreckage of the helicopter engulfed in flames, Singh said.

General Rawat was on his way to deliver a lecture at the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington.

His replacement is yet to be appointed.

including their top star leggie Rashid Khan, in Sunrisers Hyderabad has got him interested in the IPL, too. He has already picked up Hindi from films like the Aamir Khan-starrer "3 Idiots".

And yet, beyond cricket, Sherzad has an unfulfilled wish: he wants to meet his family, mother, two brothers and a sister. "I never thought that I would be playing cricket for Ireland at a World Cup. I wish my mother and siblings could watch me play. I miss them a lot. I am trying to get them to Ireland. I've applied for their visas. Let's see what the future has in store."

PLA 'links'

former US Ambassador to Myanmar and, currently, the New Mexico Governor visited in November, as did Japanese special envoy Yohei Sasakawa.

Like Shringla did after him, Sasakawa asked the junta for a meeting with the jailed Aung San Suu Kyi, and was denied it. Soon after the two visits, Naypidaw released a US journalist arrested by the junta after the coup. India had kept the US, ASEAN, Bangladesh informed ahead of the visit, The Indian Express has learnt. ASEAN itself is a divided house now over the visit last week of Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen -- Cambodia is the current president of ASEAN -- and his meeting with General Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the State Administrative Council, the junta-given name for the new government.

Meanwhile, the National Unity Government (NUG) of Myanmar, set up weeks after the coup by groups opposed to the junta, has canvassed international recognition and opened offices in the US, UK, France, Czech Republic and Australia but no country has recognised it. Explaining the need to engage with the military regime in Naypidaw, an official said India was the only country with over a 1,600-km border with Myanmar, shared ethnicities and insurgent groups based in Myanmar, and any turmoil there was bound to be felt on this side.

Moreover, at least one Manipur insurgent group, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which took responsibility for the ambush killing of an Assam Rifles commander in November, is thought to be fighting alongside the junta against civilian resistance groups called People's Defence Force, which the NUG has owned as its armed wing.

Last year, an estimated 30,000 persons from Chin state sought refuge in neighbouring Mizoram,

which has the same ethnic group, as the Myanmar Army launched operations to take back Mindat from the armed resistance. Mindat, 100 km from the Indian border, had become an early symbol of popular resistance to the Myanmar Army, known as the Tatmadaw.

With much support for Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy, Chin state remains resistant to the Tatmadaw. The Chin Defense Force, a group of militias that sprang up last year in response to the coup, has taken the fight to the military backed by one of the many "ethnic armed organisations" (EAOs) in Myanmar, called Chin National Force (CNF) or the Chin National Army.

The headquarters of the CNF, known as Camp Victoria, where thousands of volunteers have been trained for combat since the coup, is on the Indian border. In mid-November, the Myanmar army launched an offensive in Chin state and Camp Victoria was thought to be the target.

But the soldiers, who pushed westward from a place called Falam and burnt hundreds of houses at another settlement called Thantlang sending the villagers fleeing, did not push up to the Indian border.

Had they done so, there would have been thousands more displaced people crossing over into India and drawn Delhi's attention. Security analysts believe this might be a reason the Tatmadaw stayed away from the camp, though it could have also been the tough hilly terrain.

In end December, the junta, facing ambushes and IED attacks, hit back with airstrikes, including in a village in Kalay township, 150 km south of Moreh.

PDF groups have also been active in Tamu, the border town opposite Moreh, and the main crossing point between India and Myanmar. Earlier this week, a PDF group shot dead a prison warden and his wife in a village in Tamu. According to the news portal Frontier Myanmar, 11 people were killed in the clash. After the fighting, the junta raided the village.

A more immediate concern for India is that the PLA appears to have been roped in by the Tatmadaw to fight the PDFs. Ahead of Shringla's visit, the Myanmar Army handed over to India five Manipuri militants of the Revolutionary People's Front, an organisation allied to the PLA.

Anthony Davis, a regional security analyst with Jane's, told The Indian Express the Tatmadaw were desperate for manpower as they are battling ethnic armed organisations that have thrown in their lot with the PDFs in several parts of Myanmar.

"The Tatmadaw are recruiting more or less anyone willing to pull a trigger on their behalf. And in some areas along the Indian border that appears to include IIGs (Indian Insurgent Groups), apparently Manipuris rather than Nagas," Davis said, adding that these groups were reportedly operating in the area around Tamu.

The Irrawaddy news portal reported last September that a PDF called the Tamu Security Group issued a warning to Manipuri insurgents not to side with the junta

against any civilian defence groups. It reported TSG claiming that five Manipuri militants fighting alongside the Myanmar army had been killed in two clashes in Tamu and Kalay, one in May, and the other in July. Among Indian security officials, there is a view that being in operations with the Myanmar army may be honing the PLA's military capabilities and better preparing it for attacks across the border.

Alwar 'rape'

report on the nature of injuries. "The doctors have said three things: first, vagina and hymen are intact. Anus is also intact, and (third) injuries are not suggestive of any kind of penetrative assault."

Dr Pramila Sharma, a surgeon at the Jaipur hospital where the girl is admitted, said the wound at the perineum "was a very extensive wound".

On what could be the reason for her injuries, police said that with the 15-year-old unable to communicate due to her impairment, they were trying to determine it through technical and scientific evidence.

Gautam said footage from several CCTV cameras had helped them establish that after leaving home, the girl had got into an auto. She was found walking alone in different parts of the city, as well as towards the bridge where she was found, police said.

"We located the auto and have questioned the driver. The child sat in the auto by herself, from near her home, and was dropped in the city. There were other passengers in the auto, who are still being questioned," the SP said, adding that a forensic examination of the vehicle had ruled out any assault in it. Gautam said CCTV footage shows the girl climbed the bridge at 7:31 pm, about 300-350 metres from the spot. "What happened to her in the next 7-10 minutes is still a mystery," the SP said, adding that this was the focus of their probe now.

The family says the girl left home alone sometime around Tuesday 2 pm on January 11. They didn't realise she was missing till her elder sister returned from school around 4 pm and started looking for her. The family raised an alarm, and around 8:30 pm, they got a call from police that the girl had been found injured.

The 15-year-old was first taken to a hospital in Alwar, which referred her to Jaipur.

Dr Arvind Shukla, the hospital Superintendent who treated the girl, said she was brought in at 2 am on January 12. "We started treatment to stop the bleeding... She had extensive wounds." He says they did a surgery that went on for nearly two-and-a-half hours, involving plastic surgeons to repair her injuries. "There was a big lacerated wound in the perineum area which was repaired... Acolostomy was performed to bypass the intestine and prevent an infection... She is better now and conscious."

Medical Jurist Dr Deepali Pathak, who assists in legal cases, said: "There is one big wound in the perineal region and the vaginal orifice is intact. We have not found any signs of penetration of vaginal orifice."

The government has set up a

Special Investigation Team and sent a forensic team from Jaipur to help. An ex-gratia sum of Rs 3.5 lakh has been given to the family.

Attacking Vadra in Delhi Friday, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra asked why the Congress leader "who calls herself a champion of women", had not visited the family despite "being near Alwar" when the news broke.

On Thursday, the Congress named the mother of the victim of the Unnao sexual assault case as one of its candidates for the polls. The state BJP has started a social media campaign over the incident, announced state-wide protests on January 17-18, and constituted a four-member committee led by party's national secretary Alka Gurjar to "investigate" the case. The members of the delegation, apart from Rajasamand MP Diya Kumari and others, have visited the family and will head to Alwar on Saturday. On Thursday, a delegation led by Gurjar was arrested in Sawai Madhopur while on its way to meet Vadra.

In a bid for damage control, the Congress has rushed its top leaders to the hospital — including Health Minister Parsadi Lal Meena, Women and Child Development Minister Mamta Bhupesh, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Tikaram Jolly, Industry Minister Shakuntala Rawat (both Jolly and Rawat are MLAs from Alwar), and Adarsh Nagar MLA Rafeek Khan, among others. Former Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Jitendra Singh, an ex-MP from Alwar, spoke to the family over the phone. After the visit, Bhupesh said: "The CM himself has been monitoring the case and it was upon his instructions that I arrived here... Kyunki bachchi sirf uss parivar ki nahin, bachchi humari hai (because the girl is not just the family's, but ours too)."

The uncle says the family doesn't suspect anyone, nor do they bear a grudge against the government. "The treatment is going well and the administration is doing a good job in searching for the culprits," he said. However, the family feels forlorn in the war of words. Says the uncle, "The girl's parents grow vegetables and wheat on someone else's land. It is about 3 bighas and they have to give about Rs 35,000 per year to the owner, irrespective of their earnings."

Anti-CM rally

outside the state to create a law and order problem." He said police had preempted the conspiracy and prevented serious breach of peace in the state, and seized Rs 3 lakh of the Rs 10 lakh "given to bandh callers by their handlers".

Police reported only one untoward incident, of arson at the Food and Civil Supplies Directorate office at Papu Hill in Naharlagun. Nine people were detained for it, including eight juveniles.

While officials claimed a plan to attack installations like important government buildings and infrastructure, they declined to specify the exact targets.

Itanagar Capital Region Deputy Commissioner Talo Potom told The Indian Express that the situation was peaceful. "There are no reports of any untoward incident. Most of the bandh callers were arrested and put under pre-

ventive detention. Those found directly involved were charged under Section 3 of the Arunachal Pradesh UAPA. They include leaders of the organisation that called the bandh."

Others not involved in the bandh but found to be allegedly violating Section 144 were charged under Section 107 of the CrPc. They were released on personal bail bonds.

Denying police claims, ANYA president Byabang Joram said officials were trying to malign the outfit and gave an "ultimatum" to release its activists. The outfit also asked how they could be booked under the state UAPA when it were police that had attacked their vehicles. "We didn't do anything wrong. We aren't criminals. Our boys, who didn't join the strike, were picked up from their homes, their house owners and relatives were arrested," he claimed.

The Arunachal Pradesh Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 2014 is different from the UAPA in operation in other parts of the country and deals with criminal activities such as bootlegging but also people "activities... prejudicial to the security of the State". ANYA's strike call followed the Supreme Court's dismissal of a petition with similar allegations, seeking a probe against Khandu, filed by the Arunachal Justice Forum. The petition was disposed of in December last year.

Pakistan policy

times, more than any other nation, in the 62-page NSP for 2022-2026 with Jammu and Kashmir at the "core". "A just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains at the core of our bilateral relationship," the NSP states. Pakistan National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf, a former analyst at a US-based think tank, has helmed the preparation of the document, which will be reviewed every year as well as whenever a new government is formed.

The policy, which is said to have been prepared after seven years of "strategic thought", was adopted in December last week, with a shorter public version released on Friday. On bilateral ties, the NSP says that Pakistan, under its "policy of peace" at home and abroad, "wishes to improve its relationship with India".

But it flags issues that it has previously underscored: "The rise of Hindutva-driven politics in India is deeply concerning and impacts Pakistan's immediate security. The political exploitation of a policy of belligerence towards Pakistan by India's leadership has led to the threat of military adventurism and non-contact warfare to our immediate east."

Accusing India of "hegemonic designs", the NSP states that "towards the immediate east" bilateral ties have also "been stymied as a consequence of the unresolved Kashmir dispute". And contrary to Delhi's assertions, the document blames India for "ceasefire violations" along the LoC.

There is a separate section on J&K, which reiterates the country's position: "Pakistan remains steadfast in its moral, diplomatic, political, and legal support to the people of Kashmir until they achieve their right to self-determination guaranteed by the international community as per United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions." From India's perspective, the document has a section on "terrorism", "extremism" and "sectarianism" in a chapter on "Internal Security".

At a time when Pakistan continues to be on the "grey list" of the global Financial Action Task Force, the NSP lists several priorities "for continued improvement in our internal security environment". They include: "strengthening police forces and associated counter-terrorism agencies, undertaking intelligence-based operations against all terrorist groups, preventing any use of fi-

nancial sources for terrorism, addressing structural deficiencies and sense of deprivation in recruitment areas, promoting a pluralistic anti-terror narrative".

Underlining that "extremism and radicalisation" on the basis of ethnicity or religion "pose a challenge to our society", it states that the "exploitation and manipulation of ethnic, religious, and sectarian lines through violent extremist ideologies" cannot be allowed.

China occupies a relatively smaller section in the NSP. "Pakistan's deep-rooted historic ties with China are driven by shared interests and mutual understanding," it says. The document states that bilateral relations with Beijing continue to expand based on "trust and strategic convergence" — something that Delhi is keeping a close watch on. The NSP marks out the China Pakistan Economic Corridor as a "project of national importance", which "enjoys national consensus".

About the US, it states that the two countries share a "long history of bilateral cooperation", and that "our continued cooperation... will remain critical for regional peace and stability". "Pakistan does not subscribe to 'camp politics'," it states, in an apparent reference to strained US-China ties. "Communicating Pakistan's concerns to policy makers in Washington while seeking to broaden our partnership beyond a narrow counter-terrorism focus will be a priority," it states.

IIT Mandi head

Pradhan through a tweet on April 15, 2020.

In the five-minute clip, Behera recounts how he had travelled to Chennai in 1993 to help a friend who was in distress as his "family was affected by ghosts". He is heard saying that he had started "practising the thoughts and wisdom in the Bhagavad Gita" along with chanting the "Hare Rama Hare Krishna" mantra and had decided to help his friend to "demonstrate the potency of the holy name."

"So I took two of my friends and reached at 7 pm. He was in a research scholar apartment. After 10-15 minutes of loud chanting we suddenly saw his father, who was a very short... person, absolutely old, barely able to walk, and suddenly his hand and leg was... he was creating such a ghastly dance and his head is almost touching the roof. You could feel that he is being completely devoured by the evil spirit," Behera says in the clip.

He adds that the mother and wife of the friend were later "possessed by the evil spirit". It took them around "45 minutes to an hour" of loud chanting to ward off the "evil spirit", he says.

When asked about the video, Behera told The Indian Express Friday: "I narrated what I said. Ghosts exist, yes." He added that modern science cannot explain a lot of occurrences or events.

The video was posted seven months ago on YouTube on a page "Learn Gita Live Gita." Soon after The Indian Express reached out to Behera for his comments, the video's setting was changed from public to private.

An IIT faculty member said it's well-known that Behera is a "deeply religious" person.

Behera was selected by a panel comprising IIT Hyderabad chairman BVR Mohan Reddy, government of India's Principal Scientific Adviser K. Vijay Raghavan, IIT Mandi chairman Prem Vrat, Standing Committee for IIT Council Chairman K. Radhakrishnan, then Higher Education Secretary Amit Khare and Education Minister Pradhan. A member of the committee said Behera's was a "strong application," and they were not aware of the video during the interview.

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Be it known to all that my clients, namely Sh. Ashwani Kumar S/o Sh. Khari Singh and Smt. Anuradha Narula W/o of Sh. Ashwani Kumar both R/o G-15/10-A Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027 have severed all their relations from their son namely Gaurav Narula and daughter in law namely Kanika. That now from today onwards my clients have no family relations with them for all purposes. My clients debar/disown their above named son and daughter in law from their all movable and immovable properties with immediate effect. Neither my clients nor their any other legal heirs shall have any concern or link with their above-named son and daughter in law, as their acts are prejudicial, harmful and adverse to the rights and interest of my clients. Anybody dealing with them shall be doing so entirely at his/her own risk and consequences and my clients shall not be bound for any kinds of their act, deeds, dealings and mischiefs past, present or future, social as well as business etc.

DEVINDER SINGH (Advocate)
Enrol No. (D/707/12021)
J-24, Rajouri Garden
New Delhi-110027

Mentorship initiative under scanner, CM and Sisodia hit back

Head of child rights body says Sisodia didn't address concerns, not enough checks to ensure kids are protected

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

DEPUTY CHIEF Minister Manish Sisodia Friday referred to the notice issued by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), recommending suspension of the Delhi government's 'Desh ke Mentor' programme over safety concerns, a "conspiracy by the BJP".

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also took to Twitter to state: "If some good work is being done in the country, then instead of stopping it, it should be implemented across the country. The BJP government at the Centre is requested not to do politics on this. It is a question of the future of poor children. Through this programme, education is becoming a mass movement."

Launched in October 2021, the programme is aimed at providing voluntary mentors to students in classes IX to XII. People between the ages of 18 and 35 can sign up to become mentors through an app created by a team at Delhi Technological University, and will be connected to students based on mutual interests. The mentorship entails regular phone calls for a minimum period of two months, which can be carried on for four more months optionally.

The NCPCR had stated that it received a representation from one Lalit Wadher last November who alleged that the programme brings together children and "unknown persons" and exposes them to danger. Following this, the child rights body sought a response from the Delhi government on measures to ensure children's safety. After the response was filed, the NCPCR stated that



Both targeted the BJP govt at Centre

it was "ineffectual" and recommended that the programme be suspended immediately "until all loopholes pertaining to safety are overhauled".

Sisodia alleged that the notice was an attempt by the BJP to derail education initiatives: "... The BJP has used the NCPCR to issue directions that the government halt this programme. They have got a complaint from one of its workers in Chhattisgarh... They are always worried that if children of the coming generation are educated, how will they be trapped in the darkness of our misdeeds? How will we sway them? How will we keep them tangled in communal fights? They are also scared that if the educated youth start mentoring, how will they start caste-religion fights with messages forwarded on WhatsApp University."

According to Sisodia, 44,000 young people are currently acting as mentors under the programme. He said that of these, 500 are IIT graduates, 500 are IIM graduates, 15,600 are studying - from graduation to PhDs - and 15,600 are working.

In its notice, the NCPCR had expressed concern over the lack of verification of the mentors, especially to check if they have any record of crimes against children.

To which Sisodia responded:

"These youth are all volunteering... we have made sure that if it's a male mentor, mentees are also male. If a girl wants a mentor, she will be assigned a female mentor... We have made the volunteers undergo a psychometric test and trained them. 750 youths did not clear the test and were not assigned mentees... Government schools have 5.5 lakh children and we asked all of them if they want mentors; 2.2 lakh asked their parents and we have been able to assign mentors to 1.76 lakh children."

NCPCR chairperson Priyanka Kanoongo said Sisodia bypassed concerns raised by the child rights body and tried to deflect from them in his press conference. "In our letter, we very specifically asked if the psychometric test is being done by any professionals, if it has the provisions to identify any professional rapist... Now if someone comes and says that they are an IIT pass out, or an IIM pass out, what is the mechanism for cross-checking that? That's all we're asking. They're saying that their concern is that these are children of poor parents, that is our concern too... It is the government's responsibility that when they are connecting the children to someone, the children and their parents are putting their trust in the government, not in that person they are being connected (with)... Rule 3 of the POCSS Act specifically mentions that staff of the school and people (who) will regularly be in contact with (the) school should have police verification... Good people might connect to children through this app but what is there to stop the bad people... NCPCR has very cautiously used the term 'suspend' not 'termination'," he said.

Kejriwal flags off 100 buses

New Delhi: The Delhi government has inducted 100 low-floor CNG AC buses into its fleet, which were flagged off by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Friday.

"All buses are equipped with state-of-the-art technology. They

have Intelligence Management Transport System integrated with CCTV and panic button. The panic button can be pressed during an emergency and the message will go to the control room," the government said. **ENS**

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LICENCE NO.: 89 OF 2019 DATED 02.08.2019

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General public is hereby informed that re-draw of flats under Haryana Affordable Housing Policy 2013 of SignatureGlobal Proxima I, Sector 89, Gurugram, being developed by M/s SignatureGlobal (India) Private Limited shall be conducted on 19/01/2022 at 03:00 PM onwards at The Plazio Hotel, Plot No. 292-296, Sector - 29, HUDA City Centre, Gurugram.

With the help of live streaming/telecast of re-draw proceeding on youtube live. Due to ongoing situation of Covid-19 pandemic, restriction were imposed by Ministry of Home Affairs, over public gathering in order to prevent spreading of corona virus disease.

As per MHA/ DTCP Haryana Guidelines re-draw shall be conducted with maximum strength of 50 persons including draw committee and staff at site, remaining applicants shall participate in draw online after login into below provided link on YouTube live.

YouTube Link - <https://www.youtube.com/user/SignatureGlobal>

Note: If any applicant wants to check his/her name in the list he/she may contact to STP Office, Gurugram as well as the office of colonizer before re-draw of lots.

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Email: customer@signatureglobal.in, Ph.: 0124-4908200, 9311144624

PERA REGISTRATION NO.: RC/REP/HARERA/GGM/386/118/2020/02 (www.haryanarera.gov.in)

LICENCE NO.: 121 OF 2019 DATED 14.09.2019

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With the help of live streaming/telecast of re-draw proceeding on youtube live. Due to ongoing situation of Covid-19 pandemic, restriction were imposed by Ministry of Home Affairs, over public gathering in order to prevent spreading of corona virus disease.

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ARMY DAY 2022

Indian Army: A stride towards the future An initiative by **RED** *
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An inspiration for today's youth

Army Day is celebrated to commemorate the indomitable spirit and courage of Indian soldiers who have laid down their lives in service of the nation. It also marks the historic occasion of the transfer of military power from the British to Independent India in 1949

Every year, on January 15, India celebrates Army Day in memory of its valiant sons and their triumphant achievements while serving the nation. Army Day commemorates the transfer of Army control from Great Britain to independent India. It is when the then Lieutenant General KM Cariappa took over as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army on January 15, 1949 from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of the British Indian Army. Since this was a milestone event, it was decided that this occasion would be celebrated as Army Day every year.

THE ROLE OF 'KIPPER'

Cariappa, or 'Kipper' as he was popularly known, was the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army. With a military career spanning three decades, he is one of two Indian Army officers to hold the five-star rank of Field Marshal, the other being the legendary Sam Manekshaw. Much before India's Independence, Cariappa had fought in Iraq, Syria, Iran and Burma and became the first Indian officer to command a unit in 1942. His unrelenting patriotism and secular beliefs throughout his service years stood as examples for the Indian Army.

It is because of this strong foundation that, according to the Global Fire Power Index 2021, India's Army is considered the fourth strongest in the world



PTI

with America, Russia and China being ranked higher than India.

IMPORTANCE OF ARTILLERY

In any army, the artillery has proven to be the decisive, battle-winning factor and will continue to be the pivotal arm in future battles. The importance of artillery can be ascertained from the fact that throughout the history of warfare, the ability to project firepower at a distance has always been one of the most important assets that any commander could ask for.

The health of the Indian artillery was restored in 2018 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who changed the status quo by prioritising the long-pending imperative of manufacturing and ramping up

strengths at home. The Government's thrust and emphasis on the "Make in India" initiative reflects its deep commit-

ment to make India self-reliant. The import embargo on 101 defence equipment is a true measure of the Government's commitment in this regard. The idea is to trust local defence manufacturing industries, forge partnerships for knowledge transfer and try to become self-reliant in the near future. Currently, all the artillery guns are under trial, while their procurement or development are under the 'Make in India' or 'Made in India'



category.

Moreover, the firepower of artillery comes from ammunition. Today, the Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and the private sector are being encouraged to enhance ammunition production capability. Overall, the Regiment of Artillery needs to constantly upgrade its firepower by enhancing its surveillance system, guns, mortars, rockets, missiles and ammunition to meet the modern-day challenges on the battlefield.

GRAND CELEBRATIONS

Army Day is celebrated across the

country and at all Army Command headquarters with great pomp and show, with many parades and military shows. Several regiments of the Indian Army participate in the celebrations, which are held annually at the Army Parade Ground, New Delhi. The event also honours soldiers who lost their lives in combat. Soldiers perform various military drills during the day, showcasing their might. It is also a day dedicated to the valiant soldiers and their families who safeguard the sovereignty of the country and keep the nation safe and secure with constant vigil.

Apart from the parade of the soldiers, Army Day is marked by the exhibition of BLT T-72, T-90 tanks, BrahMos Missile, Carrier Mortar Tracked Vehicle,

155 MM Soltam Gun, Advanced Light Helicopters of the Army Aviation Corps and so on. To maintain their service code and protect the nation from enemies, all serving personnel take a pledge on this historic day.

SERVING BEYOND BORDERS

The Army is certainly the pride of every Indian and is admired the world over, even by its rival forces, for its professionalism and commitment in the line of duty. It is considered among the most trusted forces at the United Nations (UN) and is integral to security and development of the border areas of the country. It is also one of the largest troop contributors to the UN Peace-keeping missions, including those in Cyprus, Lebanon, Congo, Angola, Cambodia, Vietnam, Namibia, El Salvador, Liberia, Mozambique, South Sudan and Somalia.

Apart from wars, the Army has conducted peacetime exercises such as Operation Brasstacks and Exercise Shoor Veer. It is currently modernising its forces to be future-ready as part of its commitment to national security and global peace. The Army shoulders unlimited responsibility for the nation's safety and security, with its personnel serving without any regard for their safety. Their stories of valour have left an indelible mark on the national consciousness, inspiring citizens, especially the youth, to serve the country with devotion.

MQ-9B: Showcasing ISR and Mission Capabilities for India

GENERAL ATOMICS Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) salutes the courage and spirit of the Indian Army as we celebrate its 74th anniversary.

GA-ASI is proud to be associated with the Indian Army. Two MQ-9B SkyGuardian/SeaGuardian UAS are being leased to the Services while procurement is pending. MQ-9B, GA-ASI's newest UAS model, is the perfect solution to support India's growing Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) needs. Its modular design simplifies the integration of new payloads to meet multi-mission requirements as well as future needs. MQ-9B delivers key endurance and persistent situational

MQ-9B IS LESS EXPENSIVE TO OPERATE COMPARED TO MANNED AIRCRAFT AND PROVIDES OPTIONS FOR FLEETWIDE MAINTENANCE

awareness across vast land-based, open ocean and littoral domains without putting the aircrew at risk. India's acquisition of MQ-9B will allow the already low cost of the unmanned platform to be maximised by economies of scale, including areas of personnel and sustainment among the services.

In addition to national security missions, the MQ-9B is a valuable asset for environmental protection, disaster relief, combat search and rescue, close-in support to ground troops, multi-spectrum domain awareness to armed military surveillance and targeting.

MQ-9B is less expensive to operate vis-a-vis manned aircraft and provides options for fleetwide maintenance as demand for the UAS continues to grow around the world. An MQ-9B derivative for the UK Royal Air Force, called the Protector RG Mk1, is already in production, and SkyGuardian has been selected by Belgian Defence and the Australian Defence Force, delivering a key inter-operable advantage to defence partners.

Ajay Kumar Garg Engineering College
SCALING THE ZENITH OF EXCELLENCE

DIVEN BY its commitment to provide quality technical education, Ajay Kumar Garg Engineering College has become one of the best engineering institutions in Uttar Pradesh.

Ajay Kumar Garg Engineering College (AKGEC), Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, is approved by AICTE and affiliated to the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU), Lucknow. It was established in 1998 and offers B.Tech Courses in all major disciplines of engineering. It also offers post-graduate courses in Computer Application (MCA) and M.Tech in four engineering disciplines. The college has five of its B.Tech programmes accredited by NBA.

The institution has been consistently getting excellent results with a large number of its students appearing in the AKTU merit lists every year with Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. Students have also received the AKTU Chancellor's Medal for best performance across all B.Tech branches for five consecutive years since its inception.

The college is proud that the AKTU Distinguished Alumni Award has been bagged by AKGEC passout students for two consecutive



Dr R.K. Agarwal
Director General, AKGEC

years since its inception in 2020.

It has the distinction of being the only college to receive the Academic Excellence Award for Best Engineering College in UPTU (now AKTU) for two successive years from the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. The college is also the recipient of the 'Best Industry Institute Interface' conferred by the Minister of Science & Technology, U.P. Government, as well as by the Royal Academy of Engineering, UK. Students have won the STEM awards for Best Robot Lab Set Up (2020), Excellence and Innovation in Robotics Education (2019), Best Technology Infrastructure of the Year Award (2018) and Best Vocational Robotics Education Award (2018)

by the All-India Council for Robotics & Automation (AICRA). In addition, student projects and participation in various events have brought laurels to the college time and again.

The institution has established a number of Centres of Excellence in collaboration with eminent multi-national industries like Kuka Robotics, Bosch Rexroth, National Instruments, Siemens, Mitsubishi Electric, Janatics India, Automation Industries Association, Pepperl & Fuchs, B&R and Festo. The primary objective of these centres is to provide industrially relevant training in inter-disciplinary state-of-the-art technologies to bridge the gap between academic curriculum and industry needs. The centres also promote research and industrial consultancies.

AKGEC believes in setting audacious goals and infusing fresh ideas to achieve the same. The college plans to promote collaborative industry relevant projects, R&D and consultancy to raise the overall academic standards. It further intends to bridge the gap between academic curriculum and industry requirements to make its students globally competitive.



Acquisitions, home-grown tech to lend edge to frontline warriors

Since India faces an evolving and challenging geopolitical environment on its frontiers, the Indian Army should be modernised rapidly

CURRENTLY, INDIA faces a challenging strategic environment that encompasses a wide swathe of its geography. Also, China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is expanding and poses a real threat to our maritime security as well. Therefore, it is only appropriate that our armed forces maintain a certain preparedness and modernise their tactical strengths to counter and neutralise such hostility. To speed up the pace of modernisation, the Government has taken many policy decisions and actions to overhaul the entire war machinery of our country. Currently, the focus is both on acquiring the latest military hardware from the international market as well as to manufacture them indigenously following technology transfers.

Further, to give a fillip to domestic defence manufacturing, the Government had, in 2020, put an import embargo on 101 weapons, platforms and equipment. Similarly, in 2021, the Defence Ministry came out with a second positive indigenisation list of 108 items to push the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign. There is likely to be a third positive indigenisation list and a higher share of capital procurement budget in 2022, up from the 64 per cent, that was earmarked for the current financial year.

Army Aviation
In 2021, the modernisation drive of the armed forces saw some progress with a few major acquisitions carried out under emergency powers and completion of some deliveries of defence platforms for which the contracts were signed in previous years. The emergency powers pertain to the acquisition of weapons, ammunition, procurement of critical spares and other operationally critical equipment that aim to permanently enhance operational capabilities of our forces.

The Indian Army, under the emergency procurement powers, has inked a pact for over 100 'Explosive-Laden Drones', which will be manufactured by the Bengaluru-based firm Alpha Design-led joint venture (JV) along with Israel's Elbit Security Systems (ELSEC). The contract is estimated to be around Rs 100 crore.

The 'SkyStriker' drones will have a range of about 100 km and they will be used as force multipliers in Balakot type of missions. They will fulfill the requirement of the Army's "loitering munition" – a type of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) built to engage beyond the line-of-sight ground targets with an explosive warhead. As per Elbit Security Systems, Sky Striker is a cost-effective 'loitering munition' capable of carrying long-range penetration strikes. The Bengaluru-headquartered Alpha Design-led (JV) has already exported more than 100 such drones based on Elbit's technology and it will export another set of 100 drones shortly.

The acquisition of three squadrons worth of new generation Apache attack helicopters for Army Aviation has been reportedly sanctioned as a follow-up of the Air Force order. Further, the Kamov replacement helicopters, indigenous Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) and Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) projects must be pursued vigorously so that they start delivering reliable helicopters to the Army at the earliest.

Tanks and armoured vehicles

The Indian Army is set to procure over 1,700 Future Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCVs) in a phased manner under the strategic partnership route, with the induction of the "future tank" expected to be completed by 2030. In the works for over a decade, the FRCV envisages the replacement of the Indian Army's fleet of Soviet-era T-72 tanks. The first of the new tanks are intended to enter service by 2030 and will feature advanced networking capabilities to communicate with both land and air forces.

According to a Request for Information (RFI) floated by the Army, the 1,770 FRCVs will be procured along with transfer of technology, performance-based logistics, engineering support package and other maintenance and training requirements. The Indian Government had issued RFI to 12 companies, including



Russia, Israel, Europe, Turkey, the United States and France last June. Following this, according to a report in *Sputnik*, Moscow offered New Delhi help in developing a new Indian combat tank on the basis of the Russian Armata platform.

Artillery and Small Arms
The importance of artillery in the armed forces of a country cannot be emphasised more. If our forces are on an assault mission and need to inflict lethal damage on our enemies, the Indian artillery needs constant modernisation in today's scenario.

Adequate quantities of new 155 mm artillery guns, including the indigenously manufactured Dhanush systems, as well as the more lethal, precision artillery systems

such as BrahMos cruise missiles, Smerch and Pinaka rocket systems, need to be inducted immediately to replace the earlier vintage of 105 mm and 130 mm guns and rocket systems. Also, the procurement of M-777 light howitzers must be expedited, for early deployment along the mountainous terrain of the northern borders.

The Government's decision to involve the private sector in defence production and the focus on 'Make in India' and indigenisation have given a major boost to this artillery modernisation process. There is also likely to be some decision on the procurement of the Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) being developed by DRDO.

