

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY



GOVT & POLITICS


**BID TO
TARNISH
INDIA'S
IMAGE: PM**
PAGE 6

DRAFT REPORT AFTER CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA FLAGGED 'LACK OF FORESIGHT'

Penalty, not arrest; power to withdraw cases: Bihar plans reforms in liquor law

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, JANUARY 20

FIRST-TIME "drinkers" could get away with a penalty rather than face arrest; cases can be withdrawn; a vehicle in which liquor is found may no longer be confiscated and, if it is, can be released after a fine; a section dealing with "immediate" arrest may well be deleted; bootleggers should face the brunt of the law.

These are part of a set of significant reforms envisaged in the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016, according to a proposed draft of these changes, obtained


CM Nitish Kumar
has faced criticism over the law
by *The Indian Express*.

The latest proposed amendments come after criticism of the Government for the way it has implemented the law. Chief Justice N V Ramana last month flagged it as an example of "lack of foresight." He said it had resulted in the High Court "being clogged with bail applications ... a simple bail application takes

one year to be disposed."

Bihar Prohibition and Excise Minister Sunil Kumar — whose Ministry has drafted the proposals — did not respond to *The Indian Express* queries but sources said the state government is exploring the possibility of bringing these in the upcoming Budget session of the Assembly.

The key amendment proposals:

■ Under Section 37, punishment for drinking is a jail term from five years to 10 and even life. The amendment calls for a "penalty as may be notified by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED
Courts clogged, jails full

THE KEY trigger is the mountain of cases under the law as flagged by the CJ. Records show over 4 lakh arrests so far, 20,000 pending bail pleas. Bihar's 59 jails have a capacity of 47,000 but now have about 70,000, almost 25,000 booked under the liquor law.

ORDER UPHOLDING RESERVATION IN NEET

SC: Quota not at odds with merit, ensures substantive equality

Competitive exams don't reflect advantage of some: Bench

ANANTHAKRISHNAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

UNDERLINING THAT "reservation is not at odds with merit but furthers its distributive consequences", the Supreme Court said Thursday that "merit cannot be reduced to narrow definitions of performance in an open competitive examination" and "high scores in an examination are not a proxy for merit". It said merit "should be socially contextualized and reconceptualized as an instrument that advances social goods like equality that we as a society value".

This was stated by the bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and A S Bopanna in a detailed order providing reasons for its January


Justices D Y Chandrachud and A S Bopanna

7 ruling which upheld the Constitutional validity of reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the All India Quota for National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for undergraduate and postgraduate medical admissions.

The bench said while "competitive examinations assess basic current competency to allo-

cate educational resources but are not reflective of excellence, capabilities and potential of an individual which are also shaped by lived experiences, subsequent training and individual character", they "do not reflect the social, economic and cultural advantage that accrues to certain classes and contributes to their success in such examinations".

Explaining how the jurisprudence of reservation had come to recognise substantive equality and not just formal equality, the bench said "Articles 15 (4) and 15 (5) are not an exception to Article 15 (1), which itself sets out the principle of substantive equality (including the recognition of existing inequalities). Thus, Articles 15 (4) and 15 (5)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Alliance hiccups: RLD supporters question SP, feel Jats sidelined

AMIL BHATNAGAR
MUZAFFARNAGAR, SHAMLI, JANUARY 20

FORMALLY ANNOUNCING their alliance at a Parivartan Sandesh Rally in Meerut's Dabauthwa last month, the Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Lok Dal appealed to people to look beyond caste and religion-based differences to defeat the BJP in the elections. Just 20 km from the venue where SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and RLD head Jayant Chaudhary

DECISION 2022

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2


At Siwalkhas, angry residents are threatening to vote against the SP. *Abhinav Saha*

INSIDE

AKHILESH SET TO CONTEST FROM KARHAL IN MAINPURI

MORE REPORTS, PAGES 5, 6

Arunachal boy missing: Army contacts PLA, father says abducted

DEBRAJ DEB & KRISHN KAUSHIK
AGARTALA, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

ON THE day authorities said the Indian Army was in touch with the People's Liberation Army regarding an Arunachal Pradesh boy last seen on January 18, his father alleged he had been abducted by the Chinese and urged the government to "bring my son back safely".

Opang Taron, father of 17-year-old Miram Taron, told *The Indian Express* that the family was very worried. The 49-year-old lives with his wife, five sons

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PROPOSED CHANGES IN IAS RULES

NDA states join chorus of protest, Mamata writes: 'Don't push us'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, KOLKATA, MUMBAI, PATNA, JANUARY 20

RESISTANCE IS mounting from more states to the Centre's proposed changes in rules that give it overarching powers to decide on the posting of IAS officers even as the Government has tightened the norms further in a revised draft.

On Thursday, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee sent a second letter in eight days to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue, describing the move as one that goes "against the... basic structure of India's Constitutional scheme". The Maharashtra government, meanwhile, decided in a


Warns of 'greater movements' on the issue

EXPLAINED

SIMPLY PUT
IAS OFFICERS AND CENTRAL POSTING
PAGE 13

Cabinet meeting to "strongly oppose" the changes.

Sources said at least five states have sent letters to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EOW: Need to probe 82 staff at Rohini jail who helped Suresh, took crores from him

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

TWO MONTHS after Delhi Police arrested seven jail officials for allegedly helping inmate Suresh Chandrashekhar extort Rs 200 crore from Aditi Singh, wife of former Fortis Healthcare pro-


Suresh paid Rs 25-30 cr to get entire barrack for himself: Police

moter Shivinder Singh, the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has asked the jail administration

to allow it to probe 82 officials and staff of Rohini jail under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Police have claimed that Suresh paid around Rs 25-30 crore to jail staff to secure an entire barrack for himself.

In a letter to DG (Tihar) Sandeep Goel on January 10, DCP (EOW) Mohammad Ali said a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

TOREX


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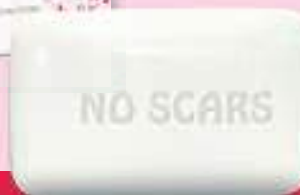
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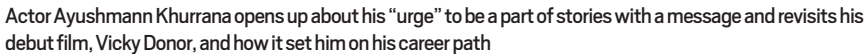
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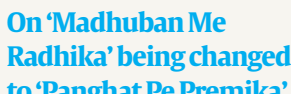
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
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So far, 14 persons, including actor Leena Maria Paul, partner of Suresh, have been chargesheeted in the case.



EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, E.C. Railway, Samastipur for and on behalf of the president of India invites open e-tender on "Single packet system" only through IREPS (Indian Railway Web Portal) for awarding of contract for SLR in Train no. i.e. mention below for a period of Five (05) years from the date of commencement.

Sl. No.	Train No.	E Tender Notice No	SLR	Scale	Reserve Price for Per Trip (in ₹)	Cost of Tender Form In RS. Including 18% GST	Earnest Money (EMD)
1	14009	C-539-SLR-I-14009-22	SLR-I	S	₹5230	₹1180	₹100000
2	15529	C-539-SLR-I-15529-22	SLR-I	P	₹13223	₹1180	₹100000

Instruction to Tenderers:

1. Availability of Tender document : Tender document is available on the web site of Indian Railway Electronic Procurement System (IREPS). 2. Date and Time fixed for bidding of e-tender: From 19.01.2022 to 08-02-2022 upto 15.00 hrs. 3. Date and time fixed for opening of e-tender: 08-02-2022 after 15.00 hrs. 4. Details of Website where e-tender is to be submitted : Tenderers are to be submitted online only through IREPS. For details please visit website www.ireps.gov.in. No Manual tender will be accepted.

Divisional Railway Manager(C)/
ECR/Samastipur

PR/01527/SP/J.Gov.M./T./21-/22/60

Delhi govt launches one-stop EV website

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

THE DELHI government Thursday launched a "dedicated one-stop website for the promotion and adoption" of electric vehicles (EVs) across the capital.

The main features of website — ev.delhi.gov.in — designed keeping in mind both buyers and manufacturers, include a 'charging stations explorer', 'EV calculator', 'EV search' and 'EV dashboard' among others.

Speaking at the launch, Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said, "Modernisation is important in every aspect. The Delhi government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, wanted to give a user-friendly, interactive, and resourceful platform to the public and EV enthusiasts especially. This new website will be able to provide all required information to potential EV consumers and keep up to date with sales and

WHAT IT OFFERS

CHARGING STATIONS EXPLORER: Provides details of all chargers in the city, viz. location, specification/type of charger, and charging points

EV CALCULATOR: Provides an estimate of the fuel savings on the visitor's choice of electric vehicle

EV SEARCH: Details of all EV models available

EV DASHBOARD: Update on total sale of EVs in Delhi

with details of public charging stations currently active in the city. "Until now, Delhi has 377 charging points across 170 locations. The website provides information with regard to: location of the charger, specification/type of the charger, and charging points. As the charging stations are growing each day in Delhi, the website will provide real-time updated numbers to the users," the government said.

The EV calculator provides the visitor "an estimate of fuel savings on his choice of electric vehicle in comparison to an equivalent conventional vehicle. It enables consumers to make a rational choice and identify the cost reduction that an EV can provide considering the maintenance and operation cost of an EV is far lesser than that of a conventional vehicle," the government said.

Similarly, the EV search option will enable visitors "to explore various EV model variants available to them, which can be filtered according to their price, brand and range in a single charge", while the EV dashboard "updates the information on the total sales of EVs in Delhi continuously".

Apart from this, the website will feature recent notifications, circulars issued by the government, and give visitors the option to submit their feedback and enlist grievances. "Especially for grievance and request, an auto-generated email would be sent to the provided email address of the consumer and to the official email address of the Transport Department of Delhi government," the government said.

SIGNATURE GLOBAL Proxima II
AFFORDABLE GROUP HOUSING

List of application numbers of successful applicants in the re-draw of flats in SignatureGlobal Proxima II, Residential Apartments, Sector-89, Gurugram held on Wednesday, 19th of January 2022, at The Pllazio Hotel, Plot No. 292-296, Sector - 29, HUDA City Centre, Gurugram.

2BHK TYPE-01 (581.396 Sq ft.)	2BHK TYPE-02 (588.586 Sq ft.)
21537 21646 22531 21602 21717 23422 21640 22105 23678	21533 21715 22229 21591 21730 22573 21667 21759 22596 21686 21790 22751 21688 21826 23390

2BHK TYPE-01 (581.396 Sq ft.) WAITING LIST
1. 21785 2. 21639

2BHK TYPE-03 (598.220 Sq ft.)
22350

2BHK TYPE-02 (588.586 Sq ft.) WAITING LIST
1. 21668 2. 21745 3. 22542 4. 22618

1sq.mt. = 10.7639 sq.ft.

Disclaimer:
• The re-draw of flats of SignatureGlobal Proxima II was held under the supervision of DTCP officials as per the guidelines laid down in Affordable Group Housing Policy.
• Confirmed Allotment list is in ascending order (Top to bottom)

For more details visit www.signatureglobal.in where the list of successful applicants with names and flat nos. is available.

SIGNATURE INFRABUILD PRIVATE LIMITED
CIN: U70100DL2013PTC247676
Regd. Off.: 13th Floor Dr. Gopal Das Bhawan, 28 Barakhamba Road New Delhi 110001
Corp. Off.: Ground Floor, Tower A, Signature Tower, South City -1, Gurugram, Haryana-122001
Email: customercare@signatureglobal.in, Ph.: 0124-4908200, 9311144624

SIGNATURE GLOBAL Proxima I
AFFORDABLE GROUP HOUSING

List of application numbers of successful applicants in the re-draw of flats in SignatureGlobal Proxima I, Residential Apartments, Sector 89, Gurugram held on Wednesday, 19th January 2022, at The Pllazio Hotel, Plot No. 292-296, Sector - 29, HUDA City Centre, Gurugram

2BHK TYPE-01 (581.396 Sq ft.)	2BHK TYPE-02 (588.586 Sq ft.)
22839 23452 23680 27496 23447 23454 23969 27721 23448 23663 24112	22547 22757 24127 28060 28448 22567 23836 26563 28406 28621

2BHK TYPE-01 (581.396 Sq ft.) WAITING LIST	2BHK TYPE-02 (588.586 Sq ft.) WAITING LIST
1. 27722 2. 22796 3. 22810	1. 28172 2. 22782 3. 23756

2BHK TYPE-03 (598.220 Sq ft.)	2BHK TYPE-04 (590.169 Sq ft.)
22794 23602 26720 27895 28631 23507 23643 27236 28155 23574 24104 27376 28537	23745 24106 28443

2BHK TYPE-04 (590.169 Sq ft.) WAITING LIST
1. 22572

1sq.mt. = 10.7639 sq.ft.

Disclaimer:
• The re-draw of flats of SignatureGlobal Proxima I was held under the supervision of DTCP officials as per the guidelines laid down in Affordable Group Housing Policy.
• Confirmed Allotment list is in ascending order (Top to bottom)

For more details visit www.signatureglobal.in where the list of successful applicants with names and flat nos. is available.

SIGNATUREGLOBAL (INDIA) PRIVATE LIMITED | CIN: U70100DL2000PTC104787
Regd. Off.: 13th Floor Dr. Gopal Das Bhawan, 28 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001
Corp. Off.: Ground Floor, Tower A, Signature Tower, South City -1, Gurugram, Haryana-122001
Email: customercare@signatureglobal.in, Ph.: 0124-4908200, 9311144624

Inspired by movie, teens kill man

New Delhi: Three teenagers have been apprehended by police for allegedly stabbing a 24-year-old man to death in Northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri. Inspired by the Telugu movie 'Pushpa', the juveniles formed a gang, decided to kill a man, and planned to post a video of it online to "be famous".

The man worked as a helper at a workshop. During investigation, the boys were seen fighting with the victim in CCTV footage.

Usha Rangnani, DCP (Northwest), said, "They called themselves the 'Badnaam gang' and imitated the mannerisms of the main character in the movie. They decided to post a video of the incident on Instagram to show their influence." ENS

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CASA 55.05% Gross Advances Growth 23% Retail Advances Growth 19% MSME Advances Growth 24% NII Growth (YoY) 17%

UNAUDITED (REVIEWED) FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021

	Particulars	Quarter Ended 31/12/2021 (Reviewed)	Quarter Ended 31/12/2020 (Reviewed)	Year Ended 31/03/2021 (Audited)
Net Profit Growth (YoY) 111%	Total Income from Operations (Net)	3893.23	3581.50	14496.21
	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	410.15	404.45	1231.11
NIM 3.11%	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	410.15	404.45	1231.11
	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	324.63	154.07	550.25
PCR 93.77%	Paid up Equity Share Capital	6730.50	6560.16	6560.16
	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) - as on date	5487.11	4213.17	4400.39
CRAR 14.85%	Securities Premium Account	328.31	94.95	94.95
	Net Worth	9627.09	7794.11	8019.20
	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	22.34	48.29	61.47
	Debt Equity Ratio	0.32	0.36	0.39
Net NPA 1.24%	Earnings Per Share (of ₹ 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)	0.48	0.23	0.88
	Capital Redemption Reserve	----	----	----

Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites (BSE: www.bseindia.com and NSE: www.nseindia.com) and Bank's website (www.bankofmaharashtra.in)

Place: Pune Date : 20/01/2022 V. P. Srivastava Chief Financial Officer Asheesh Pandey Executive Director A. B. Vijayakumar Executive Director A. S. Rajeev Managing Director & CEO

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Celebration of 50 years of Tripura's Statehood

21 January, 2022 # 11.30 AM
Rabindra Satabarshiki Bhawan, Hall No-1

Events of the Programme

- Launching of 'Lakshya 2047' Document
- Release of Commemorative Postage Stamp on 50 years of Statehood
- Distribution of Civil Awards, Statehood Day Awards and Chief Minister's Civil Service Awards

Chief Guest: Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation, Government of India (Through VC)
Guest of Honour: Shri Biplab Kumar Deb, Chief Minister of Tripura
Special Guest

Shri Devusinh Chauhan, MoS for Communications (Through VC)

Shri Ratan Chakraborty, Speaker, TLA

Shri Pranajit Singha Roy, Minister, Tripura

Shri Mevar Kumar Jamatia, Minister, Tripura

Shri Ram Prasad Paul, Minister, Tripura

Shri Sushanta Chowdhury, Minister, Tripura

Km.Pratima Bhowmik, MoS for Social Justice and Empowerment

Shri Ratan Lal Nath, Minister, Tripura

Shri Manoj Kanti Deb, Minister, Tripura

Smt. Santana Chakma, Minister, Tripura

Shri Bhagaban Ch. Das, Minister, Tripura

Shri Kumar Alok, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Tripura

To be Presided over by: Shri Jishnu Dev Varma, Deputy Chief Minister, Tripura

Government of Tripura

Join the event live at : [f](#) ICA Tripura

4 THE CITY


**VACCINATIONS IN
LAST 24 HOURS**
99,759
**OMICRON
CASES**
549
PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 2,698
OXYGEN SUPPORT 751
VENTILATOR SUPPORT 152
**DELHI: TOTAL
CASES**
17,60,272
HOSPITAL BEDS 15,589
ICU BEDS 4,482
Total active cases in Delhi
Total
15,589
Vacant
12,958
Deaths
3,620
Tests
57,776
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EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

THE ETERNAL flame of the Amar Jawan Jyoti at India Gate, which has remained unextinguished for 50 years, will be put out on Friday, as it will be merged with the flame at the National War Memorial.

In a ceremony on Friday afternoon, a part of the flame will be taken from India Gate to the flame at the National War Memorial, around 400 metres away. After this, the flame at India Gate will be extinguished. Built over a 40-acre area close



In a ceremony on Friday afternoon, a part of the flame will be taken from India Gate to the flame at the National War Memorial, around 400 metres away. After this, the flame at India Gate will be extinguished. *Archive*


THE ETERNAL FLAME

■ Set up at India Gate, Amar Jawan Jyoti has a cenotaph on a marble pedestal with a rifle and a soldier's helmet on it

■ The flame of the Amar Jawan Jyoti was established to pay tribute to soldiers who died in the 1971 war

between India and Pakistan. It was inaugurated on Republic Day, 1972, by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

■ Till 2006, the flame was kept burning using LPG cylinders. A pipeline was then laid for piped natural gas to be supplied for it

to India Gate, the National War Memorial has names of over 26,000 Indian soldiers who died in the wars and conflicts of inde-

pendent India. It was inaugurated in February 2019 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Official sources said that ear-

lier, there was no war memorial to pay homage to all military personnel who had laid down their lives for the country in various wars and conflicts, which is why the flame was at India Gate.