Missiles
In a major boost to the "Make in India" initiative in the defence sector, the Indian Army has sent proposals worth around Rs 14,000 crore to acquire two regiments of the Akash-S air defence missile system and 25 Advanced Light Helicopters (ALHs). The Akash-S missiles are a new variant of the Akash missile system with a new indigenous seeker which helps in improving the accuracy in taking down enemy aircraft and cruise missiles at distances up to 25-30 km.

The missiles are capable of performing in extreme cold weather conditions in Ladakh and would meet all the requirements of the mountainous terrain. The forces are also looking at 25 ALH Dhruv Mark 3 helicopters for their squadrons.

BRAHMOS has bolstered Indian Army's war readiness

THE INDIAN ARMY, commanding one of the largest land forces in the world, has enormously sharpened its modern combat capability by inducting a state-of-the-art weapon with precision strike power to fight future, high-intensity conflicts in a decisive manner. The operationalisation of BRAHMOS – the world's deadliest supersonic cruise missile – in the Army has galvanised its artillery firepower manifold.

Being the only land force in the world actively deploying a formidable tactical weapon in three different configurations, Block I, Block II and Block III, to fight an adversary across difficult land terrains in divergent conflict situations, the Indian Army has robustly strengthened its war preparedness.

The powerful BRAHMOS land-attack cruise missile (LACM) is designed to engage and neutralise high value strategic, ground-based enemy targets with pin-point accuracy without causing any collateral damage. The weapon can be launched in quick succession towards three different targets or in a variety of combinations to swiftly and completely decimate land-based enemy positions and installations.

"We have designed, developed and successfully delivered a very unique, high-end precision strike weapon to the Army. Being a universal missile having across-the-spectrum warfare capability, BRAHMOS has also strongly positioned itself as the ultimate weapon of choice for future joint warfare operations," says Atul Dinkar Rane, Director-General, BrahMos, DRDO, and CEO & MD of BrahMos Aerospace, the India-Russia defence joint venture (JV) entity producing the world-class BRAHMOS supersonic cruise missile system.

The highly versatile BRAHMOS, having impeccable land-



Atul Dinkar Rane, Director General, BrahMos, DRDO, and CEO & MD of BrahMos Aerospace



attack and anti-ship capability, has been inducted in the Indian Navy and Indian Air Force as well.

Keeping pace with India's defence indigenisation efforts to build an "Atma Nirbhar Bharat", BrahMos Aerospace has achieved major breakthroughs in indigenously developing and incorporating several critical components and technologies into the formidable BRAHMOS weapon system. This has resulted in reduced production costs and bolstered national security dimensions.

In a number of successful test firings conducted over the past few years, BrahMos Aerospace has enhanced indigenous content in the weapon, including the propulsion system, seeker, fuel management system, canister, ground-based launcher among others. The life-extension technologies have also been validated, thereby increasing the weapon's shelf life to 15 years.

By continuing to evolve, BRAHMOS has aptly aligned itself with the "force modernisation and resource optimisation" efforts of the Indian Army. The powerful weapon has truly become the Army's ultimate "war-winner."

BrahMos Aerospace felicitates Indian Army on the occasion of Army Day!

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VACCINATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS	OMICRON CASES
1,67,374	549
PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 2,529	
OXYGEN SUPPORT	716
VENTILATOR SUPPORT	99

DELHI: TOTAL CASES	Total		Vacant	
	HOSPITAL BEDS	15,480	12,962	
	ICU BEDS	4,405	3,730	
	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Jan 13	28,867	22,121	31	98,832
Jan 14	24,383	26,236	34	79,578
Total	92,273*	15,53,388	25,305	3,39,26,818

*Total active cases in Delhi

Noida	Jan 13		Jan 14	
	Cases	1,626	1,817	
	Deaths	0	1	
Gurgaon	Cases		Deaths	
	3,031	3,897	0	2

IED found outside busy Delhi market, timer was set for 11.40 am

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE SECURITY establishment in the national capital had a scare as an improvised explosive device (IED), set to go off at 11.40 am, was discovered a little over an hour earlier.

The IED was discovered inside an unattended bag at East Delhi's Ghazipur flower market on Friday, and eventually was destroyed via a controlled explosion by the National Security Guard's (NSG) bomb detection and disposal team, which first created an eight-foot-deep

ditch in an open area. This comes just days before Republic Day celebrations in the national capital.

Highly placed sources told *The Indian Express* that they found 3 kg of explosives, including RDX and ammonium nitrate, a timer device, an electric detonator and some shrapnel from inside the bag.

"The explosive was kept in a rectangular iron box and concealed in a black and red backpack. It was a timer bomb set to 11.40 am. But alert passersby informed Delhi Police in time and it was defused," said a source.

According to Delhi Police, they first received a PCR call at



The IED was discovered inside an unattended bag at Ghazipur flower market on Friday. PTI

10.19 am from a man identified as Anupam Kumar, who came to the flower market on his two-wheeler.

"He found a bag lying near the two-wheeler, which was parked at the gate, and he asked the local shopkeeper about it. Failing to receive a satisfactory reply, he made a call to the PCR and a team immediately reached the spot. They cordoned off the area and alerted other agencies, including NSG and special cell. A fire tender, the bomb squad and sniffer dogs also arrived at the spot," a senior police officer said.

After reaching the spot, bomb detection and disposal ex-

perts first examined the bag. "They found that it contained an IED and decided to dispose of it. A heavy metal container was brought in. The bomb disposal squad, with help from local police, dug an approximately 8-foot-deep ditch in an open ground, where the bag carrying the IED was disposed. The NSG conducted a controlled explosion of the IED around 1.30 pm," the officer said.

An FIR has been registered at the Special Cell police station and officers are checking CCTV footage to gather clues.

"Several teams of the New Delhi range of Special Cell are working on it. Prime facie, it ap-

pears that the accused had done a recce before planting the IED outside the gate," an officer said. Pawan Kumar Pandey, who has a tea stall outside the flower market, said: "The bag was first noticed by a man who came into my shop after parking his two-wheeler. He asked me about it and later informed the police, heard a loud explosion when it was destroyed."

His wife Savita said, "There was heavy rush today due to the (Makar Sankranti) festival. All shopkeepers, rickshaw pullers, etc were asked to vacate the area. We will have to keep our shops shut till police give us permission to restart business."

BRIEFLY

3 brothers killed in accident

Gurgaon: Three brothers were killed after an unidentified vehicle allegedly hit their motorcycle on Thursday night. Police said the incident took place around 10.30 pm on Thursday when the brothers, originally hailing from Kachhwa village in Bihar's Madhubani, were returning home, after closing their shop, on a motorcycle. Near a school at Sector 91, a vehicle allegedly hit their motorcycle and the trio were thrown on the road and suffered multiple injuries, said police.

Crimes down in Noida after new policing system put in place

Noida: The Gautam Buddh Nagar police highlighted a reduction in certain crimes and increase in response rate on the completion of two years of the commissionerate system. In 2020, the UP government approved a commissionerate system of policing in Lucknow, Kanpur and Gautam Buddh Nagar. Zero incidents of kidnapping for ransom and dacoity took place last year, police said. As per police data, instances of loot came down from 171 in 2019 to 75 in 2020 and further to 52 last year. There were 79 murders reported last year against 81 cases in 2020. Overall, there were 12,609 cases filed in 2021 against 9,130 in 2020.

Bengali school auction fails to take place

New Delhi: The scheduled auction of CR Park's Raisina Bengali School did not take place on January 14 with no bidders having come forward for it. On November 11, a Debt Recovery Tribunal ordered that the government-aided school would go up for an e-auction on January 14 at a reserve price of Rs 81 crore. It had taken Rs 2 crore loan from the United Bank of India in 2005. As it defaulted on payments, the amount owed has grown to Rs 8 crore now.

IIT-D to set up office to 'celebrate diversity'

New Delhi: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi will soon have an office of diversity and inclusion, which will be headed by a Dean to "celebrate diversity on campus" and make the environment "more inclusive" — a first, as per outgoing Director V Ramgopal Rao. **ENS**

FOLLOWING CHANGE IN ICMR GUIDELINES

Officials strike note of caution as Delhi begins to taper Covid testing

GAYATHRI MANI & ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

COVID TESTING numbers could come down in the days ahead as the Delhi government shifts focus on testing only those with symptoms of the virus or those referred by doctors. This comes following a change in Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines that no longer allows testing on demand.

Random testing of asymptomatic individuals being conducted at Metro stations, bus stops, markets, ISBTs and railway stations has been stopped and several districts have reduced the number of government Covid testing centres.

Government officials, however, voiced a note of caution and said the decision could have a significant impact on the home isolation system in place since asymptomatic cases can turn into super spreaders.

A senior official from the health department said, "The new ICMR guidelines do away with testing on demand, which was a huge chunk of the tests we were conducting. First, many who did not necessarily have symptoms were getting tested. Second, we were testing all contacts of a positive case. So, if we were testing 30 contacts for a positive case, now we would test a maximum of 10 — only those at a higher risk of developing severe disease."

The official said mobile teams have stopped testing, except those deployed at the airport.

A senior government official added: "If people don't follow Covid-appropriate behaviour, community spread will increase. During random tests, there were several people who were asymptomatic but tested positive."

The ICMR issued the guidelines on January 10 and the Director, DGHS, circulated them the next day — after the Health Minister's approval — to all district magistrates for implementation.

The guidelines direct that in community settings, only symptomatic patients, at-risk contacts of laboratory confirmed cases, individuals undertaking international flights, and international travellers be tested. In hospital settings, only patients referred by doctors will be tested. Further,

THE GUIDELINES

WHO WILL BE TESTED:

In community settings:

- Symptomatic (with cough, fever, cold, sore throat, breathlessness, loss of taste, smell & other respiratory symptoms)
- At-risk contacts of

laboratory-confirmed cases (those 60 years and above with co-morbidities)

- International travellers

In hospital settings:

- Only those patients referred by doctors

WHO WILL NOT BE TESTED:

In community settings:

- Asymptomatic individuals
- Contacts of confirmed cases unless at risk based on age or co-morbid conditions
- Patients who stand discharged as per home isolation guidelines, patients being discharged

from Covid facility as per revised discharge rules

- Individuals undertaking interstate domestic travel

In hospital settings:

- Asymptomatic patients undergoing surgical/non-surgical invasive procedures including pregnant women in/near labour who are hospitalised for delivery should not be tested unless warranted or symptoms develop

TESTS OVER LAST 3 DAYS

JAN 12	JAN 13	JAN 14
1,05,102 (RT-PCR: 85,349)	98,832 (RT-PCR: 80,417)	79,578 (RT-PCR: 64,183)
Cases: 27,561	Cases: 28,867	Cases: 24,833
Deaths: 40	Deaths: 31	Deaths: 24
Positivity rate: 26.22%	Positivity rate: 29.21%	Positivity rate: 30.64%

asymptomatic patients undergoing treatment/surgery, including pregnant women nearing/in labour, will not be tested unless warranted or showing symptoms.

The health department official said, "Samples coming in from hospitals have gone down. Earlier, all patients were being tested before any procedure or admission. Now, ICMR guidelines clearly state that those who are asymptomatic need not be tested before procedures, surgeries or delivery. Keeping all these factors in mind, the number of samples has reduced in the government sector." The official added that private labs were continuing to test samples of asymptomatic persons for now.

Another health department official said the objective behind the new guidelines is to reduce panic among the public. "Cases are increasing very rapidly but are mostly mild. This will also re-

duce load on labs which were testing thousands of samples a day. The harassment that asymptomatic people face in hospitals will be reduced. Recovery rate will increase as the focus is only on symptomatic patients."

"District officials and their teams will ensure a protocol is in place to reduce asymptomatic cases and community spread. Night and weekend curfew will also be lifted gradually as cases come down," added the official.

Incidentally, Delhi conducted the highest number of RT-PCR tests (85,349) Wednesday just as the guidelines were issued, and the numbers were also more than 80,000 on Thursday. This, the official said, could be because of a lag period of a couple of days after collection of samples and the report being uploaded on the ICMR portal. On Friday, there was a dip and 64,183 RT-PCR tests were done.

Covid cases dip in Delhi, but positivity rate is inching up

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

DELHI REPORTED 24,383 new Covid cases on Friday, with the number dropping by over 4,000 in comparison to the previous day's tally of over 28,800 cases that crossed the peak of infections reported in a single day during the delta variant-driven wave in April-May last year.

The drop in the numbers on Friday, however, was due to fewer tests being conducted in the capital. The positivity rate, the proportion of samples that return positive, continued its upward trend to 30.6% on Friday.

There were only 79,578 tests conducted on Thursday, as reported a day later in Friday's bulletin, of which just over 64,000 or 80% were conducted using the more accurate molecular methods like RT-PCR and CBNAAT. The reduction in the number of tests, officials say, is because of the change in the ICMR testing guidelines that no longer allows testing on demand. Only those who are symptomatic, have high-risk contacts, or need to travel outside India are to be tested.

98,832 tests had been conducted a day earlier.

Delhi also reported 34 deaths on Friday, taking January's total toll to 198. The city on Wednesday had reported 40 deaths, with the dip in the numbers coinciding

with the changed testing guidelines. In most deaths during the current wave, Covid-19 was an incidental finding when patients came in for treatment of other conditions. With the new testing guidelines stating that no test is needed for asymptomatic patients (not having Covid-like symptoms) undergoing procedures or delivering a baby, these numbers have also reduced.

There were nine deaths in the entire month of December, seven in November, four in October, and five in September.

With the cases shooting up, there are over 92,000 active cases in the city. Of them, 2,529 are hospitalised. There are 99 persons on ventilator support across city hospitals, and 716 on oxygen support, as per the Delhi government's health bulletin.

"Over 75% of the people who have died were those who did not get their vaccines. Over 90% of the deaths were in people with severe diseases like cancer, kidney disease who also happened to test positive for Covid-19," said Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Friday.

Earlier, *The Indian Express* had reported that 70 of the 97 deaths between January 9 and 12 were in those who did not get their Covid-19 shots.

Jain also said "none of the cases of deaths in children were in those who did not have any severe condition".



An empty testing centre at Anand Vihar rly station. Abhinav Saha

First doctor to get coronavirus in Delhi says vaccine hesitancy has reduced over the year

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

WHEN HE first heard about Covid-19 vaccination drive, Dr Gopal Jha thought the pandemic would soon come to an end. That was a while ago, and though he took the third dose of the vaccine on Wednesday, he continues to remain hopeful.

Dr Gopal Jha (52) and his wife Dr Alpna Jha (50), both of whom work at mohalla clinics in East Delhi, were the first reported cases of doctors getting the viral infection in the capital. They were part of Delhi's first cluster of infections in March 2020, which branched from a woman who had returned from Saudi Arabia. "I never had any hesitation

about getting the vaccine. But when I first heard about it, I thought the pandemic would come to an end. Now, I have got one, two, three doses, but it still continues. I still have hope that it will end soon. We all need to continue taking precautions. The booster dose adds to our defence," said Dr Jha after getting the shot along with his wife.

Through the year, he said, vaccine acceptance has grown: "The best part is that now patients come to me and tell me they have already taken the doses. The initial hesitation that people had, when I had to convince them to get the shots, is a thing of the past."

But even after getting the precaution dose, he said, he ensures that he follows all protocols to prevent bringing the in-



Dr Gopal Jha took the 3rd vaccine dose on Wednesday

fection home: "I still wash all my clothes in warm water and take a shower after coming back from the clinic every day. I monitored all my symptoms closely."

He said that the vaccine kept his family safe during the April-May wave when he saw many of his patients needing hospitalisa-

tion and oxygen support: "Thankfully, no one in my family got the disease during the last and so far the current wave. My wife and I were the first to receive the vaccine, then my 89-year-old mother also got it, and my 19-year-old daughter is vaccinated too. My son, however, is 13-years-old and is yet to get a shot." He had tested positive for the infection on March 18, 2020, followed by his wife and daughter testing positive a few days later. Dr Jha had already been briefed about the new viral infection, and he remembers asking his patient, who eventually became the first case in Delhi, to mask up soon after she came into her clinic.

"She was coughing very badly, and I immediately suspected she had the disease because she had

a history of international travel. We gave her a mask, but by that time I think all the staff had already been exposed," he said.

Although his wife and daughter had milder symptoms, he had breathing difficulty and a drop in oxygen saturation. He had to be admitted to the intensive care unit and put on high flow nasal oxygen. "I did not lose hope. I had the wishes of the entire medical fraternity with me. And, after I completed my quarantine following hospitalisation, I rejoined work. My patients came to check on me because they had heard the news," said Dr Jha.

He said he wasn't scared of getting back to the job and believed that as long as he followed all precautions strictly, he would be okay.

GITHUB CASE

Court denies bail to accused: 'Act affront to dignity of women of a community'

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

OBSERVING THAT his act was an "affront to the dignity of women of a particular community and communal harmony of society", a Delhi court has denied bail to engineering student Neeraj Bishnoi, who is accused of creating an app using GitHub which hosted photographs of over 100 Muslim women without their consent, alongside objectionable comments.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Dr Pankaj Sharma denied bail to 21-year-old Bishnoi, stating that the facts disclosed he created the 'Bulli Bai' app where "women, journalists and celebrities of a particular community who are famous on social media are targeted and they are projected in a bad light with an objective to insult and humiliate them by objectification".

"A vilification campaign against these women containing derogatory content and offending material having communal overtones was run on this app being made by the accused. The act of the accused is apparently an affront to the dignity of women of a particular community and communal harmony of society," the court said.

The court also observed that investigation was at an initial stage, and police were in the process of collecting evidence and identifying the other accused involved in this "disdainful act".

Bishnoi's lawyer had argued in court that "the term 'Bulli bai' can be perceived or interpreted by any individual and that he created the app which can be used by anyone". The lawyer further submitted that "nothing has been recovered from his possession and the investigation

against him has already been completed and no fruitful purpose can be served by keeping him in custody".

The Additional Public Prosecutor, appearing on behalf of the state, opposed Bishnoi's bail and argued that he "created the 'Bulli bai' app on the GitHub website in December 2021 and posted various photographs of some Muslim journalists to target them".

The prosecutor submitted that "the accused created the app on GitHub using a proton VPN to hide his identity and used a burner phone with a number belonging to Poland to create the @bullibai Twitter handle".

The prosecutor said, "They were analysing digital equipment for evidence, and that Bishnoi was involved in multiple cases registered at different police stations in the country."

The complainant in this case, a journalist, had submitted that photographs of prominent women were intentionally picked for the purpose of "insulting and outraging their modesty by making sexually coloured remarks". The complainant stated that since she was a famous journalist, she was subjected to huge embarrassment and insult by the act of the accused.

The app was hosted on US-based GitHub on December 31. On January 2, separate FIRs were registered in Delhi and Mumbai, based on complaints by women who were among those targeted.

Police have booked Bishnoi, who was arrested from Jorhat in Assam, under sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on the ground of religion and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 153B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration), 354A (sexual harassment), and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman).

Gurgaon: No namaz in public, religious leaders cite Covid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JANUARY 14

THE FRIDAY namaz was not offered at any public place in Gurgaon as Muslim community leaders appealed to people to refrain from gathering in large congregations amid the surge in Covid cases in the district.

Last month, the Haryana government had prohibited large congregations after five districts, including Gurgaon, witnessed a spike in cases.

A recent order issued by the Haryana State Disaster Management Authority, declaring new curbs in more districts, had stated, "Large congregations like all kinds of public meetings, rallies, protests, dharnas, etc shall be prohibited in the state."

Mufti Mohammad Saleem, President Jamiat Ulema e Hind, Gurgaon, said, "We had appealed to people to offer prayers at their homes considering the Covid situation. Namaz was not offered at public places in the city today. At mosques, prayers were offered in batches and mul-

tiple rounds to accommodate people and as per social distancing norms."

Khurshid Rajaka, national convener, Muslim Rashtriya Manch, said that after a meeting with senior police officers on Thursday, they held a joint meeting with the Imam Sangathan and decided against offering prayers in large congregations on Friday in the near future, until new guidelines are issued by the government.

Friday prayers have been in focus for months now, as right-wing outfits and some locals have objected to namaz in the open.

"Since Covid cases have increased, we decided to avoid large gatherings for a few weeks. We had also apprised the deputy commissioner of the same. The guidelines state that no more than 50 people can congregate for a religious gathering. We deputed representatives at some points who informed people of the new guidelines and requested them to offer prayers at their homes or at mosques," said Rajaka.

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HASHTAG POLITICS



● **Sisodia vows 'Delhi-like education success' in UP**

AAP leader and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia addressed voters in

Uttar Pradesh on Friday through a video on Twitter. He said the top parties in the state have neglected government schools, and only AAP can deliver on the promise of education, like 'it did in Delhi in the last 5 years'.

621 LIKES, 253 RETWEETS IN 7 HOURS

● **Goa Congress invokes Atal to target BJP**

With #BJPReportCard, the Goa Congress tweeded, "Late PM Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee's legacy is being tarnished by its association with Atal Setu. All those who travelled on it ask how within 2 years so many potholes have surfaced. There's always some public work going on but its quality is questionable."

22 LIKES, 14 RETWEETS IN 7 HOURS

BALLOTIN

Crowd at SP office: FIR lodged for violation of Covid norms

Lucknow: An FIR was lodged against around 2,000-2,500 unidentified Samajwadi Party workers for allegedly violating the model code of conduct and Covid-19 norms by crowding at the party office ahead of the event at which former BJP ministers Swami Prasad Maurya and Dharam Singh Saini, along with a number of other former BJP MLAs, were to officially join the Samajwadi Party. The Election Commission had banned political rallies, nukkad meetings, road shows till January 15. The EC, taking cognizance of a report submitted by the Lucknow DM regarding the matter, directed that the SHO of Gautampalli police station be suspended for dereliction of duty. It also sought an explanation from the ACP of the area concerned, and from the returning officer of the Lucknow Central Assembly constituency. **ENS**

Be visible and accessible, CEC tells election observers

New Delhi: The Election Commission organised a briefing on Friday for observers to be deployed during the Assembly elections in Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sushil Chandra told the observers to be visible, accessible, neutral and ethical. "While stressing on the Commission's zero-tolerance towards abuse of money power or any kind of inducements, CEC urged Expenditure Observers to sharpen their skills and be innovative in countering newer methods of inducement," the EC said in a statement. More than 1,400 officials attended the sessions, with 140 attending it physically at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi and the rest joining in virtually from the states. **ENS**

DILEMMA AFTER SAMAJWADI PARTY BUOYED BY INDUCTIONS

Akhilesh faces ticket claims from turncoats, SP aspirants

With a slew of MLAs from BJP & BSP joining SP, which has also tied up with seven smaller parties, Akhilesh Yadav is bracing to deal with their competing demands

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 14

THE SAMAJWADI Party (SP)'s campaign might have been boosted by the induction of a slew of MLAs from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), including ministers, and other parties into its fold in the run-up the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, but SP president Akhilesh Yadav will now have to deal with the formidable task of ticket-distribution in their constituencies which already have many existing aspirants from his own party.

The Nakur Assembly constituency in Saharanpur district is a case in point. Dharam Singh Saini, who quit his ministerial position in the Yogi Adityanath government to join the SP, is a second-term MLA from Nakur and is a leading claimant for this seat in the upcoming polls.

However, former Congress leader Imran Masood, who recently quit his party to switch to the SP, was the runner-up against Saini on the Nakur seat both in 2017 and 2012 Assembly elections. Masood, who met Akhilesh earlier this week, is also a strong candidate in the race for the SP ticket from this constituency.

Apart from Saini and Masood, there are a numbers of local SP workers who are also aspirants for the party ticket from Nakur, with their claims being based on the fact that they have remained with the party and worked on the ground even when it has been out of power since 2017.

This is not an isolated case. For Akhilesh will have to face a similar situation in over 18 Assembly seats where sitting MLAs of the BJP and BSP have either joined the SP in recent days or are headed to the party. Also, Akhilesh has forged alliances with seven smaller parties, which are also vying for seats for their respective candidates.



Supporters gather at SP head office in Lucknow on Friday ahead of the event at which Swami Prasad Maurya, Dharam Singh Saini and others officially joined the party. Vishal Srivastav

The SP's Saharanpur district president Chandrashekhar Yadav admitted that both Saini and Masood were claimants for the ticket from Nakur and that several party workers were also demanding the ticket from the constituency.

He said Saini, an OBC leader, is likely to contest from Nakur in the polls. Masood, a prominent Muslim leader, had lost against Saini by less than 5,000 votes in the past two elections.

UP's prominent OBC leader Swami Prasad Maurya, who quit the Adityanath Cabinet and the BJP to join the SP, is a sitting MLA from the Padrauna constituency. The SP had stood fourth in Padrauna in 2012 and had given the seat in 2017 to alliance partner Congress, which finished third in the polls. Maurya would be an obvious choice for the SP in Padrauna. However, conceding the claim of Maurya's son Utkrist for a ticket from a different constituency will not be easy for Akhilesh.

Utkrist had lost in Unchahar to

the SP's Manoj Pandey both in 2012 and 2017 Assembly elections.

BSP veteran and sitting MLA from Akbarpur, Ram Achal Rajbhar has joined the SP and organised a big rally in a show of strength a few weeks ago. In 2017, Rajbhar had defeated the SP's Ram Murti Verma who had got elected from there in the 2012 polls.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Verma confirmed that he has demanded party ticket from Akbarpur and that Rajbhar too was claiming it from there. "Party national president will decide who will contest," Verma said.

Similar is the situation in the Katehri constituency, with sitting MLA Lalji Verma, who quit the BSP to join the SP, leading the race for the party ticket, followed by senior SP leader Jaishankar Pandey, who had finished third in 2017 there.

Another BJP MLA who quit the saffron party to join the SP is Roshanlal Verma, who represents the Tilhar constituency in Shahjahanpur district. A three-

term MLA, Verma had defeated the Congress's Jitin Prasad in the 2017 polls, when the SP and the Congress had an alliance.

"At least 20 leaders of SP are demanding ticket from Tilhar. But whatever party president will decide, everyone will follow that," said Tanveer Ahmed, the SP's Shahjahanpur district president.

Another BJP minister and OBC leader, Dara Singh Chauhan, who resigned from the BJP government and is now set to join the SP, is currently an MLA from the Madhuban constituency in Mau district. He may be a first-time legislator from Madhuban but due to his high-profile political career and seniority the SP will be under pressure to give priority to his claim while selecting its candidate on this seat.

Other such seats where sitting MLAs from other parties have joined the SP fold include Bhinga, Sidhauri, Pratappur, Handiya, Dholana, Mungra Badshahpur, Chillupar, Sitapur, Khalilabad, Bilsa and Nanpara.

Parting the sum: My per cent vs your per cent

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 14

THE MANY additions and subtractions aren't the only math sums occupying parties in Uttar Pradesh. The caste calculations of the state have introduced another dynamic: percentages.

Yogi Adityanath's 80% to 20%

Speaking at a recent event, the Chief Minister said the state will witness an "80% versus 20%" election, and that the BJP will retain power. Yogi did not specify, but the Opposition said it was obvious. As per the 2011 Census, Muslims formed 19.01% of UP's population.

Asked to clarify the remarks at an Aaj Tak event, Adityanath said 20% are those who "oppose Ram Janmabhoomi" and "sympathise with mafias and terrorists". The CM also said that "80 vs 20" is a reality. "This is definitely an 80 vs 20 election."

Swami Prasad Maurya's 85% to 15%

Taking off from Adityanath's formulation, the BJP minister-turned-Samajwadi Party leader said on Friday that the election would actually be a contest between the 85% backwards and Dalits and the 15% upper castes of the state. Among UP's prominent OBC leaders, Maurya, speaking for the first time from the SP's stage, went on to elaborate. "*Sarkar banavien Dalit aur piche, aur malai khaven wo log agde, 5 feedi log* (Governments are made by Dalits and backwards, and the benefits are cornered by the upper castes, the 5%)! You are giving a slogan of 80 and 20, but I say that it will now be 15 versus 85," he said, adding, "85 to hamara hai, 15 me bhi bantwara hai (The 85 is all ours, the 15 is further divided)."

"If only those 5-10% are Hindus for you, *tab to aapki khatiya khadi, bistara gol hona tai hai. Kyunki batwara ki line aapne kheenchee hai*

(then nobody can prevent your rout. Because you have drawn the dividing line)," Maurya said, adding that the SCs, ST, tribals, backwards, poor and Dalits will unite in the elections.

Later, he tweeted, "*Vote hamara, raaj tumhara, nahin chalega, nahin chalega* (Our votes and your reign, this ends)".

As per the 2011 Census, SCs made up 21.1% of UP's population while STs were 1.1%. The state's OBC population is estimated at around 50%.

Akhilesh Yadav's 80% vs 20%

Trying to woo the upper

EXPLAINED
E

castes, particularly Brahmins, to broaden its appeal, the SP would have been left squirming at the stark categorisation by Maurya of the coming elections

as backwards vs forwards. In his speech Friday, Akhilesh steered clear of any caste references.

Instead, he said that when Adityanath talked of 80% vs 20%, he actually meant that only 20% would back the BJP and the rest the SP. Plus, he said, the exit of Maurya and others would further reduce the BJP's 20%. "*Baba Mukhyamantri* (the chief minister) should engage a math teacher," Akhilesh said.

An upper caste leader of the SP said the party should take up what Maurya said at an appropriate forum. "SP ideologue Ram Manohar Lohia was of the opinion that people from every section and class should be taken along. Maurya's remark is against that ideology."

SP MLA Manoj Pandey, who is president of the party's 'intellectual cell' and the organiser of its 'Prabuddha Sammelans' to connect with Brahmins, said, "I have not read Maurya's remark. The SP has always given respect to all castes and sections and ensured participation of everyone. Also, Dalits, backwards and forward classes, whoever is deprived of their right, they should get rights on the basis of poverty."

Buffeted by desertions, crisis of leadership, Cong struggles to mount campaign in Manipur

Party, however, asserts it is going all out to fight elections and that former CM Okram Ibobi Singh will play a key role

JIMMY LEIVON & TORA AGARWALA
IMPHAL, GUWAHATI, JAN 14

THE CONGRESS party seems to be in dire straits in Manipur as it braces to face the upcoming Assembly elections in this North-eastern state. Like other states in the region, Manipur was also once its bastion. But, the grand old party has been in a steady decline in Manipur too, with its MLAs' tally in the existing 60-member Assembly plunging from 28 seats in 2017 to mere 13 now.

Led by state Congress stalwart and three-time chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh, the party had ended up in 2017 Assembly polls as a single largest party. But it was outsmarted by the BJP, which led by N Biren, managed to cobble up the majority number and form the government by forming alliances with smaller parties.

Since then, the Congress has been on a downward slide, racked by periodic rounds of defections. In fact, two senior Congress legislators, Chaltonlien Amo and Kakching Y Surchandra, have switched over to the BJP just this week. In August 2021, even the then Manipur Congress president, Govinddas Konhoujam, defected to the saffron party.

The Congress has been a major player in Manipur politics since 1950s even before it gained full-fledged statehood. It had been in power multiple times with R K Keishing serving as the CM for three terms — from 1980 to 1988 and, subsequently, from 1994 to 1997. From 2002 to 2017,



Manipur Congress stalwart and three-time chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh

the Congress ruled Manipur with Ibobi Singh as the CM.

Political experts say the waves of MLAs' defections from the Congress to the BJP, who also rules the Centre, is typical of the North-east politics, with the party ruling the Centre calling the shots in states across the region.

The region's politics is also defined by its volatility, which was witnessed in Manipur in 2020 too, when a BJP ally National People's Party as well as three of its own MLAs withdrew support from the N Biren government. The BJP government had then virtually collapsed and it seemed for a few days that the Congress might stage a comeback. But, the saffron camp managed to avert the crisis following the intervention of its central leadership.

The Congress also appears to be gripped by a leadership crisis. The 73-year-old Ibobi Singh, who is currently Leader of the Opposition, has been out of action for a long time. He is rarely seen even in his own constituency, Thoubal, from where

he has been winning since 2002.

Dismissing such an assessment, Manipur Congress chief K Meghachandra says the party is going all out to fight the Assembly elections, asserting it still has many "veteran and experienced" leaders. Terming Ibobi Singh as the Congress's "key person", Meghachandra says, "He (Ibobi) is a heavyweight...active or inactive, it does not matter. Everyone knows him, and he is still powerful."

At the peak of Ibobi's power, during his second and third terms as the CM, the Congress had been beset by intense factionalism and infighting, with the party being torn between MLAs loyal to Ibobi and a dissident group. The factional feuds hit a flash point in 2016, when Yumkham Erabot, seniormost Congress legislator and Ibobi's arch rival, left the party to join the BJP. This led to other leaders following suit, including N Biren, the incumbent CM.

Following the exit of Erabot and Biren, other leaders and MLAs began to jump ship. With the BJP forming its government, the trend of defection from the Congress gained momentum.

Manipur Congress vice president and spokesperson, Kh Devabrata Singh, admitted that the party has suffered damages owing to the exodus of its legislators towards the ruling party. "A party (BJP) whose policy is to uproot its rival (Congress-mukt Bharat)...one can imagine how destructive and relentless it would be. However, we are safe now and trying to reconstruct our party," he said.

WOMEN CANDIDATES

Few women get AAP ticket for Punjab polls, but many who made the cut worked their way into contention

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
AMRITSAR, JANUARY 14

THE AAM Aadmi Party, which created a buzz when it promised to give every woman in Punjab a monthly allowance of Rs 1,000 if voted to power, has allotted only around 10 per cent of its seats to women. Of the 106 candidates that the AAP has announced so far for the 117-seat Punjab Assembly, only 12 are women.

Most of the 12 women who did get a ticket, however, are home-grown leaders who have worked their way into contention.

Baljinder Kaur and Saravjit Kaur Manuke, sitting MLAs from Talwandi Sabo and Jagraon (reserved) respectively, were among the first on the list.

Baljinder Kaur emerged as a close confidante of the AAP's Delhi leadership during the last five years. Her name has made the rounds as a potential chief ministerial candidate for the party, and is a leader who is seen as one of the AAP's safest bets in Punjab.

Manuke, on the other hand, sparked some controversy during her tenure and nearly quit the AAP before she was again nominated as a candidate to



(Clockwise from top) Sitting MLAs Baljinder Kaur and Saravjit Kaur Manuke are AAP candidates from Talwandi Sabo and Jagraon respectively. Singer-turned-politician Anmol Gagan Maan got the AAP ticket from Kharar; and Neena Mittal, who has been with the bparty since 2013, will be the AAP candidate from Rajpura

avert defection.

The party's candidate from Kharar, Anmol Gagan Maan, is a singer-turned-politician who got the key post of AAP youth wing vice president as soon as she joined the party in July 2020. She has been known to make bold and aggressive public state-

ments. Recently she also sang a song in praise of AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the context of the upcoming elections.

Neena Mittal, the candidate from Rajpura, comes from a business family and has been

VOTING ON FEBRUARY 14

with the party since 2013. She worked for the AAP in Delhi also, and was given the party ticket from the Patiala Lok Sabha seat in 2019.

Narinder Kaur Bharaj came to the limelight while working for the AAP in the Sangrur parliamentary constituency during the 2014 election in which Bhagwant Mann became an MP for the first time. However, there was controversy over giving her a ticket from Sangrur, as she was expected to contest from a rural constituency.

The AAP's candidate from Nakodar, Inderjit Kaur Maan, is known for developing her village Bir with funds collected from NRIs. She switched to the AAP from Shiromani Akali Dal in October 2021.

Former chairperson of the permanent Lok Adalat at Kapurthala, Manju Rana, is the AAP's candidate from Kapurthala seat. She was removed from her Lok Adalat post after she had slapped a fine of Rs 10,000 on Brahm Mohindra, the then Punjab health minister, for ignoring her orders in 2018. She had also passed some popular

judgments related to a toll plaza and a famous dhaba in Jalandhar.

Ludhiana South candidate Rajinder Pal Kaur Chhina has been working with Kejriwal ever since the Anna Hazare-led movement that brought the AAP chief into the limelight.

Jeevanjot Kaur, who has also been working with party for a long time, got a ticket for the first time from Amritsar East, the constituency where Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu is sitting MLA.

Santosh Kataria, the AAP candidate for Balachaur, comes from a political family. She first contested elections from Balachaur in 2007, and she has also been a chairperson of the zila parishad.

Ophthalmologist Dr Baljit Kaur, the daughter for former AAP MP Sadhu Singh, got a ticket from the reserved constituency of Malout.

The party's women's wing vice president, Dr Amandeep Kaur Arora, surprised many when she was announced as the candidate from Moga, where senior leader Naydeep Sangha was said to be in the race. Sangha joined the farmers' unions' Sanyukt Samaj Morcha, and will contest from Moga for the SSM.



The Indian EXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE SHORT-CUT

By asking the people of Punjab to select its CM candidate, AAP may be passing on to them its own responsibility to decide

THE AAM AADMI Party's decision, announced by National Convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal this week, to ask the people of Punjab to decide its chief ministerial candidate for the upcoming Assembly elections is double-edged. It can be read as throwing the question to the people, making them part of decision-making in the party. That is, as a sort of referendum politics. After all, democracies sometimes use referendums as a tool to resolve questions where there is a political deadlock, or to measure exactly where people stand on an important issue. An opening up of the often top-down and opaque decision-making approach that is used to appoint chief ministers by several parties can only be welcome. And yet, the AAP's move also seems like a short-cut. By lobbing to the people a question that should be settled by intra-party mechanisms and processes, in which the party's own elected MLAs must play a leading role, it seems like the AAP is taking the easy — and crowd-pleasing — way out.

In a parliamentary system, political parties are essential mediating institutions between the government and the people. To carry out their functions and responsibilities, they need to institutionalise an inner life — processes and mechanisms that help them make choices and take decisions. Moreover, in a country as large and diverse as India, where elections can be about many and often contradicting things at the same time — identity, governance, development, social security — political parties and elected representatives that belong to them navigate the complexity of these needs and aspirations. This is all the more so in a state like Punjab which has seen a change of chief minister barely months ago, and where the choice of a CM candidate is, or it should be, the result of a negotiation within the party, between different interests and groups. Outsourcing that critical decision to “the people” — as the AAP seems to be doing — is a cop-out.

This is not the first time, of course, that the AAP has relied on the “referendum”. In 2013, it asked the people of Delhi whether or not to form the government with Congress support and in 2015, it went to the people again on the demand for full statehood for Delhi. Even at that time, the use of the instrument seemed problematic: Both issues were not ones where a simple “yes” or “no” sufficed, their resolution called for a more nuanced debate. While a referendum on certain contentious issues can lend legitimacy to a government's decision, excessively and indiscriminately relying on “direct democracy” can end up undermining the very institutions that make democratic governance in a large and diverse country sustainable.

HOLES IN SAFETY NET

Government needs to plug loopholes, minimise irregularities, in implementation of NREGA in times when it is most needed

OVER THE PAST two years, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (MGNREGA) has played a critical role in alleviating the economic hardship stemming from the pandemic. Work demanded by households under the scheme has surged as non-farm employment opportunities have fallen and as millions of migrant labourers returned to their villages. In 2020-21, the first year of the pandemic, 11.19 crore individuals worked under the scheme, up from 7.88 crore in 2019-20. In the ongoing financial year, 9.52 crore individuals have so far benefited from it. On its part, the central government increased the scheme's allocation to Rs 1.1 lakh crore in 2020-21 to meet the surging demand. In the ongoing financial year, apart from the budgetary allocation of Rs 73,000 crore, additional allocations have been made recently. It is thus a matter of concern that in such times, discrepancies have come to light in the manner in which the scheme is being implemented in the state of Jharkhand. They raise troubling questions and point to loopholes that the administration needs to urgently look into.

As reported in this paper, the social audit unit (SAU) of the Rural Development Department of Jharkhand has documented several instances of irregularities. In many cases, the audit found that workers were listed on the records but were missing from work sites. Instances where beneficiaries have struck deals with contractors allowing them to use their names on muster rolls in exchange for a cut, or of contractors employing contract labour instead of local work-seekers, have also come to light. The audit found “delay (in) payment, no attendance entered in muster roll at worksite, no material supply despite payment made to vendor, wage payment done without work” and “work not found on ground despite shown completed”. Considering that the audit was not limited to a few work sites — it was conducted in roughly a fourth of the state's panchayats — these findings, and the questions they raise, cannot be easily dismissed.

As welfare programmes in India have tended to be marred by leakages, by problems of inclusion and exclusion, such audits serve a valuable purpose in identifying the gaps in the social security architecture, and providing the direction to strengthen systems and processes. Coming at a time when the employment guarantee scheme is playing a key role in lessening the distress amongst the informal labour force — the state's chief minister, Hemant Soren, has called it a “saviour” during the pandemic — all efforts should be made to ensure that such irregularities are minimised.

BROTHERHOOD

The internet brings together Sikka and Sadiq Khan, brothers separated during Partition. Can their countries do better?

TOO MANY PARTITION stories are about the defeat of human ties by the power and whimsy of an invisible line drawn on a map. The story of Sikka Khan and Sadiq Khan, two brothers separated in 1947, is no different. In the chaos unleashed by Partition, Sikka and the boys' mother were left on this side of Punjab; Sadiq and their father in the new nation of Pakistan. It wasn't geography that forced them apart, but history. In these years, Sikka's mother, crazed by the grief of losing her family, took her own life. He was brought up by his grandparents in Phulewal village, which still remembers with pride that it had protected all its Muslim families during the insanity of Partition. The boy's letters to his brother, sent to a wrong address, remained unanswered.

Finding the right address took 74 years — and the magic of the internet. It's hard to remember today, when it has been so completely hijacked by hate and partisanship, but the worldwide web was once envisioned as a space where borders would become irrelevant. And so, when a YouTuber in Pakistan, whose stories on Partition have a substantial following on either side of Punjab, heard of the brothers' tale, he used his platform to broadcast Sadiq's appeal: He was sure his brother was alive. Could someone help them meet? The internet obliged, and the brothers first met — on a screen, over a video call. It took two more years, and several negotiations with the bureaucracy of nation-states, for them to finally see each other. Earlier this week, the two brothers met and embraced — even if for an achingly short time — at Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib.

The journey of their respective nations — in many ways siblings too — appears to take them further and further away from togetherness. But even if realpolitik does not agree, India and Pakistan can do better. They must make an exception for Sikka and Sadiq and allow them to visit each other. For once, let brotherhood triumph over the intoxication of nationalism.



SHYAM SARAN

IN HIS PRESS conference on January 12, on the eve of Army Day, the Indian Army Chief, General Naravane, reportedly made an intriguing reference to the possibility of “demilitarisation of the glacial region” in Siachen. He is said to have reiterated that Pakistan would have to first authenticate respective troop positions along the 110-km long actual ground position line (AGPL) in the Siachen-Saltoro Ridge region for any talks on demilitarisation to take place.

The army chief's remarks are significant because, in the past few years, relations with Pakistan have deteriorated. Any talk of Indian forces stepping back from any positions that they currently hold has been considered defeatist, even anti-national. Even though the army chief's reference to demilitarisation is conditional to the AGPL being formally acknowledged, it is a departure from the uncompromising position that has been current in the recent past.

During the period when I served as India's Foreign Secretary (2004-6), India and Pakistan were engaged in what was then known as a Composite Dialogue, the agenda for which contained eight items. These were: Jammu and Kashmir, Confidence Building Measures, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul navigation, Promotion of Friendly Exchanges, Siachen, Sir Creek, Terrorism and Drug Trafficking, and Economic and Commercial Cooperation. During this period, the two sides also agreed that there were two issues on which early agreement was possible. These were Siachen and Sir Creek respectively. There were more focused negotiations launched at the foreign secretary-level to try and resolve these two outstanding issues at an early date.

It is true that the AGPL delineation had been a major sticking point in reaching an agreement on Siachen. However, this matter had been resolved between the two sides, first during bilateral defence secretary-level talks in 1992 and then subsequently in foreign secretary-level talks in 2006. These agreements could not be formalised and implemented due to political reasons.

Since this is a contentious issue it may be worthwhile to dwell on its historical background. India and Pakistan signed a Ceasefire

Is Siachen on India-Pakistan agenda once again? That would be welcome

The army chief's remarks are significant because, in the past few years, relations with Pakistan have deteriorated. Any talk of Indian forces stepping back from any positions that they currently hold has been considered defeatist, even anti-national. Even though the army chief's reference to demilitarisation is conditional to the AGPL being formally acknowledged, it is a departure from the uncompromising position that has been current in the recent past.

Agreement in 1949 after their first armed conflict over Jammu and Kashmir soon after their independence in 1947. The ceasefire line was drawn up to a point known as NJ 9842 on the map. Beyond this, the agreement stated, the line would run “north to the glaciers” leaving an un-demarcated zone right up to the border with China. This formulation was repeated in the agreement on the Line of Control in 1972, which followed the Simla Agreement of 1971 in the aftermath of the Bangladesh War. This was an act of omission on our part because by this time we had a boundary dispute with China which involved eastern Ladakh, where currently there is a continuing stand-off between the two sides. The Siachen-Saltoro glacier area is literally sandwiched between a hostile Pakistan to the west and an equally hostile China to the east. It would have mitigated the security threat if the line beyond NJ 9842 had also been demarcated on maps in 1972.

It was in the later years of the 1970s that the India side picked up activities by Pakistan in the Siachen area, such as sponsoring international mountaineering expeditions. This would have implied that Pakistan had jurisdiction over this territory. This was also the time when official US maps began to show the LoC as extending right up to the Karakoram Pass on the India-China boundary, which would, in effect, imply that the Siachen glacier fell under the actual jurisdiction of Pakistan. The Chinese followed suit. As a result, roughly 2,300 sq km of territory in this glacier zone came to be shown as under Pakistani control. In response to this encroachment, the Indian Army launched what came to be known as Operation Meghdoot, in 1984, to occupy the Siachen-Saltoro ridge. Pakistani attempts to dislodge the Indian troops from the heights did not succeed though they did occupy and fortify the lower reaches on their side.

During a meeting between the then Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and the then Pakistani Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, in December 1988, it was agreed that the two sides would hold talks to resolve the Siachen issue through mutual troop withdrawal. However, there was no final outcome because Pakistan did not agree to map the actual ground positions of the two armed forces from

where they would withdraw. The Indian side insisted on this to make any future intrusion by the Pakistani side into the zone of disengagement a clear violation.

A further effort was made at bilateral defence secretaries-level talks under the Narasimha Rao government. An agreement in principle was reached in 1992, when Pakistan reportedly agreed to the Indian proposal to record the respective locations of the forces of the two sides and the points to which they would withdraw. Joining the existing troop locations would have yielded the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL). Even though agreement had been reached, PM Narasimha Rao took a decision to defer its actual signing to a later date but then this did not happen.

In 2006, we had the draft agreement of 1992 available as a reference point and this enabled a draft agreement to be reached in the foreign secretary-level negotiations. It was agreed that there would be a formal agreement on mutual but phased withdrawal and joint monitoring of the demilitarised zone. There would be an annex which would record the current locations of the forces deployed by the two sides and the locations to which they would withdraw. There would be a schedule of withdrawals in different phases. The idea was that less risky areas would be vacated first and the more sensitive areas later. The agreement and the annex would have the same legal validity and this would be explicitly declared in the agreement itself. The proposed agreement ran into opposition as had the 1992 version and the initiative was then dropped. I believe that the agreement would have been a positive gain for India and diminished the challenge of confronting threats on both flanks of a most strategically sensitive area. Perhaps there is a rethink on this issue and I, for one, would welcome it.

I have been to Siachen on some of the border infrastructure surveys I undertook during my time in government. It is a most inhospitable theatre and the extraordinary human and material costs it imposes on our troops would justify a review.

The writer is former foreign secretary and senior fellow CPR



SUNANDA MEHTA

THE FIRST BATCH of women officers was inducted into the Indian Army in non-medical roles via the Short Service Commission in 1992. It has taken 30 years for that tentative step to translate into a firm foothold and give the women of this country their rightful place in the defence services of India.

Last year, the Supreme Court threw open the hallowed portals of the National Defence Academy for women to compete for the seats and subsequent permanent commission in the Indian army in any corps they desire, including the combat ones. Something to truly celebrate on January 15, Army Day, this year. The move promises to change the composition of this arm of the defence force not just quantitatively, but also qualitatively — both dire requirements of the force at present.

The number of women officers in the force has remained dismally low all these three decades. This is despite women being inducted as permanent commissioned officers in the legal and education corps since 2008 and as permanent commissioned officers in eight more non-combative corps in 2020: As recent as 2020, women officers in the Indian army (excluding the medical corps) numbered just about three per cent. Compare this to 16 per cent in the US, 15 per cent in France and 10 per cent in both Russia and the UK. Hopefully, the SC order would turn out to be a game-changer.

For starters this may effectively address the long-standing shortage of officers in the

WOMEN AND THE FORCE

As women stride into the combat corps, they may need to combat attitudinal hurdles

Indian army in general. In response to a question in Rajya Sabha a month ago, the Minister of State for Defence said the Army has a shortage of 7,476 officers. One of the reasons for the shortage is a fall in the number of capable youngsters opting for the career. Unlike before, when sons of defence officers tended to opt for the services, the last few decades have seen them gravitating towards careers in the corporate world.

But now with the daughters offered a permanent commission in the Army, especially in the combat corps, there is every possibility of them looking at this as a more challenging and fulfilling career. This could also bring back to the Army the legacy it always boasted of — families with generations enlisted into the armed forces. That it would be the daughters carrying forward this torch may also help confront the chauvinism, often misspelt as chivalry, that indisputably exists in the Army.

A few years ago, I interviewed a high-ranking officer who not just candidly displayed his misgivings about women joining the Army in combat roles. He also admitted he had once deliberately manoeuvred a situation whereby a male officer and a female officer did not have to spend a night at a base camp by themselves due to the breakdown of their vehicle. It did not matter to him that when the lady officer learnt of this later, she took strong objection to the manipulation as it reflected the senior's lack of trust in her. He attributed it to the ethos he had been used to in the Army.

When in February 2020, the Supreme Court decreed that women officers should get command positions on par with male officers, it also effectively dismissed the military's earlier objection that it would lead to “operational, practical and cultural problems”. The SC went on to say that denying women commands based on the above argument was discriminatory and reinforced stereotypes.

Nevertheless, the reality is that as women get ready to stride into the combat corps, they may need to combat attitudinal hurdles.

A ray of light here though comes from the words of the Army chief. General M M Naravane, on reviewing the army parade at NDA recently, hailed the decision as a major step towards gender equality in the army. He also quipped that he expected the girl candidates to outshine the boys. His final words at the parade: “At least 40 years down the line, they will be standing where I am standing.”

While none of us are sure whether we would be around 40 years from now, I, as an inveterate army kid, am quite happy to see the NDA passing-out parade just four years down the line with a bunch of combat-ready lady cadets standing alongside the gentlemen cadets, with a sparkle in their eyes, spring in their steps and well-earned pips on their shoulders.

Mehta is the author of The Extraordinary Life and Death of Sunanda Pushkar

JANUARY 15, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

20 POINT PROGRAMME

THE PM HAS announced a recast and redefined 20-point programme. It has been dovetailed into an overall programme of development. Mrs Gandhi shared the details of the programme while marking two years in office since her return to power. The revision of the programme was necessary because of the accomplishment of some of its targets and new challenges. She reminded people how she had cautioned them not to expect miracles when she had first announced the programme in 1975. Then, as now, there was only one magic that could remove poverty — hard work backed by a clear sense of purpose. She told the nation to adopt the motto,

“Satyameva jayate (truth will be victorious). To which she added, “Shrameva jayate”.

MARUTI DEAL

THE DECISION OF Maruti Udyog to not insist on a buy-back clause for a foreign tie-up for its car project has resulted in more offers from foreign manufacturers. When Maruti was nationalised, the government had announced that any foreign collaboration for know-how had to be conditional on the company buying back at least 50 per cent of the cars. When the tie-up with Renault was announced last year, it was expected that pickup vans would be exported. But the price announced by the

company was lower than what Maruti would spend on imported components.

THATCHER FOUND

THE BRITISH PRIME Minister's son, Mark Thatcher and his co-driver and mechanic, lost for seven days in southern Algeria during a car rally, have been found safe and sound.

MAKAR SANKRANTI

AN ESTIMATED 5 million people bathed at the Holy Sangam on Makar Sankranti. They included saffron robbed sanyasis, bairagis and naga sadhus.



Spreading the words

Since the 1980s, ‘innovation’ and ‘narrative’ have become keywords that mark a new culture of teaching and research. There’s no longer any need to cultivate the patience to make sense of things



KRISHNA KUMAR

SOMETIME DURING THE mid-1980s, two nouns silently rolled into India’s academic world. They were potent agents of change. Over the years, they ushered the nation into postmodern ways of talking. In its homes and hearts, the country at that time was still struggling to deal with the demands of modernity.

The two nouns are “innovation” and “narrative”. Administrators and teachers took their time to learn how to insert these nouns into the grammar of everyday parlance. Politicians and company heads investing in education were quicker. Journalists noticed the change and performed their expected role of spreading the word(s). The Programme of Action (1992) awakened and exhorted ageing vice-chancellors to recognise how important a role “innovation” was going to play in the impending dawn of the new century. Syllabi had to be revamped to make them capable of inspiring the innovative spirit of youth whose imagination had been stifled by nursery teachers. Universities took up the challenge of repairing what had been damaged during thoughtlessly playful kindergarten years. A fresh narrative of educational reform was born.

A few years ago, I met a young man who had designed a five-day training module to instil the spirit of innovation among school teachers. A whole range of VIPs had endorsed this effective module. When I met its maker, the remarkable module had already been administered to nearly half a million teachers, turning them around from their fixed pedagogic ways. Among the teachers he had trained, a few dozen had been selected for recognition as leaders. State governments were vying with each other to arrange the five-day jab of innovation among their list-less teachers.

According to a recent report in this newspaper, an American innovator had attracted a record number of big investors in a new device capable of detecting a wide gamut of potential illnesses from a few drops of blood. The device radically cut down the price and hassle of a standard blood test. This disruptive health-tech device ruled the American market for several years before being revealed to be a fraud.

The success of that project helps us figure out the intimate relationship between “innovation” and “narrative”. Both achieved the status of keywords. Together, they marked the arrival of a new culture. However, one was more important than the other. While narrative carried sustained weight, in the final analysis it was subservient to its verbal mate, innovation. That is where the new goal of teaching and research lay — in sculpting a mind that could habitually innovate in any sphere of choice, including the art of creating a narrative.

Innovation thus became the supreme purpose of the humble teacher’s labours. Universities set up cluster resource centres where exam-weary youngsters might seek



CR Sasikumar

refuge to assemble a new device or invent a solution for an old nagging problem. The mission to carve out such a space in schools had to wait for a little while, but now that wait is over. Entrepreneurship has finally become a “subject” and teachers have been trained to handle it effectively. Their focus is on nurturing young adults who do not hanker after a job; instead, they create employment for others. The innovation resides in the narrative.

Older educational theory was vaguely aware of the importance of “innovation”. The origins of vagueness were many, but the main reason was grammatical. Innovation was stuck in a mesh of similar ideas whose ancestry had enjoyed respect for a long time in the history of science and the arts. Verbs like “create” and “invent”, and nouns like “inquiry” and “pursuit” had formed a nebulous whole. The construct had dominated educational philosophy and pedagogy for far too long. This old tradition did not permit “innovation” to come into itself, or become a goal on its own. Teachers had to cultivate young minds in a slow, affectionate fog of daily attendance. The ability to do something differently germinated in a few at the end, but it could not be predicted, let alone tested with the help of a few drops of saliva. It is when “innovation” became an independent goal that the new educational era began. From then onwards, the teacher did not have to worry about general development. The narrative of specified goals would subdue old anxieties like all-round growth. The teacher could now sit back and plan her lesson just-in-time using an app procured from the pedagogy market.

Innovation, thus, became the supreme purpose of the humble teacher’s labours. Universities set up cluster resource centres where exam-weary youngsters might seek refuge to assemble a new device or invent a solution for an old nagging problem. The mission to carve out such a space in schools had to wait for a little while, but now that wait is over. Entrepreneurship has finally become a ‘subject’ and teachers have been trained to handle it effectively. Their focus is on nurturing young adults who do not hanker after a job; instead, they create employment for others. The innovation resides in the narrative.

What began with words has gradually become reality. A mid-1980s adviser once illustrated the future by flashing a small pill tucked into his palm. A time will shortly come, he said, when you could drop a pill like this into a dirty stagnant pond, and watch its water turn blue and clean enough to drink. Those words carried force. Everyone present became aware that clean water need no longer pose a systemic challenge.

A well-honed capacity to innovate tops the list of “21st century skills” to be taught in institutions of higher learning. This title also dates from the mid-1980s. Apparently, there was something magic in the air of that period. Capturing the narrative became a political art. Education is usually a slow sector to respond to pressures, but now it seems ready. Speed and volume of research production is a key booster of a university’s place in ranking lists. Old-style courses that allowed leisure to think are no longer required.

Some rare advice to re-think came a few years ago from a book titled *Slow Professor* by Maggie Berg and Barbara K Seeber. Although there is little evidence that it has made anyone look carefully at the reality students face, the book makes its diagnosis amply clear. Perhaps we need not worry about the book’s impact since the evidence is everywhere. It lies in the speed at which innovations are claimed in research papers produced and published overnight. Education has gone through a transformation in that there’s no longer any need to cultivate the patience to make sense of things.

The writer is a former director of NCERT. His latest book is *Smaller Citizens*

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“Putin’s real concern isn’t the placement of NATO weapons on his country’s borders but the very existence of a sovereign Ukrainian democracy.”
— THE NEW YORK TIMES

The bare minimum

Legal guarantee for MSP provides security to farmers against risks of farming, and is essential to make a farm viable



M S SRIRAM

THERE HAS BEEN significant writing about the dangers of providing a legal sanctity to the Minimum Support Price (MSP), including in this newspaper by Ashok Gulati (‘The fallacy of MSP’, January 4). The broad strands of argument are: One, providing MSP does not allow the market to discover the prices; if market cleared prices are less than MSP, then the only buyer would be the government; this would render the government bankrupt. Two, markets are wonderful; if they have any distortions, the way to negotiate it is through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) — as demonstrated by Amul. Three, a better way to address the possible income gap is to give an income support-based direct benefit transfer (DBT).

There are other arguments, but let us address these issues first. How do we define markets? What are the boundaries? Through tariffs and other measures, we have built a national barrier on markets, where gates are opened on the basis of strategic intent. If we were to open our borders for free movement of grains from elsewhere, we may even argue for unlocking agricultural land for more lucrative purposes without worrying about food self-sufficiency, buffer stocking and domestic food safety. We are not going there. We may have to accept a national food safety for at least the essential foodgrains and pulses.

Let us look at what the minimum support price does in terms of signalling, and when provided as a legal guarantee.

If we were to look at farming, we realise that this exposes itself to disproportionate risks. First, there is no stop-loss mechanism after sowing the seed, except for destroying the crop for the season. The farmer’s hands are tied and she is locked into a given crop once the germination happens all the way till the harvest. This enterprise not only has the usual business risks but also has the enhanced risk of the force majeure elements that destroy the enterprise — a sudden hail storm, drought, unseasonal showers, a pest attack, a locust attack — there are too many things that the farmer cannot control. These entrepreneur-farmers are operating without a limited liability clause — with no downside protection. Therefore, an MSP provides a powerful signal to the farmer to exercise the choice of sowing a particular crop because the farmer can back-calculate the expected margin. On the other hand, we can stretch the market argument to the limit, we can argue that we do not even need a token MSP. Farmers can enter into a contract in the futures market. But we are looking at people who operate on the margins, on the farms and not people who want to mix up their lives with speculative trade on the screen. If

MSP is a signal that helps the farmer to choose a crop, then it must remain a choice at the harvest time as well. If not, then the price is a token announcement. Therefore, a legal guarantee is in order.

Note that the M in MSP stands for minimum — the bare essential to make the farm viable. Clearly if the wonderful markets clear this price, then both the signalling and legal guarantee are irrelevant. The significance of MSP is only when the markets do not clear the price. In such a situation, the farmer gets a return less than the MSP and by this argument we are escorting the farm fraternity towards bankruptcy. A legal guarantee is, therefore, needed. The ability of the state to address the issue is greater than that of an individual marginal farmer.

The argument that the state will have to procure all the floating stock in the market and may become bankrupt is fallacious. The intervention of the state in the markets usually covers information asymmetry, arbitrage and cools the markets when they get overheated. Anybody who looks at the intervention of the central bank in the forex markets would know the importance of market intervention operations. In the case of agriculture, the issue is more than just volatility management.

While the income support scheme is an interesting instrument and is crop agnostic, it does not address the issue of viability of the farming operations. There is no doubt that we need to make farming viable. It is important to address the prices of each crop as a strategic signalling mechanism: For crops that would be encouraged and those that would be discouraged. It may be a good idea to declare a low MSP upfront that is legally guaranteed so that the farmers are encouraged to move to an alternate crop. This would need imaginative decentralised thinking because these have regional implications. If these have regional implications, then naturally restrictions on free movement would also be in order.

We need to modernise the markets and storage and processing facilities. There is no point in conflating modernisation with liberalisation.

The question of how Amul and dairying in India succeeded also needs interrogation and elaboration. While the Amul model recognised the inherent power of markets, it took about five decades to make the system competitive — the investments were made in breed improvement, free veterinary services, better cattle feed, capital subsidy for processing plants, and return-free capital as investments. The nature of subsidies was smart and innovative. If we need to take Indian agriculture on the path of Amul, we need to start making those investments now. As a trivia, dairying was the last bit to be liberalised, and it enjoyed protection even when we opened up in 1991. So let us use the MSP framework smartly on diversified crops, on a decentralised basis while we develop the markets. A legal guarantee will only assure the farmers that they will not be bankrupted.

The writer is with the Centre for Public Policy, IIM, Bangalore



RAJIV BHATIA

“YESTERDAY IS A foreign country — tomorrow belongs to us,” stated Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa, in 1998. Never was this truer than for 2020 and 2021, which experienced globally transformational events. And nowhere more than in the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific, which is changing at multiple gears and levels. As it moves into 2022, the region will carry the imprint of the past five years, and will have to chart a course through inter-state tensions and crises, using both diplomacy and military preparedness.

The region is central to world economy and peace, and nine countries are key players: the US, China, Japan, India, Germany, the UK, Russia, Australia and France. The geopolitics and geo-economics of the Indo-Pacific will be largely shaped by the interplay of relations among these nations.

Of paramount importance is the US-China equation. As the Trump era ended last January, there was uncertainty over whether the next president would be tough or soft on China. President Joe Biden has demonstrated, in his first year, his formula of firmness, resilience and civil discourse. Expect this relationship to be marked by continually adversarial, competitive and cooperative traits.

Differences over Beijing’s south/east China policy, aggressive postures towards Taiwan, human rights violations in Xinjiang, the subjugation of Hong Kong’s citizenry and assertive economic outreach in the Indo-Pacific — these will weigh heavily on US-China relations. Through its active diplomacy

The Indo-Pacific opportunity

India must have a clear economic and trade agenda in this vital region

— a series of high official visits starting with Vice-president Kamala Harris — and reaffirming commitments to treaty allies and partners alike, the US signalled it is here to stay. However, it wants the full engagement of its friends to create integrated deterrence and will keep the doors of dialogue open to Beijing. In contrast, Chinese President Xi Jinping, armed with unprecedented authority at home, has been confrontational, as seen in China’s repeated incursions into Taiwan’s air defence zone and the PLA’s obduracy in eastern Ladakh.

In this standoff, the role of new groupings and individual nations is significant. Foremost are the Quad, a strategic partnership between the US, India, Japan and Australia and the militaristic AUKUS (Australia, UK, US). Together, they have arrested the perception of China’s regional ascendancy. In 2022, the effort to curb China’s influence can gain further momentum if Japan under prime minister Kishida Fumio announces a bold National Security Strategy (NSS), doubles its defence budget and makes a serious effort to amend Article 9 (which limits the use of its defence forces), thereby expanding military cooperation with the US. Meanwhile, India and Australia are on track to deepen ties, not only bilaterally but also with the other two Quad powers. The next Quad summit, probably hosted by Japan, will cement the grouping.

Two regional groupings — the EU and ASEAN — can determine how they situate themselves in the Quad-China interaction.

The EU’s Indo-Pacific strategy, announced last September, aims at increasing its economic and security profile in, and linkages with, the region. The new government in Germany and the April 2022 presidential elections in France will shape the EU’s policy towards this distant region. Only by being more strategic and less mercantilist, more candid and assertive with China, and more cooperative with partners such as India, can the EU — and its former member the UK — hope to become vital players in the Indo-Pacific.

ASEAN, located in the middle of the Indo-Pacific waters, faces the heat of China’s aggression and the sharpening great power rivalry. Its unity is under stress and its centrality is under question. This group has the most work to do. It must enhance its realism and shed its tendency of wishing away problems. Some plain-speaking by the Quad powers with ASEAN governments is necessary; an opportunity will be available when President Biden holds an in-person summit with the 10 ASEAN leaders soon.

The outcome of three major summits in 2022 — G7, BRICS, G20 — will also impact the politics and diplomacy of the region. Germany, as host of the G7 this year, will need to assess if the G7’s 2021 “Build Back Better World” pledge has made any headway in Asia. It now has to cope with not one but two adversaries: China and Russia. All eyes will be on whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends the 14th BRICS summit, to be hosted in China. It’s an unlikely prospect unless Beijing shows sufficient accommodation

to end the impasse in Ladakh. The G20 summit, to be hosted by Indonesia, will reveal whether the depth of Indonesian diplomacy and capabilities of president Joko Widodo make him a star statesman.