Now that there is a dedicated museum, the flame will be merged.

After the National War Memorial was set up, political leaders and military chiefs have been laying wreaths at the new site, and not at India Gate like they used to earlier. The PM, along with the military chiefs, lays a wreath at the National War Memorial before the Republic Day parade.

RT-PCR RATES NOW Rs 300, HOME COLLECTION TO COST Rs 500

Covid test prices slashed again; private labs say not consulted, can't break even

ANONNA DUTT
 NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

THE DELHI government on Thursday further slashed the prices of Covid-19 testing, reducing the cost of the gold-standard RT-PCR test to Rs 300 if the samples are given at the lab or hospital and Rs 500 if they are collected from home. Several private lab owners, however, said it will be impossible for them to sustain business at these rates.

Last year in August, the government had fixed the prices at Rs 500 for lab collection and Rs 700 for home collection. The cost of the less accurate rapid antigen test was also fixed at Rs 100, reduced from Rs 300 previously fixed by the government.

The government will pay private labs Rs 200 for sample collected by it and Rs 300 for samples collected by the private labs at the behest of the government.

"All labs/hospitals will display the revised rates at (a) prominent place latest within 24 hours of this order. This order comes into effect immediately



At the Covid care centre inside Shehnai banquet hall, Thursday. The govt order also states that samples have to be processed within 12 hours of receiving it. *Amit Mehra*

and is for strict compliance by all concerned," according to the order by Delhi's principal health secretary Manisha Saxena.

Owners of several private labs that *The Indian Express* spoke to said that they will not be able to break-even at the prices being offered by the government.

Said Dr Naveen Dang, founder of Dr Dang's Lab: "We

were barely breaking even at the cost that was being offered, with the new price we will not be able to do even that. The cost of the test has to cover not only the reagents, but consumables, quality manpower, quality kits, waste disposal and all. The cost of the kits also vary with the quality of the kits; we are committed to give the best quality reports at

the best possible turn-around time. All this comes at a cost."

Dr Arvind Lal, chairman and managing director of Dr Lal Pathlabs, added: "It is most unfortunate that the government

has once again unilaterally lowered the pricing of the most important test in the pandemic, namely the Covid RT-PCR, without discussing it with the

laboratory fraternity or trying to understand the different costs involved."

A private lab owner, who did not want to be named, said all labs have decided to stop doing rapid antigen tests: "The kits cost me Rs 95, how can I do the test for Rs 100? Besides, the government is yet to pay crores they owe us. Our survival is at stake."

"It is next to impossible for us to keep the lab running at the prices offered by the government. They only account for the kit prices, but we have to account for incentives to technicians for samples collection, salaries of microbiologists, data entry operators and other staff, fumigation, sterilisation, PPE kits, and maintenance of the machines. I won't even save Rs 10 per test. I will have to stop home collection from tomorrow," the owner added.

The Indian Express had previously reported that half of the samples collected by the government centres were being analysed by private labs. The increase in testing capacity from 1,00,000 a day to 3,00,000 was

aided largely by newer private labs opening up.

The order also states that all samples have to be processed within 12 hours of receiving it. Further, it states, the reports of all positive cases have to be uploaded on the ICMR portal within 30 minutes of processing the samples and all negative reports have to be uploaded latest within 24 hours of receiving the samples.

According to a senior government official, this was done because some labs were collecting more samples than they could process leading to delays in reporting. Earlier, the government said samples were to be processed within 24 hours.

"People will start pooling samples, use bad quality reagents at this cost," said the private lab owner.

Another owner of a city laboratory added: "The government has slashed prices, but wants us to invest more in manpower so that we can do the tests in 12 hours? How is that possible? People will cut corners and compromise on quality."

First convict in riots case gets 5 yrs in jail
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

A DELHI court Thursday sentenced the first person to be convicted in a Northeast Delhi riots case to five years rigorous imprisonment for trespassing into a woman's home and setting it on fire.

Sentencing the convict, Dinesh Yadav, Additional Sessions Judge Virender Bhat said: "It cannot be gainsaid that the offence committed by the convict was a

very serious one. However, no evidence had been led by the prosecution to prove that the unlawful assembly of which the convict was a member had been formed in pursuance to some conspiracy."

The court said the convict was a first-time offender and has clean past antecedents. "It is also to be kept in mind that the convict has been held guilty only by virtue of section 149 IPC and there was no evidence that he had directly committed the incident of violence in which the house of the victim, Manori Devi

(67), had been vandalised and burnt. The young age of the convict also deserves to be kept in consideration while deciding the quantum of sentence to be imposed upon him," the order read.

Special Public Prosecutor RCS Bhadoria asked the court to hand an exemplary sentence to the convict who was found guilty for being "part of an unlawful assembly which created large scale disturbances to defame India". Yadav's lawyer sought a lenient sentence as he had learnt his lesson by spending over a year in jail.

2 labourers killed after soil caves in, kin allege negligence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 GURGAON, JANUARY 20

TWO CONSTRUCTION labourers were buried alive after soil caved in on them while they were working at an under-construction plot in Sector 56 Wednesday. Police registered an FIR against the contractor and owner of the plot after a relative of the victims' filed a complaint alleging negligence on their part, causing deaths.

The victims have been identified as Malkhan (28) and his sister-in-law Guddo (42), hailing from Chhatarpur district in Madhya Pradesh. Their family said they were living in a rented accommodation near Sector 56.

According to police, the incident took place around 4 pm when Malkhan, Guddo and three other labourers were working at the basement of the plot, dug at least 15-20 feet deep.

A police officer said, "While digging, an adjacent wall collapsed and fell on the two victims, who were buried underneath the soil. Three labourers, who were working a few feet apart from them, escaped unhurt."

Police said the victims fell unconscious and their bodies were



Malkhan (28) and his sister-in-law Guddo (42)

retrieved and taken to a private hospital, where they were declared dead on arrival.

Malkhan's brother, Rajkumar, a painter, alleged that the incident occurred due to the negligence of the contractor and the plot owner. "Had proper safety gear and equipment been provided to them, they would have survived. The wall should have been concretised and proper support should have been given before digging at the bottom," he said.

Rajkumar said Malkhan earned Rs 700-800 a day for labour work and was about to get married soon: "The family had been looking for a match for him. I had spoken to him three days ago over the phone. He had been unreachable since then. He used to stay with me earlier at Sector

5 DECISION 2022

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HASHTAG POLITICS



• Family problems

With the name of Utpal Parrikar, son of former Union Defence minister and Goa CM the late Manohar Parrikar, missing from the BJP's first list of Goa candidates announced on Thursday, BJP and AAP are

now exchanging barbs over the Parrikar family. After Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal tweeted that the BJP "has adopted use and throw policy" with the Parrikar family, Goa CM Pramod Sawant hit back, saying AAP's "entire party & politics is based on shallow opportunism" and Kejriwal should remember his "filthy comments" against Manohar Parrikar, made in 2016 over an alleged mining scam.

2.9K LIKES, 1K RETWEETS IN 7.5 HOURS

BALLOTIN



Priyanka Maurya (right) and Pramod Gupta (left) join the BJP in Lucknow on Thursday. Vishal Srivastav

Congress poster face joins BJP

Lucknow: Former Samajwadi Party MLA Pramod Gupta, relative of the party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, joined the BJP here on Thursday. This comes a day after Yadav's daughter-in-law Apama Yadav jumped board to the saffron party. Also to join the BJP was Congress' poster girl Dr Priyanka Maurya and Ayodhya's folk singer Vandana Mishra. Maurya was the face of Congress 'Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon' poster in UP. **PTI**

Khatauli MLA chased by locals

New Delhi: The BJP candidate from Khatauli, Vikram Saini, was forced to return from the area on Thursday after angry locals raised slogans against him. In videos of the incident that emerged on social media, the Khatauli MLA was seen getting into his car as a crowd surrounded it. He is seen rolling up the window as people continued to chant slogans, and the car leaves. Saini is up against the RLD's Rajpal Singh Saini and the BSP's Kartar Singh Bhadana from BSP in the upcoming Assembly polls in UP. Saini, however, downplayed the incident and said: "Only two people were there. They were under the influence of alcohol. I folded my hands and left. There was no other problem," he told reporters after the incident. **ENS**

Bhim Army chief to fight from CM Yogi home turf

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 20

PROMINENT DALIT leader and Aazad Samaj Party (Kanshiram) chief Chandrashekhar Azad will contest the UP Assembly election from the Gorakhpur Sadar constituency, the stronghold of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Azad's decision came days after he said talks with the Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party for a pre-poll alliance had failed.

"Taking forward the ideology of Babasaheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar and Kanshiram sahib... ASP (K) announces

Chandrashekhar Azad as candidate from Gorakhpur Sadar," ASP (K) election in-charge for Gorakhpur, Mohd Aqib said.

Speaking to the *Indian Express*, Azad said, "For the last five years I have been on the ground fighting against the oppressive policies of this government. The opposition should have fielded their strongest candidates against Yogi Adityanath. I am not afraid to go up against him."

"If Bhagat Singh had been afraid, India wouldn't have got Independence. I will fight with integrity. It is a fight of kind vs a poor person's son. And I have the blessings of many families with me."

The other Maurya

OBC exits mean Keshav Prasad Maurya is now indispensable for BJP. Denied CM chair in 2017, can the 'Mandal plus Kamandal' leader be kept out again?

SHYAMLAL YADAV
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

KESHAV PRASAD Maurya has been biding his time for a while now. Five years ago, he was considered the closest to the chief minister's chair when he led the state BJP as it swept Uttar Pradesh. At the last minute, however, surprise choice Yogi Adityanath pipped him to the post. Now, while Adityanath is the face of the party in the state, Maurya's claim cannot be as easily overlooked. The exit of several OBC leaders from its ranks means the BJP needs to keep its tallest leader from the community happy.

All those who have left, including ministers Swami Prasad Maurya and Dara Singh Chauhan, accused the BJP of ignoring OBCs. Swami Prasad specifically mentioned Keshav Prasad, saying the 52-year-old had been reduced to a "bechara (a helpless man)".

The fact that Maurya has been smarting from the 2017 reversal is an open secret in the BJP. The deputy chief ministership offered to him — with Brahmin leader Dinesh Sharma as the second deputy CM — was as much a conciliatory gesture to him as to castes other than Adityanath's Thakurs. In July 2019, further ruffling Maurya's feathers, the BJP appointed Swatantra Dev Singh the new state unit president. A Kurmi, Singh is also an OBC face, and is considered close to Adityanath.

Since then, even as Maurya — the Minister for Public Works Department, Food Processing, Entertainment Tax and Public Enterprises — retained his hold among party workers, meeting them, redressing their grievances, equations have weighed more



Maurya is the tallest of the OBC leaders the BJP has in UP.

and more in Adityanath's favour.

Any doubts were settled when, at the start of the campaign for the elections, PM Narendra Modi and Union minister Amit Shah declared that a vote for Adityanath in 2022 was one for Modi in 2024. Sources said senior BJP and RSS leaders, who held talks with state leaders in Lucknow in the run-up to the polls, also let it be known that there will be neither any change in the state leadership (CM), nor state BJP (Swatantra Dev). Adityanath's visit to Maurya's official residence in June — the first since the 2017 results — was seen as an effort to patch things up between the two.

All that has changed in the past few days, with OBC leaders leaving the BJP. The community had been crucial to the BJP's sweep last time. Backing Maurya, a prominent BJP OBC leader, who doesn't want to be named, says: "He is accessible to BJP workers and ordinary people and tries to resolve their problems. Even when he opposed decisions of the government that he thought were anti-

people, he did it at proper forums. Nothing came out in public."

As far as credentials go, Maurya has all the right ones — a combination of "Mandal and Kamandal". BJP leaders point out, the first one to symbolise both since the party's late stalwart Kalyan Singh.

A native of Sirathu, Maurya started out with the VHP. He was quite young when he started living at the outfit's office at Kydganj in old Allahabad, helping senior RSS pracharak Thakur Gururaj Singh. After a few years, he was appointed sangathan mantri (district organisation secretary) by the VHP.

Those close to Maurya say he tried to move to BJP but, in the late '90s, was sent by VHP to Ayodhya as prant sangathan mantri (state organisational secretary). These were the years after Babri Masjid demolition, when VHP was very active in Ayodhya. Here, Maurya grew closer to late VHP chief Ashok Singhal. However, he sought to return to Allahabad, and moved on to social work. Maurya's attempts to again join

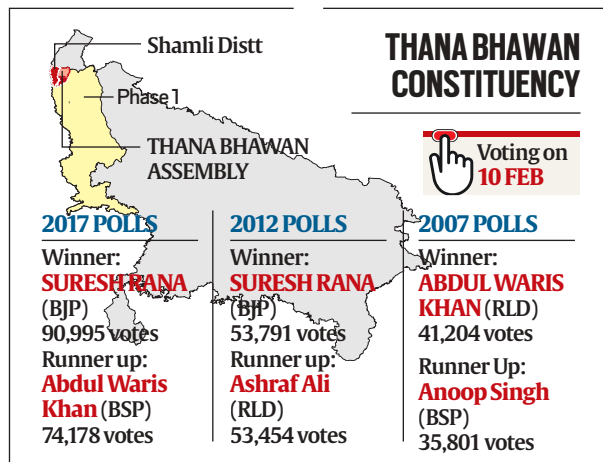
BJP were reportedly blocked by some BJP leaders, including then Allahabad Lok Sabha MP Murlu Manohar Joshi. After Joshi lost the Lok Sabha poll in 2004, Maurya finally made it to the party and was fielded from the Allahabad (West) Assembly seat in a bypoll. The seat had been dominated by strongman Atiq Ahmed for years, and Maurya could only finish third.

The BJP gave the ticket to him again in the 2007 Assembly polls, but he again came in third. Then, in the 2012 Assembly polls, he contested from Sirathu, and won despite a Samajwadi Party wave.

Maurya's stature further rose when in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, he won from the Phulpur Lok Sabha seat, which was once represented by Jawaharlal Nehru and was considered tough for the BJP. Around this time, Modi and Shah who were looking for a new face for UP BJP chief set their eyes on Maurya. He came from a community that is a big force in UP (including not just the Mauryas but also Shakyas, Sainis, Kushwahs, spread across the state). Just before the 2017 Assembly polls, he was named the UP BJP chief.

After he became the Deputy CM, Maurya was elected to the Legislative Council. For the coming Assembly elections, BJP has fielded him again from Sirathu.

Sources said Maurya is playing a key role in the BJP ticket distribution, particularly in Prayagraj region. Asked about his role post-elections, particularly in reference to the CM post, Maurya told *The Indian Express*, "This is not a topic to be discussed now. As of now we are busy campaigning and we are getting full support among all sections of society, including SCs, STs, OBCs. We will win like 2017 again."



Amid farmer discontent, Thana Bhawan faces keen battle

AMIL BHATNAGAR
SHAMLI, JANUARY 20

TRACTORS OVERLADEN with sugarcane, spilling some of their load as they hit speed bumps on the roads, is a familiar sight across Thana Bhawan. One of the three Assembly constituencies in Shamli district in West UP, Thana Bhawan is the home town of UP Cane Development Minister and two-time BJP MLA Suresh Rana.

In the backdrop of local farmers' pending sugarcane dues and the year-long farmer protests against the three central agriculture laws earlier, the Thana Bhawan constituency, which has a mixed caste population, is heading for a keen electoral battle with the polling scheduled for 10 February.

So far, the names of the BJP's Suresh Rana and the RLD's Ashraf Ali, former chairman of the Jalalabad civic body, have been announced as poll candidates. In the 2017 polls, Rana had trumped the BSP's Abdul Waris Khan by a margin of about 50,000 votes out of the nearly 2 lakh total votes polled. However, in the 2012 polls, he had squeezed through with mere 265 votes against the RLD nominee Ashraf Ali, who has now again returned to challenge him. The local residents' main grievance against Rana is that he has not done enough to help the sugarcane farmers in the region. They allege farmers' sugarcane dues pending for months have not been cleared despite the claims made by government officials.

Farmers say their local BJP MLA and Minister Rana could have done more to get them dues from mills like the Bajaj sugar mill located in Thana Bhawan, which is one of the biggest in West UP and a key source of sugarcane sale in Shamli.

"One can go around in the en-

tire region and ask any farmer and they will tell you that their dues are pending. For some it may be one month dues and for others it may be for many months. But the fact is that the farmers have been let down. A person from this very region has been given the ministry that impacts our daily life. There is general discontent regarding Suresh Rana's work," said Deepak Thakur, a resident of Naujil village in the constituency, who grows sugarcane over nearly 30 acres of land.

Some of the people backing Rana make it clear that their support is actually meant for the saffron party and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. "Either people are unhappy with Suresh Rana or are indifferent to him. It is true, that he is one among us and people have known him for long, but our true support is for the party (BJP). We know that the party thinks for everyone of us. It is not about one candidate but the party ideology," said Ankur Singh, a local resident.

The RLD's candidate Ashraf Ali seems to be grappling with the tension arising out of his party's alliance with the Samajwadi Party (SP), with their ticket distribution in West UP causing a rift between the workers and supporters of the two allies.

The SP supporters say that Sher Singh Rana, their local "popular" leader, was expected to be given the ticket from the seat, but the SP-RLD combine chose to field Ali. A mahapan-chayat was held in Tahodi a few days ago, that urged Sher Singh to fight the polls as an Independent candidate.

On his part, Sher Singh Rana told *The Indian Express*, "In the last minute, tickets have been given to those who are weak and would make it easier for others (their rivals). I will follow what the party instructs me."

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

Pramod Sawant to contest Sanquelim seat, Utpal Parrikar denied Panaji ticket

LIZ MATHEW & MAYURA JANWALKAR
NEW DELHI, PANAJI, JAN 20

WITH GOA heading for a multi-cornered Assembly elections, the ruling BJP on Thursday released its first list of 34 candidates of the total 40 constituencies in the state for the 14 February polls, fielding CM Pramod Sawant from his Sanquelim seat, even as the party denied the Panaji constituency ticket to Utpal Parrikar, son of party stalwart and ex-CM late Manohar Parrikar.