Where, then, does India stand in these swirling Indo-Pacific waters? India has three key obligations. First, to strengthen the Quad — especially by ensuring that the grouping fulfils its commitment to deliver at least one billion vaccine doses to Indo-Pacific nations by December 2022. Simultaneously, India must protect its established relationship with Russia, and show some resilience in dialogue with Beijing. Second, it must enhance cooperation with key Southeast Asian partners — Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines and Thailand — while humouring ASEAN as a grouping. Third, the eastern and southern planks of Africa and the Indian Ocean island states need continued high policy attention and financial resources. A clear economic and trade agenda, involving and incentivising corporate India to follow the flag in this vital region, is certain to yield long-term dividends.

India has done well by fulfilling its humanitarian duties during the pandemic. Learning how to convert them smartly into economic and strategic opportunities in its periphery is the focused task for the nation in 2022.

The writer is distinguished fellow, Gateway House and a former ambassador with extensive diplomatic experience in the Indo-Pacific region

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEW LOW

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘6 CMs, 1 conspiracy’ (IE, January 14). The shrill cries of the six BJP chief ministers against the Punjab government represent a new low in Indian politics. Parties are very confrontational and don’t lose any opportunity to abuse and insult opponents. This charged atmosphere provides a fertile ground for violence, and in a sensitive state like Punjab, is deeply worrying. Unsurprisingly, even the Supreme Court’s advice to show restraint has gone largely unheeded. While this issue may come to a close soon, the portents are a matter of grave concern.

Hemant Contractor, Pune

POISON OF HATE

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘A social line of control’ (IE, January 14). It is unfortunate but not surprising that hatred for Muslims, tacitly supported by the government, has become a central tenet of public discourse. Along with an ever-shrinking space for dissent, the othering of minorities, through formal and informal means, has solidified. But perhaps the most dangerous aspect of this institutionalised hatred is the enthusiastic participation of ordinary citizens. Indeed governments may come and go, but the poison of hate once unleashed is difficult to hold back.

Ila Raikar, Mumbai

CASTE IN UP

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Twist in UP Plot’ (IE, January 13). Regional parties in Uttar Pradesh have been thriving on caste politics. The BJP too knows that getting the caste permutations and combinations right is imperative for it to come back to power. However, the exit of Swami Prasad Maurya from the BJP and as a consequence, the OBC vote bank, is bound to bring the saffron party’s think tank back to the drawing board. It is not just the development plank that can see the ruling regime through. Social engineering is no less important. Many more twists and turns, with leaders crossing over, are expected in the run-up to UP elections.

Vijal Pant, Hampur

JUST A STORY?

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Salil’s Story’ (IE, January 13). Salil Tripathi’s story is symbolic of the distress and misery caused to a large section of our population due to the pandemic. Illness, hospitalisation, job losses, deaths — all this and more were born stoically by Covid-affected families. Unfortunately, as always, Salil’s story makes for some catchy headlines, but whether it will usher any transformation in the informal sector of our economy is anybody’s guess.

Kamna Chhabra, Gurgaon



New regulations for conversion of agri land use notified in J&K

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 14

J&K GOVERNMENT'S Board of Revenue on Friday notified regulations for conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Under these regulations, powers have been delegated to the District Collector to grant permission for land up to "12 and a half standard acres against a fee of 5 per cent of the market value of the land notified under the Stamps Act".

The time period for grant of permission will be 30 days, subject to addressing all deficiencies in the application.

The regulations were approved by the J&K Administrative Council headed by LG Manoj Sinha on December 16 last year. "These regulations were necessitated after the legislative changes in the land revenue Act post-reorganisation of the erstwhile state," the government said.

In October 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs, through an order, introduced key amendments to four major laws that governed ownership, sale and purchase of land in the erstwhile state, including the J&K Land Revenue Act, 1996.

Under the J&K Agricultural Land (Conversion of Non-Agriculture Purposes) Regulations, 2022, issued on

Friday, the Board of Revenue provides rules for conversion of land use in the Union Territory. Therefore, either with permission from a District Collector or through payment of conversion fee, agricultural land can be repurposed for non-agricultural use.

Under the J&K Land Revenue Act, 1996, "no land used for agriculture purposes shall be used for any non-agricultural purposes except with the permission of the District Collector". However, subsection 2 of Section 113-A of the Land Revenue Act said that an owner or occupant who wished to put his agricultural land to non-agricultural uses as provided in the regional plan, development plan or master plan as the case may be, "shall do so after payment of conversion charges as prescribed by the Board from time to time".

The regulation states that an application for change of land use can be filed with the District Collector, along with revenue extracts, copy of sale deeds, key location plan, letter of intent from concerned agency and an approval from concerned authority that would regulate the "activity for which the change of land use has been sought".

The application would then be forwarded to the Revenue field agencies for verification of records. After this, it would go to the District Level Committee.

Desire for peace borne out of strength, should not be mistaken, says Army Chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE INDIAN Army's desire for peace is derived from its "inherent strength" and should "not be mistaken" otherwise, Army Chief General MM Naravane said on the eve of Army Day, underscoring that the force was prepared to counter any attempts to change the status quo along the country's borders.

"We stand firm to counter any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo along our border," he said on Friday, against the backdrop of an ongoing standoff with China along the LAC. "Our desire for peace and tranquility is borne out of our inherent strength, it should not be mistaken otherwise," he said.

The armies of India and China have been locked in a military standoff along the LAC since May 2020. The two sides have held 14 rounds of military-level talks to, with the latest held this Wednesday, to resolve the issue.



General MM Naravane

Naravane said that the Army has "instituted additional safeguard to prevent any further attempt at military brinkmanship" and "we believe that differences in perceptions and disputes are best resolved through established norms, based on the principle of equal and mutual security".

The talks between India and China have so far resulted in disengagement at Galwan Valley, the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area. Progress is yet to be made in Hot Springs, Depsang Plains and Demchok along the LAC.

General Naravane said safeguards to counter state-sponsored terrorism too have been strengthened — both along the "borders and the hinterland".

MORE THAN 700 STAFF TEST POSITIVE

Covid shadow on Parliament's Budget session

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

AS INDIA grapples with the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, propelled by the highly transmissible Omicron variant, the government is gearing to convene the Budget Session of Parliament this month-end with strict social distancing and other protocols in place.

Accepting the government's proposal, President Ram Nath Kovind Friday evening summoned Parliament from January 31. The session will conclude on April 8 with a month-long break in between.

The first half of the session will conclude on February 11 after the customary President's address to the joint sitting of the two Houses on the opening day, tabling of the Economic Survey, presentation of the Budget on February 1 and discussion on the President's address. The second half of the session will commence on March 14 and end on April 8.

The Budget session will take place amid indications that the third wave is still to peak. But the government is hard pressed as presentation of the Annual Financial Statement, popularly known as the Budget, is a constitutional requirement which cannot be done away with.

What is a serious concern though is the fact that a large number of Parliamentary staff — over 700 until Thursday — have tested positive since January 4.

According to sources, 718 people in the Parliament complex have tested positive so far. "These include 204 people in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. Rest of the cases were reported from the Lok Sabha Secretariat and allied services," sources said. Most of those who tested positive are said to be asymptomatic.

If the cases don't ebb, sources



Rehearsals are underway for the Republic Day parade in New Delhi. Amit Mehra

EXPLAINED For safe passage

PARLIAMENT IS being convened at a time when there's a surge in Covid cases. Safety protocols will require distancing, repeated tests, perhaps staggered schedules to keep the Budget session going. The 2020 monsoon session stringent protocols may be revisited to ensure safe conduct of proceedings.

said the Budget session could witness restrictions as was seen during the monsoon session of 2020.

Held in September 2020, the monsoon session was the first

full session held under strict Covid-19 protocol with the Rajya Sabha meeting in the first half of the day and Lok Sabha during the second half and members of both the Houses sitting in both the chambers.

The same protocols were followed during the first part of the Budget session last year.

Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha reverted to normal timings for the second part of the Budget session, monsoon and winter sessions last year, but social distancing norms and some restrictions were still in place with members sitting in the chambers as well as galleries in both Houses.

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said: "The Covid situation is bad. Cases are spreading fast. But the Budget session has to be called. Otherwise, government spending will come to a halt. We don't

want that. But we would urge the government to follow all protocols and take the decision after consulting health experts to see what all precautions are required to be taken. The government should discuss all aspects with health experts and give weightage to their suggestions."

Sources said Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla earlier this week directed the Secretary Generals of both the Houses to "examine in detail the prevailing scenario of spread of Covid-19 and suggest effective measures for safe conduct of the Budget session".

Taking stock of the situation, Naidu and Birla favoured review of the "adequacy" of Covid protocol followed during the winter session when cases were low. The Secretary Generals, sources said, have been asked to submit their proposals at the earliest.

UP CM has lunch at Dalit party worker's home; targets SP for 'social exploitation'

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 14

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who had lunch at the household of a Dalit BJP worker in Gorakhpur on Friday accused the Opposition Samajwadi Party (SP) of the "social exploitation" of the poor.

The Chief Minister's comments came amid the exodus of three ministers and several MLAs from the ruling party. Two of the ministers, Swami Prasad Maurya and Dharam Singh Saini, resigned from the state government earlier this week. They joined the SP on Friday along with five MLAs who also quit the BJP, and a sixth legislator who switched over from the Apna Dal (Sonelal). Both Maurya and Saini are prominent leaders



CM Yogi Adityanath has a meal at the house of party worker Amrit Lal Bharti, in Gorakhpur. Courtesy: Twitter/Yogi Adityanath

from Other Backward Class (OBC) communities. Their exits have pushed the BJP into launching an outreach campaign for the backward classes.

Adityanath ate khichdi bhoj (a lunch consisting of a rice and lentil dish) at the home of party worker Amrit Lal Bharti in the city's Jughiya Gate area, which is a Dalit-

of attending the event as chief guest due to rising Covid-19 cases in his country at the time.

Sources said nearly 1.25 lakh people used to attend the parade before the pandemic, which was pared down to 25,000 last year; another 1,000 have been trimmed to take extra precautions. Of these, 5,200 seats are for the general audience, who can buy tickets. The remaining 19,000 or so will be invited guests, it is learnt.

Officials are still working out the protocols for vaccination demands for the audience. An official said, "We will insist on double vaccination."

Like last year, the audience will be seated six feet apart to ensure distancing norms, and masks will be mandatory. The area will be sanitised, and sanitiser dispensers are also likely to be installed close to the seating area. For all cultural participants and armed forces personnel, double vaccination has been made mandatory. All of them will also be tested for Covid-19.

As per convention, only VVIPs will be seated at the podium, which will include President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt. The Defence Ministry is expected to announce the details of the participating tableaux and marching contingents on Monday.

Goyal suggests 5-point reform agenda for FCI

dominated slum 10 kilometres from the Gorakhnath Math that is headed by the Chief Minister. Adityanath was seen sitting on the floor, and eating food from a leaf plate along with Bharti's father.

Later, he laid into the SP and said people would have to understand the difference between "sarnajik nyay [social justice]" and "sarnajik shoshan [social exploitation]". "Those doing politics of dynasty and nepotism cannot do the politics of social justice," said Adityanath.

BJP worker Amrit Lal Bharti told *The Indian Express*, "It has long been a tradition of the Math to have bhoj with the community... Maharaj [Adityanath] used to come very often in the past but his visits became less frequent after he became the CM but still all our problems are resolved."

PINARAYI VIJAYAN AND S RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI

One party, two conflicting stands on China

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 14

CPI(M) POLITBURO members Pinarayi Vijayan and S Ramachandran Pillai have taken conflicting stands on China, with the former being critical of the neighbouring country's approach towards fighting imperialism and the latter showering praise on it for gaining strength to question American imperialism.

Both leaders presented their views at the ongoing CPI(M) district conferences. Inaugurating the party conference in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday,



Pinarayi Vijayan and S Ramachandran Pillai

Vijayan, the Kerala Chief Minister, said socialist countries are making interventions in tune with the changed world order. Even as he lauded China's declaration that the country has lifted its people out of poverty, Vijayan said, "They themselves have declared that they are being troubled by the is-

sues of inequalities and corruption." Recalling the CPI(M) ideological resolution on China adopted in the party Congress held in Kozhikode in 2012, Vijayan said, "We had raised the criticism that as a socialist country China was not willing to adopt a proper stand against imperialist countries. Our stand on China remains the same now as well."

Vijayan's views came a day after Pillai said China has grown to the stature of questioning American imperialism. Addressing the party district conference in Kottayam on Thursday, the senior leader said, "The astonishing progress China has made over the years is a continuum of

the fight against imperialist forces. China has become powerful and is facing a global attack targeting its achievement of socialism."

"America has made several alliances to attack China and India is also part of such alliances. How many alliances are there against China? India, Japan, America, and Australia. But China has made links with 180 countries," he said.

Pillai said the CPI(M) is the target of anti-China campaign. "In India, the only motive behind attacking China is to target our party..." he said.

BJP state president K Surendran said the CPI(M) "has become a party that supports all anti-national activities."



Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray

chamber. The suspended MLAs include Ashish Shelar, Sanjay Kute, Atul Bhatkalkar, Girish Mahajan, Jaikumar Rawal, Yogesh Sagar, Parag Alvani, Harish Pimple, Ram Satpute, Narayan Kuche, Bunty Bhangadia and Abhimanyu

Pawar. One day before the hearing of the case in the Supreme Court, 6 of the 12 suspended MLAs appeared before Assembly Deputy Speaker Narhari Zhirwal for a hearing on their suspension, after they were asked to come and record their statements before the Deputy Speaker.

Sources in the Maharashtra government said that the apex court's remarks have "certainly added some pressure". "The state Legislature Assembly has exercised its power... The Supreme Court's remarks have certainly added some pressure on the government but a call will be taken considering all aspects of the issue," said a government source.

A senior minister raised questions over Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari not approving the 12 names recommended by the Uddhav Thackeray Cabinet, in November 2020, to the state Legislative Council through the Governor's quota. "It has been more than a year that the Governor has not approved any names despite the recommendation of the state Cabinet... But, nobody is calling it unconstitutional," said the minister. There are a number of instances where members of the Maharashtra Assembly or Legislative Council have been suspended for six months or more on various grounds over the last sev-

eral years. In March 2017, Prashant Paricharak, a BJP-backed independent member of the Legislative Council, was suspended for his certain objectionable remarks for 18 months, although his suspension was revoked in February 2018. However, following the Shiv Sena members' protest and demand for his dismissal, Paricharak's entry into the House was "restricted" till June 2019.

On 25 July 2000, 12 Sena MLAs were suspended — 6 members for 1 year and another 6 for six months — for creating ruckus in the House and their "misbehaviour" after the then Congress-NCP government decided to arrest the

Sena founder, Balasaheb Thackeray, for allegedly inciting communal hatred in the cases pertaining to the 1993 Mumbai riots. Two days later, 2 Sena MLAs were suspended for 1 year. Subsequently, the 1-year suspension was reduced to six months.

On the current suspensions, Dr Anant Kalse, former principal secretary of the Maharashtra Legislature Secretariat, said, "The (Supreme Court's) view of depriving the members of representing the constituencies is right. But, the Constitution has given powers to the House for suspension of members for their behaviour unbefitting of the House under the penal jurisdiction of the House."

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

SUGGESTING A five-point reform agenda for the Food Corporation of India, Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said that the FCI's public perception needs to be changed from "being inefficient & corrupt to dynamic, inclusive & honest."

Goyal made these remarks on the occasion of the 58th Foundation Day of the FCI.

According to an official statement, Goyal gave "5 Sutras" to improve FCI's progress.

"1. Change the public perception of FCI from being inefficient & corrupt to dynamic, inclusive & honest. 2. Focus on integrating end-to-end tech solutions right from procurement to delivery to achieve operational efficiency & leakage free, distribution -- reduce PDS response time, beneficiary tracking etc. 3. Establish a grievance redressal mechanism to react rapidly to farmer/Farmer Producer Organisation in distress. Reaching out to farmers through "Jan Jagrukta" programmes at grass-root level to spread awareness. 4. Plan for modern infrastructure & logistics. Upgrade warehouses to international standards. Improve storage capacity for the growing need - Power backup, CCTV, robust network facility. 5. Global best practices to make India a 'Food hub'," the statement said.

BAIL HEARING ON MONDAY

2 accused in hate app case sent to judicial custody

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

THE TWO accused who were arrested last week from Uttarakhand in the hate app case — Mayank Rawat, 21, and Shweta Singh, 18 — have been sent to judicial custody after their police custody ended on Friday afternoon.

Their bail pleas will be heard on Monday.

Shweta will be kept in safe custody of police until her test report on Covid-19 is received. She will be sent to jail if she tests negative.

Rawat tested positive for Covid-19 on Friday morning and was sent to Kalina quarantine centre in Mumbai. The first accused, Vishal Kumar Jha, 21, had also tested positive for coronavirus a few days ago and is kept at the same quarantine facility.

During arguments, the cyber police told the court that on learning that an FIR had been registered the main accused and creator of the hate app, Niraj Bishnoi, had alerted Jha to delete technical evidence that could be used to trace them. Police said further custody is required to question the accused in this connection.

Singh's lawyer, N Das, told the court that she was allegedly slapped by someone in cyber police during questioning. Magistrate Komalsingh Rajput noted down the allegation in the order and also asked Singh whether she is feeling any pain or has any injury, to which she replied in the negative and said that she just has a headache.

The magistrate sent both Singh and Rawat to judicial custody, noting that no new grounds were put forth by cyber police for further custody.

Lawyers of the two accused subsequently moved court for bail. "As the investigating officer has also tested positive for Covid-19 along with two accused, it was mutually decided that all the bail pleas will be heard on Monday," said Sandeep Sherkhane, lawyer for Rawat.

BIKANER-GUWAHATI EXPRESS DERAILMENT: TOLL RISES TO 9

Glitch in locomotive equipment: Vaishnaw

SANTANU CHOWDHURY & SWEETY KUMARI
JALPAIGURI, KOLKATA, JAN 14

A GLITCH in the locomotive equipment may have caused the derailment of the Bikaner-Guwahati Express, said Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who visited the accident site in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal, on Friday.

"Preliminary inquiry shows there was a glitch in the locomotive equipment. No fault was found in tracks or speed restrictions. The equipment will be dismantled first and marks will be checked. The Commission of Rail Safety is conducting an inquiry to find out the root cause of the accident," Vaishnaw told reporters.

The death toll in the accident climbed to nine on Friday with the recovery of two more bodies at the site.

The accident took place minutes after the train passed the New Domohoni station at 4.53 pm on Thursday.

The train's assistant loco pilot, Abhishek Roshan, told a local television channel that moments before the derailment there was an unusual jerk in the movement. "I felt the jerk and we applied emergency brakes.



Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday inspects the train that derailed in West Bengal on Thursday. PTI

When we got out to check, we saw some of the coaches had derailed," he said.

Twelve coaches of the train derailed. While some toppled off the tracks, one coach was found on top of another.

Sources said a preliminary investigation revealed that Bikaner-Guwahati Express had WAP IV category engine, which has four traction motors. One of traction motors broke down due to which the loco pilot felt the jerk in the movement, said the sources.

The Railway Minister said the disbursement of ex-gratia amount to the families of the victims has begun. "Family of each deceased will get Rs 5 lakh, those who sustained grievous injuries will get Rs 1 lakh and those with non-serious injuries will get Rs 25,000," said Vaishnaw, who visited the injured passengers at hospital after inspection at the accident site.

At least 36 injured passengers are undergoing treatment at the North Bengal Medical College, Maynaguri Rural Hospital and Jalpaiguri Super Speciality Hospital. The condi-

tion of some of them was critical, said sources.

One of the survivors on Friday filed a complaint with Maynaguri GRP against the train pilot. Uttam Roy, a Cooch Behar resident, was injured in the accident along with his son. Roy filed the complaint soon after being discharged from Maynaguri Hospital. He claimed that the accident was cause due to the driver's negligence.

Union minister John Barla, who is the Alipurduar MP, also visited the accident site Friday morning.

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, meanwhile, blamed the central government for not focusing on the safety of rail passengers.

"More than 2 crore people travel by train every day in India... The government and Railways are responsible for the safety of that train... But the government is not giving the money needed for safety.... This horrific accident has proved how big a mishap can be if the coach is not maintained [properly]," said Chowdhury, who also blamed poor maintenance of the tracks for such accidents.

Senior CPIM leader Sujan Chakraborty sought a thorough investigation into the incident.



One of the injured at a Jalpaiguri hospital on Friday. Partha Paul

‘Was stuck in coach for 3 hrs’

SANTANU CHOWDHURY
JALPAIGURI, JANUARY 14

FOR 34-YEAR-OLD Haradhan Chakraborty, it was the worst three hours of his life. Trapped with the lifeless body of a fellow passenger of the ill-fated Bikaner-Guwahati Express for over three hours, the daily wage worker did not have much hope left until he was rescued by BSF and RPF personnel.

"I boarded the train at New Jalpaiguri Station and was on my way home in Cooch Behar district. I was travelling in coach number S6 when the accident occurred. I broke my right leg and was stuck

inside the coach with the lifeless body of another passenger. I stayed like that for three hours, afraid for my life," he said. He was among the 23 passengers undergoing treatment at Jalpaiguri Superspecialty Hospital.

Debabrata Sharma, a 19-year-old student from Cooch Behar, said it was sheer bad luck for him. He had a ticket for D2, but boarded S6 coach at New Jalpaiguri Station as he was running late. Coaches S5 and S6 were among the worst-affected. "I was standing near the door when all of a sudden the coach shook violently and the train came to a halt... I was thrown in the air and injured my head."

Activist arrested for ‘spreading secessionist’ agenda on social media in J&K

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 14

J&K POLICE on Friday arrested human rights activist Mohammad Ahsan Untoo for allegedly "spreading secessionist agenda" through social media content and inciting the youth towards violence in the Union Territory.

The police said in a statement issued that Untoo — the chairman of International Forum for Justice and Human Rights, Jammu and Kashmir — was among the participants in a Twitter discussion on Kashmir along with two "known secessionists". They spread "hated" against India, it said.

"It was reliably learnt that Mohammad Ahsan Untoo, resident of Diver (Lolab) Kupwara, a proactive secessionist is an active participant and speaker at Twitter spaces titled 'Radio Resistance Kashmir' led by two known secessionists namely Muzammil Ayyub Thakur and Dr Asif Dar. These known secessionists, who are accused in several cases along with Ahsan Untoo, are actively spreading hatred against the Union of India on the social media platform," it said.

Goan writer Maria Aurora Couto dies at 85

BENITA FERNANDO
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

PADMA SHRI awardee, writer and educationist Maria Aurora Couto died on Friday morning. She was 85.

Couto was diagnosed with pneumonia and her health started to decline earlier this week.

Couto lived in Aldona, Goa, and will be remembered for dedicating much of her life and work to the state's cultural activities and socio-political causes. Among her writings, she is best known for her autobiography, 'Goa: A Daughter's Story' (2004), in which her memoirs mingle with Goa's past.

Couto (née Figueiredo) was born in Salcete in 1937. Her fam-

ily moved to Dharwad, Karnataka, in 1945, where she and her six siblings were raised by their mother as a single parent. She attended St Joseph's High School and later studied English Literature at Karnatak College of Arts and Science — late playwright Girish Karnad and novelist Shashi Deshpande were her classmates.

In her later years, Couto taught English Literature at Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi, and Dharmapada College, Panaji.

Goan writer Damodar Mauzo told *The Indian Express* that Couto's death is a "huge loss and blow to Goa's cultural field. She was a true Goan personified... Well-read and well-travelled, the dignified Aurorabai carried herself intelli-



MARIA AURORA COUTO
1937-2022

gently with elegance."

Couto's career as a writer started with 'Graham Greene: On the Frontier: Politics and Religion in the Novels' (1988), an examination of Greene's works, which turned into a lifelong association, after she met him for the first time

in Goa in 1963. Among her other works are 'Filomena's Journeys: A Portrait of a Marriage, a Family and a Culture' (2013), which recounts her mother's story while tracing the decline of Goa's elite Catholics.

In 2010, she was awarded the Padma Shri.

Couto was also one of the fearless voices from Goa, and often commented on social injustices and environmental issues in and around the state. She criticised the attacks and vandalism of Catholic crosses in South Goa in 2017. She was a supporter of the Goenchi Mati Movement, a people's group that has been campaigning against exploitative mining practices in Goa.

In 2015, the murder of pro-

gressive thinker and scholar MM Kalburgi in Dharwad found a strong reaction from India's intellectuals, including Couto. She was among other writers and Sahitya Akademi winners in Goa who asked for the Akademi to "condemn cultural talibanism in the country" following Kalburgi's murder and incidents of lynching.

Poet Ranjit Hoskote tweeted, "With deep, overwhelming grief, I record the passing of Maria Aurora Couto—superb writer, memoirist and critic, deeply committed to Goa's confluent and transcultural traditions, a liberal at home in many worlds..."

Goa CM Pramod Sawant tweeted, "Deeply saddened.... My heartfelt condolences to her family and admirers."

COMPLAINT AGAINST ARCHBISHOP
Misunderstanding, say cops; set to file closure report

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

MUMBAI POLICE is set to file a closure report into its probe against the archbishop and two bishops of the city in connection with a complaint filed by the family of a minor boy, alleging their failure to report a sexual offence.

The police have prepared a closure report calling it a "C Summary" case. This is filed in cases where it is found that the complaint is neither true nor false. The police have claimed the complaint resulted out of a misunderstanding and, therefore, they cannot proceed further.

In 2015, a 12-year-old boy was sexually assaulted twice by a priest at a Catholic church in the city. Following the second incident, the boy informed his parents.

In 2019, the boy's father approached the special court conducting the trial against the priest. His application said after the assault was revealed, they had informed the zonal bishop. It was alleged that they did not get a reply, following which they approached the archbishop. The family claimed that no action was taken by him to report the offence and hence, an offence under Section 19 of POCSO Act should be filed against him and the two bishops, who were also approached.

‘Bitcoin is as much a political movement as it is a technological one’

In this explained. Live session, researcher and advisor Tanvi Ratna, Founder & CEO, Policy 4.0, discussed the future of money, there being no one blanket identity for cryptocurrency and why banks are staying away from it



On cryptocurrency's journey from a decentralised tender to an asset class

Imagine Pranav and Aashish are living in different parts of India and Pranav has something that Aashish wants to buy and they don't know each other, they are strangers. So should Pranav send the money first or should Aashish send the goods first? That's essentially the trust deficit and to fill this trust deficit in all transactions we have intermediaries. Banks are essentially doing the same thing in financial transactions, you don't know if the other person is good for the money and if you enter into anything with them you need some kind of guarantor saying that this person is good for the money.

So when the Lehman Brothers went bust and all these different financial institutions started collapsing in so many parts of the world, it was a domino effect. This started from one intermediary, which sort of traded, bundled and traded out an asset which was not worth anything and because of the action of that intermediary a lot of the interconnected financial system went bust. Instead of actually checking that moral hazard problem, in the end they got bailed out with taxpayers' money.

So this is the premise of the whole thing, you need to understand this because bitcoin is as much a political movement as it is a technological movement... there is a mixture of all these dynamics of belief, philosophy and tech and new models, new systems, all of this that comes. That's the first generation of crypto, which was bitcoin. It's a system which was able to self-incentivise people, so this whole intermediary function is decentralised.

So it starts off as an alternative system of finance. It started off with just one use case, which was payment. Bitcoin, till date, only performs one use case. Of course now that they are looking at bitcoin-based DeFi, there will be other things. This other developer came along, some years later, and said, "Well, why can I only



(Clockwise from above) Tanvi Ratna in conversation with Pranav Mukul and Aashish Aryan, Principal Correspondents, *The Indian Express*



perfectly legal and there is no objection from the bank, but the banks still don't bank crypto. Even in Singapore and in places very progressive on crypto, it is quite a difficult task to get a bank account. That is simply because of the calculations of banks themselves. Banks are basically providing you financial services based on the kind of assets you have and there are people in the chat who get worried looking at the volatility of crypto, so what do you do with a customer who is only holding onto these assets? He might come to you with an asset value of some two million or something and maybe by the time you have issued him his bank account, that goes down by one-fourth or changes in a day or two days or in one cycle. So how do you manage operational risk in a scenario like that? It is very difficult. For those reasons, the banks are a bit worried and honestly if you see banks, crypto is really competing with banks.

On whether there is a global consensus on regulating crypto

To some degree there is already a global consensus on the KYC side, which is the final guidance of the FATF (Financial Action Task Force) that has been issued. It came out in 2019 and now every country will start ratifying it. So you will see that on the issue of terrorism finance, money laundering, there is already a standard that has come in. Now when it comes to the other aspects, it's very difficult to blanket set it, because there is no agency that has that kind of authority over anyone's economy. There is no agency that can mandate that you shouldn't have capital controls or you should have capital controls or your securities market needs to have this sort of a law or it shouldn't have that. There is no binding kind of institution like this.

On the role of the CBDCs

I think they are completely different things, so the CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency) only matters if there is a sovereign country and if it is issuing its own cryptocurrency. For day-to-day functions, I think the CBDC will probably be the more dominant tool. What crypto enables, the CBDC can't enable. But crypto might never have the legitimacy of a CBDC, so I feel they will sort of work on different tracks.

change the nature of crypto. We could call it anything, but crypto is everything and it has been from the start, all kinds of crates, whether it is a currency, or it is a commodity, or it's a security. I think there is really no blanket identity that can be given to crypto.

Just calling it one thing or the other doesn't solve the problem. What it is, is simultaneously all these things. It is simultaneously a currency and an equity in the network.

On what exactly is one investing in

When you buy a token, you essentially own a piece of the network. What that gives you depends on the design of the network. So sometimes when you own tokens, what a network gives you is it allows you to stake those tokens and you earn an interest on it. And then what everybody knows is that the price appreciates and you can earn things with the crypto that you have.

On why banks in India are hesitant to allow crypto transactions

It's actually not so much to do with the trust deficit, the issues of the banks are different. There are many countries where crypto is



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AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

On whether the government will be able to regulate financial problems

This is a common misconception. Crypto is not inscrutable, it is actually completely public ledger, the only thing that is not known on it is identity. There is already a field called blockchain forensics, which is quite advanced now. It's even in places that don't have Aadhaar, don't have KYC, don't have anything; they are able to identify these actors quite effectively because of basically two elements of clustering and identification.

On how the common man can benefit from cryptocurrency and its adverse impact on the environment

So bitcoin has a very energy intensive mechanism, which is called proof of work and the trade-off there is that it's seen as the most robust one also. It's the one that

is the most decentralised, nobody can capture it, it's the most rigorous, so people can't cheat. The bitcoin maximalists will tell you that it is less expensive than running a multi-layer financial system. For example, seven percent of US GDP goes into delivering financial services. That's a huge charge as well, that's a huge amount of money. Some people will say that's the cost we are bypassing with this proof of work chain. This was earlier the rationale. This is the proof of work consensus, it is energy intensive, it's computation intensive, and that's why there are all these environmental impacts of it. I think a couple of innovations are happening there in terms of the chips that will be used for mining, can this whole thing move to renewable energy. A lot of bitcoin mining actually happens on renewable energy.

do payments, why can't I add conditionality to these payments. Why can't I say that if these conditions are met, then a transaction executes. That's essentially what is called smart contracts. And that was ethereum, and that's why bitcoin

and ethereum are sort of like the grandfathers of this whole system. But they are bringing different levels of functionality into this money. Each coin is bringing something else.

So just calling it a commodity doesn't

TOPOF THE WORLD



A test launch of a hypersonic missile on Jan. 11 in N Korea. AP

NORTH KOREA
Fresh missiles fired in response to US sanctions

Seoul: North Korea on Friday fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles in its third weapons launch this month, officials in South Korea said, in an apparent reprisal for fresh sanctions imposed by the Biden administration for its continuing test launches. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missiles were fired 11 minutes apart from an inland area in western North Pyongan province, where North Korea is known to operate key missile bases and has frequently conducted test launches in recent years. The missiles flew 430km cross-country on a maximum altitude of 36 km, before landing in the sea, the military said. **AP**

INDONESIA
Strong quake shakes capital

Jakarta: A powerful earthquake shook parts of Indonesia's main island of Java on Friday, damaging buildings and houses and sending people into the streets, but there were no immediate reports of casualties. Officials said there was no danger of a tsunami. The US Geological Survey said the magnitude 6.6 quake was located in the Indian Ocean about 88 kilometers southwest of Labuan, a coastal town in Banten province. It was centered at a depth of 37 kilometers, it said. An official said there was no danger of a tsunami but warned of possible aftershocks. **AP**

UNITED STATES
RFK assassin to remain in prison

Sacramento: Sirhan Sirhan, who assassinated Presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy in 1968, was denied parole Thursday by California's governor, who said the killer remains a threat to the public and hasn't taken responsibility for a crime that altered American history. Kennedy, a US senator from New York, was shot moments after he claimed victory in California's pivotal Democratic presidential primary. Five others were wounded during the shooting at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. **AP**

Hospitals in many US states fill up as Omicron spreads

Acute scarcity in adult ICU's in Alabama, Missouri, others

THE NEW YORK TIMES
JANUARY 14

THE EXTREMELY contagious Omicron variant is fueling an enormous coronavirus wave that is pushing hospitals close to their capacity limits in about two dozen states, according to data posted by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

At least 80 per cent of staffed hospital beds were occupied in 24 states on Thursday, including Georgia, Maryland and Massachusetts, the figures show. More troubling, the data showed that in 18 states and Washington, DC., at least 85 per cent of beds in adult intensive care units were full, with the most acute scarcity of beds in Alabama, Missouri, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Texas.