In the Poriem seat, where Congress candidate and ex-CM Pratap Singh Rane has remained



BJP Goa in-charge Devendra Fadnavis releasing the list, Thursday. PTI

undefeated for the last 50 years, the BJP has fielded his daughter-in-law Deviya Rane as its nominee. His son Vishwajit Rane, Goa health minister, had earlier

claimed that he would take on his father in Poriem. His party has however nominated Vishwajit from his existing seat in neighbouring Valpoi.

The BJP's list has 11 OBC, 9 Christian and 2 women candidates. Sawant, who has been elected twice from Sanquelim, is set to contest for the third time.

In Panaji, BJP has chosen its sitting MLA Atanasio alias Babush Monserrate as its candidate. Monserrate was one of the 10 Congress MLAs who had defected to the BJP in 2019. While Utpal may have been denied the Panaji seat that his father represented five times, the BJP's Goa election in-charge and ex-Maharashtra

CM Devendra Fadnavis said the party has offered him another seat. "We have given the (Panaji) ticket to the sitting MLA. Utpal Parrikar and Parrikarji's family is our family. They are very close to us. We gave Utpal Parrikar two more options from where he can contest. He already refused one and discussions about the other are going on with him. We all feel he should agree. The Parrikar family will always be respected by the BJP," he said. Utpal, who has been keen on contesting from Panaji, had earlier questioned the party's decision to give his father's seat to a candidate with "criminal antecedents". **FULL REPORT**

www.indianexpress.com

Cong delays 2nd Punjab list to prevent defections to BJP

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 20

AFTER HAVING released its first list of 86 candidates for the upcoming Punjab Assembly elections, the ruling Congress is holding on to its second list of 31 poll nominees, waiting for the BJP to declare its candidates so that its rejects could not leave and join the saffron party.

The BJP and its Punjab election allies — former Congress CM Capt Amarinder Singh's Punjab Lok Congress and ex-Akalis leader Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa's Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt) — are yet to finalise seat-sharing formula for the 20 February polls.

Congress sources said the party's Punjab Screening Committee has already sent a list of candidates for the remaining 31 seats to party chief Sonia Gandhi and that the Gandhi-headed Central Election Committee (CEC) has scheduled its meeting at 11 am on January 22 to consider it.

"The CEC may or may not declare all the remaining candidates on January 22. The Screening Committee has sent the final list to Gandhi. However, several seats have a panel of two names each," said a Congress leader privy to dis-



Channi to contest from Chamkaur Sahib; party sending names for 31 seats

VOTING ON FEBRUARY 20

cussions on the matter. "If the decision is not taken (by the CEC on January 22), then it may be postponed to January 25," he added.

The Congress leader pointed out that the party has some more time now as the Punjab election date has been deferred to 20 February. The last date of filing poll nominations is now scheduled for February 1. "We expect fireworks after the second list as several sitting MLAs are likely to lose their seats. But if BJP has already announced its candidates, then they would not have anywhere to go,"

he said, adding that the BJP has been eyeing Congress rejects, who may not win but could dent the Congress's prospects.

A source said the Congress has decided against fielding CM Charanjit Singh Channi from two seats. It may replace the candidate of Adampur seat as former MP Mohinder Singh Kaypee has been upset as the party has nominated a former BSP leader from there.

The Congress has already fielded CM Channi and Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu from their respective constituencies, Chamkaur Sahib and Amritsar (East).

In Patiala (Urban), the Congress may field former mayor Vishnu Sharma against Capt Amarinder. Sharma was earlier a loyalist of Amarinder but later joined the SAD. Navjot Sidhu recently got him into the party fold.

The 31 constituencies include the seats of 13 sitting Congress MLAs, whose names did not figure in the party's first list. They include Tarsem DC from Attari, Satkar Kaur from Ferozepur (Rural), Kuldip Vaid from Gill, Nirmal Singh Shutrana from Shutrana, and Davinder Singh Ghubaya from Fazilka.

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

POLITICS & ENTERTAINMENT

Durga hymns, Bhojpuri rap: Melody of UP poll songs

YASHEE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

NEITHER SRI Lankan singer Yohani nor Chhattisgarh child artiste Sahdev Dirdo will vote in the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. But the ruling BJP is hoping they can influence other people to vote in its favour, by setting its campaign songs to the tune of Manike Mage Hithe and Bachpan Ka Pyar, the two viral hits of last year.

With the EC banning physical rallies in poll-bound states because of the Covid-19 threat, the political parties are trying all other modes of outreach to woo voters. And in UP, campaign songs have turned into full-blown war cries, with the BJP and the Samajwadi Party (SP) leading the way so far.

Both the parties have come up with several songs in various UP dialects such as Khadi Boli, Awadhi, and Bhojpuri. The Congress and the BSP too have songs around their campaigns, but they are not as prolific as the incumbent and its main challenger. While the songs showcase the parties' planks, they also offer an insight into the intra-party dynamics — and issues no party is vocal about.

Here are some of the songs that should not be missed.

Bharatiya Janata Party

The song pinned to BJP's YouTube homepage as of January 20 is 'Bhooh nahin jana re', based on Dirdo's 'Bachpan ka pyar'. The song exhorts voters to remember they have to vote for BJP in this election. While listing the 'achievements'

of the Yogi Adityanath government, it urges voters not to forget the 'ghor brashitachar (rampant corruption)' and 'mafia rule' of previous governments.

Based on the Sri Lankan melodious song Manike Mage Hithe, the song 'Sab ki man ki ye bhasha, yahan du du hai asha (this is what everyone feels, there are two hopes here)' is less defensive, and seeks to project the BJP government's 'many accomplishments'.

Samajwadi Party

The song pinned on the SP's YouTube page is 'Janta pukarti hai, Akhilesh aayiye (the people are calling, Akhilesh do come)'. Written by Bilal Saharanpuri and sung by Altamash Faridi, the song is like a Bollywood romance number, complete with a lilting tune.

Rather than attacking the BJP, it focuses on all things bright and beautiful — 'khushhaali (happiness)' and 'vikas (progress)'. Akhilesh as the inheritor of the JP and Lohia legacy, Lucknow metro, Agra highway, and Gomti riverfront.

Congress

The song released on Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's official YouTube page plays up the Congress's poll pitch, 'Ladki hun lad sakti hun (I am a girl, I can fight)'. The song begins with the hymn Aigiri Nandini, dedicated to Goddess Durga. The only two politicians who feature in the video are Priyanka at the beginning, and Indira Gandhi later when it says a woman can run a household as well as the country. The Hindu rituals of worship run through the song. Another song, shared on an unofficial Congress

YouTube page, goes 'Behen Priyanka aayengi, BJP tou jayegi (Sister Priyanka will come, BJP will have to go)', which mentions UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu as a 'sarathi' (charioteer).

Bahujan Samaj Party

The BSP has been subdued in the poll run-up so far. However, a campaign song, posted on a YouTube page called 'Bhim Music', declares 'Aa rahin hain sabki Behenji (everyone's sister is coming back)'. The song claims UP has had enough of 'gundagardi (bullying)' and durachar (foul conduct), and that no Sengar (reference to former BJP MLA Kuldip Singh Sengar, accused in the Unnao rape case) will go unpunished.

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com



DIGITAL PUSH

RESTRICTIONS ON physical election rallies appear to have thrown up new star campaigners besides those in the party's official list. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor does not figure in the star campaigners' list of his party, but the digital campaign seems to have put him in demand, at least in some states. Earlier this week, Tharoor announced that he would address the people of poll-bound Goa virtually. Soon more than 150 people signed up and his followers on Facebook and YouTube also joined. Tharoor's 25-minute speech went viral and there were dozens of questions from the viewers as well, which received significant coverage in local newspapers.

PUSAD MOVEMENT

ONE YEAR ago, Rajya Sabha MP Rakesh Sinha made an appeal to Chairman of the Upper House Venkaiah Naidu to develop Pusad in Maharashtra as a memorial of the 1930 Jungle Satyagraha, which was offered under the leadership of RSS founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. The spot in Pusad in Yavatmal district has remained neglected since Independence. On Wednesday though, the Ministry of Culture formally gave a go-ahead to a museum dedicated to the movement, which ran parallel to Mahatma Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha, as part of the Azaadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.

EYES ON NUMBERS

DUE TO the rise in Covid cases, most central ministries are running with depleted staff strength. Below the level of under-secretaries, 50 per cent staff are allowed to work from home on a given day. Naturally, the usual buzz is missing from the power corridors. But officials in the Department of School Education in Literacy are slogging away to make the upcoming 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' a success, with the Prime Minister's Office monitoring the status of registrations for the event on a daily basis. It is learnt that so far there have been over 11 lakh registrations for the annual event during which Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds an interaction with selected students, parents and teachers on tackling exam stress. On Thursday, the last date for registration was extended to January 27. An official said the event is likely to be held in online mode around mid-February.

Uttarakhand elections: BJP announces candidates for 59 seats

AVANEESH MISHRA
DEHRADUN, JANUARY 20

THE BJP on Thursday announced its first list of candidates for the Uttarakhand Assembly election, which is scheduled to take place on February 14. The ruling party announced its candidates for 59 out of the total 70 Assembly seats in the state. Of the 59, only five are women.

In 10 of the announced seats, the BJP has fielded a different candidate to the one fielded during the last Assembly election.

Announcing the candidates, Union minister Pralhad Joshi, who is the election in-charge for the BJP in Uttarakhand, said: "The Vidhan Sabha elections in Uttarakhand is not just a mandate for five years of work by the

BJP in the state, but also of the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make this decade the decade of Uttarakhand... Today we are declaring candidates on 59 seats, and five of them are women. Of the total candidates, 15 are Brahmins," he said.

According to the list, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami will contest from the Khatima Assembly seat that he currently holds, and BJP state president Madan Kaushik will contest from the Haridwar seat.

Ministers Subodh Uniyal, Ganesh Joshi, Swami Yatishwaranand, Dhan Singh Rawat, Satpal Maharaj and Rekha Arya will also contest from the seats they currently hold. Raipur MLA Umesh Sharma Kau will also contest from the seat he holds.

Hathras victim lawyer joins BSP, supports Mayawati as UP CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 20

SUPREME COURT lawyer Seema Kushwaha, who represents the Hathras gangrape and murder victim and earlier fought for the 2012 Delhi gangrape victim, joined the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Lucknow on Thursday, in the presence of party general secretary Satish Chandra Misra. She also met party president Mayawati.

Kushwaha said she is impressed with the policies of Mayawati and wants her to be the next UP chief minister for women's safety and crime control. In the Hathras case, a Dalit girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by local youths in September 2020, and died a fortnight later at Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi. The investigation was handed over to the CBI.

Kushwaha decided to represent the victim after the Allahabad High Court took suo moto cognizance of a hasty burial of the girl by the district administration. After the lawyer joined the party, Misra tweeted, "Inspired by the thoughts of all the revered saints and great men born in Bahujan Samaj and respected behan Mayawati ji, Seema Kushwaha ji, who always fought for justice and rights for women, took membership of BSP today."



Seema Kushwaha and BSP chief Mayawati. ANI

AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV

PM: Attempts being made to 'tarnish' India's image

At same programme, Rajasthan CM says atmosphere of violence in country

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, JANUARY 20

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Thursday flagged "attempts to tarnish" India's image and said giving precedence to rights and "completely forgetting" about duties ever since Independence had left the country weak.

At the same programme — the virtual national launch ceremony of 'Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat Ke Ore' — Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot told the Prime Minister that peace and brotherhood are the most pressing needs of the day as there is an atmosphere of violence in the country.

Prime Minister Modi also virtually launched seven initiatives dedicated to Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by the spiritual organisation Brahma Kumaris.

Delivering the keynote address, Modi said there is a tendency to tarnish the image of India, including at the international level.

"You are all witness to how there are attempts to tarnish India's image. A lot of it happens at the international level too. We cannot get away from this by saying that this is just politics. This is not politics, this is the question of our country. Today, when we are celebrating the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, it is also our responsibility that the world should know India properly," the Prime Minister said.

He said organisations such as Brahma Kumaris, which have an international presence, should convey the correct picture of India to the people of other countries and tell the "truth about the rumours being spread about India".



PM Narendra Modi at the event on Thursday. PTI

Development partnership key pillar of India-Mauritius ties: PM

New Delhi: Jointly inaugurating multiple development projects in Mauritius, along with the country's Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said Mauritius is "integral" to India's approach to the Indian Ocean, and that the development partnership is a key pillar of the close ties between the two nations. Speaking at a virtual event, Modi said, "India and Mauritius are united by history, ancestry, culture, language and the shared waters of the Indian Ocean. Today, our robust development partnership has emerged as a key pillar of our close ties."

Modi also appealed to such organisations that they should encourage foreign citizens to come to India and learn about the country. "In whichever country you have branches, you should try that at least 500 persons come to visit India from



SP president Akhilesh Yadav at a press briefing in Lucknow on Thursday. Vishal Srivastav

Akhilesh set to debut in state polls from SP bastion Karhal

ASAD REHMAN
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 20

SAMAJWADI PARTY chief Akhilesh Yadav will contest the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections from Karhal seat in Mainpuri, the party said on Thursday, making it Akhilesh's Assembly poll debut.

Mainpuri is seen as a bastion of SP.

When he was the chief minister between 2012 and 2017, Akhilesh had taken the Legislative Council route.

SP national spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary confirmed to The Indian Express that Akhilesh

will contest from Karhal, a seat SP has won five times after the party was formed in 1992. The SP lost it only once in the six Vidhan Sabha elections since 1993 — in 2002, three-time SP MLA Sobaran Singh Yadav had won on a BJP ticket.

Sobaran returned to the SP later and has won the seat for the party in the last three elections.

The move comes days after the BJP announced Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will contest the Assembly polls — also his first — from Gorakhpur.

SP spokesperson Abdul Hafeez Gandhi said Akhilesh chose Karhal for "emotional and strategic reasons". He said, "Netaji (party founder and Akhilesh's father Mulayam Yadav) is from Mainpuri and has represented the seat several times. He (Mulayam) also studied at Karhal Inter College and later taught there. This move to contest from the (party's) stronghold will cement our place in the region and ensure the party doesn't lose seats in the Yadav bastion, like it did in 2017."

Mulayam has been a five-time MP from Mainpuri. Karhal is a few kilometres from Saifai, Mulayam's native village.

On Wednesday, asked whether he will contest the Assembly polls, Akhilesh had said he will first seek permission from the people of Azamgarh, from where he is an MP.

National-level shooter among 16 women in UP Cong 2nd list

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 20

NATIONAL-LEVEL SHOOTER Poonam Pandit, who gained political prominence after her participation in the farmers' protests on Delhi's border, and the wife of a Congress leader who had died of a cardiac arrest during a TV debate are among 16 women in the Congress's list of 41 candidates for Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, announced on Thursday.

The party has announced it will give 40 per cent party tickets to women in the state elections.

In the first list of 125 candi-

dates, announced on January 13, Congress had named 50 women. The second list has also tried to balance caste equations, with the party naming 12 candidates each from General and OBC categories, nine from the Muslim community, and seven candidates from Scheduled Castes background.

The Congress named Pandit, 25, the national-level shooter, from Sayana seat in Bulandshahr district. She had joined Congress about three months ago.

The party has named Sangeeta Tyagi, 43, from Sahibabad Assembly seat, an urban constituency next door to the national capital, in Ghaziabad. Sangeeta's husband, late Congress spokesperson Rajiv Tyagi, had died last year following a heart attack during a TV news debate.

From Nawabganj constituency in Bareilly, Congress has fielded Usha Gangwar, who had contested in 2012 on a BSP ticket and finished second, getting nearly 49,000 votes.

Other women in the Congress second list include Sukhwinder Kaur, Yasmeen Rana, Salma Agha Ansari, Kalpana Singh, Mithlesh, Neeraj Kumar Prajapati, Bhawana Valmiki, Sunita Sharma, Monika Suryavanshi, Preeti Dhangar, Suman Chaudhary, and Priyanka Jaiswal.

each branch, to know about India," he said.

The Prime Minister said it needs to be admitted that in the 75 years after Independence "the evil of ignoring duties and not keeping them paramount has entered our society, our nation and each one of us".

He said that during this period, "we only spent time talking and fighting about rights".

Modi stressed that the talk of rights, to some extent, may be correct in some circumstances, but forgetting one's duties completely has played a major role in keeping India weak.

Earlier, addressing the PM, Chief Minister Gehlot, who joined the programme via video conferencing from Jaipur, said: "We want to create and strengthen peace, harmony and brotherhood which is also needed the most today because it is being seen that there is an environment of tension and violence in the country. You and all of us want to get rid of it."

"I believe that we can progress a society and a nation only by taking the road to truth and non-violence. Where there's peace, there's development," he said.

Founded in India in 1937, Brahma Kumaris identifies as "a worldwide spiritual movement dedicated to personal transformation and world renewal". While their headquarters is in Mount Abu in Rajasthan, they claim to have a presence in over 100 countries.

Bhagwant Mann, AAP Punjab CM face, to contest from Dhuri

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 20

AAM AADMI Party's chief ministerial face in Punjab, Bhagwant Mann, will fight the Assembly poll from Sangrur district's Dhuri constituency.

Making this announcement in Chandigarh, AAP state co-in-charge and Delhi MLA Raghav Chadha said that Mann had won majority of votes in Dhuri Assembly segment, which falls under Sangrur Parliamentary seat, during 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Mann, a comedian-turned-politician, is a two-time Lok Sabha MP from the Sangrur.

Reacting to the announcement on his official Facebook page, Mann said he was happy that he would contest the elections from Dhuri.

Later, in a statement, Mann said, "Those living in and around Dhuri and Sangrur have had our backs on our sorrows and celebrated all our joys with us. AAP had gotten an edge in Dhuri with over 30,000 votes during 2014 Lok Sabha elections. I am certain that everyone here will shower even more love upon me this time".



Bhagwant Mann

Amend IPC, CrPC to deal with hate speech: Home panel chair to Shah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

AMID AN increase in incidents of hate speech, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, Anand Sharma, has written to Home Minister Amit Shah and urged the government to consider "legislative action", including amendments to the IPC and CrPC, to deal with all manifestations of hate speech.

Pointing out that there is a "growing and disturbing trend" of hate speech targeting certain sections, Sharma said, "Actions of cer-

India: UN should recognise 'phobia' against Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

EMERGENCE OF new "religio-phobia", especially against Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs, is a matter of serious concern and needs to be recognised, just like Christianophobia, Islamophobia and anti-semitism, to bring a balance in discussions on such issues, India said at the United Nations on Tuesday.

Speaking at the International Counter Terrorism Conference by Global Counter Terrorism Council on January 18, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations TS Tirumurti said, "In the past two years, several Member States, driven by their political, religious and other motivations, have been trying to label terrorism into categories such as racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism, violent nationalism, right wing extremism, etc."

Referring to "emerging threats", he said it is "essentially a move to categorise terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, based on the motivations behind such acts".

Calling it a "dangerous" tendency, Tirumurti said this "goes against some of the accepted principles agreed to by all UN Member States in the recently adopted Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which clearly states that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations should be condemned and there cannot be any justification for any act of terrorism, whatsoever".

Such actions, he said, "will take us back to the pre 9/11 era of labeling terrorists" as "my terrorists" and "your terrorists" and will "erase the collective gains we have made over the last two decades".

In democracies, Tirumurti said, "right-wing and left-wing are part of the polity primarily because they come to power through the ballot reflecting the majority will of the people and

BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Assam, Meghalaya CMs brief Shah on proposed agreement

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, JANUARY 20

THE CHIEF ministers of Assam and Meghalaya on Thursday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi and briefed him about the two states' tentative roadmap on resolving the five-decades-long boundary dispute between them.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma are likely to meet Shah for further talks after January 26.

The Union Home Ministry has to approve the agreement before any progress on the issue.

Twelve locations are disputed in the 885 km-long shared boundary between Assam and Meghalaya. The differences emerged after Meghalaya was carved out of Assam in 1972 according to the North East Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971.



TS Tirumurti, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

also since democracy by definition contains a broad spectrum of ideologies and beliefs. We, therefore, need to be wary of providing a variety of classifications, which may militate against the concept of democracy itself".

Such labels are being given "to so-called threats which are limited to certain national or regional contexts," he said, adding that "extrapolation of such national or regional narratives into a global narrative is misleading and erroneous".

"Such trends are neither global nor have any agreed global definition," said Tirumurti, who took over as the Chair of UN's 15-member counter-terrorism committee for 2022 beginning this month.

On religious phobias, Tirumurti said the UN has "highlighted some of them over the years, namely, those based on Islamophobia, Christianophobia and antisemitism — the three Abrahamic religions", which are also mentioned in the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

He said "new phobias, hatred or bias against other major religions of the world need to also be fully recognised".

The emergence of contemporary forms of religiophobia, he said, "especially anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhist and anti-Sikh phobias is a matter of serious concern and needs attention of the UN and all Member States to address this threat". Only then "can we bring greater balance into our discussion on such topics", he said.

Six of the disputed sites are under consideration in the first phase of talks between the two states. These six 'areas of difference' include 36 villages spanning across 36.79 sq km.

"Called on Honourable HM (Home Minister) Amit Shah ji with Himanta Biswa ji and apprised him (Shah) on the reports of the Regional Committees. He expressed happiness on the initiative taken by both the States in the matter. MHA will examine the reports & we will meet HM again post 26th Jan," Meghalaya CM Sangma tweeted Thursday.


Sarma too wrote on Twitter: "I along with HCM Meghalaya Sri Sangma Conrad met Adamiya Griha Mantri Sri Amit Shah ji in New Delhi. We apprised Hon HM on the outcomes of discussions held between Assam & Meghalaya governments to resolve the border disputes amicably. We're grateful for his guidance."

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e-Tender No.: IRCON/3018/DFCIL-CTP-12e-Tender/LC Extension/08-411 Date: 21.01.2022
e-Tender in Two Stage bid System is invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirement for the work under the above ref. "Supply & Installation of Pre-engineered Portable cabin huts for extension of Level Crossings over DFC track at 11 Nos. of LCs in connection with construction of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor phase-II Vaitama - Sachin section."
Estimated Cost (Including all taxes & GST) Rs. 1,33,89,609.86/-
Last date and Time of Bid Submission 04.02.2022 up to 15:00 Hours
For Further details, Visit website at <https://www.etenders.gov.in/e procure/app>. Corrigendum if any would be hosted only on the web site.
Project Director, IRCON
1/72 Vaishnav Nagar, Nr. Ayappa Temple, Atul, Pamera Road, Pamera, Distt. Valsad, Gujarat-396007, Email: sleeshkumars@ircon.org, ircon.3018@ircon.org

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & MANAGEMENT GWAJIOR
Merous Link Road, Gwalior - 474015, (M.P.)
(An Institute of National Importance under Ministry of Education, GOI)

Re: ABV-IIITM/1048 Dated 19.01.2022
ABV-IIITM invites applications for the post of JRF (on temporary basis) under the DST, New Delhi sponsored through IHUB NTIHAC Foundation project titled as "Malware Analysis Using Machine Learning Techniques for Industrial Control Systems". Details of the advertisement can be seen on the institute website (www.iiitm.ac.in) Last date for sending the application form is 14-02-2022.
Principal Investigator

**NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA**
Ministry of Education, Government of India
Nahru Bhawan, 5 Institutional Area, Phase-II
Vasant Kunj, New Delhi- 110070
Email: snarotra@nbtindia.gov.in

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Marketing Executive Book Promotion Centre (Bhopal) (for Sales & Marketing of NBT books in M P & Chhattisgarh)	01 Post
Editorial Assistant (Braille Books Project), NBT HQrs., New Delhi	01 Post

For further details visit NBT Website: www.nbtindia.gov.in
davp 21103/12/0031/2122

PUBLIC NOTICE
IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD (ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
CIVIL APPLICATION NO.3 OF 2021
In R/O.J. APPEAL No. 11 of 2015
In R/COMPANY PETITION NO. 3 of 2015
FIXED ON : 28/01/2022
District: AHMEDABAD
Petitioner's Advocates: **MR. MASOOM K SHAH**
J. P. FINANCIAL SERVICES PVT. LTD.Petitioner(s)
Versus
GOLDEN TOBACCO LTD.Respondent(s)
To,
7. BHARAT B MERCHANT, 8 A LANDS END 8TH FLOOR -29-D DOONGERSEY ROAD, MALABAR HILL, MUMBAI-400006
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Take notice that the Petitioners above-named having presented an APPLICATION to this High Court to grant relief as prayed at para 10 (B) to issue necessary order/direction in favour of the applicant allowing them to serve Opponents no. 7 to 12, 14 to 27, 29 to 38 by way of Paper publication and the same having been registered in this Court as CIVIL APPLICATION No.3 of 2021 and this Court (Coram: Honourable Mr. Justice S. H. VORA and Honourable Mr. Justice ANIRUDHDA P. MAYEE) having on 23rd Day of December, 2021 ordered to issue service of Notice, by way of Public Notice in the Newspaper having circulation in the respective States in English Newspaper and Local Newspaper in vernacular language as per the Hon'ble Court's order at the last known address of Respondent no. 7 to 12, 14 to 27, 29 to 38.
Take Notice that the hearing of the said Civil Application No. 3/2021 in R/O.J. APPEAL No. 11 of 2015 will take place on 28th day of January, 2022 at 11 AM Peremptorily in this court and if no appearance is made on your behalf, by yourself, your advocate or by someone authorised by law to act for you, it will be heard and determined in your absence.
Witness ARAVIND KUMAR, Esquire the Chief Justice at Ahmedabad aforesaid this 23rd Day of December, 2021.
(J.B.Parmar) (JJ.Shah) (A.J.Rathod) (M. Sivakumar)
(Computer Operator) (Dy. S.O.) (Section Officer) (Assistant Registrar)
By the Court
(T. F. SHAH)
(Deputy Registrar)
12th day of January, 2022

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME
STATION HQ (ECHS CELL) MATHURA
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(a)	Officer-In-Charge	Graduate. Minimum five years work experience.	01-PC Aligarh 01-PC Hathras	Rs. 75000.00
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(j)	Female Attendant	Literate. Minimum five years experience in Civil /Army Health Institutions.	01-PC Mathura	Rs 16800.00

2. **For terms and Condition, Application Form & Remuneration.** Kindly see our website www.echs.gov.in For additional details, please contact (ECHS Cell, Station Headquarters) Mathura at Tele No 05652470041 Mobile No 9870760374 & Email: echsmathura1@gmail.com & shgmathura@echs.gov.in
3. **Last date of receipt of application as per format is given at our website.** Application as per requisite format & medical fitness certificate duly signed by SEMO/CMO alongwith self attested photocopies of testimonials in support of Education Qualifications and Work Experience will be submitted to OIC, Stn HQ (ECHS Cell), Mathura by 17 February 2022 in Duplicate. Any application received after 17 February 2022 will not be accepted.
4. **Interview Date, Timing & Venue** Candidate must reach at Stn HQ Mathura. Date of Interview of eligible applicants / verification of documents will be intimated later. Candidate must bring all the original certificate / marks sheets / degree of 10th + 2 & Graduation / Post Graduation / Diploma / Course, Work Experience and Discharge Book, PPO. No TA/DA is admissible. Only candidate meeting the Qualitative Requirements may apply.



“ आज का भारत अपनी खोई हुई विरासत को फिर से संजो रहा है।
नए भारत में अपनी संस्कृति का गर्व भी है और अपने सामर्थ्य पर
उतना ही भरोसा भी है। नए भारत में विरासत भी है और विकास भी। ”
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

अख्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति ।
अप्रशस्ता इव स्मसि प्रशस्तिमम्ब नस्कृधि ॥ ऋग्वेद, 2.41.16
(हे सरस्वती! आप माताओं में श्रेष्ठ माता, नदियों में उत्तम महानदी और देवियों में अग्रगण्य देवी हो। हे माता! हम अज्ञानी हैं। आप हमें ज्ञान प्रदान करें)

सरस्वती नदी में निरन्तर जल-प्रवाह हेतु
सोम्ब नदी आदिबद्री पर बनने वाले बांध के लिए
हरियाणा सरकार
तथा
हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार
के मध्य
समझौता ज्ञापन हस्ताक्षर समारोह

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति
श्री जयराम ठाकुर
मुख्यमंत्री, हिमाचल प्रदेश
एवं
श्री मनोहर लाल
मुख्यमंत्री, हरियाणा


दिनांक: 21 जनवरी, 2022 - प्रातः 11:00 बजे
स्थान: विश्राम गृह, लोक निर्माण विभाग, पंचकूला

परियोजना का प्राथमिक उद्देश्य
आदि बद्री में सोम्ब नदी पर सरस्वती बैराज
का निर्माण करके, बाढ़ के अतिरिक्त
पानी को मोड़कर, संग्रहित करके सरस्वती नदी
में नियंत्रित तरीके से जल का प्रवाह करना है।

कार्यक्रम से जुड़ने
के लिए क्यू आर
कोड स्कैन करें




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**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	HSAMB KURUKSHETRA	WIDENING OF L/R FROM DAULATPUR TO SHADIPUR IN MC PIPLI (ROAD ID : 3790) + 2 OTHER WORKS	20.01.2022 11.02.2022	1.14 CRORE	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01744-231420 xenkkv2019@gmail.com

7047/HRY FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

**GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA**

CORRIGENDUM

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/ CORP./AUTH	OLD REFERENCE/ NIT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	UHBVN	NIT NO 37/SE PROJECTS/AMR	EXTENSION OF DATE DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF BID 09.02.2022 UP TO 13:00 HRS. OPENING OF PART-I 10.02.2022 AT 15:00 HRS.	http://www.uhbvn.org.in	9356063249 seprojects@uhbvn.org.in

7037/HRY FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

**Land Ports Authority Of India**
(A statutory Body under Ministry of Home Affairs,
Government of India)
**INVITATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT IN
VARIOUS POSTS**

Land Ports Authority of India invites applications from the serving emplyees of Central /State Government, for filling up various posts of **Group-A, B & C** at its Headquarter in New Delhi and ICPs at Attari (Punjab), Agartala (Tripura), Petrapole (West Bengal), Raxaul and Joghani (Bihar), Moreh (Manipur) and Dawki (Meghalaya) on deputation (Foreign Service).

2. Complete information of posts, eligibility criteria, application format and other details are available on the website at <http://mha.nic.in/vacancies>, <http://lpai.gov.in>, [www.ncs.gov.in](http://ncs.gov.in)

3. Last date for receiving of applications through proper channel is 10.02.2022. Incomplete and applications received after last date shall not be considered.

4. **Address for sending applications:**
Under Secretary (Establishment)
Land Ports Authority of India
First Floor Lok Nayak Bhawan
Khan Market New Delhi-110511
Tel: No. 011-24340712
E.mail: robin.gangte74@nic.in

davp 19142/11/0007/2122

New Delhi

8 EXPRESS NETWORK

Two arrested for beating up pregnant forest guard in Satara

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA
PUNE, JANUARY 20

A FORMER sarpanch and his wife allegedly thrashed an on-duty woman forest guard, who is three months pregnant, along with her husband at a village in Satara district of Maharashtra, following which the accused couple has been arrested, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Wednesday at Palsawade village, located around 120 km from Pune, and a complaint in this connection was lodged by the woman forest guard.

Minister Aaditya Thackeray said, "The accused has been arrested this morning and will face the law at its strictest. Such acts will not be tolerated." Satara SP Ajay Kumar Bansal said the forest guard was beaten up as the accused sarpanch was "angry over the guard taking the contractual forest labourers along with her without his permission".



PERFECTING A PARADE

Rehearsal for Republic Day parade underway at the Ridge in Shimla on Thursday. *Pradeep Kumar*

Karnataka: Bajrang Dal leader who gave hate speech held for murder

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JANUARY 20

DAYS AFTER a 19-year-old Muslim was stabbed to death in Nargund town in north Karnataka's Gadag district, police on Thursday said they have arrested four people, including a local Bajrang Dal leader who addressed a gathering in front of a police station hours before the murder, allegedly calling the youth to beat up Muslims wherever they encounter them.

Shamir Shihansad Shahpur, a hotel worker, was chased and stabbed to death by allegedly seven or eight people, including the Bajrang Dal leader, around 7.15 pm on January 17.

Shamir was traveling home after work with his friend Shamshir Pathan, 19, when they were attacked. While Shamshir managed to escape with injuries, Shamir died due to the stabbing.

Those arrested for the murder were identified as Mallikarjun (20), Chennabasappa (19), Sakrappa (19) and local Bajrang Dal leader Sanju Nalavadi (35).

On the day of the murder, Nalavadi was actively involved in a rally organised in Naragund where calls were made for violence against Muslims. Few hours before the murder, he addressed

a gathering in front of Nargund police station and allegedly gave a call to the youth to assault Muslim youth wherever they encounter them.

He also dared the circle inspector of the police station to come out and arrest him and his followers. In a purported video of the speech, he is heard saying, "Let the police book as many cases against us as they want. We have come here to get cases booked."

A local police officer, who did not want to be named, said the city has witnessed tension between Muslim and Hindu communities over the past one year. On the day of killing, in the morning hours, there was an incident which provoked people of both communities.

According to Shamir's elder brother Sahil, the teenager had nothing to do with any communal incident.

"With frequent communal incidents, Nargund town was getting toxic but we never knew my brother would be a victim. He never bothered about these issues," Sahil said. "There have been lot of incidents to provoke both Muslim and Hindu communities but my brother was not part of any."

"We worked in the same hotel and we used to return home

together. On that day, he went to a barber's shop, which separated us. He would have been alive today otherwise," he said.

Sahil said there was an incident of eve-teasing a month ago involving some Hindu boys and Muslim girls. In retaliation, relatives of one of the girls attacked the boys. One of the boys lost a finger. Shamir was targeted on the suspicion that he was involved in the attack, his brother said.

Gadag Superintendent of Police Shiva Prakash Devaraj said an investigation is underway and did not want to comment on the case further.

"On the basis of CCTV footage we arrested the accused and an investigation is on to find out if there is any connection between the murder of the youth and the eve-teasing incident," said a senior police officer, who did not want to be named.

The CCTV footage shows Shamir and Shamshir on a motorcycle being waylaid by a mob and attacked with rods and knives.

"We are four children, including my sister. We three brothers worked in the same hotel. Everyday we used to report at 8 am in the morning and return together at 7 pm... Now, my brother's death will continue to haunt me as I left him and reached home alone," Sahil said.

Government Women's Pre-University College, Udipi, has said that the ban was being enforced to maintain "uniformity".

The college has around 700 students, including 70 Muslim students, studying in the Science, Arts and Commerce branches. Initially, there were 12 Muslim students who had demanded that they be allowed to wear the hijab during class hours, but the number has since reduced to seven. Those still re-

sisting the ban say the others gave in to the threats of not issuing hall tickets for final exams. According to the college, students are allowed to wear hijab until classes start. A protesting student said, "We are asking for our fundamental rights."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Rudre Gowda, principal of the college, said, "The girls are allowed to wear hijab and or burqa till they reach their desk, but once the class starts, they must remove it."

ther and three brothers.

Ranjan, whose parents died a few years ago, says he sought the document because he suspected one of his relatives of allegedly trying to usurp the family's 2.75-acre ancestral land.

Between March 2018 and February 2021, Ranjan says he met land and revenue officials, including Karpi Circle Officer Sanjay Kumar, at least 10 times. The CO is an administration official who deals with land records at the block level.

"Each time, they cited an old State Information Commission (SIC) rule that says there is no provision to issue a certified jamabandi copy. I was told that I can complain to whoever I want to

but I won't get the document," says Ranjan, adding that he had to come down to Arwal several times from Mumbai, where he works as a senior manager with a market research company.

Frustrated, on April 9, 2021, Ranjan filed an RTI seeking the information he desired from the Karpi Circle Office. "I was called by CO Sanjay Kumar on June 14. I showed him my vanashavali certificate (a document certifying genealogy) procured from the sarpanch of Karpi. The CO dismissed the certificate, calling it fake. He stuck to his earlier stand and cited the SIC rule."