The pressure on ICU capacity comes as the Omicron has touched off a nearly vertical rise in infections and hospitalisations. The country as a whole and 26 states have reported more Covid cases in the past week than in any other seven-day period.

In that time, an average of more than 803,000 coronavirus cases have been reported each day in the United States, an increase of 133 percent from two weeks ago, according to a *New York Times* database, and 25 states and territories have reported their highest weekly caseloads yet. Deaths are up 53 percent to an average of roughly 1,871 a day.

Since Thanksgiving, the White House has sent more than 350 military doctors, nurses, medics and other personnel to 24 states to help hospitals with staffing challenges, President Biden said this week, and plans to send an additional 1,000 service members to six hard-hit states. That is in addition to the more than 14,000 National Guard members deployed in 49 states to help staff hospitals and other medical facilities, he and other officials said.

Omicron shift in Europe: Pandemic or endemic?

MEGAN SPECIA
LONDON, JANUARY 14

IN BRITAIN, France, Spain and other countries across Europe, politicians and some public health experts are pushing a new approach to the coronavirus pandemic borne of both boldness and resignation: that the illness is becoming a fixture of daily life.

Governments are seizing a moment in which their populations have experienced less severe illness, and, in some instances, a drop in new daily cases after weeks of record growth. And they are moving their mitigation policies off emergency footing.

The shift comes even as the World Health Organization cautioned this week against treating the virus like the seasonal flu, saying it was too soon to make that call. Much about the disease remains unknown, the WHO said. And a surge in cases driven by the Omicron variant is still battering the continent, while the population of much of the world remains vulnerable because of a lack of widespread vaccination, and more variants are still likely to arise.



A testing site in Seoul on Thursday. AP

Supreme Court blocks Biden's virus mandate for large employers

ADAM LIPTAK
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 14

THE SUPREME COURT on Thursday blocked the Biden administration from enforcing a vaccine-or-testing mandate for large employers, dealing a blow to a key element of the White House's plan to address the pandemic as coronavirus cases resulting from the Omicron variant are on the rise.

But in a modest victory for President Biden, the court allowed a more limited mandate requiring healthcare workers at facilities receiving federal money to be vaccinated.

The vote in the employer mandate case was 6 to 3, with the liberal justices in dissent. The vote in the healthcare case was 5 to 4, with Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh joining the liberal justices to form a majority.

The employer decision undercut one of President Biden's most significant attempts to tame the

virus and left the country with a patchwork of state laws and policies, largely leaving companies and businesses on their own.

The President welcomed the ruling in his favour, saying in a statement that it would save the lives of healthcare workers and patients. But he said he was disappointed that the court had overturned the employer mandate, which he said was "grounded squarely in both science and the law."

The unsigned majority opinion in the employer case said a statute on workplace hazards did not justify a mandate that would have required more than 80 million workers to be vaccinated against the coronavirus or to wear masks and be tested weekly. It also stressed the novelty and sweep of the mandate issued by the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA, saying Congress had not authorised the agency to act and describing its response as "a blunt instrument." **NYT**

S African study finds Omicron less severe even for unvaccinated

Johannesburg: Unvaccinated people infected with the Omicron variant of coronavirus may be less prone to severe illness and requiring hospital care or dying than was the case with previous variants, a South African study showed on Friday.

The study, by the National Institute of Communicable Diseases in the Western Cape region, which has not yet been peer-reviewed, concluded, compared about 11,600 patients from the first three Covid-19 waves with about 5,100 from the Omicron-driven wave that began in November.

Omicron globally has tended to cause less severe disease, and proportionally fewer hospital admissions and deaths, than previous variants. Scientists are trying to determine the extent to which this is because of higher immunity rates engendered by vaccination or past illness, or Omicron is intrinsically less nasty.

The study concluded that about a quarter of the reduced risk of severe disease with Omicron was attributable to characteristics of the virus itself. **REUTERS**

After six-week surge, Africa's Omicron fourth pandemic wave flattens: WHO

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, JANUARY 14

AFRICA'S FOURTH pandemic wave, driven primarily by the Omicron variant, is flattening after a six-week surge, the WHO has said even as it stressed that the shortest-lived surge to date in the continent was "steep and brief but no less destabilising."

The new Omicron variant was first reported to the WHO from South Africa on November 24. The World Health Organisation on November 26 declared it as a variant of concern.

"Early indications suggest that Africa's fourth wave has been steep and brief but no less destabilising. The crucial pandemic countermeasure badly needed in Africa still stands, and that is rapidly and significantly increasing Covid vaccinations. The next wave might not be so forgiving," WHO Regional Director for Africa Dr. Matshidiso Moeti said.

In a statement on Thursday, the WHO said, "After a six-week surge, Africa's fourth pandemic wave-driven primarily by the Omicron variant is flattening, marking the shortest-lived surge to date in the continent where cumulative cases have now exceeded 10 million."

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus voiced concern that even though more than 9.4 billion vaccine doses have now been administered globally, 90 countries did not reach the target of vaccinating 40 per cent of their populations by the end of last year, and 36 of those countries have not yet vaccinated 10% of their populations. **PTI**

SWEDEN'S PM TESTS COVID POSITIVE

Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson of Sweden tested positive for the coronavirus on Friday, days after her government introduced new restrictions to curb a fourth wave of cases driven by the Omicron variant. A government press secretary, Darina Agha, said the PM was "feeling well considering the circumstances" and that she would continue her work while isolating at home. Several other Swedish officials have also tested positive for Covid since attending a parliamentary debate on Wednesday. **NYT**

HONG KONG BANS TRANSIT FLIGHTS

Hong Kong: Hong Kong International Airport said it will ban transit passengers from 150 countries and territories starting Sunday, tightening stringent travel controls in an effort to stem the spread of the highly contagious omicron variant. Authorities also said Friday they will extend social distancing restrictions, including a ban on dining in after 6 pm, by another two weeks over the Lunar New Year holidays to Feb. 3. Large-scale events, such as Lunar New Year fairs held annually in Hong Kong, will be canceled. **AP**

WEBDATE

SPIDER-MAN COMIC PAGE SELLS FOR RECORD PRICE

A single page of artwork from a 1984 Spider-Man comic book sold at auction for a record \$3.36 million. Mike Zeck's artwork for page 25 from Marvel Comics' "Secret Wars No. 8" brings the first appearance of Spidey's black suit. The symbiote suit would eventually lead to the emergence of the character Venom. The record bidding, which started at \$330,000 and soared past \$3 million, came on the first day of Heritage Auctions' four-day comic event in Dallas.



Russia prepping pretext for Ukraine invasion: US

Intelligence said the operatives were 'trained in urban warfare, using explosives,' and could try to stage an incident

DAVID E. SANGER
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 14

THE BIDEN administration accused Moscow on Friday of sending saboteurs into eastern Ukraine to stage an incident that could provide President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia with a pretext for ordering an invasion of parts or all of the country.

The White House did not release details of the evidence it had collected to back up its charge, though one official said it was a mix of intercepted communications and observations of the movements of people. In an email, a US official wrote that "Russia is laying the groundwork to have the option of fabricating a pretext for invasion, including through sabotage activities and information operations, by accusing Ukraine of preparing an imminent attack against Russian forces in eastern Ukraine."

The official, who described the intelligence on the condition of anonymity, added that in the assessment of US intelligence officials, "the Russian military plans to begin these activities several weeks before a military invasion, which could begin between mid-January and mid-February. We saw this playbook in 2014 with Crimea."

Russia annexed Ukraine that year. The release was part of a strategy to try to prevent the attacks by exposing them in advance. But without releasing the underlying intelligence — some of which has



Russian tanks taking part in drills at a firing range in the Rostov region, near the border with Ukraine, on Wednesday. AP

EXPLAINED
Throw of the dice

THE US allegation about a Russian false flag operation could be a strategy to prevent precisely such an occurrence. But the claim, which is not backed by evidence, will likely provoke Russian allegations of reckless Western brinkmanship based on flawed intelligence. The statement also indicates that the US has given up on talks with Russia and the possibility of a diplomatic breakthrough in Ukraine for now.

been provided to allies — the United States opens itself up to Russian charges that it is fabricating evidence. In past years, Russia

frequently recalled the deeply flawed intelligence case the United States built for invading Iraq, as part of an effort to discredit the CIA and other American intelligence agencies as political operatives.

The official said that the US had "information that indicates Russia has already pre-positioned a group of operatives to conduct a false-flag operation in eastern Ukraine," where Russian-backed forces have been fighting a grinding war of attrition with the Ukrainian government. The operatives "are trained in urban warfare and in using explosives to carry out acts of sabotage against Russia's own proxy forces."

The US accusation also embraced disinformation operations, charging that in the media "Russian influence actors are already starting to fabricate Ukrainian provocations in state and social media to justify a Russian intervention and sow divisions in Ukraine." **NYT**

Hackers bring down govt sites in Ukraine

Kyiv: Hackers brought down several Ukrainian government websites on Friday, posting a message on the site of the Foreign Ministry saying, "Be afraid and expect the worst." It was the latest in a long line of cyberattacks targeting the country amid its conflict with Russia.

The attack on Friday was ominous for its timing, coming a day

after the apparent breakdown of diplomatic talks between Russia and the West intended to forestall a threatened Russian invasion of Ukraine. The message appeared in Ukrainian, Russian and Polish on the foreign ministry website.

"As a result of a massive cyber attack, the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a number of other government

agencies are temporarily down," the ministry said in a statement.

The attack came within hours of the conclusion of talks this week between Russia and the United States and NATO in Europe that were intended to find a diplomatic resolution after Russia massed tens of thousands of troops near the border with Ukraine. **NYT**

China dismisses British accusation of political interference

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, JANUARY 14

CHINA ON Friday dismissed a warning from Britain's domestic intelligence service to lawmakers that a London-based lawyer is trying to "covertly interfere in UK politics" on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party as "irresponsible."

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China has "no need to and will never engage in the so-called interference," saying those behind the accusation "may be too obsessed with James Bond 007 movies and made some unnecessary associations."

House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle on Thursday sent legislators an alert from the MI5 spy agency alleging that the lawyer, Christine Lee, was acting in coordination with the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department, an organisation dedicated to exerting Chinese influence abroad.

MI5 said Lee had "facilitated" donations to British political parties and legislators "on behalf of foreign nationals." Members of Parliament are required to declare the source of donations they receive, which must be from UK-registered electors or entities.

Lee is not accused of a criminal offense. Lee's firm, Christine Lee & Co., states on its website that it has "developed strong affiliations between the UK and China" and has advised the Chinese Embassy in London on legal matters. It has offices in the UK and China and practices immigration, corporate and commercial law, according to the website. Lee's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In November the head of the MI6 overseas intelligence agency, Richard Moore, called China one of the biggest threats to Britain and its allies.

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Lee is not accused of a criminal offense. Lee's firm, Christine Lee & Co., states on its website that it has "developed strong affiliations between the UK and China" and has advised the Chinese Embassy in London on legal matters. It has offices in the UK and China and practices immigration, corporate and commercial law, according to the website. Lee's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In November the head of the MI6 overseas intelligence agency, Richard Moore, called China one of the biggest threats to Britain and its allies.

India grants over \$900 million aid to Sri Lanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, JANUARY 14

INDIA HAS announced a \$900 million loan to Sri Lanka to build up its depleted foreign reserves and for food imports, amid a shortage of almost all essential commodities in the country.

On Wednesday, the governor of the Central Bank Ajith Nivard Cabraal said the island nation is negotiating a \$1 billion loan from India to import goods. The Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Gopal Baglay met Cabraal on Thursday and "expressed India's strong support to Sri Lanka in the wake of RBI extending over \$900 million facilities over the last week".

Cabraal on Wednesday said that billion-dollar loan negotiations with India had reached its advanced stage. Commenting on India's gesture, analysts said the Indian assistance could have contributed to Sri Lanka's doubling of reserves announced at the end of December.

Myanmar's Suu Kyi hit by 5 new corruption charges

Bangkok: Myanmar's military-installed government has filed five new corruption charges against ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in connection with granting permits to rent and buy a helicopter, a legal official said on Friday. Suu Kyi, who has been detained since last February's military takeover, is already being tried on five other corruption charges. Each is punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine. She has also been charged with other offenses, and has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment after being convicted of illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies and violating coronavirus restrictions. Her supporters and rights groups say the cases against her were contrived by the military to



Aung San Suu Kyi. Reuters

justify its takeover and prevent her from returning to politics.

The government has rejected the criticism. "No one is above the law. I just want to say that she would be judged according to the law," government spokesperson Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun said when asked about the matter at a news conference Friday. **AP**

TEN YEARS AGO COSTA CONCORDIA RAN AGROUND OFF THE TUSCAN ISLAND OF GIGLIO, KILLING 32 PEOPLE

How wreck of a cruise liner changed an Italian island

GAIA PIANIGIANI
GIGLIO PORTO, JANUARY 14

THE CURVY granite rocks of the Tuscan island of Giglio lay bare in the winter sun, no longer hidden by the ominous, stricken cruise liner that ran aground in the turquoise waters of this marine sanctuary ten years ago.

Few of the 500-odd residents of the fishermen's village will ever forget the freezing night of Jan. 13, 2012, when the Costa Concordia shipwrecked, killing 32 people and upending life on the island for years.

"Every one of us here has a tragic memory from then," said

Mario Pellegrini, 59, who was deputy mayor in 2012 and was the first civilian to climb onto the cruiser after it struck the rocks near the lighthouses at the port entrance.

The hospitality of the tight-knit community of islanders kicked in, at first to give basic assistance to the 4,229 passengers and crew members who had to be evacuated from a tilting vessel as high as a skyscraper. In no time, Giglio residents hosted thousands of journalists, law enforcement officers and rescue experts who descended on the port. In the months to come, salvage teams set up camp in the picturesque harbor to work on



The port of Giglio on Thursday, the 10th anniversary of the Costa Concordia shipwreck, which killed 32 people. NYT

safely removing the ship, an operation that took more than two years to complete.

The people of Giglio felt like a family for those who spent long days at its port, waiting to receive

word of their loved ones whose bodies remained trapped on the ship. On Thursday, 10 years to the day of the tragedy, the victims' families, some passengers and Italian authorities attended a remembrance Mass and threw a crown of flowers onto the waters where the Costa Concordia had rested. At 9:45 p.m., the time when the ship ran aground, a candlelit procession illuminated the port's quay while church bells rang and ship sirens blared.

What stands out now for many is how the wreck forever changed the lives of some of those whose paths crossed as a result. Friendships were made, business relations took

shape and new families were even formed.

"It feels as if, since that tragic night, the lives of all the people involved were forever connected by an invisible thread," Luana Gervasi, the niece of one of the shipwreck victims, said at the Mass on Thursday, her voice breaking.

Francesco Dietrich, 48, from the eastern city of Ancona, arrived on the island in February 2013 to work with the wreck divers, "a dream job," he said, adding: "It was like offering someone who plays soccer for the parish team to join the Champions League with all the top teams in the business." **NYT**



Our soldiers stood tall and shielded us from the enemy

The Indian Army has been a formidable force, alongside the Indian Navy and the Air Force in battles for the country. Its valiant men have never fought shy of adversity and turned around intractable border situations to protect the country's integrity. Our soldiers' story has been about courage under fire, grace under pressure and determination under duress.

Many instances abound. But worth mentioning is the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, when the Army was able to capture three strategic mountain locations in Kashmir after waging sustained artillery barrages against Pakistan. By thwarting Pakistan's 1st Armoured Division's attack at the Battle of Asal Uttar on September 10 near Khemkaran, our men in uniform had their largest haul of Pakistani tanks. The Combat of Chawinda, the largest tank battle in history following World War II, was the biggest tank battle of the war. The loss of Pakistan at the Battle of Asal Uttar signalled the end.

Who can forget the 1971 Indo-Pak war when, led by Lt. General J. S. Arora, our forces reached Dhaka as part of the Indo-Bangladesh allied force on December 16, 1971, as the the Battle of Basant ended in the western theatre. In the shortest time, they forced Pakistani troops to surrender. And during the 1999 Kargil War, robust and well-thought Indian attacks resulted in the recapture of most of the peaks and the pushback of remaining Pakistani troops behind the Line of Control (LoC).

A look at some of the Army's key battles that left an indelible mark on the nation's history

Indo-Pak war of 1965

On August 5, 1965, over 26,000 Pakistani soldiers dressed as Kashmiris crossed the Cease Fire Line (CFL) at several sites on their way to J&K. Initially, they attempted to instil fear by raiding remote and vulnerable locations. The infiltrators were on the run as the Indian Army limbered up by bringing the 163 Infantry Brigade from Ladakh to the Valley. HQ SRI Force was constituted later, after additional men were inducted. Along with anti-infiltration operations, which began on the intervening night of August 14 and 15, 1965, actions along the CFL were undertaken to secure key places.

Pakistani army took Chhamb but our units at Akhnoor fought back. There was a break in the offensive at this point due to a leadership change. Major General Yahya Khan succeeded Major General Akhtar Malik as commander. The Indian Army was able to strengthen Akhnoor as a result of this.

On September 6, 1965, the Indian Army launched offensives in Pakistan's Punjab, the country's heartland, on two thrust lines. The assault on Lahore reached the city's outskirts, but the forces

were pulled back owing to "logistical problems." Another Indian push began the next day in the Sialkot region, with armour-infantry clashes at Phillaura and Chawinda.

In contrast to Pakistan, India had carried out all of its offensive activities in 1965 under the banner of Operation Ablaze. Both countries were required to withdraw their forces to the locations they had taken on August 5, 1965 under both UN Security Council resolutions.

The main advantage India had was that it possessed more infantry divisions, but many of them were new, post-1962 raises that had not yet settled in and were not entirely battle-ready. India won because of its superior training and leadership at the unit level, as well as its superior performance in the highlands, notably in night combat.

After a ceasefire was declared, the fighting came to an end. India won the conflict because Pakistan lost more territory than it gained and failed to capture Kashmir.



The third India-Pakistan war of 1971

Instead of waging a hastily mounted military campaign as in the past, the India-Pakistan conflict of 1971 saw the implementation of a planned strategy.

Although the conflict officially began on December 3, 1971, it was preceded by a series of border confrontations, some of which lasted days. East Pakistan had been ringed by the Indian Army and the Indian Navy had done the same in the Bay of Bengal. The IAF was also committed before the formal start of the war, and it gained air superiority in the east within a day.

The overarching military plan was a strategic offensive in

the east and a strategic defence in the west. Although China was not expected to pose a big threat, one justification for delaying until December was that mountain passages would be closed, allowing the army to leave a token force in the north to cope with any Chinese shenanigans.

The adversary had chosen a forward defensive perimeter posture, with minor forces in the inner sectors, therefore quick thrusts and bypassing main opposition nodes were the tactics used along the various thrust lines. East Pakistan had four divisions plus, and there was little likelihood of further forces joining in. The Indian Army deployed units from three different corps against them, as well as ad hoc forces to expand the number of push lines and keep the enemy engaged.

The Indian Army promised to protect the prisoners of war (PoWs) from the Mukti Bahini and the local community, who were plotting vengeance against the Pakistani military and its allies. Over 93,000 prisoners of war were taken into Indian captivity, making it the largest surrender in wartime history. A new nation, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was formed after two weeks of severe fighting.

India-Pakistan Kargil War of 1999

Between May and July 1999, the Kargil conflict was fought along

the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kargil region of J&K and the surrounding districts of Ladakh. Pakistani soldiers had sneaked into areas on the Indian side of the LoC, disguised as infiltrators. Discreetly, they began setting up outposts on 132 vantage points along the LoC. India seized control of the hills overlooking key transit routes to Srinagar after mobilising, and then began forcing the Pakistani forces back across the LoC.

The battles were fought in high-altitude highlands with jagged, near-vertical hill slopes posing tactical and logistical challenges. Our men showed great tactical depth and bravery while engaging in hand-to-hand combat in certain situations. It was also the first time two nuclear-armed countries fought a conventional war (both became nuclear states after 1971). The infiltration and battle took place across around 160-km stretch of mountains overlooking the only route between Srinagar and Leh. Military stations were normally around 5,000 metres (16,000 feet) high on the ridges above the highway, with a few as high as 5,485 metres (18,000 ft). The operations area was separated into two sectors: Kargil and Batalik.

Among other assaults, the Battle of Tololing gradually shifted the battle in India's favour. Winning back some of the posts, such as Tiger Hill, changed the course of the war.

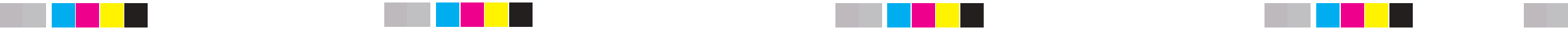


Saluting the undying spirit of valour and patriotism that build confidence in every Indian heart.



For over 74 years, the Indian army has set unprecedented examples of patriotism and valour, both on Indian and foreign soil. Today, the esteemed force not only stands tall as the world's fourth most-powerful military, but also as a role model for millions.

This Army Day, Wave Group salutes the unconquerable spirit of gallantry displayed by our glorious bravehearts who always put our country first.



BRIEFLY

UTTAR PRADESH
38-year-old woman found with throat slit

Meerut: A 38-year-old woman who went missing from her house in Saharanpur's Rasoolpur Khedi village since last evening was found dead with her throat slit on Friday morning. Her husband lodged an FIR with the Nagal police station, alleging the their neighbor - who had an affair with his wife - was behind the murder. Police said the locals found her body lying in a field. "We have recovered the body and have lodged the FIR given by her husband. The husband has held his neighbour responsible for the killing and had also alleged that his wife and the accused had illicit relations. We are investigating the case. No arrest has been made so far," said Deputy Superintendent of Police Durga Prasad Tiwari. The couple have five children. **ENS**

JAMMU & KASHMIR
Trilingual land pass books introduced

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday launched trilingual Land Pass Books, which contain the details of an individual's land records in Hindi, Urdu and English languages, to increase transparency and make record-keeping easier. Chief secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta launched the initiative in Jammu and said it was a historical step towards transparency and good governance. He complimented the revenue, IT and law departments for providing the facility. On Friday, the chief secretary handed over the Land Pass Books to residents of village Chak Lal Din of Tehsil Jammu West (Jammu district) and village Bagh-e-Mehtab of Tehsil Chanpora (Srinagar district). **ENS**

CALL OF FAITH



Pilgrims at the Gangasagar Mela at Sagar Island in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on Friday. Reuters



Devotees gather to take a 'holy dip' in the Ganga on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, in Prayagraj on Friday. PTI

Lakhs throng Gangasagar Mela, many violate Covid guidelines

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JANUARY 14

EVEN AS the state grapples with a surge in Covid-19 cases, pilgrims flouted safety guidelines as they visited the Gangasagar Mela in large numbers at Sagar Island in South 24 Parganas district on Friday. While many of them were spotted without masks, others were seen taking a dip in the Ganga without maintaining social distancing norms. Devotees had started thronging the Mela since Thursday. The district administration said that it is expecting a higher footfall on Saturday. The district administration plans to deploy 20 drones that will spray sanitiser mixed with water from the Ganga on the devotees while they are taking a dip. A senior official of the South 24 Parganas district administration said, "We have made arrangements to ensure that all Covid protocols are followed. We will also deploy drones that will spray a mix of sanitiser and holy water on the devotees. However, many devotees are taking a holy dip and are gathering without maintaining social distancing. We cannot prevent them not from taking a dip." As per the plan shared by officials, Covid-19 testing facilities have been set up at all entry points of Sagar Island. Visitors can avail medical facilities at buffer zones and first aid centres that have been set up between Outram Ghat in Kolkata and Sagar Island. Besides, centres have been set up at 13 locations, including bus and railway stations, to conduct rapid antigen tests and screen visitors. Four dedicated Covid hospitals with 500 beds have been selected to treat Covid patients. Apart from this, medical facilities with 1,910 beds are being set up between Outram Ghat and Sagar Island, besides five Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) isolation wards with 125 beds and four safe homes with 235 beds. Officials said that the administration has built seven quarantine centres with 435 beds to accommodate direct contacts of Covid-19 patients. There are six dedicated cremation grounds on the venue to ensure that patients are cremated safely. The health department has roped in 25 ambulances, apart from water ambulances and air ambulances for emergencies. The department has pressed 75 ambulances for service to treat non-Covid patients. According to the district administration, between Thursday and Friday, at least three patients had to be shifted to Kolkata for better treatment through air ambulance. Officials said they had also designed a software to track Covid-19 patients' health and the progress they are making while recovering. The state government's decision to organize the Gangasagar Mela this year has drawn flak from both doctors and opposition parties amidst the rapid surge in Covid-19 and Omicron cases in the state. With a positivity rate that has crossed the 30 per cent mark, West Bengal's tally of daily cases has been rising steadily. On Thursday, the state logged 23,467 new cases. The Calcutta High Court had earlier given its go ahead to the state government to organise the Mela. It also formed a two-member committee to monitor compliance with Covid-19 norms at the Mela. The committee will also be able to give necessary directions to the government and the instructions have to be implemented by the Chief Secretary of the state. While inaugurating the Mela on Wednesday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged all pilgrims to "strictly follow Covid-19 guidelines" while advising those showing symptoms not to visit the fair.

Devotees take Ganga dip in Prayagraj amid Covid threat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PRAYAGRAJ, JANUARY 14

TENS OF thousands of devotees took a holy dip in the Ganga here on the occasion of Makar Sankranti on Friday, braving severe cold amid the threat posed by the coronavirus. Devotees have been flocking to the Magh Mela area since morning and around 6.5 lakh people, including children and the elderly, had taken bath in the river by 6 pm, an official of the annual event said. Crowds of devotees were seen at ghats in Varanasi too. Prayagraj District Magistrate Sanjay Kumar Khatri, Mela Adhikari Sheshmani Pandey and Senior Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar visited the VIP Ghat, Sangam Nose, Arail Ghat and other major ghats. According to the mela administration, masks were distributed to 65,000 devotees in the area. Thermal screening of devotees was conducted at all 16 entrances and parking areas, a mela official said. Meanwhile, a fire broke out at a tent located in Arail area in Magh Mela. The fire, triggered by a leaking gas cylinder, was brought under control immediately, preventing any injury.

MAHARASHTRA

11 skulls, bones of foetuses found buried in hospital, say police

Doctor, two nurses from hospital in Wardha district had been arrested over alleged abortion on a 13-year-old girl

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

DAYS AFTER a doctor and two nurses from Kadam Hospital, in Arvi city of Wardha district, about 723 km from Mumbai, were arrested for allegedly carrying out an abortion on a 13-year-old girl, police said on Friday that 11 skulls and 54 bones, reportedly of foetuses, were found buried in the hospital premises. "We have sent the remains for post-mortem and forensic analysis to Nagpur forensic lab, and have requested for the reports as early as possible. We are investigating if more abortions were carried out at the hospital. As of now, we have information on one case only," said Bhanudas Pidurakar, Senior Police Inspector at Arvi police station. The family-run hospital — a maternity and nursing home set up in the 1990s — has four doctors, Kumar Singh Kadam, his wife Shailja Kadam, son Niraj Kadam and daughter-in-law Rekha Kadam, and 11 nursing staff. The hospital has been sealed. On January 10, Dr Rekha Kadam was arrested for allegedly carrying out an abortion on a 13-year-old girl. Two nurses, Pooja Dhat and Sangita Kale, were also arrested between January 12 and 13. The girl's mother had filed an



The hospital in Arvi city, 723 km from Mumbai, where the remains of foetuses were found. Express

FIR on January 9, alleging that her daughter was raped by a 17-year-old boy, and an abortion was carried out at the hospital on January 7, when she was five months pregnant. The girl has been shifted to another hospital, and is reported to be in a stable condition. "The 17-year-old boy has been sent to a juvenile home and his parents have been arrested for threatening the victim's mother. The hospital authorities, as per law, should have informed us when the victim was taken to the hospital for abortion. All the accused are in judicial custody," said Pidurakar. Dr Rekha Kadam is alleged to

have charged Rs 30,000 for the procedure. Police said the foetus was buried inside the hospital's premises, in a pit dug for a bio-gas plant. The nurses are alleged to have helped dispose the foetus. The other bones were recovered from the same pit. "Our probe is on. We conducted further searches at the hospital on Friday and will be questioning more people from the hospital to find evidence in the case," said Sunil Salunke, Deputy Superintendent of Police. The investigating officer, Sub-Inspector Jyotsna Giri, said they would record the statements of the rest of the Kadam family.

IMD commissions 4 new doppler radars, including one in Leh

India taken lead in Asia to provide weather, climate services: minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE INDIA Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday commissioned four doppler weather radars, including an X-band radar in Leh that is installed at the highest altitude anywhere in the country. The commissioning was announced at an event in Delhi on the occasion of 147th foundation day of IMD. The IMD joined hands with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in designing and indigenously manufacturing these radars. At the event, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh said India has taken a lead in Asia to provide weather and climate services to South Asian, Southeast Asian and West Asian countries. He said the Ministry of Earth Sciences will enhance deployment and use of drone-based observation technology for strengthening localised forecasting, besides adopting high-resolution models. Singh inaugurated four doppler weather radars at Leh, Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai for better research and operational analysis. IMD's radar network, with the additional four radars, is now 33. Delhi got its third doppler radar in the form of an X-band radar at Ayanagar. It has a radius of 100km around the NCR. Presently, radars are also operational at Palam and Mausam Bhavan. Mumbai got its second radar,

EXPLAINED

Why doppler radars are crucial

DOPPLER RADARS help forecasters observe rainfall, advance of cloud formations over a region and subsequently monitoring thunderstorms and lightning in real-time. The radar operations are particularly crucial during extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall, and data from these are used in predicting flash floods in local regions.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOCHI, JANUARY 14

KERALA POLICE Friday told the High Court that actor Dileep and five others, accused of threatening officers probing the sexual assault of an actress in 2017, will not be arrested till January 18, when his anticipatory bail plea would be heard again. Justice Gopinath P said the court needs to examine the statement of a movie director in the fresh case against the actor and five others, and will hear the matter on Tuesday. "I would like to see his (director Balachandra Kumar) statement and intend to grant protection till then," the court observed. However, an order was not issued in this regard as the prosecutor assured the court that the accused would not be arrested till Tuesday. Meanwhile, Dileep's lawyer brought up the raid conducted on the residence and office of the actor on Thursday to which the state government contended that it was based on a search warrant issued by a competent court. Kumar, who had recently made accusations against Dileep in the assault case, had also recorded his statement on the threat case before the Crime Branch wing recently. The Crime Branch, on January 9, registered the case on a complaint based on an audio clip released by a channel, in which Dileep was purportedly heard conspiring to attack the official.