Karpi CO Sanjay Kumar did not respond to repeated messages by *The Indian Express* seek-

ing his comment.

Ranjan says he unsuccessfully tried to reason with the official, citing Bihar revenue and land department's manual and also a 2014 Central Information Commission ruling that had overturned the earlier SIC rule.

On "Certified Copies and Information", Rule 18 of the Bihar government's revenue and land department manual says, "Subject to such rules on payment of such fee as the state government, from time to time may prescribe in this behalf, information and certified extracts and certified copies of order sheets,

correction slips, continuous khatian and tenants' ledger shall be given to persons applying for the

was on January 14.

However, on January 9, the girl consumed pesticides. Next day, she went home and was taken to a local clinic near her home on January 11 after she complained of stomach ache. She was given medicine and she was back home the same day.

On January 15, the pain aggravated and she was taken to Tanjavur Medical College, where a detailed examination found that her liver had been severely damaged. She died at the hospital on Wednesday.

Tanjavur Superintendent of Police G Ravali Priya told *The Indian Express* that they received a complaint on January 15 soon after her admission to Tanjavur Medical College. "That was when she revealed that she consumed pesticide. We executed all procedures required for a juvenile and a

judicial magistrate recorded her video statement immediately," she said.

Based on the girl's statement, a school official was arrested two days ago. "After she died on January 19, we changed the charges and booked the school official for abetment to suicide. A detailed probe is on," SP Priya said.

When asked about the allegation of conversion attempt, a police officer involved in the investigation said it was one of the many charges the girl raised in her statement. Her other complaints were that she was ill-treated and tasked to do domestic chores, the officer said.

The school management was not available for comment.

On Thursday, BJP and VHP leaders released the video of the girl in which she says that a school administrator had demanded her

to convert to Christianity two years ago and that she was being troubled by the management for refusing. Among those who posted the video was state BJP president K Annamalai.

A senior police officer and a local BJP leader said the video was neither shot by police nor her parents or relatives. "She had given many reasons for the suicide attempt. And she clearly said in the video that the particular incident in which the management asked her and her parents to convert to Christianity to avail better social support happened two years ago. We have registered a case, arrested and remanded the culprit the next day although political parties took it up only after her death. The video they are sharing online today was shot before her death, but they submitted it before the police only today," the of-

ficer said.

"The video was shot by someone known to her parents and relatives. He is close to the BJP and VHP leadership in the locality. But for reasons including she being a minor and the questions asked were leading, we did not use it until her death," said a senior BJP leader.

BJP state president Annamalai tweeted that conversion is a "fast-growing poisonous plant" in Tamil Nadu. He said many such incidents targeting poor sections are happening at many places. "The central government should step in," Annamalai said.

Police said the girl's statement before the magistrate named one school official, who was arrested. "We have spoken to other school officials and several students... there were no complaints on conversion," an officer said.

HATE APP CASE

Fourth accused arrested in Odisha

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 20

NEERAJ SINGH, a 28-year-old MBA graduate in human resources and a resident of Odisha, was arrested on Thursday by the Mumbai Police Crime Branch's cyber police in the hate app case. He is the sixth accused to be arrested by the Mumbai Police.

A resident of Brajrajnagar in Jharsuguda district, Singh stays with his parents and brothers. "He was studying in Delhi but due to the Covid-19 pandemic,

he had to leave his studies and return home a year ago. He is unemployed and unmarried," said a police officer from Odisha.

"Singh was produced before a local magistrate court in Jharsuguda and remanded in police custody for six days. A cyber police team left Odisha for Mumbai by train with him on Thursday night," the officer added. He will be brought to Mumbai on Friday, DCP (Cyber) Rashmi Karandikar said.

Singh was said to be in touch with Niraj Bishnoi – the creator of the app – on a Twitter group

called Trad Mahasabha, with "Trad" referring to traditional. The police said while the members of the group posted anti-Muslim comments, discussions on this group led to the creation of the hate app.

In a related development, Bishnoi and Aumkareshwar Thakur, alleged creator of another hate app, were brought to Mumbai by the cyber police and produced before a Bandra magistrate court that remanded them to police custody till January 27. They were arrested by the Delhi Police.



ED raid at the residence of Bhupinder Singh Honey, a relative of Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi, in Ludhiana. *Express*

Congress approaches EC over raids on Channi's kin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

AS THE political war of words intensified over raids by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at the residence and offices of Bhupinder Singh Honey, the nephew of Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, the Congress on Thursday approached the Election Commission (EC) seeking its intervention.

The Congress said that the "pattern of raids" on the family members of the Punjab CM, and the "unleashing of the maligning game", with the ED being what it called an "active party",

violated a 2019 direction of the EC, the Model Code of Conduct and several laws.

"This is a brazen misuse of the official machinery and part of a larger pattern of malicious intimidation that is being done to directly influence the outcome in five election-bound states. The Commission must enforce what it commands..." the Congress said in a petition to EC.

The raids were conducted in connection with an anti-money laundering investigation over illegal sand-mining operations in Punjab. Cash amounting to more than Rs 10 crore, including around Rs 8 crore from a relative of Channi, was seized during the raids, according to ED.

Former Yes Bank MD denied bail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

A DELHI court on Thursday dismissed the bail application of former MD and CEO of YES Bank, Rana Kapoor, in a money laundering case related to the wrongful loss of Rs 466.51 crore to the bank observing that he appears to be the man pulling the strings.

Special Judge Sanjeev Aggarwal observed that prima facie "Kapoor appears to be the controlling mind of the fraudulent transaction along with one Gautam Thapar, as both were at the apex of corporate ladder qua YES Bank and Avantha Group respectively".

thorities. "I called up Karpi CO Sanjay Kumar for a follow-up after meeting the CM. He said, 'CM ke aadesh se kya hota hai (So what if the CM has ordered)?', said Ranjan.

When approached, Arwal Additional District Magistrate Jyoti Kumar told *The Indian Express*, "There is an SIC order prohibiting us from giving him a certified copy of the jamabandi receipt."

A day later, when told about the SIC law officer saying that it's incumbent on the officials to part with the information sought by the applicant, the ADM said: "I have asked the Karpi CO to look into Ranjan's case... We are on it."

form department provisions. If the officer is denying it, it amounts to an offence of denial of information under the RTI Act."

Subsequently, Ranjan went in for a second appeal in July, which he won, but he still did not get the certificate. As a "last resort", he decided to meet the Bihar CM Nitish Kumar.

"After my experience with Bihar's bureaucracy, I thought only a meeting with the CM could help. I met him at his janta darbar on September 6 last year. He gave me a patient hearing and directed senior officials to help resolve my problem," said Ranjan.

But to his dismay, Ranjan has not yet heard from Arwal au-

same in the prescribed form."

The CIC had said while disposing a similar case on December 29, 2014: "The Commission holds that the land records containing the names of different owners and describing boundaries and extent of the land are public records and the information such as names of persons and the extent of land owned or possessed by the public authority is neither private information nor 'third party' information."

State Information Commission law officer Upendra Singh told *The Indian Express*: "Everyone has a right to get a certified jamabandi copy as per the Central Information Commission and Bihar revenue and land re-

Yati denied bail by Haridwar court in hate speech case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, JANUARY 20

ARRESTED FOR making derogatory remarks on women of a particular community and hate speech during a three-day "Dharam Sansad" held last month in Haridwar, a bail application of Juna Akhara Mahamandleshwar and the controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand, was denied by a CJM court in Haridwar.

On January 15, the Haridwar Police had arrested Narsinghanand from Sarvanand Ghat where he was sitting on a hunger strike to protest against the arrest of Waseem Rizvi aka Jitendra Narayan Tyagi on January 13. Tyagi too was named in the hate speech case.

The arrest of Tyagi and Narsinghanand took place after the Supreme Court issued notices to the Centre, Delhi Police and Uttarakhand government on Monday. The notice was over a PIL seeking probe into the alleged hate speech by participants at two separate events in Haridwar, organised by Yati Narsinghanand, and another in Delhi by Hindu Yuva Vahini where speakers allegedly called for the "genocide of members" of a community.

"We have faith in the judicial system, but what is happening is media trial. The way these were brought into media in a sponsored way, the judiciary is sometimes back down because of that. This is good for the country and the democracy. The way Uttarakhand Police is increasing number of cases (against Narsinghanand) it is condemnable. Why is this oppres-



Organised Haridwar 'Dharam Sansad'

sion only against Hindus and Hindu religious leaders? I am in pain but still trusts the judiciary. While the CJM court has rejected the bail applications, we will now move to the sessions court," said Swami Anand Swaroop, Peethadheeshwar of the Shambhavi Dham.

In total, two FIRs have been registered in connection to the case. The first FIR was registered on December 23 on the complaint of one Gulbahar Khan at the Haridwar Kotwali police station under sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups and acts prejudicial to harmony) and 295 A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) of the IPC. A total of five persons – Tyagi, Dharamdas Maharaj, Annapurna Maa, Yati Narsinghanand and Sagar Sindhuraj Maharaj – have been named in that FIR.

Another FIR was registered on January 2 on the complaint of a social worker Nadeem Ali for allegedly making hate speeches at the Haridwar event and continuing to do so in the days that followed. The FIR under sections 153A and 298 (uttering, words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person) of the IPC named Tyagi and unidentified others. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has also been formed to investigate the hate speech case.

Exception to marital rape is instrument of oppression, amicus curiae tells Delhi HC

SOFIAHSAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

TERMING EXCEPTION 2 of IPC 375 a colonial legacy and an exemption from criminal prosecution, Senior Advocate Rebecca John, an amicus curiae in the case seeking criminalisation of marital rape, on Thursday contended before Delhi High Court that the court will be upholding the bodily integrity of women by striking it down and putting the people to notice that a marital partner's non-consent must be respected.

Submitting that if the consequence of the exception is that a married woman can be subjected to sexual intercourse without her consent, John argued that then it must be viewed as "an instrument of oppression".

The division bench of Justice Rajiv Shakdher and Justice C Hari Shankar is hearing the petitions challenging Exception 2 in IPC Section 375 that protects men, who have forced non-consensual sexual intercourse with their wives, from criminal prosecution under Section 376 IPC.

Stating that the challenge to the exception does not seek to punish every man in a marital relationship but only an act where the wife's 'no' has been disregarded, John contended that if the court holds the same to be unconstitutional, it will not be creating a new offence as the same already exists, but only a class of individuals who at present enjoy legal immunity from the prosecution will now lose it.

"What is written in Exception 2, which has been given to us from a doctrine, propounded 200 years by our colonial masters does not reflect either the Indian man or the Indian woman, certainly not the Indian marriage. The colonial masters have done away with it. We continue to hang on to that legacy," said John.

She submitted that the expectation of sex or a meaningful conjugal relation within a marriage is fair and that there may even be a unilateral expectation for sex in a given case. "If that expectation is not fulfilled, then the spouse has every right to resort to civil remedies. However, when the expectation within a marriage becomes a physical act based on coercion and force and is non-consensual, causing harm or injury... then that sexual act must become an offence."

Stating that the exception is in the nature of an immunity, John stressed that the issue needs a serious judicial intervention as the question before court does not pertain to trivial cases but a serious case like that of forceful sexual intercourse. While referring to the consequences, John asked whether the court will allow a husband, who is suffering from a venereal disease, to claim the exception and also permit it in a case where a woman is ill and a sexual relation will have detrimental affect on her health.

In response to a question from Justice Shankar on which freedom is curtailed by Exception 2, John responded: "The freedom to say no."

structure, including that of a proposed grievance redressal mechanism?

We have been talking about the IAMAI for the past two or three years and last year we actively started working on a committee or group of like-minded tech companies coming in, just to formulate a specific point of view in the ecosystem. We had to now bring out everything because the government also came out with an advisory. That was from a consumer perspective. So the government advisory covered what a consumer should do or not do. And we felt it was right to come up with the dos and don'ts from a company perspective, so that both

Why has a consortium been formed and what will be its



ROAD TO RECOVERY

A vaccination drive at a roadside mobile camp in Delhi's Anand Vihar area on Thursday. Tashi Tobgyal

Physical classes start Monday in Mumbai Amid record cases, new curbs in Kerala

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 20

SCHOOLS IN Mumbai will reopen for Monday for all classes, including the pre-primary sections. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) gave the green light to all city schools after the state government on Thursday approved offline operations of schools across Maharashtra, with permission from the local administration.

"All schools in Mumbai (Class 1 to Class 12) shall open from Monday, including pre-primary section," said I S Chahal, Municipal Commissioner. The BMC categorically mentions inclusion of pre-primary section in the guidelines issued late Thursday evening. It also specifies that online mode of learning has to continue for children whose parents have not given consent for offline classes. It asks

all schools to connect with the nearest health facility of their choice to get medical services in case of need. Specifically addressing its own Mumbai Public School, the BMC guideline stated that if any of them are being used as isolation or vaccination centre; those arrangements should be shifted to other places and sanitisation should be done on the premises. It also directs teachers on Covid duty in isolation centres and railway stations to resume their duties, adding that vaccination of eligible students from schools should be completed as per the plan.

BMC schools will be reopening for offline classes after a long gap. In fact, during the pandemic, this is the first time that pre-primary sections have been given the permission to resume offline operations. On Wednesday, the state school education department had submitted a proposal to start offline sessions of schools for all classes.

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 20

KERALA ON Thursday hit a record for daily Covid-19 infections, prompting the government to enforce a lock-down like situation for next two Sundays, with essential services only, and other curbs to stem the spread of the virus in the state.

The state diagnosed 46,387 new cases with a test-positivity rate of over 40.2 per cent – both Kerala's all-time highest in two years of the pandemic – the health department said on Thursday. Active cases too touched 2 lakh on Thursday, government data showed.

The surge in cases in the state comes at a time the country is in the grip of a third wave of infections fuelled by the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday chaired a

review meeting where it was decided to revive the pandemic management and surveillance system last implemented in Kerala during the previous waves of infections.

Apart from the restrictions on Sundays, the government decided to enforce curbs after categorizing the districts mainly based on occupancy in hospitals.

In a district where the rate of admission to hospital doubles from January 1, the baseline date, and the rate of Covid-19 patients admitted to the ICU exceeds 50 per cent, that district would be in the A category. At present, Ernakulam, Alappuzha, and Kollam districts are in A category, where only 50 persons would be allowed to attend all events, public, religious etc.

The Kerala government's order on restrictions comes at a time Mumbai appears to be past its peak of infections in the current wave. Kerala's surge, however, appears to be far from over.

Bodies of Indians killed in Abu Dhabi attack to reach Amritsar today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

The bodies of the two Indians who were killed in a suspected drone strike in Abu Dhabi will reach India on Friday, an official said.

The Indian Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Sunjay Sudhir, tweeted Thursday evening that the embassy in Abu Dhabi had "completed all formalities for repatriation of mortal remains of 2 Indians deceased in Jan 17 incident".

He said: "Remains reach Amritsar tomorrow morning. Highly appreciate the fullest support extended by Govt of UAE & @AdnocGroup. Tied up with Punjab Govt for local support."

The government has not revealed the identities of the victims. Three people had died in the attack. Two of them were Indians and one was a Pakistani. Six more people, including two Indians, were injured.

The attack, for which UAE has blamed the Yemen-based Houthis group, has been called unacceptable by India. UAE's Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Fewer hospital cases in third surge due to vaccines: Govt

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

HIGHLIGHTING THAT 515 districts across the country have reported more than 5 per cent positivity rate in the last one week, the Health Ministry on Thursday said the third surge triggered by the highly infectious Omicron variant has spread to almost all parts of the country.

But, the ministry said, despite the surge, there have been fewer hospitalisations and deaths owing to high vaccination uptake.

The ministry said that a sharp surge in Covid-19 cases continues to be noted in India, with the weekly positivity rate touching almost the 16% mark in the last one week. "The pandemic situation shows that the third surge is now spreading in almost all parts of the country," Dr VK Paul, head of India's Covid-19 task force, said. "It is also clear that deaths are low. Vaccination has acted as a shield...the mortality is significantly low.... However, the overall positivity of 16% is quite high."

He said, "There are some states with 50% percent positivity (Goa)...the virus is spreading rapidly. Vaccination and masking have to be adopted. We cannot lower the guard."

The ministry said in the week ending January 19, 515 districts reported positivity rate, compared to 335 districts in the week ending January 12.

The ministry flagged that six states continue to remain areas of concern due to an increase in the weekly positivity rate in week ending January 20, compared to the weekly positive rate reported in the week ending January 13: Maharashtra (20.35% vs 22.12%, respectively); Karnataka (6.78% vs 15.12%); Tamil Nadu (10.70% vs 20.50%); Kerala (12.28% vs 32.34%); Delhi (21.70% vs 30.53%), and Uttar

EXPLAINED A key factor

APRIL 30 last year saw 3.86 lakh new cases reported; there were around 3,000 deaths. During April 1 to 30, only 2% people were vaccinated. On January 20, there were 3.17 lakh new cases and 380 deaths reported. At present, 72% adults are completely vaccinated. Fewer hospitalisations and deaths despite high cases is due to high vaccination, according to Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan.

Pradesh (3.32% vs 6.33%).

"These are the states with whom we are in continuous contact and we are reviewing the situation. We have sent Central teams to these states. The health administration of the states have been briefed," Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said.

Bhushan also emphasised that the symptoms have been milder during the current surge. "Around 99% adults have fever, with or without rigors (shivering), cough, and irritation in throat, and usually by fifth day the symptoms are resolving," he said.

Paul, however, reiterated, that even in the "relatively low mortality phase", people with comorbidities and the elderly continue to remain vulnerable.

Dr Balaram Bhargava, director general, Indian Council of Medical Research, said, "The overall test performance in the country is being maintained at a level comparable with the second wave. What is important to note is that we have noted an increasing uptake of home tests..."

BJP WORKER KILLING

SC gives arrest protection to Mamata's poll agent, to hear plea on Jan 31

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

THE SUPREME Court Thursday granted interim protection from arrest to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's election agent, Sheikh Sufiyan, who is being probed by the CBI over the killing of a justice BJP worker.

A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and B R Gavai fixed January 31 as the date of hearing for the Special Leave Petition filed by Sufiyan against a Calcutta High Court order rejecting his anticipatory bail. The bench directed that the not be arrested till then.