'Paid money for BSP poll ticket, didn't get': man files complaint

Meerut: A man who says he is a Bahujan Samaj Party leader from Muzaffarnagar Thursday filed a complaint alleging that a senior party functionary duped him of Rs 67 lakh with the promise of fielding him in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election. In his complaint, Arshad Rana said he was acting as the in charge of the Charthawal seat on behalf of the party since he was promised a ticket two years back. Police declined to disclose

the name of the BSP leader accused by Rana. Rana's complaint came after the BSP named Salman Saeed, the son of the former state minister S Saiduzzaman, from Charthawal. BSP leader Satish Kumar Ravi said: "I want to make it clear that Arshad Rana was never associated with our party." Rana countered this by releasing a set of images purportedly showing him with some BSP leaders. **ENS**

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



PALLAVI
General Public is hereby informed that one girl **Name(s): Pallavi, D/o: Guddu, R/o: H.No. 95, Near Railway Fatak, Vill. Badali, Delhi, Age: 14 Years, Height: 4'5", Face: Round, Built: Thin, Hair: Black, Wearing: Navy Blue Colour Suit & Yellow Colour Pajami** has been missing/kidnapped since 06.11.2021 from the area of P.S. Alipur, Delhi. In this regard **FIR No. 895/21, Dated 08.11.2021**, has been registered at **P.S. Alipur, Delhi.**
SHO P.S. Alipur, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27202265

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
E-Tender No.: JHS-ENGG-E-2022-05, 06
Divisional Railway Manager (Works)
North Central Railway, Jhansi

E-Tendering Tender Notice					
Divisional Railway Manager (Works) North Central Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Special Limited Tender" through online (E-Tendering) for the following work.					
Description of work	E-Tender No.	Approx Cost	Earnest Money	Date of Closing Tender	Date of Completion /Period from issue acceptance letter
Maintenance and petty repair and operation of pump etc. to ensure water supply in Jhansi-Mahoba & Mahoba-Tikamgarh section in Railway colony & other service buildings under SSE/WKS/MBA in the Jurisdiction of ADEN/MBA for the period of 02 years.	JHS-ENGG-E-2022-05	12573190.56	212900/-	07.02.2022 at 15:00 hrs.	24 Months
Part "A" Provision of interlocking of LC gate (KID-BZM section LC No. 80) Part "B" Maintenance and petty repair and operation of pump etc. to ensure water supply in Mahoba Manikpur & Khairar-Bhimsen section in Railway colony & other service buildings under SSE / WKS / BND A in the Jurisdictions of ADEN / BND A for the period of two years.	JHS-ENGG-E-2022-06	14967534.39	224900/-	07.02.2022 at 15:00 hrs.	24 Months
Note:- (1) Tender online can be submitted upto 15:00 hrs. on 07.02.2022 (2) For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps.gov.in (3) 34/22 (P)					
North central railway www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in					

MP: 2 TRAIN COACHES DERAIL, NO INJURIES

Jabalpur: Two sleeper coaches of 02134 Jabalpur-Bandra Terminus train derailed on Friday while entering platform number 3 of Jabalpur station in Madhya Pradesh, leading to disruption in rail traffic for a few hours, an official said. No injuries were reported.

Coaches S3 and S4 derailed while entering the station and since it was coming from the yard, there were no passengers, but it led to disruption of the schedule of platforms 3, 4 and 5, said Jabalpur Divisional Commercial Manager Devesh Soni. **PTI**

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

Martyr on 15th January
On the occasion of 57th Raising Day, the CARNATIC family with a heavy heart and head held high, salute and pay our tributes to our valiant soldiers who laid down their lives true to our regimental motto "Swadharme Nidhanam Shreyaha".

Maj JS Pandian, SC

OP PAWAN (Sri Lanka) 1988
Nk Murugesan, Nk Haridasan B Nk KA Ramakrishna, L/Nk K Selvaraj, L/Nk G Marimuthu, L/Nk R Chidambaram, L/Nk T Muniappa, Sep Santhanam, Sep Selvaraju J, Sep Devendra Reddy, Sep Maruti Patil & Sep J Reddappa Reddy

OP RAKSHAK-III (J&K) 1996
Maj JS Pandian, SC, Nk Vinayan, SM, Sep Francis Suresh Kumar, SM, Sep Ramakrishna Pillai & Sep S Dasarathan

OP VIJAY(J&K) 1999
Sub C Mohan Rao & Sep Sekhar

OP RAKSHAK-III (J&K) 2000
Nk Saveena, Sep Natarajan, Sep Babu Sanikoppa, Sep S Narasimhulu, Sep Hema Chandu, Sep Simhachalam K & Sep Jenish TS

OP RAKSHAK-III (J&K) 2004
Nk K Mani, Sep Balarami Reddy & Sep Ajith

OP MEGHDOOT(Siachen)2016
Sub Nagesha TT, Hav Elumalai M, SM,L/Hav S Kumar, L/Nk Sudheesh B,L/Nk Mahesha PN, L/Nk Hanamanthappa Koppad, SM, Sep Ganesan G, Sep Rama Moorthy, SM, Sep S Mustaq Ahmed & Sep V Santhosh Kumar
Their act of valour & sacrifice will always be the guiding light for the CARNATIC family & will inspire rank & file to keep the 'CARNATIC' flag flying high in the years to come.

Colonel Mohver Singh Grewal, SM& all Ranks 19 MADRAS (CARNATIC)

AKKALKOT MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, AKKALKOT

e-Tender Notice No. 25 for 2021-2022 (Vaishishatapurna Yojna)
No.2022/ANP/Works/11/Desk-I/R/R/Kavi/45 Dated 11/01/2022
Sealed online e-Tenders for the Different Development Works are invited by the Chief Officer Municipal Council Akkalkot from contractors Registered with Government of Maharashtra public works department in appropriate class. Details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Maharashtra e-Tendering portal <https://mahatenders.gov.in> from Dated 12/01/2022 to 09/02/2022 at 4.00 PM. The last date of Tender Submission is 09/02/2022 at 4.00 PM. The prebid meeting will conducted on Dt. 02/02/2022 at 3.00 PM in the Office of Municipal Council Akkalkot. Received tenders will be opened on Date 10/02/2022 at 4.00 PM, if possible in the presence of available contractor or their representative. Sd/- **SACHIN PATIL, Chief Officer Municipal Council, AKKALKOT**

भारतीय कंटेनर निगम लिमिटेड
Container Corporation of India Ltd.
(Central Government of India Undertaking)
NSIC New Kirti Building, 2nd Floor, Old India Estate (Opp. NSIC Old Main Station), New Delhi-110020

Tender Notice (E-Tendering Mode Only)

Online E-Bids are invited for HANDLING OF CONTAINERS & CARGO AND INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION at MMLP BALLI. Go for through e-tendering mode.	
Tender No.	CON/Area-II/BALLI/HTO1/2022
Name of Work	HANDLING OF CONTAINERS & CARGO AND INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION at MMLP-BALLI
Estimated Cost	Rs. 12,77,11,400/- (Inclusive of GST)
Period of the contract	Five (4+1) years
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 5 Lakhs through e-payment
Cost of Document	Rs. 1,000/- inclusive of all taxes and duties through e-payment
Tender Processing Fee	Rs. 4,720/- inclusive of all taxes and duties (Non-refundable) through e-payment.
Date of Sale (On Line)	From 15/01/2022 at 15:00 hrs. to 31/01/2022 (upto 14:00 hrs.)
Last Date & Time of submission	On 31/01/2022 upto 17:00 hrs.
Date & Time of Opening	On 02/02/2022 at 15:00 Hrs.

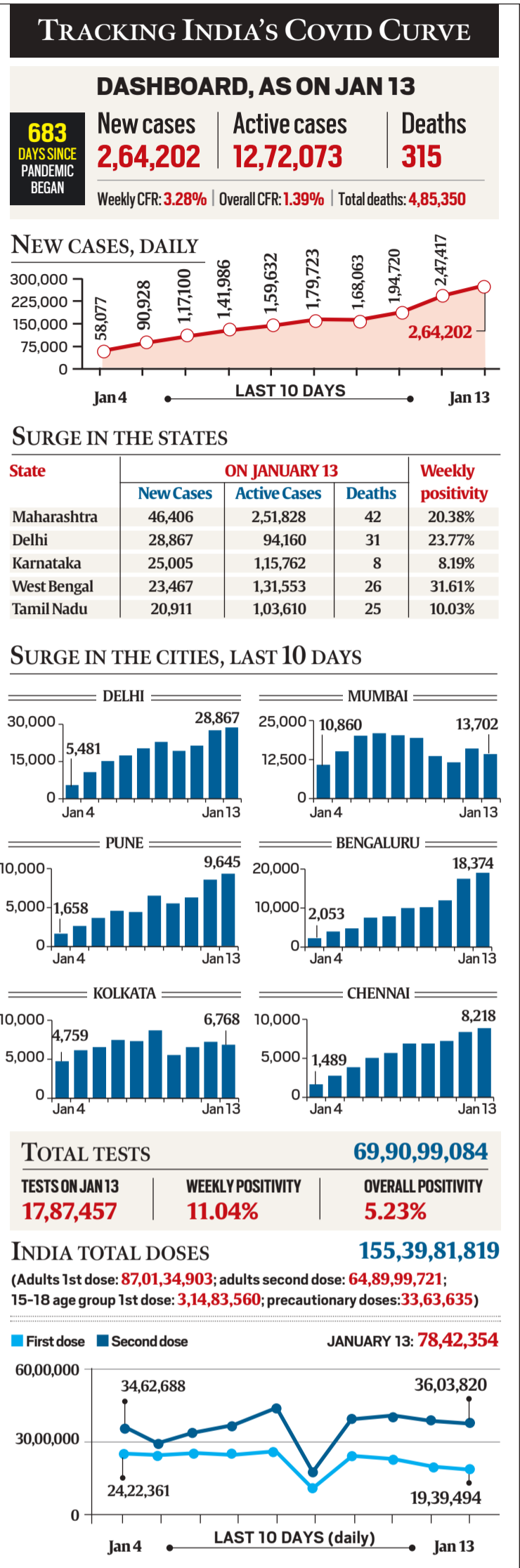
For eligibility criteria and other details please log onto www.concorindia.com or eprocure.gov.in or www.tenderwizard.com/CCL. Bidders are requested to visit the websites regularly. CONCOR reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. For complete details login to www.tenderwizard.com/CCL.

Executive Director /Area-2



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



SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

The suspension of MLAs

12 BJP MLAs from Maharashtra have gone to Supreme Court against their year-long suspension from the Assembly. The SC has flagged the statutory requirement to not keep a seat vacant for more than 6 months

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

THE SUPREME Court has observed that the suspension of 12 BJP MLAs from the Maharashtra Assembly for a full year is prima facie unconstitutional, and “worse than expulsion”. A “constitutional void” and a “hiatus situation” has been created in these constituencies, and the “consequences are dreadful”, the court said on Tuesday.

What was the plea before the court?

On July 5, 2021, soon after the Assembly met for its two-day monsoon session, there was commotion as Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis (BJP) objected to an attempt by state minister Chhagan Bhujbal (NCP) to table a resolution demanding that the Centre release data on Other Backward Classes (OBCs), so that seats could be reserved for them in local bodies in Maharashtra.

Several BJP MLAs entered the well in protest, snatched the mace, and uprooted mics. Shiv Sena MLA Bhaskar Jadhav, who was in the chair, adjourned the House for 10 minutes, following which some BJP MLAs allegedly entered his chamber and threatened, abused, and misbehaved with him.

The Maharashtra House has not had a Speaker since Nana Patole of the Congress resigned in February 2021, and Jadhav was one of four presiding officers named by Acting Speaker Narhari Zirwal the previous day. The data on the population of OBCs is a political hot button, and the Centre has told the Supreme Court that data on OBCs collected during the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 is erroneous and unusable.

Maharashtra Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anil Parab subsequently moved a resolution to suspend 12 BJP MLAs — Sanjay Kute, Ashish Shelar, Abhimanyu Pawar, Girish Mahajan, Atul Bhatkhalkar, Parag Alavani, Harish Pimpale, Yogesh Sagar, Jaikumar Rawal, Narayan Kuche, Ram Satpute and Bunty Bhangdia — for a year.

The MLAs filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court last year against the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and the State of Maharashtra and asked for the suspension to be quashed.

The matter has been posted for further hearing on January 18.

What have the suspended MLAs argued?

The petition has submitted that their sus-



BJP MLAs hold a “counter Assembly” to protest the suspensions on the premises of the Maharashtra legislature in July 2021. *File*

pension is “grossly arbitrary and disproportionate”. The challenge relies mainly on grounds of denial of the principles of natural justice, and violation of laid-down procedure.

The 12 MLAs have said they were not given an opportunity to present their case, and that the suspension violated their fundamental right to equality before law under Article 14 of the Constitution. They have also submitted that they were not given access to video of the proceedings of the House, and it was not clear how they had been identified in the large crowd that had gathered in the chamber.

The MLAs have contended that under Rule 53 of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Rules, the power to suspend can only be exercised by the Speaker, and it cannot be put to vote in a resolution as was done in this case.

Rule 53 states that the “Speaker may direct any member who refuses to obey his decision, or whose conduct is, in his opinion, grossly disorderly, to withdraw immediately from the Assembly”. The member must “absent himself during the remainder of the day’s meeting”. Should any member be ordered to withdraw for a second time in the same session, the Speaker may direct the member to absent himself “for any period not longer than the remainder of the Session”.

What has Maharashtra said in its defence?

A counter-affidavit filed by the in-charge secretary of the state’s Parliamentary Affairs Department has pointed to the “undisciplined and unbecoming behaviour” of the 12 MLAs, and the fact that the Leader of Opposition had

tendered an apology. There was, therefore, no question of hearing or furnishing of written explanations by the MLAs, who had committed contempt of the House, the affidavit says. It denies any violation of Article 14.

Counsel for Maharashtra argued that the House had acted within its legislative competence, and that under Article 212, courts do not have jurisdiction to inquire into the proceedings of the legislature.

Article 212 (1) states that “The validity of any proceedings in the Legislature of a State shall not be called in question on the ground of any alleged irregularity of procedure”.

The next subsection says “no officer or member of the Legislature...in whom powers are vested by or under this Constitution for regulating procedure or the conduct of business, or for maintaining order, in the Legislature shall be subject to the jurisdiction of any court in respect of the exercise by him of those powers”.

The state has also referred to Article 194 on the powers and privileges of the House, and argued that any member who transgresses these privileges can be suspended through the inherent powers of the House.

It has denied that the power to suspend a member can be exercised only through Rule 53 of the Assembly.

What about the length of the suspension?

This is the point that the bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and CT Ravikumar took up during the hearing on Tuesday. The basic structure of the Constitution would be hit if the constituencies of the sus-

pended MLAs remained unrepresented in the Assembly for a full year, the bench said.

The bench referred to Article 190 (4) of the Constitution, which says, “If for a period of sixty days a member of a House of the Legislature of a State is without permission of the House absent from all meetings thereof, the House may declare his seat vacant”.

Under Section 151 (A) of The Representation of the People Act, 1951, “a bye-election for filling any vacancy... [in the House] shall be held within a period of six months from the date of the occurrence of the vacancy”. This means that barring exceptions specified under this section, no constituency can remain without a representative for more than six months.

The Supreme Court said that the one-year suspension was prima facie unconstitutional as it went beyond the six-month limit, and amounted to “not punishing the member but punishing the constituency as a whole”.

What are the rules on the length of suspension of a Member of Parliament?

Rules 373, 374, and 374A of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha provide for the withdrawal of a member whose conduct is “grossly disorderly”, and suspension of one who abuses the rules of the House or willfully obstructs its business.

The maximum suspension as per these Rules is “for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less”.

The maximum suspension for Rajya Sabha under Rules 255 and 256 also does not exceed the remainder of the session. Several recent suspensions of members have not continued beyond the session.

Similar rules also are in place for state Legislative Assemblies and Councils which prescribe a maximum suspension not exceeding the remainder of the session.

On the first day of Parliament’s winter session last month, 12 Rajya Sabha members were suspended for the remainder of the session for alleged unruly conduct on the last day of the monsoon session on a motion moved by the government. The Opposition argue that action in regard to an incident from the previous session violated the Rules of Procedure.

The Supreme Court is expected to rule on the question of whether the judiciary can intervene in the proceedings of the House. Constitutional experts, however, say that the court has clarified in previous rulings that the judiciary can intervene in case of an unconstitutional act done by the House.

Common entrance test and concerns at JNU

ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

ON WEDNESDAY, the Academic Council of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) decided to adopt the Central Universities Common Entrance Test (CUCET) from the 2022-23 session. The final approval lies with the Executive Council, but the decision is as good as final. The move has been opposed by the JNU Teachers’ Association and the JNU Students’ Union.

The current process

Since 2019, the National Testing Agency (NTA) has been conducting online entrances for all courses in a Computer Based Test format (before that, JNU used to conduct its own entrance). For research programmes, those who clear the NTA-conducted entrance are interviewed by the university itself.

One of the most distinct features of JNU’s admission policy is the concept of ‘Deprivation Points’: Disadvantaged students are given cer-

tain additional points making their admission easier. These points are granted to women and transgender students, as well as those coming from backward districts. There is no clarity as of now on whether the deprivation points will be affected with the adoption of CUCET.

Why the change

The newly implemented National Education Policy advocates the need for a common entrance across. A seven-member committee set up by the UGC had submitted a report recommending a plan to implement CUCET from 2021-22 itself, but the pandemic led to the plan being shelved then.

On November 22 last year, UGC officials met with Vice-Chancellors of 45 central universities; on November 26, a letter was sent to them stating that “after detailed deliberations, it was resolved that the Common Entrance Test for UG and PG may be conducted for Central Universities from the academic session 2022-23 through National Testing Agency (NTA)”.

JNU, Director of Admissions Jayant Tripathi

said the proposal to adopt CUCET was “overwhelmingly endorsed” at the Academic Council meeting. However, the JNU Teachers’ Association (JNUTA) alleged the discussion was “selectively orchestrated”.

Teachers’ concerns

The JNUTA claimed that the VC had said the decision on the matter had already been taken in the 157th meeting of the AC. “A perusal of the minutes... shows that this was not even listed on the agenda of that meeting... In fact, members of the Academic Council have reported that there was no discussion on CUCET during the 157th AC meeting,” the JNUTA said.

Another ground for opposition stems from apprehensions over what it could mean for teachers. Former JNUTA president Ayesha Kidwai said JNU offered many unique interdisciplinary courses which could be under threat.

“How does the JNU administration conceive that these will be covered by any common entrance test? For example, how many CUs offer an MA course in Computation and

Integrative Sciences? Or In Arts and Aesthetics?... So a CUCET for these MA programmes cannot be common with other universities,” she said.

Response to concerns

While the university has not responded to the apprehensions, Director of Admissions Tripathi said these were either ill-founded or premature. “At this stage we have only adopted the CUCET. We have only decided that we will hold entrance exams next year as per this; there have no further deliberations on what the format will be or further modalities. So any apprehensions should wait till then,” he said.

Tripathi brushed aside allegations of procedural impropriety during the AC meeting and said everything was followed as per rules. “There was proper discussion on the matter this time, as well as last,” he said. On worries about unique and interdisciplinary courses being affected, Tripathi said, “I’m sure there will be further deliberations and discussions and they (UGC) will take all this into account.”

March for Mekedatu reservoir halted: the project, legal issues & politics

KIRAN PARASHAR
BENGALURU, JANUARY 14

A MARCH started on January 9 by the Congress, which was meant to cover 100 km in 10 days, was halted on Thursday, a day after the Karnataka High Court had raised questions on how it could be carried out amid rising Covid-19 cases in the state.

The ‘Mekedatu march’ had been launched for implementation of a project to build a reservoir on the Cauvery near Mekedatu near the Tamil Nadu border. The proposed reservoir, which aims to supply drinking water to Bengaluru and surrounding regions, has been challenged in the Supreme Court by Tamil Nadu on the ground that it would eat into the state’s share of Cauvery water as adjudicated by the court in 2018.

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, which had labelled the march the ‘Walk for Water’, has temporarily suspended it citing rising Covid-19 cases, and saying it would resume when the crisis subsided.

The project

Proposed by Karnataka, the project envisages a reservoir near Ontigondlu, about 1.5 km from Mekedatu (which literally means goat’s leap) in Ramanagara district of south Karnataka at the confluence of the Cauvery and Arkavathi rivers. It is 4 km from the Tamil Nadu border and 100 km from Bengaluru.

In 2013, the Congress government in Karnataka headed by Siddaramaiah prepared a feasibility report for the reservoir project with a storage capacity of 67.16 thousand million cubic feet (TMCF) of water that would aim to supply 4.75 TMCF to Bengaluru and its surrounding areas, besides generating 400 megawatts of hydro-electric power. The project was estimated to cost Rs 5,000 crore at the time. It was proposed to be built across an area of 5,252 hectares, including 1,869 hectares of reserve forest land.

The project will need multiple clearances from the Centre and courts as it involves the Cauvery water sharing dispute.

Current status

In January 2019, the then Congress-JD(S)



Siddaramaiah, D K Shivakumar and other Congress leaders during the march near Bengaluru on Tuesday. *PTI*

state government headed by H D Kumaraswamy submitted a detailed project report to the Central Water Commission and the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA). The report is yet to be approved.

The project also needs environmental



clearances since large portions of forest land will be submerged if the reservoir is built. Environmentalists have raised concerns about this and about an elephant corridor that would be covered by the proposed reservoir.

The project can only be executed with

the consent of Tamil Nadu, which has already challenged it.

The politics

With a year to go for the Assembly elections, the protest by the state Congress is being seen as an effort to attract voters in south Karnataka through the emotive issue. The Congress is hoping to displace the JD(S) as the most influential party in the Vokkaliga heartland. These are the two main rivals in this region, where 80 of the state’s 224 seats are at stake. The ruling BJP has a very small presence here.

The Mekedatu march or ‘Walk for Water’ is the brainchild of KPCC president D K Shivakumar who is seen as aspiring to become Chief Minister. The 10-day march sought to build a narrative that the BJP governments, both in the state and at the Centre, are not in a position to implement the project.

To prevent the Congress from seizing the narrative, the JD(S) has announced its own programme to collect water from 15 rivers from January 26 to hold a Ganga puja. Kumaraswamy has said the Congress only

proposed the Mekedatu project but it was the JD(S) that prepared the detailed project report.

Halt to the march

On Wednesday, the Karnataka High Court questioned the BJP government in the state as well as the Congress on how the march could be carried out when the government has imposed curbs on all gatherings due to the recent rise in Covid cases.

The BJP has alleged that the protest march is a primary cause for the rise in Covid numbers.

Congress leaders Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah, following consultations with other party leaders, announced on Thursday that the protest would be suspended temporarily. The state leaders had reportedly received a signal from the party central leadership to call off the march as it could damage the party outside of Karnataka.

The 10-day march was supposed to traverse over 100 km and culminate in a massive rally in Bengaluru on January 19. When halted, it had traversed around 30 km over four days.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/ CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE TIME	AMOUNT/ EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HARYANA TOURISM CORPORATION LIMITED	DESIGN, ENGINEERING, SUPPLY, STORAGE, CIVIL WORK, ERECTION OF SUITABLE STRUCTURE, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF ROOF TOP SOLAR PV PROJECT 2 NOS. OF 150 KW EACH AT MANSA DEVI & NADA GHRIH	13.01.2022 24.01.2022	EMD 2.63 LACS	haryanabourism.gov.in	9996107464 ee2009nrc@gmail.com
2	HARYANA TOURISM CORPORATION LIMITED	RENOVATION, REPAIR & MAINTENANCE WORK AT RED BISHOP TOURIST COMPLEX, PANCHKULA	14.01.2022 19.01.2022	EMD 30500/-	haryanabourism.gov.in	9996107464 ee2009nrc@gmail.com
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in						

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/ CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE TIME	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	MAHARISHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY ROHTAK	TENDER FOR EQUIPMENT OF CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT	14.01.2022 05.02.2022	11.65 LACS	www.mdu.ac.in	9896091443 hod.chem@mdurohtak.ac.in
2.	MAHARISHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY ROHTAK	CONSTRUCTION OF SECOND FLOOR OF EXISTING ACADEMIC BLOCK BUILDING (CIVIL, PH. AND E.I.) MDU-CPAS, GURUGRAM.	12.01.2022 02.02.2022	370 LACS	https://mdurohtak.etenders.hry.nic.in	9991366698 xen.civil@mdurohtak.ac.in
3.	MAHARISHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY ROHTAK	ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR 04 NOS. 'KONE' LIFTS INSTALLED AT MDU ROHTAK (02 NOS. LIFTS OF 13 PASSENGERS INSTALLED IN PARKISHA SADAN AND 02 NOS. LIFTS OF 16 PASSENGERS INSTALLED IN UNIVERSITY SECRETARIAT).	13.01.2022 02.02.2022	4.38 LACS	https://mdurohtak.etenders.hry.nic.in	9991366698 xen.civil@mdurohtak.ac.in
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in						

NORTHERN RAILWAY							
Tender Notice							
Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Northern Railway, Moradabad for & on behalf of the President of India, invites sealed applications:-							
SN	Application of appointment of JANSADHARAN TICKET BOOKING SEWAK at Railway Stations of Moradabad Division are invited. Name of stations & No. of JTBS is as under- Applicable of other Area.	Completion period	Cost of Application Form	EMD	Address of the office from where the Application form can be purchased	Date & time for submission of the Application & opening of Application	Website Detailed Terms and Conditions location and JTBA form where complete distribution of JTBS can be seen etc.
1.	Baerilly-15, Haridwar-14, Dehradun-9, Moradabad-14, Hapur-14, Shahjampur-12, Hardoi-9, Chandauli-10, Roorkee-9, Rampur-18, Rishikesh-5, Najibabad-5, Laksar-5, Amroha-9, Raiwala-2, pilkhuwa-3, Balamau-1, Sandila-2, Gajraula-4, Dhampur-2, Chandpursiau-2, Jwalapur-1, Sitapur City-1, Ptlamberpur-2, Raja Kasahaspur-2, Tilhar-2, Kotdwara-5, Bulandshahr-2, Babrala-2, Bijnor-3, Nagina-2, Garhmudtesar-2, Seohara-2, Roza-2, Kanth-2, Haldaur-2, Motichur-2, Muazzampur Narain-2, Katghar-2, Madhogani-2, Bangarnau-2, Khurja city-2, Mandhiana-2, Daffra-2, Anjhisshahabad-2, RajgahatNarora-2, Asafpur-2, BishartGang-2, Mallawan-2, Autrolroad-2, Dibai-2, Hakimpur-2, NM-2	3 Years	Rs.295/- per application form for each station	2000/- Rs.	Commercial Branch of the office of Divisional Railway Manager, Northern Railway, Moradabad	Submission of FORMS for station upto 14.00 hrs, which will 10.02.2022 open on same day at 15:00 hrs	www.n.r.indianrailways.gov.in Notice board is located in the Commercial Branch of the office of the Divisional Railway Manager, Northern Railway, Moradabad
Notice No. 1/JTBS/Policy/2006-Pl-2 Dated : 13.01.2022							
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89/2022							



कार्यालय मुख्य वन संरक्षक एवं क्षेत्र संचालक, पेंच टाइगर रिजर्व, सिवनी (म.प्र.)

ई टेंडर क्रमांक/ स्टोर/ 146

सिवनी/दिनांक 10/01/22

संक्षिप्त निविदा विज्ञापित

पेंच टाइगर रिजर्व, सिवनी (म.प्र.) के अंतर्गत 10 सीटर मोटर बोट (इंजन सहित) अनुमानित 10.00 लाख रुपये की सामग्री क्रय हेतु विभिन्न फर्मों से ई-टेंडरिंग पद्धति के अंतर्गत ऑनलाईन निविदा www.mptender.gov.in पर Key data and time अनुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है। समस्त शर्तें एवं अन्य जानकारी स्टोर शाखा से कार्यालयीन समय में अथवा सर्वेपेटल www.mptender.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है।

क्र.	सामग्री का विवरण अनुमानित	अनुमानित मात्रा
1	मोटर बोट 10 सीटर (इंजन सहित) Patrolling Motor Boat with 10 Seater, 40 HP Petrol Engine Remote steering canopy, custom trailer, water cannon for crowd control.	01 नग

टीप-उपरोक्त सामग्री की मात्रा किसी भी सीमा तक कम या अधिक हो सकती है।

Purchase of Tender Start Date & Time	14.01.2022 TIME 10.30 AM
निविदा क्रय की तिथि	
Purchase of Tender End Date & Time	19.01.2022 TIME 17.30 PM
निविदा क्रय की अंतिम तिथि	
Bid Submission closing Date & time	24.01.2022 TIME 17.30
निविदा प्रस्तुत करने की तिथि	
Bid Opening Date	31.01.2022 TIME 17.00 PM.
निविदा खोलने का दिनांक	

कोरोना से बचने की तीन बातें बहुत जरूरी

टीका लगवाना, मास्क पहनना और अपना दो गज दूरी

G21383/21

हस्ता/-

उप संचालक

पेंच टाइगर रिजर्व

सिवनी (म.प्र.)

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड कोण्डगांव, जिला-कोण्डगांव (छ.ग.) (E-mail Address: eecon-phe-cg@gov.in)			
ई-प्रोक्यूरमेंट निविदा सूचना			
छत्तीसगढ़ के राज्यपाल की ओर से जिला कोण्डगांव में एकीकृत पंचायत प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑनलाईन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:- कार्य का नाम:- जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत विभिन्न ग्रामों में ट्रेटोफिटिंग/एक्ल ग्राम नल जल प्रदाय योजना का कार्य।			
निविदा क्रमांक	निविदा विवरण	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत (रु.लाख में)
153 / 04.01.2022	90221	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम गुणगुनगढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	127.11
154 / 04.01.2022	90224	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम बरिवागढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	228.09
155 / 04.01.2022	90226	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम बरिवागढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	116.90
156 / 04.01.2022	90228	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम पौलगांव में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	203.46
157 / 04.01.2022	90229	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम कलेवर में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	250.76
158 / 04.01.2022	90233	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम विरवा में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	153.27
159 / 04.01.2022	90235	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम बरिवागढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	71.88
160 / 04.01.2022	90236	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम बरिवागढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	62.08
161 / 04.01.2022	90239	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम बरिवागढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	229.49
162 / 04.01.2022	90231	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम गुणगुनगढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	78.03
163 / 04.01.2022	90232	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम बरिवागढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	139.02
164 / 04.01.2022	90234	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम गरी में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	59.98
165 / 04.01.2022	90236	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम विरवा में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	177.44
166 / 04.01.2022	90237	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम बरिवागढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	93.75
167 / 04.01.2022	90238	जल जीवन मिशन अंतर्गत ग्राम बरिवागढ़ में ट्रेटोफिटिंग कार्य	30.79
निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापित, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी कार्यालयीन अवधि में कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है, साथ ही सह जानकारी ई-प्रोक्यूरमेंट वेब पोर्टल http://eeprocurement.gov.in पर तथा विभागीय वेबसाइट http://phecprocurement.gov.in से दिनांक 20.01.2022 तक डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।			
हस्ता/- कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड कोण्डगांव (छ.ग.)			
66785			

Expression of Interest (Eoi) for ToT of

DRDO developed

“Granules for Bio-Degradable Bags”

Polythene bags/ bottles have become persistent threats to environment. The pollution caused by all pervasive polythene based packing material is having inadvertent impact on nature. Plastics and polyethylene takes about 200-300 years to decompose on its own. The efforts to recycle plastic by collection and segregation are tedious and costly. Keeping in view of ill effects of pervasive usage of plastics and polyethylene bags, various options are being researched to replace these hazardous materials.

In such efforts, DRDO scientists have developed **Granules for bio-degradable bags** to replace single use polyethylene bags. The single use bags is based on a formulation developed using PBAT starch and food graded additives. The salient features of the Technology/ product are:-

- A alternate to conventional single use plastic.
- Eco friendly, Bio-degradable and Home compostable.
- No harm to animals/ aquatic life by disposal/ consumption.
- Bio-degradable within 60 days.
- Home compostable in 90 days.
- Fully tested and certified.
- Printable in multiple colors based on user requirement.
- Cost effective.

DRDO is willing to transfer the technology to industries for mass production to the benefit of society and mankind. 'Nil' ToT Fee to be paid by industry to DRDO for entering into Licensing Agreement for Transfer of Technology (LATOT).

Interested Industries may apply for ToT by submitting Eoi **by email only before 30th June 2022**. The detailed information to apply for ToT can be downloaded from **DRDO website (<https://www.drdo.gov.in/transfer-technologies>)** under **Category B Technologies (Dual Use / Commercial Technologies)**.

-Sd/-
Director, DIITM
DRDO Hqrs

davp 10301/11/0140/2122


KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD. (A Government of India Undertaking)	
Head Office, Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link Project, Satyam Complex, Marble Market, Greater Kailash, P.O. Sainik Colony, Jammu -180011, Jammu & Kashmir, Tel: +91 - 191 - 2484778	
OPEN e-TENDER	
Tender Notice No.: KR-PD-JK-AV-01-2022 dtd. 13/01/2022	
Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd. invites "Open e-Tender" in "Single Packet System" from experienced agencies for "Engagement of Professional Agency for Monitoring Progress from Km 25,000 to Km 72,935 & Km 91,200 to Km 101,635 by Aerial Videography in Connection with the Construction of Katra-Dharam Section of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link Project, Jammu & Kashmir." Approx. Cost of the Work: ₹11.11 Lakhs. Earnest Money: ₹22,200/- to be submitted through online payment modes available on IREPS portal only. Completion Period of Contract: 12 Months. Submission of Tender: 14/02/2022 upto 15.00 hrs. Opening of Tender: 14/02/2022 @ 15.30 hrs. Cost of Tender Form: Nil. For further details and updates please visit https://www.ireps.gov.in Amendments / Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted on the above website only.	