The court directed that all statements recorded under Section 164 of the CrPC (statements made before a magistrate) in the case should be produced before it. It said this after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that Sufiyan had been named in the Section 164 statements by some of the witnesses but had managed not to be arrested till now.

The court said no adjournments will be granted on January 31 and that the matter will be heard finally on that day.

Mehta told the bench, "It is a very serious offence. We will satisfy your Lordships. He is quite powerful. This will have its own repercussions."

Justice Rao responded: "Please don't get politics into this." The S-G denied this and pointed to Sufiyan's alleged complicity in some of the crimes.

Sufiyan, the election agent for Banerjee from Nandigram, is facing the CBI probe in connection with the killing of BJP worker Debabrata Maity.

Maity was allegedly attacked by TMC workers a day after the poll results were announced. He succumbed to his injuries at a Kolkata hospital on May 13.



The suspected drone strike had killed 3 and injured 6.

had called External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Tuesday and had "conveyed the deepest condolences of the UAE Government on the death of two Indians" and had also "assured that the UAE Government would extend the fullest support to the families of the deceased".

Jaishankar had condemned the terror attack "in the strongest terms" and emphasised such an attack on innocent civilians was "completely unacceptable".

Jaishankar had also conveyed "India's strong solidarity with UAE in the face of such an attack". The police in Abu Dhabi had found parts of a small plane that could possibly be a drone at the sites of the explosions.

refunds. Between sales, marketing, and financing many times malpractices do creep in...

The code of conduct does not have anything on protecting children's privacy online. It is limited to communication, marketing and funding of education.

Whether it's data privacy, data protection, every company has to follow the law. So I think we took a call that the code of conduct should talk about rights and behavior which may not necessarily be governed by law. But things that are governed by the law, one should stay out of it, because you have the law developed in the country.

‘Ed-Tech firms came up with code of conduct as malpractices creep in’

THE ED-TECH sector in India recently took a step towards self-regulation with a clutch of leading firms adopting guidelines to conduct their businesses. The firms have formed a collective – India EdTech Consortium – under the aegis of Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), a development that follows the government's announcement that a policy to regulate the sector was in the works. **SOURAV ROY BARMAN** and **RITIKA CHOPRA** speak to **MAYANK KUMAR**, a co-founder of upGrad – a member of the consortium. Excerpts:

Why has a consortium been formed and what will be its



sides of the ecosystem are covered.

Do you think that if the companies had self-regulated in the first place or not adopted business malpractices the government



would not be thinking of regulating the Ed-Tech sector?

The objective here was that look, if growth happens, these elements will creep in. And it is important that sometimes, instead of ignoring these elements, we

might as well come up with our own set of code of conduct so that these one or two incidents do not actually tarnish the name of the tech ecosystem. So that was the thought process at which we came up with the self code of conduct to ensure that we bring in the right discipline and the right set of parameters for broader benefit.

As an industry player, could you elaborate on what are the types of unfair business practices that some companies are indulging in?

It is largely around aggressive selling. Sometimes in the push for ensuring a product is purchased, you do end up aggressively push-

ing the product to the consumer, regardless of whether they need it, or they don't need it. And that's where the sales practice becomes sort of slightly inappropriate. And education is a very personal thing. Many times learners don't understand what they need. So you have to explain them. But in overzealousness, sometimes you cross the line. Secondly, wrong communication when it comes to marketing. Education is not an instant gratification product, it takes time for results to come out. So what happens is many times in marketing, you end up making wrong claims.... And the third broad area is around, which is the most critical one, financing and loans, and

refunds. Between sales, marketing, and financing many times malpractices do creep in...

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Whether it's data privacy, data protection, every company has to follow the law. So I think we took a call that the code of conduct should talk about rights and behavior which may not necessarily be governed by law. But things that are governed by the law, one should stay out of it, because you have the law developed in the country.



WORDLY WISE
IF I'M GONNA TELL A REAL STORY, I'M GONNA
START WITH MY NAME.
— KENDRICK LAMAR

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA
BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

A NEW LESSON PLAN

Learning crisis in schools demands urgent interventions, radical reorientation from governments and educators

TWO YEARS INTO the Covid-19 pandemic, a recovery that also needs critical attention is in the classroom. India has seen one of the longest school closures in the world. The pivot to digital learning has locked vast numbers of underprivileged schoolchildren out of the classroom; and online classes have struggled to replace the experience and quality of teaching in a physical classroom. This is adding up to a grave learning crisis. A study carried out in January 2021 in five states by a research group from Azim Premji University found not only clear evidence of learning loss, but an alarming regression in children's foundational abilities — to read, to understand what they are reading or do simple sums. A report in this newspaper has pointed to more evidence — over a third of Class X students in Gujarat needed grace marks to be promoted to the next class. Worriingly, this suggests that the deficit is not restricted to primary school, but is also showing up in higher classes. A field assessment carried out by Pratham-ASER in Karnataka in March 2021 had revealed, for instance, that only 66.4 per cent of Class VIII students could read a Class III textbook, compared to 70 per cent three years ago. If not arrested, the slide in learning, at this scale, has grim consequences for the young, and is likely to push them out of education entirely and stunt their future income opportunities significantly.

All of this leads to an irrefutable conclusion — after the third wave abates, schools and education departments, across the states, cannot slip back to business as usual. This crisis demands a radical reorientation of priorities and pedagogies from all stakeholders. The first step is to acknowledge that students are re-entering the classroom with diminished skills. And so, the syllabus must be set aside. The task for the school and the teachers must be reset and underlined: To help children recoup their losses, to make sure that their learning journeys are only interrupted, not derailed. Short and intense bridge courses, a few months long, might not cut it. Much of this year, if needed the next 10-odd months, must be devoted to this goal. The teacher must be given the freedom to teach students at different levels — within the same classroom. But that is possible only when governments provide the support — whether it is in terms of an education bureaucracy that does not insist on short-term syllabus goals, or a clearly stated policy that prioritises this recovery. It is possible only when the power to make academic decisions is decentralised to schools and teachers. "Remedial" learning often comes with added stigma for underperforming students. Care must be taken — at all times — that their confidence is not broken in this process.

Finally, governments must prioritise keeping schools open, with closure as the last option only in cases of an immense spike in infections. Learning — with and without Covid — is an urgent imperative.

A SHABBY MOVE

Government's attempt to project its bid to take over Kashmir Press Club as a factional row doesn't wash

SINCE AUGUST 5, 2019, the Jammu & Kashmir administration has invited accusations that it was attempting to subdue the media in the Valley by various methods, including the use of harsh laws such as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and the Public Security Act against individual journalists. Now, as revealed by a shabby sequence of events last weekend, it would seem the government also wants to hand-pick its own nominees to run the Kashmir Press Club, the largest association of journalists in the Valley — or else, the chilling message is, the club would not be allowed to function.

On January 15, a group of Valley journalists "took over" the KPC premises, and declared itself the interim committee that would henceforth manage the affairs of the KPC. This came two days after the KPC's outgoing committee had announced that it would hold elections for new office-bearers in mid-February. The government re-registered the club in December 2021 under the new laws that took effect in 2019, paving the way for holding the election. However, the day after the election date was announced, it abruptly withdrew the club's registration certificate, saying it was being kept in abeyance "on the basis of a report on the antecedents" of the managing committee received from the state CID. It has sought to project the fracas as the result of factionalism, and has taken back the premises allotted to the club, declaring the interim body as "infructuous".

Press clubs are places where journalists gather and expect to be helped and supported by colleagues, especially when they come under attack for carrying out their professional duties. The KPC was a place where young journalists gathered to find solidarity in what has been a trying period for the media in the Valley. It was also perhaps the rare journalists' association in J&K that gave voice to concerns about the attempts to muzzle the media in Kashmir. As with any club, there were those who supported the committee and others who opposed it. If this was a faction war, the government is yet to explain what its own stakes were in it that impelled it to send already stretched security forces to assist one group against the other. If the government is in possession of "adverse" reports against members of the outgoing committee, it must make clear what they say, instead of smearing by innuendo. Till then, it must restore the premises to the KPC and allow fresh elections to be held as planned.

THE SECRET LIFE OF GABO

A Colombian novelist and an untold story, real and magical

IN MARCH 1983, Malayalam novelist M Mukundan spotted a man on a rickshaw in Chandni Chowk who he thought was the Colombian writer, Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Marquez and his *One Hundred Years of Solitude* had become quite the rage among serious fiction readers by then. Mukundan almost called out to Gabo, but didn't, and walked away thinking that the previous year's Nobel winner was unlikely to be in Delhi in spring. The next morning's papers, however, reported that Marquez was in town, accompanying his friend and Cuban President, Fidel Castro, to the Non-Aligned (NAM) summit in Delhi. Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister, had asked Castro, who she met in Moscow some months before that, that he must bring Marquez when he visited India next. The story goes that the first thing Mrs Gandhi, who was at the airport to receive her "brother", Castro, asked his entourage was about Marquez, who had yet to disembark. Marquez reportedly told a Colombian diplomat that by the third day of the visit he felt as if "Indira had been born in Aracataca", his home town that became the prototype for Macondo of *One Hundred Years*.

All stories about Marquez tend to have a touch of magical realism. In the latest, told by Colombian newspaper *El Universal*, and confirmed to Associated Press by two relatives of the writer, Marquez had a secret daughter, who he had named Indira, in memory of Mrs Gandhi. Indira Cato, whose mother, writer and journalist Susan Cato, had worked with Marquez on two movie scripts, lives in Mexico City and works as a documentary filmmaker. Apparently, Marquez's immediate family knew about Indira but kept it a secret out of respect for Mercedes Barcha, his wife, who died in 2020.

Mrs Gandhi was assassinated the year after Marquez met her in Delhi. Though he had seen a fair amount of violence and written about it, Marquez was reportedly so disturbed about her violent death that he vowed never to visit India again. To the disappointment of thousands of his Indian admirers, he kept that promise.



ISHAN BAKSHI

THE DOMINANT NARRATIVE in public discussion is that much of the persisting economic distress is concentrated in the informal or unorganised parts of the economy. That enterprises in the organised sector and the formal labour force have emerged relatively unscathed is a view that resonates widely. However, contrary to this notion, there are signs that the distress not only envelops the informal economy, but also that large parts of the formal economy continue to face considerable financial hardship.

Take the formal labour force. Since the onset of the pandemic, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has allowed members to avail of an advance to deal with expenses arising from Covid-19. Data from EPFO shows that between April 2020 to September 2021, 15 crore such claims were received. This implies that 23 per cent of India's formal labour force (an upper limit, based on those contributing to EPFO) has availed of this facility. (Members were allowed to do so twice from June 2021).

Of these 15 crore claims, 87.2 lakh were received in 2020-21. This works out to an average of 72.6 lakh claims per month. In comparison, in just the first six months of 2021-22 (April-September), 63.4 lakh such claims were received, at an average of 10.5 lakh per month. This suggests that not only has the formal labour force continued to face economic hardship, but also that it has been of a similar if not higher magnitude in the ongoing financial year.

For the informal labour force with no such safety net, dealing with the economic fallout would have undoubtedly been far more difficult. While there are no firm estimates, it is possible to arrive at some understanding of the extent of the distress using data of individuals seeking work under MGNREGA.

In the pre-Covid year of 2019-20, 7.88 crore individuals obtained work under NREGA. In 2020-21, the first year of the pandemic, this rose to 11.19 crore. In just the first nine months of 2021-22, this figure has touched 9.33 crore. Considering that work demanded by households under the scheme tends to rise during



D RAJA

ON JANUARY 26, 1950 when the Indian Constitution came into force, it was a big step for the nation that had longed to achieve the ideals of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity. Our Constitution tried to give a definite shape to the aspirations of the people for a sovereign, socialist, secular democratic republic through provisions like fundamental rights of all citizens. In a country of subcontinental proportions, it is necessary that the ideals mentioned in the Preamble to the Constitution should extend to all levels of governance. The overall emphasis on equality in the Constitution is visible in all arrangements made around the federal spirit and ideas.

Conscious of the differential needs of the populations of different states, the drafters of the Constitution made provisions for an equitable share of powers and responsibilities among different levels of governments. The lists in the 7th Schedule of the Constitution — Union, state and concurrent — are an example of this division, wherein each level of government has its own sphere, enabling context-sensitive decision-making. Later, institutions for local self government were added through the 73rd and 74th amendments, which strengthened grass roots democracy.

Article 246 and Article 243 G provide for this division of responsibilities. Article 280 provided for the constitution of Finance Commission to define the financial relationship and terms between the Union and states. Apart from these institutions and the Rajya Sabha, the Constitution makers also left much scope for consultative and deliberative bodies so as to strengthen the spirit of cooperation and federalism. Article 263 provided for the establishment of an Inter-State Council for

Distress persists, in unorganised labour and enterprise, and also in formal economy

Considering that the relief package was largely disbursed through formal monetary channels, to what extent the stress among the millions of unregistered or informal MSMEs would have abated is difficult to ascertain. As only entities with reserves would have been able to survive during this period, it is likely that firm death rates in the informal sector would have risen dramatically. But the question is, have birth rates also picked up? Among the informal MSMEs that did survive, those with stronger linkages to the formal economy would probably recover faster than the informal ones.

the lean season of January-March, the final number for this year may end up being closer to last year's number.

This persisting and heightened demand for work signals either the continuing absence of other forms of employment, or the need to rebuild buffers, or the need to supplement incomes because wages in other jobs remain depressed. It also implies that the distress in the informal labour market, at least in rural areas, is yet to recede, and is similar to levels observed last year. It is possible that in the weeks ahead, with constraints on budgets, states begin to curtail registration of households demanding work, in which case, work demanded under NREGA will cease to be a proxy for labour market distress.

At the enterprise level, the distress amongst the smaller formal firms has been severe. Data on the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) which was designed to extend credit facilities to firms provides some understanding.

According to the RBI, the total number of guarantees extended to MSMEs under this facility stands at around 1.10 crore, amounting to Rs 1.7 lakh crore. As this facility was extended upto 20 per cent of the loan outstanding, it implies that these entities had a loan exposure of roughly Rs 8.5 lakh crore (upper limit). To put this in perspective — as per RBI, the total credit flow to MSMEs by banks (assuming a congruence in definitions) stood at Rs 17.8 lakh crore across 4.2 crore accounts at the end of 2020-21. Roughly 85 per cent of disbursements under ECLGS are through banks.

This provides a sense of the extent of the financial distress among formal MSMEs, and how extensively this facility was used during this period. However, unlike the data on the labour force, these numbers are skewed towards the initial period of the pandemic. Over time, the distress at the firm level, at least among the formal ones, is showing signs of easing.

Of the 1.10 crore guarantees, 95.3 lakh were issued in 2020-21, while only 20.6 lakh were issued in 2021-22, despite the scope for more.

Similarly, under the RBI's restructuring schemes, while 9.29 per cent of eligible MSME accounts were restructured under the February 11, 2020 scheme, this fell to 7.19 per cent under the August 2020 scheme, and to 5.8 per cent under the May 2021 scheme. This indicates that at least some of the formal MSMEs are witnessing an improvement in their operating climate, and are able to meet their obligations.

The second quarter results of 2,000-odd companies point to a similar trend. Among the smaller firms (those with net sales of 0-25 crore which account for 40 per cent of the sample), 50 per cent had surpassed their pre-Covid sales at the end of the second quarter of 2021-22, up from 37 per cent in the first quarter. While the corresponding numbers for the bigger firms are 80 per cent and 53 per cent respectively, these numbers, nonetheless, do suggest that smaller firms are recovering to their pre-pandemic levels, even if at a glacial pace.

But if this is the pace and extent of the recovery among formal MSMEs, considering that the relief package was largely disbursed through formal monetary channels, to what extent the stress among the millions of unregistered or informal MSMEs would have abated is difficult to ascertain. As only entities with reserves would have been able to survive during this period, it is likely that firm death rates in the informal sector would have risen dramatically. But the question is, have birth rates also picked up? Among the informal MSMEs that did survive, those with stronger linkages to the formal economy would probably recover faster than the informal ones.

Naturally, the pace at which unorganised enterprises, and the smaller formal firms recover, will have a bearing on how quickly the labour market distress eases, and how India exits from this pandemic. Considering this the upcoming Union budget must continue to provide support to the economy, nurture the recovery.

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THE MISSING FEDERAL SPIRIT

Ruling establishment's attempts to flatten diversity hurt the republic

The Planning Commission has been scrapped. The Inter-State Council has only met once in the last seven years while the National Development Council has not met at all. The tenure of the 15th Finance Commission was mired in controversy and many states expressed apprehensions about devolution. The misconceived GST has already taken away much autonomy available to states and has made the country's indirect tax regime unitary in nature. Many important and politically sensitive decisions are taken without reference to, and consultation with, the concerned states.

smooth transition of business between the Union and states and resolution of disputes.

The Planning Commission always had space for discussion on issues concerning the federal nature of the polity and was sensitive to the different developmental requirements of states. The inter-state tribunals, the National Development Council and other informal bodies have served as vehicles of consultations between the Union and states and UTs. These bodies have been instrumental in tackling difficult issues democratically through deliberations while upholding the cooperative spirit between the Union and states. Unfortunately, we are now witnessing the worst assault on the federal system and on institutions.

The Planning Commission has been scrapped. The Inter-State Council has met only once in the last seven years while the National Development Council has not met at all. The tenure of the 15th Finance Commission was mired in controversy and many states expressed apprehensions about devolution. The misconceived GST has already taken away much of the autonomy available to states and has made the country's indirect tax regime unitary in nature. Many important and politically sensitive decisions are taken without reference to, and consultation with, the concerned states. Article 370 was removed without consulting the state legislature.

Parliament legislated on "agriculture", entry no. 14 in the state list, to enact the three contentious farm laws, overstepping its jurisdiction and imposing a law on the states. Students in Tamil Nadu have committed suicide over the discriminatory nature of the NEET examination. Other centralised examinations are

also indifferent to languages spoken in different parts of India and education boards of different states. The New Education Policy has been flagged as encroaching on the federal nature of the polity. The BSF's jurisdiction was extended in Assam, West Bengal and Punjab without any consultation with the concerned states. The constitutional office of governor has come under scrutiny several times for encroaching on the powers of state executive and legislature. Recently, the rejection of the Republic Day tableaux of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal by the Centre prompted protests by the respective states.

These developments stem from an ideology that has disregarded for the diversity of the country and a contempt for constitutional values. These are rooted in a monolithic conception of the country, which is the hallmark of the RSS and the BJP. Their obsession with homogeneity and the idea of "Hindi-Hindu-Hindusthan" is blinding. The philosophy of uniformity and flattening out diversity has disastrous consequences for our republic, society and ways of life. The obsession with homogeneity can escalate and destroy the progressive ideals of secularism, tolerance and mutual respect. It should be underlined that Article 1 of our Constitution declares that "India that is Bharat is a union of states", and that devolution of powers is necessary in such a setting. A conscious recognition of the federal character of our polity is essential to protect our national character. A struggle at all levels against the Union government's moves to usurp federal rights has to be waged.

The writer is General Secretary, CPI

JANUARY 21, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

ASSAM BARRIER

THE FIRST ROUND of tripartite talks on foreigners in Assam ended on Wednesday without any agreement on the contentious issue of the detection formula. However, some progress was made when the meeting agreed on steps to strengthen the border with Bangladesh. The government agreed to erect a physical barrier line, a road all along the border and a zone "free of human habitation" on the Indian side of the international border in Assam. This is aimed at preventing infiltration in future. The government and the movement leaders will resume talks on February 8 with the help of the leaders of five major opposition parties to continue their search for a solution.

BHOSALE SWORN IN

BABASAHEB ANANTARAO BHOSALE was sworn in Maharashtra's eighth chief minister at a special function in the Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan in Mumbai. The oath of office and secrecy was administered by Governor O P Mehra. Bhosale took the oath in Marathi in the name of god. Former chief minister A R Antulay was seated on the dais. The 60-year-old Bhosale hails from Satara but was elected to the assembly in the 1980 poll from the Urla constituency of Greater Bombay, thus becoming the first Chief Minister from Bombay. Talking to newsmen after the swearing-in ceremony, Bhosale said it would take at least

three days to form his ministry.

BILLA, RANGA TO HANG

BILLA AND RANGA will be hanged, but they will leave unanswered a few constitutional questions they had raised in November about the powers of the President. The Supreme Court, while dismissing the writ petition of Ranga, stated that the question raised in the petition, regarding the scope of the power of pardon, "may have to wait for examination on an appropriate occasion. This clearly is not that occasion." Chief Justice YV Chandrachud, also revoked the general stay of all executions in the country passed on November 7.



New Delhi



THE IDEAS PAGE

The unbreaking point

Virat Kohli is no longer captain. But the adversity he grew up with, the strength it gave him, will ensure that he will endure and thrive



SANDEEP DWIVEDI

SO USED TO being the larger than life totemic King Kohli, can Virat adjust to the life of a commoner? Will he be able to smother the urge to shout out instructions or rush to the umpires with an angry representation of the team's angst? No longer the voice of the team, will Kohli silently fade into the background?

There are those who say that the demons in the head will mess up his muscle memory, impact his form and maybe even shorten his glorious career. It's a worrying eventuality, a potential body-blow to Indian cricket that could dent the game's global popularity.

In these unsettling times, revisiting a popular Kohli story, a bedtime fable for many budding cricketers, can give a fresh perspective and timely reassurance. It is a reminder to his doubters that Kohli is no lily-livered cricketer. What fate awaits the former captain in this game of glorious uncertainties can't be predicted but the smart money will always be on the hardened survivor weathering one more storm.

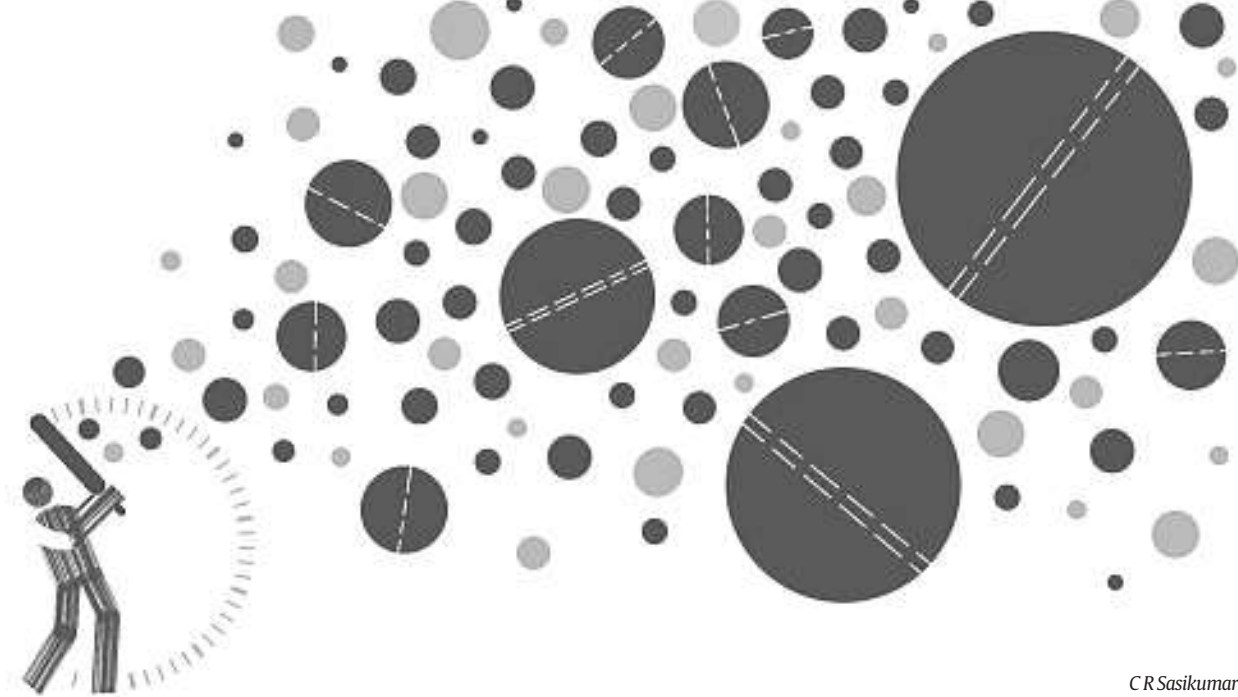
A couple of years back, in the In Depth with Graham Bensinger podcast, Kohli had given an emotional account of a life-changing day from his turbulent teen years. The world knows he first hit the headlines when he played a match-saving Ranji Trophy innings hours after his father passed away. But there's much more to that episode. The child protagonist of that "once-upon-a-time" tale might have no resemblance to the present-day, seemingly vulnerable, former India captain but ask captains around the world — when it comes to Kohli a sulk should never be confused with surrender.

A bit of background, before the story. Five years before the death of his father, Kohli's family moved to a rented accommodation to support his elder brother's business idea. The enterprise on which the Kohlis had bet their house, would go bust. The unexpected setback would disturb Kohli Senior's plan of making the baby of the family an India cricketer.

It wasn't that the family couldn't afford a cricket kit but to get spotted on the famously-corrupt Delhi cricket circuit you needed extra funds to grease palms and throw booze parties for officials. Kohli would say that his father, a self-made man more inclined to reach for his tool kit and not the electrician's number when the fuse snapped, always believed his son would get into the team only on the weight of his runs. Even if in a weak moment the elder Kohli had thoughts of obliging the sharks, he didn't have the resources. To augment the family income, Kohli's father would try his hand at online stock trading. Misfortune wasn't leaving the family. The father's account would crash, transactions would get wiped out and the Kohli household would face this second tremor.

Kohli Sr could never recover from it. He would suffer a brain stroke that would compromise his vision and paralyse him partially. For the young cricketer, a silent witness to the family's slide and the tense faces of the elders at home, the sight of his once busy-bee, but now bed-ridden, father was too painful.

In the wee hours of December 19, 2006, Kohli's father had a cardiac arrest. The previous



C R Sasikumar

evening, the young boy, playing his debut first-class season, had come home excited. He was unbeaten on 40 in the Ranji Trophy game. It wasn't to be thoughts around scoring a 100 the next day that would deny him sleep.

In the podcast, Kohli speaks about seeing his father take his last breath, the futility of pumping his chest and then running to a neighbourhood doctor's home, banging the door in a frenzy but getting no response. They would drive to the hospital where the doctors would declare him dead.

The family was shattered, Kohli froze. To date, he hasn't understood why he didn't shed a tear that night. Nor could he figure out how he got the courage to call his coach and inform him that he would play the game. On reaching the Kotla, in the company of mates in the dressing room, Kohli would finally break down and weep inconsolably. But not for too long.

Soon, he would splash water on his face and walk out to resume his innings. He would score 90, avert the follow-on and get out to a dodgy lbw decision. Kohli would take off his pad and excuse himself. His father's cremation was at 3.30 pm.

Towards the end of that long and draining day, Kohli would tell his brother about his plan. "I am going to play this game at the highest level and there is nothing that can distract me from doing that." He would call his coach to tell him about his deep disappointment. It was about the "lbw" decision. This wasn't the expected instant "boy to man" transformation; this was Kohli's first step towards becoming King Kohli.

Science backs the theory that early-life disruption can prepare one for sporting excellence. A study in the UK divided 32 Olympic athletes into two groups — medalists and non-medalists. Scrutiny of their backstories showed how all medalists had to deal with parental death or divorce, abuse or came from unstable homes.

The early self-awareness about his in-built resilience would give Kohli a sense of being unbreakable. It helped him to soak up the pressure of leading a nation of unrealistic expectations and also trust his ability to bounce back when he wanted to mend his ways in 2012 and two years later, overcome depression.

After his early international success — he was a World Cup winner at 23 — Kohli, by his admission, "lost focus, went out for drinks with friends often and ate junk". He also says

In the podcast, Kohli speaks about seeing his father take his last breath, the futility of pumping his chest, and then running to a neighbourhood doctor's home, banging the door in a frenzy but getting no response. They would drive to the hospital where the doctors would declare him dead. The family was shattered, Kohli froze. To date, he hasn't understood why he didn't shed a tear that night. Nor could he figure out how he got the courage to call his coach and inform him that he would play the game. On reaching the Kotla, in the company of mates in the dressing room, Kohli would finally break down and weep inconsolably. But not for too long.

it was the time when he was trying to fit into the "cool crowd".

Then, one day, he took a long hard look in the mirror. He didn't see an international player there. New goals were set. Kohli didn't want to merely lose weight, he wanted to be Novak Djokovic, adopt his discipline and regime.

If the son of a pizza joint owner, Novak, could go gluten-free, the West Delhi boy too was willing to turn his back to his favourite meal — chole bhature at Rajouri Garden's Rama — and also go gluten-free. He needed just one day to flip his entire life. Within 24 hours, he had changed his sleeping pattern, training schedule and diet. There were no cheat days, no U-turns till date. It had a lot to do with his wintry Delhi night of 2006 and the chat with his brother.

In 2014, after a disastrous tour to England, Kohli had faced a confidence crisis. He says he felt like the loneliest man in the world. He found it hard to sleep, and even wake up in the morning. He thought he had forgotten batting. Kohli would call Sachin Tendulkar, the oracle with all batting solutions. That would be the all-important first step towards complete healing.

In a way, by reaching out to Tendulkar, a circle was getting completed. Like the rest of India in the '90s, Tendulkar was Kohli's bio-rhythm. He recalls buying nibbles to settle in front of the television when his idol batted. In case Tendulkar would get out chasing a steep target, Virat couldn't sleep. He would lay in bed dreaming how he would one day finish those tight India games.

When Tendulkar retired, Kohli was his teammate. The superstar-in-making would present a priceless farewell gift to the Master — the holy thread that was given to him by his departed father. It was his way of thanking Tendulkar for dominating his mind space, keeping him immune to distractions and introducing him to a brand of cricket that would be his coping mechanism all his life.

Finally, the question again: Will Kohli adjust to the life of a commoner? What's losing the captaincy for someone who has endured, survived and also thrived after losing his way, his form, his mental balance and his father while he was still in school?

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Inflation is at a 30-year high, while workers are suffering their third drop in real wages in a decade — and worse is yet to come."

— THE GUARDIAN

In sight, the virus's exit

Evidence from 1918 influenza epidemic, Omicron, indicates SARS-CoV-2's ability to cause serious illness could be on the wane



GANESAN KARTHIKEYAN

A FEW disclaimers first. This piece is a non-specialist's view of how things may pan out, based on the emerging science and the current trajectory of the pandemic. The idea is to highlight the silver linings and provide some hope, after two years of pain and suffering. Whatever is said here should not be misconstrued to mean that the Omicron variant of the coronavirus is a benign entity. This variant may cause a relatively milder affliction than Delta, but that isn't saying much. Covid-19 by any variant is not the common cold, and all protective measures (masking, physical distancing, and additional vaccine shots to boost immunity) should continue till the pandemic abates. Now, let's address the two main questions on everyone's mind: How long is this pandemic going to last? And what happens after that?

Some experts are beginning to compare the ongoing Omicron wave to the last ("exit") wave of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918. The implication is that SARS-CoV-2 has progressively mutated into a milder variant, and the pandemic could be coming to an end. Let's try to understand some of the science behind this supposition.

Infections during a pandemic are sustained depending upon two important factors: The virus's ability to mutate, and the population's level of immunity against the infection. Mutations are random copying errors in the virus's genetic material that occur every time it replicates. During a pandemic, mutations are common because of the billions of times the virus replicates in infected people. In the beginning, when the entire population is susceptible — no one has any immunity whatsoever — the mutants that dominate are predominantly the ones that make the virus more transmissible (the ones that allow the virus to be more easily passed on from person to person).

This is a simple consequence of natural selection. In this pandemic, for instance, the more transmissible Alpha variant replaced the original strain, and then, the Delta variant replaced all previous variants. Two years into the pandemic, things have changed. A large chunk of the population is now immune to the virus, either through vaccination or through prior infection. In India, for example, 70 per cent of the adult population is fully immunised, and some more have perhaps acquired immunity through infection.

At this stage, therefore, the mutations that provide the virus with an evolutionary advantage are the ones that help it evade immunity — more than the ones that make it more transmissible. Simultaneously, there is one other important pressure on natural selection constantly at play. Variants that rapidly debilitate or kill off their human hosts are at a disadvantage because they have less

opportunity to infect other humans. On the other hand, the variants which produce milder illnesses (or cause no symptoms) make for more ambulant humans who can efficiently spread the virus. The emergence of the Omicron variant, possibly, illustrates this sequence of events.

So far, so good. But how do we know that future mutations will not result in producing variants which produce severe disease? Of course, we can't be sure. Mutations are random events — akin to rolling a dice that has a million sides — but there is hope, nevertheless. There are two broad reasons why this may not happen. First, as a larger part of the population becomes at least partially immune (due to infections by previous variants, and vaccinations), our ability to fight off the virus progressively improves, resulting in less severe illness. In addition, we have also begun to realise that prior infections with other seasonal coronaviruses afford some protection against SARS-CoV-2, highlighting the importance of more general immune responses that are less dependent on specific proteins on the virus.

The second reason is that additional mutations may have evolutionary costs for the virus. This is particularly so when mutations that cause immune evasion must involve the structure of one relatively small region of the virus (the spike protein in this case), a part of which is also responsible for its ability to infect. For example, the Omicron variant has a whole bunch of mutations affecting the spike protein, and research suggests that it is not as efficient in infecting lung cells as its predecessors. This may partly explain the conclusion in some preliminary studies of a 70 per cent reduction in the odds of dying from an Omicron infection compared to infection with Delta. In short, because this target region is small, there may be constraints on the number of possible mutations that would ensure immune evasion, transmissibility, and the ability to cause serious illness.

What happens after the pandemic ends, is a subject of even greater speculation. As has already become evident, we aren't going to have lifelong protection after infection or vaccination. It is reasonable to expect that the virus will continue to mutate to evade immunity. Of the several unsavoury scenarios, one optimistic (and perhaps also likely) possibility is that the virus continues to circulate but infects only people without immunity — children born after the pandemic, older adults, or others with waning immunity. These vulnerable individuals will continue to require vaccination. This is presumably what happened after the 1918 pandemic. That virus now causes seasonal influenza.

Some will undoubtedly consider this to be too optimistic an account of what may transpire in the coming months and years. But there is no denying that this is a plausible scenario, at this point in the pandemic. We must limit the number of new cases around the world — by masking, distancing, and vaccinations — so that the chances of another new, more troublesome variant emerging are reduced. That is something to wish for in the New Year.

Karthikeyan is a Professor of Cardiology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Views are personal



TANVI MADAN

At stake in Ukraine

Russian military action could dent Delhi's ties with Moscow, embolden China

IT'S NOT surprising that with several other issues facing India, the Russian military build-up near Ukraine — one of its largest recent mobilisations — is not getting much attention. But it should. What happens in Europe will not stay in Europe. In 2014, the Russian annexation of Crimea created problems for India. And if Moscow again takes military action against Ukraine, it will significantly complicate India's objectives vis-à-vis Russia, China, the US, Europe, and even Ukraine.

For one, it would hinder Delhi's interest in preventing a further deepening of Russia's ties with China. Potential Russian military action against Ukraine and western backlash would mean that Moscow will need Beijing's diplomatic support even more. Beyond the strategic challenge that a close Sino-Russian partnership poses for India, a Moscow that is more beholden to Beijing would be particularly problematic at this moment when India is dependent on Russian military supplies and Sino-Indian border tensions could flare up again. If Beijing asks Moscow to take some steps (for instance, stall military supplies to India), what will Russia do at a time when its need for China is acute due to a crisis with Ukraine? It's worth keeping in mind that in 1962, when Moscow needed Beijing's backing during the Cuban missile crisis, it resulted in Soviet support for ally China versus friend India at a crucial moment in the China-India war.

Russian military action against Ukraine would also impede Delhi's suggested ap-

proach for stalling Sino-Russian ties or fuelling friction between them — that the West, particularly the US, stabilise relations with Russia. For this reason, Delhi welcomed last summer's Biden-Putin meeting — it would also help if two of India's key partners were not at loggerheads. But another Russian invasion of Ukraine would put paid to any near-term prospect of a rapprochement between the West and Russia. Some critics already argue that Vladimir Putin saw Joe Biden's outreach as a sign of weakness to exploit. German and French efforts have received similar criticism. And Japanese attempts have already been stymied by the Russian military build-up on the disputed Kuril islands, and the Sino-Russian military exercises.