Government Of Meghalaya	
MEGHALAYA INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT & FINANCE CORPORATION	
Corrigendum Notice	
With reference to the Previous Advertisement No: MIDFC/MITP-PMC/15/2021-22-137, Dated: 7/12/2021 for the engagement of a "Project Management Consultancy (PMC)" for the Meghalaya Integrated Transport Project (MITP), World Bank Funded Project, the last date for the submission of the EOI has been extended to the 24th January 2022. For more details please visit http://megplanning.gov.in	
MIPR No. 1709 dt. 13/12/2022	-Sd/- Chief Operations Officer (COO, MIDFC)


UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU (NAAC Accredited "A+" Grade)	
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST	
On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu, Jammu, Expression of Interest is invited from the reputed Chartered Accountants/Firms (CAG empanelled) for providing Accounting, Auditing and Tax related services for the financial year 2022-23 to 2023-24.	
The Expression of Interest can be obtained from the office of undersigned against payment of non-refundable fee of Rs. 2500/- in the shape of Demand Draft in favour of Registrar, University of Jammu w.e.f. 17-01-2022. Expression of Interest can also be downloaded from the University website www.jammuniversity.in and the fee in the shape of DD shall have to be enclosed with the Expression of Interest subscribed.	
The Expression of Interest, duly completed and sealed (with firm's profile) must reach in the office of the undersigned by or before 10-02-2022 upto 4.00 p.m. The earnest money deposit of Rs. 25,000/- in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged in favour of Registrar, University of Jammu should be enclosed with the Expression of Interest.	
For further detail information about the Expression of Interest, please log on to University website www.jammuniversity.in and JK tenders.	
No: JU/IA/22/9022-26 Dated : 10-01-2022	Sd/- REGISTRAR

SEARCH OF MISSING	
General public is hereby informed that one female (depicted in the photo), NAME: Sonam Devi, W/o: Raj Kumar, R/o: H.No.7, Ambedkar Colony, Bijwasan, New Delhi. Aged: 33 years, has been missing/kidnapped since 04.01.2022 at about 3:30 PM from the above address. In this regard, a vide DD No. 96-A, Dated 05.01.2022, has been lodged at P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi	
Her physical description is as under: Height: 5'2" Feet, Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Build: Medium, Wearing: Pink Colour Suit Salwar & Slipper in Feet. Any person is having any information/clue about this missing female, may inform SHO, Kapashera, New Delhi at E-mail: ciccbi@cbi.nic.in or website: http://cbi.nic.in Fax: 011-23011334, Tele No. : 011-23014046 (Direct), 011-23015229, 23015218 extn. 210	
DP/999/SW/2022	S.H.O P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi Ph.: 011-25063758, 25066105

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION	
General public is hereby informed that one male namely Naresh S/o Unknown R/o Unknown Age about 50 years, Height 5'4", Complexion Wheatish, Face Long, Built Thin, Wearing White & Red Printed T-shirt, Black Lower & Printed Grey colour socks in feet was found dead at Below Geeta Colony Flyover, Near Sai Bhawan, Geeta Colony, Delhi on 11.01.2022. In this regard a DD No. 60-A dated 11.01.2022 has been lodged at PS Geeta Colony, Delhi.	
Any person having any information or clue about this deceased male may kindly inform to the following SHO PS Geeta Colony, Delhi Ph. 011-22506665, 22184453	
DP/699/SHD/2022	



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
EX-SERVICEMAN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS)
STATION HQ (ECHS CELL), AFS HINDAN
PHONE : 0120 -2670025, email:stnhqechshindan@gmail.com



EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

1. **ECHS** invites applications to engage following **Medical, Para Medical & Non Medical Staff** on contractual basis in **ECHS Polyclinic Hindan** for a period of one year for ESM and 11 months for the civil candidates

Appointment	Minimum Qualification	No. of Vacancies	Fixed Remuneration
Medical Specialist	MD/MS in Specialty concerned. Minimum 03 years in specialty after PG.	01	₹ 1,00,000/-
Medical Officer	MBBS. Minimum 03 years experience after internship.	04	₹ 75,000/-
Dental Officer	BDS. Minimum 03 years experience after internship.	01	₹ 75,000/-
Nursing Assistant	DMN, Diploma/Class-I (Armed Forces). Minimum 05 years of work experience.	03	₹ 28,100/-
Dental Assistant / Technician/Hygienist	Diploma holder in Dental Hygienist / Class-I DH / DORA. Minimum 03 years of work experience.	01	₹ 28,100/-
Pharmacist	B Pharma or 10+2 with PCB and Diploma Pharmacy. Minimum 03 years of work experience.	03	₹ 28,100/-
Lab Technician	B.Sc (Medical Lab Technology) or 10+2 with Science and DMLT. Minimum 03 years of work experience.	01	₹ 28,100/-
Lab Assistant	DMLT/Class-I Lab Tech (Armed Forces). Minimum 05 years of work experience.	01	₹ 28,100/-
Data Entry Operator	Graduate / Class-I Clerical Trade (Armed Forces). Minimum 05 years of work experience.	01	₹ 28,100/-
Driver	Education-8 th Class / Class-I, Driver MT (Armed Forces). Posses a civil driving license (LMV). Minimum 05 years of work experience.	01	₹ 19,700/-
Female Attendant	Literate. Minimum 05 years of work experience.	01	₹ 16,800/-
Peon	Education-8 th Class / Class-I, GD trade for Armed Forces Personnel, Minimum 05 years of work experience.	01	₹ 16,800/-
Safaiwala	-Do-	01	₹ 16,800/-

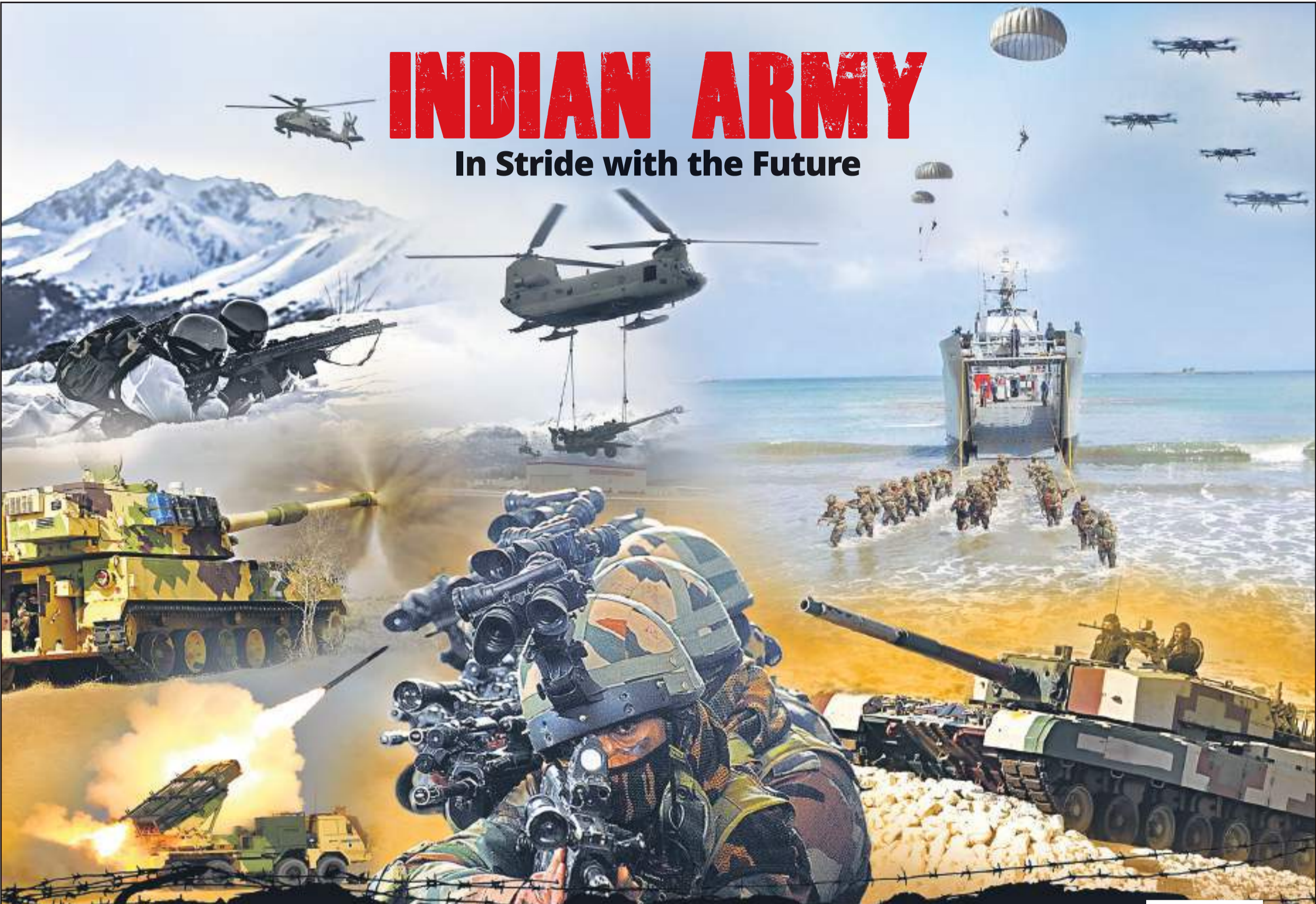
2. **For Terms & Conditions, Application Form & Remuneration.** Kindly see our website www.echs.gov.in. For additional details, please Contact, Stn HQ (ECHS Cell) AFS Hindan at Telephone No. 0120-2670025 & email istnhqechshindan@gmail.com. Also approach concerned ECHS Polyclinic for details. Preference will be given to the Ex-Servicemen.

3. **Last date of receipt of application as per format given at our website.** Application as per requisite format along with self attested photocopies of testimonials in support of Educational Qualifications and Work Experiences will be submitted to **OIC Stn HQ (ECHS Cell / Polyclinic), AFS Hindan by 15 February 2022** in duplicate. Any application receipt after 15 February 2022 will not be accepted

4. **Interview Date, Timing & Venue.** The same will be intimated to candidates through e-mail and telephonically. Candidates must bring all the Original Certificate/Mark Sheets/Degree of 10th /Matric, 10+2 & Graduation / Post Graduation / Diploma / Course, Work Experience and Discharge Book, PPO, Service Records and 02 PP size photographs at the time of interview. No TA/DA is admissible. Only candidates meetings the Qualitative Requirements may apply.


NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
E-tender Notice Number:- CM-1/Saini./Pay & Use Toilet/SKB/2022 Date : 12.01.2022	
Following e-tender on prescribed tender forms are invited by the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, North Central Railway, Prayagraj on behalf of President of India.	
e-tender No.	16/2022
Name of work and Station:	Contract of Normal Pay & Use Toilets at Shikohabad Railway Station (PF-01/02 & in Circulating Area) on operation and maintenance (O&M) basis.
Period of Contract:	Three Years
Minimum Reserved L/Fee of Contract for 01 years:	₹ 86,807.00
Minimum Reserved L/Fee of Contract for 03 years:	₹ 2,79,077.00
Earnest Money:	₹ 8,700.00
Cost of Tender Form:	₹ 1,180.00
Time & date for the opening of tender:	At 15:00 hrs. on 14.02.2022
Website & Notice where the full detail of tender can be seen: E-tender forms shall be available on www.ireps.gov.in upto 13:00 hrs. on 14.02.2022 from the date of opening of the e-tender. The e-tender Notice can also be viewed on Railway's web site www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in . 46/22(R)	
f North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @ CPRO NCR	

कार्यालय संयुक्त संचालक सह अधीक्षक छत्तीसगढ़ आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (सिम्स चिकित्सालय) बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)	
Fax (o)-07752-224200, Phone (o)-07752-230030	
क्र. 206/ओ.भं./सं.सं.अधी./सिम्स चिकि/2022 बिलासपुर दिनांक-12/01/2022	
निविदा सूचना	
मेडिकल गैस द्वितीय निविदा	
निविदा कार्य का नाम	सिम्स चिकित्सालय बिलासपुर हेतु वित्तीय वर्ष 2021-22 में मेडिकल गैस (ऑक्सीजन, नाइट्रस ऑक्साइड एवं कार्बन डाइऑक्साइड) क्रय किये जाने हेतु निविदा आमंत्रित किया जाता है।
निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य	रु. 1000.00 (एक हजार मात्र) का Demand Draft वापसी योग्य नहीं। जो को संयुक्त संचालक एवं अधीक्षक (Joint Director Cum Superintendent CIMS Hospital Bilaspur C.G.) सिम्स चिकित्सालय बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) के पक्ष में देय हो।
धरोहर राशि	1,50,000.00 (एक लाख पचास हजार रुपये) वापसी योग्य का डिमांड ड्राफ्ट/बैंकर्स चेक
निविदा प्रपत्र प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि	दिनांक 29/01/2022 को कार्यालयीन दिवस एवं अवधि तक संबंधित शाखा सिम्स, चिकित्सालय बिलासपुर (निविदा प्रपत्र प्राप्त करने हेतु स्वयं के लेटर हेड पर लिखित आवेदन प्रस्तुत करना अनिवार्य होगा)
निविदा प्रपत्र जमा अंतिम तिथि	दिनांक 15/02/2022 को दोपहर 03.00 बजे तक। रासक्रोय पंजीकृत डाक अथवा स्पीड पोस्ट के माध्यम से हो।
निविदा खोलने की तिथि तथा स्थान	दि



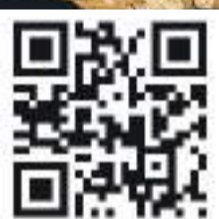
INDIAN ARMY

In Stride with the Future




74TH ARMY DAY

15 JANUARY 2022




Visit our website





*Our Army always puts the Nation first.
I salute all those great individuals
who sacrificed their lives while serving the Nation.
India will never forget our valiant heroes.*


OUR FALLEN HEROES IN THE YEAR 2021								
RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES	RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES	RANK	NAME	ARMS/SERVICES
NAIB SUBEDAR	RAVINDER, SM	INFANTRY	SEPOY	VIKESH KUMAR SAH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	VAISAKH H	MECHANISED INFANTRY
NAIK	NISHANT SHARMA	MECHANISED INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	KASHIRAY BAMMANALLI	ENGINEERS	SUBEDAR	EBENEZAR AMADALA	ARTILLERY
SEPOY	LAXMAN	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	SREEJITH M. SM	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	DEB KUMAR BHATTACHARJEE	ARTILLERY
LANCE DAFADAR	DEEPAK KUMAR	ARMOURED	SEPOY	MARUPROLU JASWANTH KUMAR REDDY	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	AJIT KUMAR SHUKLA	ARTILLERY
HAVILDAR	NIRMAL SINGH	INFANTRY	NAIK	GURJANT SINGH	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	AJAY SINGH	INFANTRY
BATTERY HAVILDAR MAJOR	KULDEEP SINGH	ARTILLERY	SUBEDAR	KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA	INFANTRY	RIFLEMAN	YOGAMBAR SINGH	INFANTRY
HAVILDAR	PINKU KUMAR	INFANTRY	SEPOY	BOOPATHI S	ARMY SERVICE CORPS	RIFLEMAN	VIKRAM SINGH NEGI	INFANTRY
LIEUTENANT COLONEL	RISHUBH SHARMA	ARMY AVIATION	SUBEDAR	RAM SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	HARENDRA SINGH RAWAT	INFANTRY
RIFLEMAN	PRADEEP KUMAR	INFANTRY	LANCE DAFADAR	JOGINDER SINGH	ARMOURED	SEPOY	HIMANSHU	INFANTRY
GUNNER	SAYAN GHOSH	ARTILLERY	SIGNALMAN	BEEPRIN BICHHWALIA	SIGNALS	SEPOY	BRIJESH RAUTELA	INFANTRY
NAIK	K DEVENDRAN	ENGINEERS	COLONEL	ASHWANI KUMAR	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RANJEET KUMAR	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIK	UTTAM KUMAR SINGH	SIGNALS	HAVILDAR	SUDHEESH KUMAR S	ENGINEERS	NAIK	DEVA ANAND A	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIK	PANDRANKI CHANDRA RAO	EME	NAIK	RAMARAO VANJARAPU	ENGINEERS	SEPOY	KAMAL DEV VAIDYA	INFANTRY
SUBEDAR	DOIPHODE LAXMAN SANTU	SIGNALS	SEPOY	PRABHJOT SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	KAILASH CHAND GURJAR	MECHANISED INFANTRY
NAIK	MANISH KUMAR	SIGNALS	SEPOY	JAGRAJ SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	LOVEPREET SINGH	INFANTRY
HAVILDAR	HAOBIJAM PREMANANDA SINGH	ARTILLERY	HAVILDAR	MOHD SALEEM AKHOON	INFANTRY	LIEUTENANT COLONEL	ABHEET SINGH BATTH	ARMY AVIATION
NAIK	BADAL SINGH CHANDEL	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	SUDHAKER SINGH	ARTILLERY	CAPTAIN	JAYANT JOSHI	ARMY AVIATION
HAVILDAR	GANESH YADAV	ARTILLERY	HAVILDAR	BHADOURIA KULDIP SURESH	MECHANISED INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RAKESH KUMAR	INFANTRY
LANCE DAFADAR	VIKRAM SINGH	ARMOURED	SUBEDAR	RAM SHANKER	ENGINEERS	HAVILDAR	GURNINDER SINGH	INFANTRY
NAIB SUBEDAR	PARWINDER SINGH	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	VIRENDRA KUMAR	ARTILLERY	SOWAR	SHANAVAS A	ARMOURED
SEPOY	PARABJEET SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	RAVI CHANDRAN R	INFANTRY	SUBEDAR	DAMBAR CHAND	INFANTRY
SEPOY	AMARDEEP SINGH	INFANTRY	NAIK	RATHOD JASHAVANTSINH JAVANSING	ARMY SERVICE CORPS	NAIB SUBEDAR	JAIPAL SINGH CHAHAR	INFANTRY
SEPOY	PARGHAT SINGH	INFANTRY	SEPOY	KARN VEER SINGH	INFANTRY	HAVILDAR	RAJESH KUMAR	ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
NAIB SUBEDAR	NITUL GOGOI	INFANTRY	NAIB SUBEDAR	JASWINDER SINGH, SM	MECHANISED INFANTRY	GUNNER	VISHAL KUMAR	ARTILLERY
SEPOY	POLUKANTI SIVAGANGADHAR	EME	NAIK	MANDEEP SINGH	INFANTRY	COLONEL	VIPLAV TRIPATHI	INFANTRY
SEPOY	SASANKHA SEKHAR SAMAL	EME	NAIK	GAJJAN SINGH	INFANTRY	MAJOR	PANKAJ KUMAR PANDAY	INFANTRY
NAIB SUBEDAR	VIJAY KUMAR SHARMA	EME	SEPOY	SARAJ SINGH	INFANTRY	MAJOR	MAYANK VISHNOI, SM	INFANTRY
NAIK	ABHILASH KUMAR S	EME						

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davp 10127/13/0005/2122



GOLD	RUPEE	OIL	SILVER
₹47,005	₹74.15	\$83.75	₹61,005
Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of January 13			

COMPETITION WATCH
DEAL STREET

NCLAT to hear plea challenging CCI order: What next for Amazon-Future deal

AASHISHARYAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE NATIONAL Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has agreed to hear Amazon's plea challenging the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) decision to suspend the company's 2019 deal with Future Coupons. The NCLAT, on Thursday, while rejecting Amazon's plea to put on hold CCI's decision, asked both the regulator and Future Coupons to file their reply within the next 10 days.

Why does Amazon want the NCLAT to set aside the CCI decision on Future Coupons deal?

A primary argument that Amazon pleaded before the NCLAT was that since the deal with Future Coupons was signed in 2019, the CCI could not have gone back more than 12 months to review and subsequently suspend the deal. The counsel for Amazon also questioned how the competition regulator could have revisited its own order allowing the deal almost after two years.

In its December 17 order staying the Amazon deal with Future Coupons, the CCI had also asked Amazon to seek a fresh approval for the deal by filing out the Form II. Amazon also took exception to this demand by the CCI and said that since the deal with Future Coupons was strategic, the regulator could not have reviewed the entire deal. "Form II is given when there is an activity. Here the investment was, in the event of the policy of the government of India changes or you obtain the government approval, there was a certain call option. Because we have referred it (deal) as strategic, the commission takes a view to reviewing the entire matter," counsel for Amazon Gopal Subramaniam said.

Why did the CCI stay Amazon's deal with Future Coupons two years after approving it?

In its December order suspending the deal, the CCI had said that Amazon had "misled"

REPLIES ASKED

■ The NCLAT, while rejecting Amazon's plea to put on hold CCI's decision, asked both the regulator and Future Coupons to file their reply within next 10 days

the regulator about its intentions regarding its investment in Future Coupons. In its order, the CCI had said that Amazon had "misled the Commission to believe, through false statements and material omissions, that the combination and its purpose were the interest of Amazon in the business of FCPL". The regulator added Amazon had suppressed "the purpose of establishing strategic alignment and partnership between Amazon Group and FRL (Future Retail Ltd) as well as have a 'foot-in-the-door' in the India retail sector."

What will happen next in the Amazon-Future Coupons legal tussle?

So far, both Amazon and Future Group have filed more than a dozen cases against each other in various forums, such as the Delhi High Court, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal and the Supreme Court. Apart from this, both these companies are also engaged in arbitration at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC). On the next hearing in the NCLAT on February 2, Amazon will try to prove why the CCI could not have revisited its earlier order when it had granted its approval for the deal, while Future is likely to argue that since the deal has now been suspended, the NCLAT should not entertain the plea. Apart from the NCLAT, Amazon and Future Group are also battling the case out in the Supreme Court, where the Future Group has challenged the Delhi High Court's refusal to grant stay on an arbitration tribunal decision refusing to interfere with the Emergency Award (EA) of the SIAC.

AIMED AT REDUCING COST OF DOING BUSINESS

DPIIT Secy: Dynamic pricing, cost optimisation key to ONDC

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

DYNAMIC PRICING, inventory management and optimisation of delivery cost will be key to the success of the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) initiative of the government, a senior official said on Friday.

The ONDC is aimed at providing an alternative to proprietary e-commerce platforms, as well as reducing the cost of doing business.

"Three important things in ONDC (are) dynamic pricing, inventory management, and optimisation of delivery cost. All these facilities will actually reduce the cost of doing business for everybody," said Anurag Jain, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal

ADVISORY COUNCIL

■ The ONDC is aimed at providing an alternative to proprietary e-commerce platforms, as well as reducing the cost of doing business

■ The government has set up an advisory council to decide on the steps required to design and accelerate adoption of ONDC

Trade (DPIIT), during the launch of ONDC national rollout strategy 'Reimagining the Future of Digital Commerce with ONDC'. Jain noted that only larger players had thus far been able to take advantage of e-commerce.

Anil Aggarwal, Additional Secretary, DPIIT, said the ONDC would standardise operations such as cataloguing, inventory management, order management, and order fulfilment and allow small businesses to use "any compatible ONDC app instead of being governed by specific platform-centric policies."

"So what happens, small businesses would be able to use any compatible ONDC app instead of being governed by specific platform-centric policies and this opens up multiple options to small businesses to be discoverable over the network and conduct their businesses," Agrawal added.

The government has set up an advisory council, which includes Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani and National Health Authority Chief Executive

Officer RS Sharma, to decide on the steps required to design and accelerate adoption of ONDC.

Nilekani said ONDC would expand the e-commerce market significantly. "I would recommend that everybody get on-board now and participate in the most exciting business transformation happening in the world."

He further said that the protocols being designed for ONDC were "best in class" and would allow a wide set of participants to inter-operate and contribute.

ONDC, he said, will also have a large number of public spirited shareholders. "I am told that there is an enormous interest in investing in ONDC." Nilekani said India will have a trillion dollar retail economy and even if 10-20 per cent of that goes online, "we are talking" about \$100-200 billion doing online.

'Industry leaders confident of economic recovery, expansion'

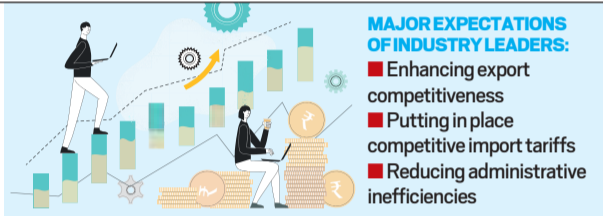
Optimism and confidence are high amongst Indian businesses as several industry leaders are positive about the economic growth and expansion, a Deloitte survey said

SURVEY DETAILS

The pre-budget survey by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (DTTILLP) collated a total of 163 responses from 10 industries

~91% respondents said Atmanirbhar Bharat, coupled with monetary policy actions by RBI, contributed to bringing economy back on track

~55% business leaders believe providing extra tax incentives to long-term investors for infrastructure investment can help promote growth



45% respondents believe that the Budget should focus on announcing incentives for increased R&D spending

>75% respondents positive about India's economic growth and expansion

Source: Deloitte/PTI

'PV sales skid 13% in Dec, up 27% in CY21'

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

WHOLESALE DESPATCHES of passenger vehicles (PVs) declined 13 per cent to 2,19,421 units year-on-year (y-o-y) in December 2021 on account of semiconductor woes, but if the calendar year performance is seen, sales grew 27 per cent to 30,82 lakh units against 24.33 lakh units in 2020.

While this growth was due to the low base of 2020 when there was a period of total lockdown, despatches above the 30-lakh unit have happened only for the third time since the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) began releasing such data.

Sales of PVs had crossed the 30-lakh mark for the first time in CY 2017 when total sales stood at 32.3 lakh units. In CY 2018, PVs were at 33.95 lakh units and fell to

29.62 lakh units in CY 2019.

Releasing the sales data for December and CY 2021 on Friday, SIAM said the chip shortage situation is not likely to improve in the short term, but expressed hope that things will improve soon.

The sales numbers in October-December quarter were also not as per expectations for most of the industry players as the festival season sales were very weak. Sales across categories decreased by 22 per cent during the third quarter.

"If we look at the third quarter figures, passenger vehicle sales were the lowest in the last five years while the two-wheeler sales were the lowest in the last nine years. Similarly, commercial vehicle sales were the lowest in the last five years. Three-wheeler segment is the worst-impacted, with sales lowest in the last 13 years," SIAM president Kenichi Ayukawa said. **FE**

Collision of India-bound planes averted in Dubai: DGCA seeks report

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has asked its UAE counterpart to share the report of the probe into the near collision of two India-bound Emirates passenger jets on January 9 at the Dubai airport. The planes had come on the same runway during take-off from the airport. The DGCA has asked UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) to share its investigation report on this incident.

DGCA chief Arun Kumar told PTI on Friday. "Both are their registered aircraft and the place of occurrence is their airport and so, as per ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation), it will be investigated by them." **PTI**

'Battery PLI: RIL, M&M, Hyundai among bidders'

REUTERS

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

RELANCE INDUSTRIES, Mahindra & Mahindra and Hyundai Motor Co are among companies that have submitted bids under the \$2.4-billion battery scheme, two sources told Reuters.

The government last year finalised the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to encourage companies to invest in the local manufacturing of batteries as it looks to establish a domestic supply chain for clean transport and build storage for renewable energy. Friday was the last day to submit technical bids.

Softbank Group-backed Ola

GOVT'S AIM

■ The government wants to establish a total of 50 gigawatt hours of battery storage capacity over five years, which it expects will attract direct investment of about \$6 billion

Electric, engineering conglomerate Larsen & Toubro and battery makers Amara Raja and Exide have also submitted bids, the sources said.

None of the companies named by the sources immediately responded to requests for comment.



The Reserve Bank has invited comments on the discussion paper from stakeholders by February 15. *File*

Informal Group on Valuation of Banks' Investment Portfolio, which was submitted in 1999.

The recommendations of this informal group culminated in the issue of prudential guidelines on the investment portfolio in October 2002, which forms the basis of the current norms.

While the RBI has been tweaking the guidelines in response to situations as they emerge, a comprehensive review has not been undertaken so far, resulting in a wide gap between the country's norms and the global standards and practices, the regulator said.

It is against this backdrop that a discussion paper reviews the rationale and the evolution of the current framework, the corresponding global standards, and developments in the financial markets before framing its proposals. **WITHPTI**

'FB, Google CEOs aware of formal ad market deal'

Washington: Chief executives of Google and Facebook were aware of a deal to carve up part of the online advertising market, according to an amended antitrust complaint filed by Texas and 15 other states against Google.

The deal with Facebook, which Google dubbed "Jedi Blue," was "signed off" by Google Chief Executive Sundar Pichai while Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg was on an email thread discussing it, they said in their third amended complaint. Google said the complaint's assertion "isn't accurate," and that the complaint itself is "full of inaccuracies." Facebook, now called Meta Platforms Inc, said the deal was not exclusive to Google, and that other deals have raised competition for ad placements. **REUTERS**

US President nominates 3 people for Fed board, including 1st Black woman

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 14

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden on Friday announced the nominations of three people for the Federal Reserve's Board of Governors, including Sarah Bloom Raskin, a former Fed and Treasury official, for the top regulatory slot and Lisa Cook, who would be the first Black woman to serve on the Fed's board.

Biden also nominated Phillip Jefferson, an economist, dean of faculty at Davidson College in North Carolina and a former Fed researcher. The three nominees, who will have to be confirmed by the Senate, would fill out the Fed's seven-member board.

They would join the Fed at a particularly challenging time when the central bank will undertake the delicate task of raising its benchmark interest rate to try to curb high inflation, without undercutting the recovery from the pandemic recession.

On Wednesday, the government reported that inflation reached a four-decade high in December.

If approved, Biden's picks would significantly increase the Fed's diversity.

BRIEFLY
PM, startups

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will Saturday interact with over 150 startups via video. He will also address World Economic Forum's online Davos Agenda summit January 17.

WPI inflation

New Delhi: Wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation bucked the 4-month rising trend in December 2021, and eased to 13.56 per cent.

GST arrests

New Delhi: Directorate General of GST Intelligence officials arrested one person for operating a syndicate and issuing fake invoices of Rs 4,521 crore for availing input tax credit (ITC) benefit. **PTI**

Citi biz sale

Singapore: Citigroup will sell its consumer business in 4 southeast Asian nations to Singapore's United Overseas Bank for about \$3.7 billion.

Tesla, dogecoin

Bengaluru: Tesla will accept dogecoin as payment for its merchandise and mini models of electric vehicles, CEO Elon Musk said. **REUTERS**

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

IT WILL arguably go down as an evening to remember showcasing a genuine corporate solidarity and oneness of purpose in supporting women entrepreneurship.

The Express Awards for Women Entrepreneurs (or ExpressAWE) announced on Friday saw a tidal wave of entrepreneurial success. But what also added glitter and weight to the memorable evening were rich and insightful conversations between industry veterans with takeaways for life for the many leading and budding women entrepreneurs.

The evening began with a keynote interview of Sheryl Sandberg, COO, Meta, by Anant Goenka, executive director, The Indian Express Group, which covered the entire changing landscape of women entrepreneurship.

The author of 'Lean In', a milestone book for working women, Sandberg urged the growing number of women in Indian colleges not to "leave before you leave".

Congratulating The Indian Express Group for instituting ExpressAWE and for engaging in conversations that matter, Sandberg reminded that while the proverbial glass ceiling still needs to be shattered by more women, there was also a broken rung that needed fixing.



Or to quote a snippet from the interview: "Even before we get to that glass ceiling there is a broken rung and it is that first promotion to manager... men are promoted and hired based on their potential, women have to prove it... So the inequity starts few years after college."

This was followed by a free flowing and engaging discussion between industry veterans and the members of the jury who chose the awards in the organisation/established business segment.

Each of them a lodestar for many budding entrepreneurs (both women and men)—Deepak Parekh, chairman of HDFC and also the jury chair; Arundhati

Bhattacharya, CEO and chairperson, Salesforce India; Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, executive chairperson, Biocon and Biocon Biologics; Preetha Reddy, executive vice chairperson, Apollo Hospitals; and Zia Mody, co-founder and managing partner, AZB & Partners.

They discussed what was enabling and hindering the 'power of Her' and tried to address some crucial questions around the changing landscape of women entrepreneurship in India, their advice to budding women entrepreneurs, what industry could do to enable this, what government and policymakers could do to facilitate it even more. They also spared a few minutes pondering on what they

would do differently if they were to start all over again today. The message that stood out in the discussion was that it was imperative for women entrepreneurs to stay the course, not to give up and to remember that their time has come.

A highlight of the evening was a delightful and engaging conversation between the Newsmaker of the year award winner Falguni Nayar, founder and CEO, Nykaa, and the lifetime achievement award winner Anu Aga, former chairperson, Thermax. Looking at a range of issues women leaders grapple with and how they sort them out and carve out a niche. From the nurturing ingredients that they build on to the role that spouses and families play, the way inheritance is viewed and how merit really counts. This and a lot more emerged from the discussion between the two — one, a leader who emerged as an icon of entrepreneurship and leadership in adversity and then went to institution-building while the other made news and inspired others with a deep entrepreneurial ability to spot an opportunity and ensure wealth creation for the stakeholders while staying focussed on brand building.

Watching the evening unfold, one could not help but agree with Deepak Parekh who in the name of Harry Belafonte said, "Let us conclude that women of today are smarter than men in every way!" **FE**

THE WINNERS	
■ EDUCATION & SKILL DEVELOPMENT RISING SEGMENT	SUPRIYA PAUL, CEO & Co-Founder, Josh Talks
■ FASHION & LIFESTYLE RISING SEGMENT	AKANKSHA ARORA, Chief Executive Officer, Tribe Amrapali
■ HEALTH & WELLNESS RISING SEGMENT	RUPAL MEHTA, Founder & CEO, MedMarvel Software Solutions Pvt Ltd
■ MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT RISING SEGMENT	DVL PADMA PRIYA, Co-Founder & Editorial Lead, Suno India
■ SOCIAL IMPACT RISING SEGMENT	ISHITA SHARMA, Founder & CEO, MukkaMaar
■ TECHNOLOGY RISING SEGMENT	JYOTI SUDHIR, Director & COO, InventIndia Innovations
■ E-COMMERCE RISING SEGMENT	PALLAVI UTAGI, Founder & CEO, SuperBottoms
■ TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY RISING SEGMENT	PALLAVI AGARWAL, Founder & CEO, GoStops Hospitality Pvt Ltd
■ EDUCATION & SKILL DEVELOPMENT	DIVYA GOKULNATH, Co-Founder, BYJU'S
■ FASHION & LIFESTYLE	ANITA DONGRE, Founder, House of Anita Dongre
■ HEALTH & WELLNESS	AMEERA SHAH, Managing Director, Metropolis Healthcare
■ MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT	SHRADHA SHARMA, Founder & Chief Editor, YourStory Media
■ SOCIAL IMPACT	CHETNA SINHA, Founder, Mann Deshi Bank
■ TECHNOLOGY	ANU ACHARYA, Founder & CEO, Mapmygenome
■ FOOD & BEVERAGES	RAJNI BECTOR, Founder & Chairperson Emeritus, Mrs Bector's Food Specialities
■ FICCI-FLO EXCELLENCE AWARD	SHOBHANA BHARTIA, Chairperson & Editorial Director, HT Media Limited
■ LEGACY SPIN-OFF	LAVANYA NALLI, Chairperson, Nalli Group of Companies
■ NEWSMAKER OF THE YEAR	FALGUNI NAYAR, Founder CEO, Nykaa
■ LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD	ANU AGA, Former Chairperson, Thermax

BRIEFLY

Head slams century, Aus recover on day 1

HOBART: Travis Head spoiled a promising start for England in the Ashes on Friday with his second century of the series as Australia recovered from 12-3 to reach 241-6 at stumps on a rain-hit first day of the fifth test. Head, who scored 152 in the opening test at Brisbane, counterpunched England's early success with an aggressive 101 off 113 balls in the day-night test as Australia came back strongly after losing the toss. Cameron Green contributed an authoritative 74 and Marnus Labuschagne scored a rapid 44 before rain arrived around half an hour after tea and prevented further play. Head entered with Australia in serious trouble after a brilliant spell of swing and seam bowling from Ollie Robinson (2-24), one of the five changes England made, and Stuart Broad (2-48) on a lively green wicket. **Brief Scores:** Australia 241 for 6 (Travis Head 101, Cameron Green 74, Marnus Labuschagne 44; S Board 2 for 48, Ollie Robinson 2 for 24) vs Eng. **AP**

Arun to coach KKR

KOLKATA: Former India bowling coach Bharat Arun has now taken up the same role at Kolkata Knight Riders, the IPL franchise announced on Friday. Making the announcement of his appointment, Venky Mysore, CEO & MD of KKR said, "We are very excited to have someone of the calibre of Bharat Arun joining us as our bowling coach. He will bring a wealth of experience and expertise to KKR's strong support staff. We are delighted to welcome him to the Knight Riders family." Arun was the bowling coach of the Indian team under Ravi Shastri until recently and worked alongside B Sridhar as the fielding coach. **—PTI**

Joshi slips to second

SINGAPORE: India's Khalin Joshi struggled with his putter and slipped to 2-over 74 on the second day but stayed two shots off the lead at the halfway stage of the Singapore International here on Friday. Thailand's Rattanon Wannasrichan sensationally eagled the 626-yard par-five 18th to take the lead after the second round. With 73-66, he was five-under 139, two shots clear of Joshi and Ratchanon Chantanuawatt (75-66), Thailand's 14-year-old amateur golf sensation. The USD 1 million tournament is the second from last event on the Asian Tour's 2020-21 season. **—PTI**

Sen and Sensibility

Lakshya beats Prannoy in three games to enter India Open semifinals

SHIVANI NAIK
JANUARY 14

LAKSHYA SEN'S verdict on the new Spiderman movie is comparative: "People said it's better than *Avengers: Endgame* or *Infinity War*. It's good but not that good," he says. Sen had endured a bread-and-butter-earning busy work week at Huelva in Spain last month, pulling off three-game matches, while the franchise spin-off hit theatres. Once home in Almora, he'd go and check it out for himself.

For the last six months, while scything at a bunch of known names, the World Championships bronze medallist has been appraising for himself the relative abilities of his peers. Never mind the frozen rankings of his sport which are holding tight many reputations, akin to Captain America in a cryogenic chamber.

On Friday, quarterfinals day at the India Open Super 500 in New Delhi, Sen nicked bragging rights off HS Prannoy who started furiously, but couldn't hulk out and play the enforcer in the decider, going down 14-21, 21-9, 21-14. His contender aspirations, gone in 60 minutes.

So, Sen has emerged as the only Indian men's singles shuttler to make the semifinals and make any decent use of India hosting the event. The win came after he faltered twice - at 13-all and 15-all - in the high-octane opening game on "silly errors", lacking in composure, as the pace got pushed.

Then he quickly turned it around, as is his wont, suited up in the virtue of patience, and took Prannoy apart, facing little resistance. The pace of exchanges, ironically, dropped, suiting Sen. He knew he was trailing on account of silly errors. But Sen is riding an immense wave of self-assurance. "I was always confident that I'm playing the rally well. My coach (Korean Yong Sung Yoo) also told me not to worry and the game is still 50/50." It's that sort of a conviction coursing through his veins, and Prannoy, despite the good defence that Sen acknowledges, most likely felt the full force of it, as he crumbled as soon as Sen came from behind and strung together a decent lead. The door gently, but decisively, shut.

Sen is coming off a 10-day break at home in Uttarakhand. The first 3-4 days were release/massage sessions on the physio's table. "It was nice to go back home after the medal where people were on the road to welcome me," he says. He'd meet Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami before returning to training, "taking it slow."

Against Prannoy, Sen went with a 1-1 head-to-head record. He'd beaten Prannoy at the 2017 Nationals, and then lost at a se-



Sen nicked bragging rights off HS Prannoy who started furiously, but couldn't hulk out and play the enforcer in the decider, going down 14-21, 21-9, 21-14. —BAI

lection ranking event in 2019. The win on Friday might edge him to India No. 2 spot in popular consciousness, leapfrogging other seniors.

Malaysian blitz next

Sen has spent a fortnight training alongside Olympic and World champions, Viktor Axelsen and Loh Kean Yew last year. He's just starting to get acquainted with Yong at the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy.

He's quietly sealed a semis berth at the India Open, even as Sai Praneeth and Srikanth were snared by Covid, and packed off Prannoy. But there's an immensely competent 21-year-old Malaysian, NG Tze Yong, who stands in his path to the final - a possible face-off with the World Champion Lo. Tze Yong is tipped to catapult onto the regular circuit, making the Top 30, on the back of titles at Scottish, Polish and Belgian Opens. But more than the points crunching, Tze Yong took Indonesian Jonatan Christie through a 75-minute wringer in the high-pressure Malaysia-Indonesia Thomas Cup sizzle.

Sen had found Srikanth's tricky net and superior attack a tad difficult to get past in the Worlds semis, he admits. And Tze Yong uses his backhand - parallel to the ground - to flick the shuttle around quite deftly from the forecourt.

The Malaysian has a heavy cross smash, and a very controlled cross-reverse slice, and plays at that discomfiting pace that can rush opponents. For once, Sen might hold the advantage of experience having been on the circuit for a few years now.

But it'll be a grave folly to start rubbing hands in anticipation of a Loh final, and not keep eyes open for the immediate threat of the Malaysians whom he beat easily in Bangladesh two years ago.

Sen's stated goal is to stay injury-free in the new season. He knows results will follow. But he'll not want nasty surprises in the form of a World No. 60 Malaysian who's been under the radar, but landed in India to pack off seasoned Indonesian Tommy Sugiarto. Sen would want to see for himself, where his Malaysian contemporary stands. There's a place in the endgame-final to be secured.

Second visa cancellation, Djokovic gets ready to fight another legal battle

SHORTLY AFTER Immigration Minister Alex Hawke made the decision to cancel Novak Djokovic's visa, the World No. 1's lawyers moved court to appeal the decision. Again, in the Federal Circuit Court, it was Judge Anthony Kelly who presided over the hearing that was essentially to discuss where the case would be heading.

Also, when the final verdict would be made, will the case be moved to the higher Federal Court, and if Djokovic would be returned to detention, or deported, till the final verdict.

Both sides made their claims till Judge Kelly gave the final order for the day, moving the case to the Federal Court.



Djokovic's demands

Nicholas Wood SC, arguing on Djokovic's behalf, questioned the timing of Hawke's decision, which came "shortly after 6 PM on a Friday," and four days after Judge Kelly had made the order to remove tennis legend Djokovic from the detention he was placed in when he landed in Australia last week.

Wood requested that the case should remain with the Federal Circuit Court and not be pushed up to the Federal Court as time was "precious."

"Mr Djokovic may be scheduled to play on Monday night or Tuesday night ... In those circumstances, we're very concerned

about time," he said. He also confirmed that Djokovic had not been detained so far.

Wood also argued that Hawke's reason for cancelling Djokovic's visa were in "stark contrast" to the ones used by the Australian Border Force (ABF).

He claimed the reason cited by Hawke was that Djokovic's presence in Australia will excite "anti-vax sentiment."

In his statement released to the media, Hawke had claimed that the decision was made "on health and good order grounds, on the basis that it was in the public interest to do so."

Minister Hawke's demands

Through his lawyer Stephen Lloyd, Hawke agreed that Djokovic will not be deported until the verdict in the case arrives.

With regards to detention, there was agreement that the 20-time Grand Slam champion will not be detained on Friday night. However, post his interview with immigration officials at 8 AM on Saturday, Djokovic will be escorted by two ABF officials into the office of his solicitors - the security will be stationed on the same floor, but away from the conference room. Essentially, Djokovic will be detained post his meeting with immigration officers, till the court's final hearing on Sunday.

Judge Kelly's final orders

In a move that goes against the player, Judge Kelly moved the case to the Federal Court.

Essentially, four points were made.

The first was that Djokovic submit "as soon as reasonably practical" a formal affidavit and application along with Hawke's reasons for deportation.

Second, Djokovic will not be deported from Australia until the case is over.

Third, following Djokovic's interview with immigration officials, he will be supervised by ABF from 10 AM to 2 PM on Saturday at his solicitors' office.

Finally, Djokovic will continue in detention from 9 AM on Sunday at his legal team's office till the duration of the hearing.

Heeding Wood's request, Judge Kelly added "any other location agreed between the parties" so as to not incite crowds to flock down to the solicitors' office". In other words, only both parties and the court will know where Djokovic will be meeting with his lawyers on Saturday and Sunday.

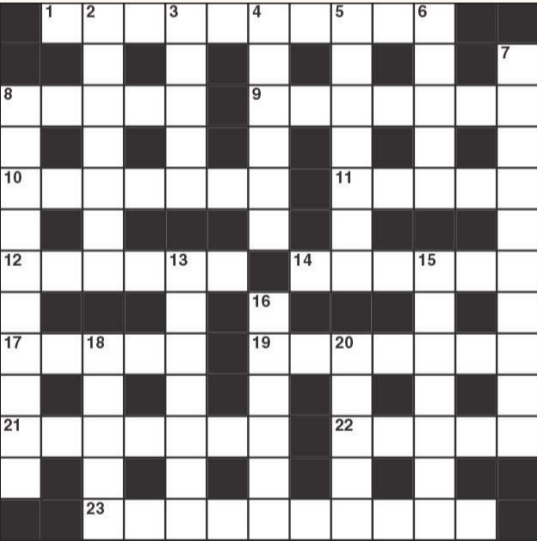
As it stands at the Aus Open

Djokovic remains the top seed and will likely be called to play on either Monday night or Tuesday night, against compatriot Miomir Kecmanovic in the first round.

The schedule and draw will only change if the Federal Court rules in favour of the Australian government on Sunday.

—SHAHID JUDGE

CROSSWORD 4638



ACROSS

- 1 Law breakers may be carried away by it (5,5)
- 8 Kind of information put before us (5)
- 9 Insect on animal is a cause of annoyance (7)
- 10 The South African flag (7)
- 11 Pakistan's greatest current asset (5)
- 12 Lawful position as redefined by Edison (6)
- 14 Ploughed a mowed field (6)
- 17 Bloom damaged by louts (5)
- 19 Fight for more pay? (4,3)
- 21 Skin specialist (7)
- 22 A brief for example is for the defence (5)
- 23 Whiskers (10)

DOWN

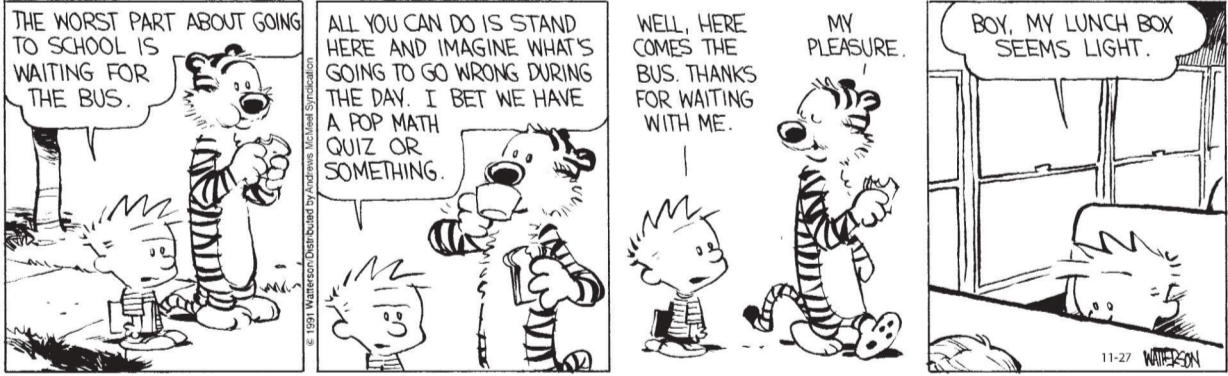
- 2 Dance for soldiers and surgeons? (7)
- 3 The price of a suit (5)
- 4 Mass-produced legislation? (3,3)
- 5 Maigret was involved in making jazz (7)
- 6 A capital position to be in (5)
- 7 Puzzles resulting in arguments? (10)
- 8 The living present? (4,2,4)
- 13 In a hurry to be seen as stylish (7)
- 15 The widow who urges one to take a gamble (7)
- 16 Choose not to go straight? (6)
- 18 As many as there can be (5)
- 20 A gift for an American President (5)

Solutions Crossword 4637: Across: 1 Afresh, 4 Crater, 9 Recipes, 10 Tunic, 11 Say-so, 12 Address, 13 Contentious, 18 Preview, 20 Crash, 22 Neons, 23 On stage, 24 Easter, 25 Creels. Down: 1 Arrest, 2 Rocky, 3 Support, 5 Rated, 6 Tonneau, 7 Recess, 8 Isaac Newton, 14 Ocelots, 15 Incisor, 16 Sponge, 17 Sheets, 19 Issue, 21 Agate.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

— is only the name that men of weak nerves give to wisdom. — Bernard DeVoto (9)

PXEII



MIMERS



BELSS



ELMUMP



SUDOKU 4715

Difficulty Level 2s

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 4714



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

It's a typical day for a spot of shopping, for hunting out the best bargains. There's nothing like disposing of your ill-gotten gains in the pursuit of happiness. Psychologically speaking, though, the stars are advising you to value yourself more in the future.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

After a lot of negative responses and criticism, you may at last be able to relax and appreciate your partners' good wishes. Family members may be whipped back into line at your convenience. Late afternoon and evening favour intimate chats, short trips or a romantic dalliance.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

The Moon will arrive in a favourable and passionate position in the nick of time. All confusion, uncertainty and lost causes should be cleared up then. You'll begin to feel much happier about the way family relationships and events at home are heading.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Life is shrouded in mystery and something seems to be perplexing you. If you have any say in the matter, do make inquiries of family members, for they may be in the know. Make time for a little quiet reflection and recharge your spiritual batteries.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Socially your stars are suddenly looking extremely bright. I strongly suspect that you may meet someone rather special, but you may feel pulled in two directions. Leave difficult choices until later, for tomorrow if you wish, because there might still be secret information to emerge.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Take out your bearings and give yourself plenty of time if professional affairs intrude on your private life. It may be a family member who is contemplating a step forward and could do with a spot of advice. You might have to follow through with practical help, so make sure you've got the spare time.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

There are a couple of very powerful planetary aspects homing in on a prominent region of your chart. The consequence should be a very pleasant, long journey, perhaps not straight away, but within the month. Think about where you'd like to go, and start planning.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

There is simply no way that you can keep a secret any longer. Take a fresh look at what you're doing with your money. You can break with past habits, but don't shock people unnecessarily, especially if they've been good to you. And give a younger relation the benefit of the doubt, within reason.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

You cannot possibly expect other people to fall in with your plans without question. At last partners will begin to ask exactly how, why and when. If money is involved, then listen to their every word. Not everything they say makes sense, but some of it does, so pay attention.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Any feelings of remorse or anger should be dealt with now. Not only will you discover your tongue, but you'll also realise what you really want to say. Don't rush it though, as the chances are that you'll be altering your personal opinions more than once over the next three weeks.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

A family and routine-bound day should give way to a more enjoyable evening. Make a point of enjoying yourself. It could be very useful for your morale, and hence your whole state of being, to throw caution to the wind: that's the only way to discover where your limits lie.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Get out and about today, and contact people on the spur of the moment. Evening reminds you of the importance of home and family connections and you may resolve that a fresh start is finally needed: just because someone else hasn't taken the initiative, that doesn't mean that you should sit on your hands and do nothing.

Downcast Kohli rues not giving South Africa a bigger target

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
KOLKATA, JANUARY 14

THE SIEGE mentality was absent. The customary swagger was missing. Seldom has Virat Kohli looked so downbeat at a press conference. As a captain, he has lost Tests and series before. But Kohli never looked defeated. The post-match presser following India's series loss to South Africa was different. Sample this: The Indian Test captain was asked if his back spasms that forced him to miss the second Test at Johannesburg, had been the turning point of the series. "I played the third Test and by that token we should have won this game. So there's no guarantee and in sport, you will have niggles and injuries. I can't single out one particular thing as the turning point. South Africa played good cricket and if we had given them bigger fourth innings totals to chase, we could have put more pressure on them," Kohli said.

Then this: He was asked about the transition and changes in the team. "No sir, I can't tell you anything at this moment," Kohli shouldered arms.

The Indian players, including Kohli, made their displeasure heard on stump mic after the controversial DRS call on the third day, which gave South African captain Dean Elgar an LBW reprieve. Once again, the skipper chose deadpan defence rather than a flowing drive and even a question on whether the players got a bit carried away in their reaction couldn't spur him on. "I have no comment to make on either. We understood what happened on the field and people on the outside don't know exactly what goes on onto the field. So for me to try and justify what we did on the field and say we got carried away is all... If we had got charged up and picked up three wickets, then that would have probably been the moment that changed the game."

Kohli revels in siege mentality. Usually it becomes 'us against the world' when India lose a game under his charge. Not many moons ago, after India's Test defeat to England at Headingley last summer, Kohli took to sarcasm and lauded a reporter for asking a cricket question, unhappy with the inquest that came before. He was the master of the show then.

About Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane's future, he put the ball in the selectors' court. "Obviously the batting has let us down in the last two games I would say, when we needed to kind of step up. And there's no running away from that. (About Pujara and Rahane) honestly I cannot sit here and talk about what's going to happen in the future. That's not for me to sit here and discuss."

The captain didn't ditch his beleaguered team-mates. "As I have said before and I will say again, we have continued to back Cheteshwar and Ajinkya because of the kind of players they are, what they have done in Test cricket for India over the years, playing crucial knocks in the second Test as well. You saw that partnership in the second innings, which got us to a total which we could fight for."



Virat Kohli speaking during the post-match interaction with television experts in Cape Town. *Reuters*

Elephant in room grows bigger

Blame for World No.1 team's failure to win a maiden series in South Africa lies with the misfiring middle order

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

IN HINDSIGHT, had it not been for arguably the best batting day of the series -- the first day of the first Test -- India could have ended the South Africa tour in a worse position. They had gone to stumps on 272/3, which quickly turned into 327 all out when play resumed on the third morning.

In the second innings, 109/4 led to 174 all out. In Johannesburg, 116/4 was to become 202 all out in the first innings, and 155/2 into 266 all out in the second. In Cape Town, 116/3 subsided to 223 all out in the first innings, and they went from 152/4 to 198 all out in the second dig. No frontier of any sort, let alone a final one, can be crossed with so many collective stumbles along the path.

The time has in all likelihood come to finally address the elephant in the room -- the misfiring middle order. If there was one glaring difference between the two sides, it was at No. 3. Keegan Petersen got better and better as the series reached its climax: three flowing half-centuries, two of them in the decider. South Africa averaged 38.16 at No. 3. India managed 19.66. Starting from their previous tour of South Africa, in the last four years, India's No. 3 position has averaged 32.83, which is seventh among all Test teams. India's No. 3 strike-rate of 39 is, of course, right at the bottom.

Cheteshwar Pujara has been one of India's finest batsmen ever, but if India do not utilise the upcoming Sri Lanka home Tests to try out someone else at No. 3, it will be a waste of an opportunity. There is little to be achieved now if Pujara bosses another hapless attack in home conditions.

Ajinkya Rahane at home has anyway been more often than not a disappointment, so again the question for the selectors will be whether there is anything to be gained by keeping out another deserving youngster against Sri Lanka.

His boy-on-the-burning-deck style overseas ended with two poor choices of shots in Centurion, and thereafter South Africa sorted him out with a few peaches.

A half-century each across 16 innings on such a big tour is clearly not what a No. 1 team should be expecting from their main three batsmen, irrespective of one of them pointing out the permanence of class and the transience of form. They kept out Hanuma Vihari for a year after his Sydney heroics, and in the only game he got at Wanderers due to Kohli's injury, he batted superbly with the tail to make an unbeaten 40. And he is not the only deserving batsmen sitting out.

But Kohli reiterated his support for Pujara and Rahane. "I cannot sit here and talk about what is going to happen in the future. You have to speak to the selectors, what they have in mind," Kohli said. "This is not my job.

"I will say it again, we will continue to back Cheteshwar and Ajinkya because of the kind of players they are, what they have done in Test cricket for India over the years. They played crucial knocks in the second Test, you saw that important partnership in the second innings. These are the kind of performances we recognise as a team."

Coming to the man himself, if he was not Test captain, 12 successive overseas dismissals edging to wicketkeeper or the slips would have surely raised many more eyebrows. He's tried all but avoiding the cover drive and it hasn't worked. The 29 off 143 in Cape Town also went against his own oft-repeated tenet of showing intent.

Moving on, Rishabh Pant now has Test hundreds in Australia, England, India and South Africa, and it might be unpopular to say this, but before his Cape Town stunner, Pant had scored 86 runs in five innings on the tour. The five-bowler strategy places a lot more batting responsibility on the keeper. And while Pant will continue to play the other-worldly knocks now and then, he will have to be more consistent if he bats at No. 6. There is no way a team can post competitive totals if Nos 3 to 5 cannot get the runs and



South Africa lifted their game after the loss in the series opener to seal a come-from-behind win against India.(Below) Keegan Petersen top-scored with 82. *Reuters*



No. 6 gets them once in a while, no matter how unconventionally or aggressively he gets them.

Coming to the lower middle order, R Ashwin and Shardul Thakur averaged 15 and 10 with the bat in South Africa. You can tag them as any kind of allrounder you think they are, but there is no point if they are going to get out playing expansive shots when the situation calls for some discretion. It was especially jarring when they did that with Pant in full flow at the other end. It is fair to say India missed Ravindra Jadeja with the bat.

India invariably get away with these batting shortcomings at home. But if the selectors do not take this chance to address some of them starting with the Sri Lanka Tests, India may have to pay with more missed opportunities overseas, such as this South Africa tour.

SCOREBOARD
India 1st innings: 223
South Africa 1st innings 210
India 2nd innings 198
South Africa (Overnight: 101/2
Keegan Petersen b Thakur 82
Rassie van der Dussen not out 41
Temba Bavuma not out 32
Extras (8lb 3nb) 11
Total (63.3 overs) 212/3
Fall of Wickets: 1-23 (Aiden Markram, 73 ov), 2-101 (Dean Elgar, 29.4 ov), 3-155 (Keegan Petersen, 46.2 ov)
Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 17-5-54-1, Mohammed Shami 15-3-41-1, Umesh Yadav 9-0-36-0, Shardul Thakur 11-3-22-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 11.3-1-51-0.

‘Manipulating DRS is highly unlikely, but there is scope for human errors’

MIHIR VASAVDA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

BEFORE TEAM India lost the series against South Africa, they lost their heads.

During the final session of the third day of the deciding Test in Cape Town, led by captain Virat Kohli, the Indian players fired a barrage of criticism at host broadcasters SuperSport. The players let their displeasure known over three key issues: the use of technology, in particular, the ball-tracking system that they alleged was manipulated; the use of stump-mics; and the conduct of the SuperSport crew.



HEMANT BUCH

What Kohli said: "Don't hit them on the pads, boys. Either stumps or caught behind, that's it. Real experts sitting in the DRS column, boys... couldn't believe they gave me out in the first match. Different ball been shown for tracking, lads."

Context: Ashwin believed he had trapped Dean Elgar in front of the stumps and umpire Marais Erasmus, too, raised his finger. However, after the South African captain reviewed the decision, the tracking system showed the ball was going over the stumps.

Hemant Buch, who has been the broadcast director for more than 100 Tests, said while a human error is possible, it is highly unlikely that the ball-tracking visuals could be manipulated, as implied by the India captain. The ball-tracking technology is supplied by Hawk-Eye, one of the two vendors approved by the ICC. Six cameras are used for this system and there are five people employed by Hawk-Eye to work on the broadcast. These people, Buch said, control the camera's iris, plotting the pitch of the ball,



The ball-tracking of the Ashwin delivery to Elgar, which the Indian team believed was manipulated.

working on Ultra-Edge, and so on. "There are people of varying skill levels and varying degrees of experience working for the company. Sometimes, you find it is taking more time in bringing up the track, sometimes it happens very quickly. Skill levels differ," Buch said. Because of the human intervention involved in the tracking system, there is scope for errors. "But you have to remember that you are talking about one or two decisions in the entire series which are wrong with Hawk-Eye," Buch said. All the data collected is provided to the ICC after the match. "There are so many checks and balances that if it (manipulation) happens, they'll be caught out."

What Kohli said: "I wonder if the stump mic catches all this chatter here, huh?"

Context: For the second time in the match, Kohli spoke angrily about stump mics. Even on Day 2 of the Test, Kohli was heard saying, 'stump mics are way too loud' when India was bowling, implying selective broadcast done by SuperSport, to put increased attention on what the visitors say on the field.

In South Africa, however, they are often kept on for longer durations. In 2018, Australia had requested SuperSport and match officials to turn down the mics when the ball was dead although it was ignored by the broadcasters. Buch, too, felt that compared to the Ashes, being played simultaneously, 'you hear everything that's happening' on the field in South Africa.

ICC rules allow stump mics to be broadcast at all times, but Buch said the volume is pushed up 'only at certain times' when the ball is dead because 'you don't want anything abusive to go out'. A director, who can listen to everything that's said on the field, can up the volume if he comes across interesting banter. At times, Buch added, on-field umpires give the players a heads up when the mics are being used. "I think the Indians feel that stump mics are deliberately kept high when they are bowling," Buch said. "I am not sure if that's 100 percent accurate, but it is apparently what they feel."

What Kohli said: "Focus on your team as well when they shine the ball. Not just the opposition, trying to catch people all the time."

Context: It was a clear reference to the 2018 Sandpaper-gate scandal when Australian players were caught tampering with the ball by the cameras that constantly followed them. Kohli's comments showed he felt only his team, too, was being put under constant scrutiny.

The anger directed at the host broadcaster over the reviews, however, was misplaced. SuperSport, as they clarified in a statement, isn't responsible for the technology. In a statement to AFP, the broadcaster said: "SuperSport notes comments made by certain members of the Indian cricket team. Hawk-Eye is an independent service provider, approved by the ICC and their technology has been accepted for many years as an integral part of DRS."

[A former U19 World Cup skipper's advice to the current batch]

Don't lose focus, follow the process, never compromise on your ethics



BY PRIYAM GARG

IT'S HARD not to be nostalgic about the Under-19 World Cup. I remember our batch played continuous cricket throughout the year before the World Cup. We had series in South Africa, Sri Lanka and India. So preparation-wise, we were prepared mentally. We had gained some experience before the World Cup. It was a proud moment for me when I was handed the task to lead the team. It was a big platform and we tried hard to bring back the crown, but couldn't.

India under-19 players get similar attention and fame like the senior cricketers, especially as the World Cup gets closer. It's the first time we all face such a situation where everyone recognises us, everyone talks about us. There are messages coming from all over, the phone doesn't stop ringing. It's the biggest challenge for an 18-year-old kid, who is trying to find a route to reach the top level.

Sadly, a player doesn't get such fame when playing for their state teams. And the problem starts when a player unknowingly expects such fame permanently, which is never going to be the case. I feel those who can face that situation calmly and keep their head down, will find success ahead.

After the under-19 level, the cricketers get to the senior state level where they have to match the performance of players who are more mature than them. First-class cricket is another big challenge.

Luckily, my family doesn't understand much about cricket, and my father only told

me to grab the opportunity. I remember when it was announced that I will captain the India under-19 team, I was in Bengaluru but back home, we had visitors, media and well-wishers coming to greet our family. There were journalists coming on a daily basis to interview my family; it's something none of us had ever experienced. Suddenly, the whole world wanted to know what I eat, what I like and what I dislike. In Bengaluru, there were hundreds of calls and unread messages on the phone.

I was lucky to have played Ranji Trophy before, so my aim was clear from Day One. I have to represent the senior Indian team one day. Around the time of the Under-19 World Cup, there was also an IPL auction to be held but it never hit my mind because my thought process was clear.

Once I returned, it was a similar kind of buzz. The phone kept ringing, well-wishers came calling. During all this, players have to keep their priorities right. For instance, even when I was picked as captain of the under-19



India Under-19 open their campaign against South Africa on Saturday.

team, I didn't change my schedule - my gym session, nets session, rest and sleep early. Only in my free time, did I take the phone in my hand. The day a player compromises on this routine, I feel the distraction starts. Upar jaane ka percentage kam ho jaata hai, (the chances of making progress go down), following the process is very important. Sleeping on time and getting up early is the key.

Like me, these current players will also make temporary friends, social media will attract them, agents will run behind them, duniya bhi aapke peeche bhagegi (the world will run behind you). My only advice to this under-19 team is to think about the long term and make the best decision from that perspective. Under-19 is the age which needs maturity, but we are very immature. So, take help from your family.

Don't lose focus, follow the process, never compromise on your ethics. Be prepared to hear taali (applause) and gaali (brickbats), we live in a country which has billions of peo-

ple. So don't expect that everyone is your well-wisher. Now with the IPL auction coming up, everyone will want to be part of the glamorous league. It has fame, money, everything. Once you play for your country, these things will come automatically. Decide an off-day where you want to do things outside cricket. In my case, Sunday is my off-day, people will call you, be it at a function or ribbon cutting of their store, decide what is best. If you think that going there will harm you, don't go. Players can judge that. Under-19 could be a short-cut to playing for India but remember only work ethic, performance and hard work will help you remain at the top. So keep working hard, even if you don't find success in this World Cup. (**Priyam Garg was the India captain at the 2020 Under-19 World Cup. He spoke to Devendra Pandey**)

■ **India U19 vs SA U19, Providence, 6:30 pm onwards; on Star Sports network.**