Further, Russian military action against Ukraine would complicate India's efforts to maintain a delicate balance between its partnerships with the US, Europe, and Russia. Delhi could try its posture, post the Russian annexation of Crimea, of neither openly criticising nor endorsing Russian actions. However, its silence will be seen as an endorsement. Moreover, even as Moscow might seek support from Delhi, it will sell India's silence as an endorsement, as it did in the case of Crimea, and recently when it unilaterally issued a joint statement on Afghanistan.

A worsening Russia-Ukraine conflict would also bring India-US and India-Europe contradictions on Russia to the fore. The western response will involve even more

sanctions that will further hinder India's ability to do business with Russia and diversify Russia-India ties. And all this could come at a time when Washington is considering a waiver for India from CAATSA sanctions. Even advocates of a waiver who are Russia hawks, such as Senators Ted Cruz and Mark Warner, could look askance at the seeming Indian support for Moscow.

Delhi and Washington might manage that problem but there will be others too. A deteriorating situation in Europe could draw US attention away from the Indo-Pacific theatre, as Afghanistan and Middle East crises did in previous administrations. It has already absorbed considerable American bandwidth at a time when Delhi wants Washington to be focused on the China challenge.

A Russia-Ukraine crisis could also create headwinds for India's move to deepen security and economic ties with European partners. A crisis nearer home could reduce the latter's increased attention to Asia, especially India. Moreover, in order to focus on the Russia challenge, European capitals could seek to stabilise ties with China, rather than act against its assertive actions. This, in turn, could negatively affect the coordinated approach that Delhi seeks among like-minded partners to balance China. Furthermore, whether or not Beijing seeks to use the opportunity of the West being distracted to take further military action against India or elsewhere, China would benefit from American

and European attention focused on Russia-Ukraine rather than on Asia. It could potentially present itself as a useful interlocutor between the West and Moscow, or seek accommodation from a West that needs stability in Asia to focus on Europe, or try to deepen the cleavages between the US and Europe on itself.

There are other problematic aspects of a Russia-Ukraine crisis for Delhi. For instance, India has economic and defence trade ties with Ukraine, as well as 7,500-odd citizens residing there. There are precedent and principle-related concerns, though many in Delhi argue that power often trumps those. Nonetheless, Moscow's justifications for its actions against Ukraine are similar to those Beijing makes versus India: Historical claims, ethnic linkages, and Indian steps that it says threaten China. And Russian military action would go against respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty that Delhi frequently advocates.

For all the reasons above, India will hope for a diplomatic solution and that Russia does not take military action against Ukraine. It is unclear if Delhi privately has expressed or will express its concerns to Moscow. Regardless, it is likely considering such a scenario, and will have to prepare for the potential fallout for India's interests with Russia, the West and China.

The writer is director of the India Project at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SOCIAL CHURN

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A new alignment in UP' (IE, January 20). The churn caused by the Mandal report in the early Nineties brought a sea change in OBC representation across all political formations. It catapulted OBC leaders like Mulayam Singh Yadav, Lalu Prasad Yadav to the position of chief minister. During this period, Dalit leader Mayawati had the opportunity to prove her mettle as chief minister of UP. Unfortunately, the potential of this social churning at the bottom of Hindu caste society could not be capitalised by these leaders the way it happened in Tamil Nadu for example. As a result OBC and Dalits parties are now having to fight for relevance. The numerically less upper castes seem to be aware that their hegemony won't last against OBC and Dalits if the two unite. They are using religion to obfuscate caste fault lines.

LR Murmu, Delhi

YOUTH MATTER

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Young and jobless' (IE, January 20). Candidates spend about five to seven years of their youth after graduation in preparation to seek government jobs. The exams take place once every two years and the recruitment process takes a long time. The pandemic has aggravated the problem.

Niharika, Sangrur

LOW BAR

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Tests matter' (IE, January 20). This is not the first that the Centre has had to push the states to increase testing. But this time, the ICMR must also share the blame. It has needlessly lowered the criteria for mandatory tests at a time when cases are rising in almost all parts of the country.

Uttara Singh, Lucknow

GREEN DEFICIT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Forest fine print' (IE, January 18). It seems that human-made forests are replacing natural forests. A natural forest is an ecosystem in itself. It took natural forests millions of years to evolve that way. They cannot be replaced by plantations, which are no match in terms of biodiversity.

Shubhra Atreya, Meerut

AGENDA FOR PUNJAB

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lost in Punjab' (IE, January 19). It seems that the main fight in the state will be between the Congress and AAP. Protests against three farm laws were driven by farmers from Punjab and now the ball is in the court of these parties to ensure that the farmers' interests are safeguarded. The agenda in the border state will also be to make sure that Punjab's youth are not misled.

Bal Govind, Noida

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Monika Pawar, W/O Major Prashant Singh, R/O#555, Sarodaya Nagar, Pilkhuva, Hapur, U.P-245304, have changed my name to Monika Singh vide affidavit no 39AA298229 sworn before notary Om Dutt Tyagi 4(22)/2011 dated 07 Jan 2022.

0120013666-1

I Permila Devi W/O, Rajesh Kumar Gond R/o Vill & Post- Raikwar Dih Teh- Mau Nath Bhanjan, Distt- Mau (u.p.) have changed my name to Pramila Devi for all purposes.

0040599907-1

I Pankaj S/O, Avnish Kumar R/o A-1/286, Hastals Road, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Pankaj Chhabra for all purposes.

0040599906-1

Myself Sanil S/O Shri Rajeev Jain resident of Flat no 660, sector 19, pocket 3, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 has changed my name from SANIL to Sanil Jain for all purpose 0040599886-1

I,Sharif Ahmad Khan S/O-Nafees Ahmed R/O-184 & 115, F/F, Back-Side Gali.No-7,Zakir-Nagar,Jamia-Nagar Delhi-110025,have changed my name to Sharif Ahmed. 40599920-7

I,Saroj Kumari,W/O Rajendr Singh,R/O 1857, Gali Ahiran, Near Balmiki-Mandir, Malka-ganj, Delhi-110007, have Changed my name to Ritu Singh. 0040599920-1

I,Sarabjot Sandhu,S/o Palvinder Singh Sandhu R/o M-310,Guru Kharkishan-Nagar Paschim-Vihar Delhi-110087, changed my name to Sarabjodh Singh Sandhu. 0040599934-7

I,Sameer Sherif Khan S/O-Sharif Ahmed R/O-184 & 115,F/F,Back-Side Gali.No-7,Zakir-Nagar, Jamia-Nagar Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Sameer Khan. 0040599920-8

I,SWATI AGRAWAL W/O MANOJ KUMAR AGARWAL R/O MP-119, FIRST-FLOOR,PITAMPURA, DELHI-110034.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SWATI AGARWAL.

0040599934-1

I,SHAIK DASTHAGIR BASHA, S/O:SHAIK NABI SAHEBR/O:B-107, AMRAPALI GREEN, 1/3,VAIBHAV KHAND, INDIRAPURAM,GHAZIABAD,U.P -201014,changed my name to SHAIK DASTAGIRI BASHA.

0040599934-10

I,SANJEEV JOSHI S/O-ISHWAR SINGH JOSHI R/O-08 RAM-NAGAR COLONY HARIDWAR UTTARAKHAND-249407,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SANJIV JOSHI. 0040599920-2

I,S SAMEENA BEGUM,W/O: SHAIK DASTAGIRI BASHA R/O: B-107, AMRAPALI GREEN, 1/3,VAIBHAV KHAND, INDIRAPURAM, GHAZIABAD, U.P-201014, Changed my name to SAMEENA BEGUM SHAIK.

0040599934-8

I,Simranjit Kaur,Aadhar Card.No. 965739270474,D/o Sh.Surinder Singh,W/O Sh.Ramneet Singh Chadha Permannet R/o EA-1/50, Ground-Floor, Inderpuri, Central Delhi-110012,Also at Victoria C-501,Omaxe-Grand Woods, Sector-93B,Noida, District-Gautambudh Nagar,U.P.201301,That In The School-Records Of My Son namely Jasmehar Singh Chadha,(aged about-17 years plus I.E,Class-10 th |,certificate, marksheet & migration-

certificate my name has been wrongly-written as Simranjit Kaur Chadha instead of Simranjit Kaur which may be amended accordingly, for all, future purposes. 0040599920-9

I,MD Shehjad,S/O Shan Mohammad,R/O 2140,Block G-9 Transit-Camp Anand-Prabat Indl Area,NEW Delhi-110005, hereby declare that my Father Name is wrongly-mentioned of my 10 th |-class certificate & marksheet (8769856) Shah Mohammad. The correct-Name is Shan Mohammad. Shah Mohammad and Shan Mohammad both Name are same person. 0040599920-10

I, Sunita Devi, D/o Dharam Pal, R/o Saharwa, Saharwa(3), Hisar, Haryana-125001, Declare that Name of Mine and My Father has been wrongly written as Sunita Chahar and Dharmpal in My Aadhar Card No-230558890940, that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as Sunita Chahar and Dharampal Chahar in my M.Sc.Marks card Roll No-280808, that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as Sunita and Dharmpal in Pan Card No-FKIPS7779P, that name of my father and my mother has been wrongly written as Dharampal Chahar and Kalawati Deiv in my Bsc Marks card Roll No-0618230. The actual name of Mine & my Father and my Mother are Sunita Devi & Dharam Pal and KLA WATI, which may be amended accordingly. 0070769357-1

I,Rashmi Aggarwal,W/o-Neeraj Kumar residing-Flat No.1302, Govdhan Tower, Kaushambhi, Ghaziabad,have changed my name to Rashmi, for all purposes. 0040599963-2

I,Ajay Kumar,S/O-Late Shri Kaliesh Chand,R/O-House No.47A,Block-U&V,Shalimar Bagh,Delhi-110088,have changed my minor daughter Name,from Kal Gupta to Kalee Gupta. 0040599934-2

I,Rajwati W/o Paramjit Singh R/o Nurpur Bet,Ludhiana Punjab-141008,have changed my name to Lakhvir Kaur after-marriage. 0040599963-3

I,Rajat Kumar Gupta,S/o Subhash Chand Gupta,R/o-4280/3, 3rd-Floor, Ansari-Road, DaryaGanj,new delhi-110002, have changed my Minor daughter name, Yashita Gupta to Yasshita Gupta. 0040599920-5

I,Mohit Bisth,S/o Harish Chandra Singh R/o 1058, Block-22, Lodi-Colony, Lodi Road, Delhi-110003,have changed my name to Mohit Bisht. 0040599920-6

I,MOHAMMAD NURULLAH,S/O-MOHD HUSNNAIN,R/O-A-33,LAL KUAN,M,B ROAD,NEAR VALMIKI MANDIR,PUL PRAHLADPUR, South DELHI-110044,have changed my name to MOHD NOORULLAH SHAIKH(both are same persons)permanently. 0040599934-4

I,MANISH SHARMA S/O NIRDOSH KUMAR,R/O HOUSE. NO.25,PARDA BAGH, DARYAGANJ, DELHI-110002, HAVE.CHANGED MY NAME FROM MANISH KUMAR SHARMA TO MANISH SHARMA FOR,ALL PURPOSES. 0040599951-2

I,M.S Anand/Manjeet Singh Anand,S/o Late Dalip Singh R/o-T-6 S.F, Budh,Vihar Phase-1, Delhi-110086, changed my name to Manjeet Singh for all purposes. 0040599934-5

I,Jyoti W/o- Sandeep Bindal, R/o-407, School Block,Mandawali, Delhi-110092, have changed my name,from Jyoti to Jyoti Bindal,for all future purposes. 0040599963-1

I,Geeta Anand/Geeta W/o Manjeet Singh R/o-T-6 S.F, Budh,Vihar Phase-1,Delhi-110086,changed my name to Geeta Kaur for all purposes. 0040599934-6

I,GEETA CHAUHAN,W/O BIJENDER SINGH,R/O VILLEG- & POST-BUSANA TEHSIL-GOHANA DISTT-SONIPAT PIN-124306,HARYANA,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME,FROM GEETA CHAUHAN TO GEETA DEVI,VIDE-AFFIDAVIT DATED-19/01/2022,BEFORE NCT-DELHI. 0040599951-1

0040599934-6

I,DEEP Lakashmi W/O Vishal Gupta R/o 1883,Kucha Khyali Ram, Bazar Sita Ram,Delhi-110006, have changed my name to Deepa Gupta. 0040599963-8

I,BIKKI RAO/W/O SUIIT RAO/R/O 229B, MUNIRKA VILLAGE,JNU, VASANT VIHAR SOUTH WEST DELHI-110067,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO BIKKI SUBBA. 0040599920-3

I,Anil Kumar,S/o-Om Parkash, residing at,4/1628,Mahavir-Block,Gali No.6,Bholanath-Nagar, Shahdara,Delhi-110032, have changed the name of my minor son Dishant(12Years) and he shall hereafter be known as Dishant Suri. 0040599920-4

I,Ajay Kumar,S/O-Late Shri Kaliesh Chand,R/O-House No.47A,Block-U&V,Shalimar Bagh,Delhi-110088,have changed my name to Ajay Kumar Gupta. 0040599934-3

I,Sweety, D/o Ram Khilari, R/O E-1, 10/552, Nehru Vihar, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to Sweety Gautam for All Future purposes. 0070769365-1

I,AYESHA SHAIK,D/O:SHAIK DASTAGIRI BASHAR/O:B-107, AMRAPALI GREEN, 1/3,VAIBHAV KHAND,INDIRAPURAM,GHAZIA BAD,U.P.201014,changed my name to SOHA SHAIK. 0040599934-9

I, Dev Deshlaan, S/o Bhopal Singh, R/o 2292 Amantha, Gaur Saundaryam, Sector Techzone 4, Noida Extension, Greater Noida West, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201318, have changed the name of my minor daughter Vaishnavi Deshlaan aged about 13 Years and She shall hereafter be known as Vaishnavi Deshlaan. 0070769361-1

I, Deepak, S/o Sushil Kumar, R/o 17/A, Ward No-13, New Ramesh Nagar Ext., Karnal, Haryana-132001, that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as Deepak Verma And Sushil Kumar Rajput respectively in my Educational Documents And Driving Licence HR-0520140149854. The actual name of mine and my father is Deepak and Sushil Kumar respectively. 0070769355-1

I, Dev Deshlaan, S/o Bhopal Singh, R/o 2292 Amantha, Gaur Saundaryam, Sector Techzone 4, Noida Extension, Greater Noida West, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201318, have changed the name of my minor daughter Drishti Deshlaan aged about 5 Years and She shall hereafter be known as Drishti Deshlaan. 0070769360-1

I, Amit Kumar, S/o Krishan Lal, R/o RZ 12, Ganpati Enclave, Paprawat Road, Najafgarh, New Delhi 110043, have changed my name to Amit Gaur. 0070769355-1

I, Deepak S/O Shs. Kailash R/O W-116A/45, T-Huts, Jwala Puri, Delhi-110087 have changed my name to Deepak Tanwar for all purposes. 0040599884-5

I, BRAHMI GIRISH SHAH, W/O SHRI AABIR CHATTERJEE, R/O 7A, SHATABDI VIHAR, SECTOR-61, NOIDA, DISTT-GAUTAMBUDH NAGAR, U.P.-201301, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AFTER MARRIAGE TO BRAHMI SHAH CHATTERJEE FOR ALL PURPOSES. 0070769356-1

I, Rajiv, S/o Suraj Mal, R/o Near Bittu Murga Farm, Bharan(106), Rohtak, Haryana-124111, have chnged my name to Rajiv Kharb. 0070769362-1

I, Monu Maurya, S/o Ram Naresh, R/o 2 D4, Sec-20, Rohini Nithari Sunitapur C Block, Delhi-110088, have changed my name to Harshit Maurya. 0070769369-1

I, Mohan Singh, S/o Late Baldev Singh R/o 283/B, Munirka Village, New Delhi-110067, have changed my name to Mahesh Singh. 0040599909-1

I, Anil Kaushik S/o Sh.Mange Ram R/O-H.No-1/2,block-D Rama-vihar, Mohammadd pur Majri, Delhi-110081,have changed my name Anil Kaushik to Anil Kumar,for all future purposes 0040599889-1

I, Shanti Kiran Dandamudi w/o Venkateswara Rao Dandamudi, R/O. Plot.No B-1/17, DLF Phase-1, Gurgaon-122001. Have Changed My Name to Shanthi Kiran Dandamudi, for all purposes. 0040599709-3

LOST & FOUND

I,Manish Kumar Sharma,S/o Harish Kumar, Plot.No.253, Roshan-Garden, Najafgarh, New Delhi-110043, Have Lost My Property-Document,Plot.No.-216 Khasra.No.253,Roshan Garden,Plot Measuring-233 sq/yards. 0040599951-6

Lost original NOC to Obtain-electric & water-connection bearing-No-F187/79/234/SFS1 dt-15/04/1983, and Possession Letter bearing-No-F187/79/234/SFS1 dt-25/04/1983,both issued by DDA of Flat.No-251, Sidhartha Enclave, New Delhi-110014. I found, please return to Mr. Indra Swarup-(9910002882) at the above address.

0040599889-2

I Kanuj Khanna S/o Sh. Parvesh Khanna R/o H.No.76, Model Town North Ex, Delhi-110009 have lost my all Original documents of Shop No.4081, Shafi Building, Arya Pura, Subzi Mandi, Delhi-110007.Finders may contact at Mobile No. 9811485048 and 9212163301. Misuse of these documents are illegal. 0040599884-4

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PUBLIC NOTICE

My Clients Sh. Manoj Kumar S/o Sh. Deseg Raj and Smt. Sushila W/o Sh. Manoj Kumar, both R/o WZ-25, Jwalaheri, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, have disowned /debarred their son Sagar Yadav and daughter-in-law Sapna Yadav from all their movable and immovable properties and ceased all relations with them, if anybody dealing with them, shall do so at his/her/their own risk, cost and responsibility. My clients will not responsible in any manner whatsoever.

Sd/-
KAMAL SINGH
Advocate
Chamber No. 512, Fifth Floor, Dist. Court, Rohini, Delhi-110085

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client VIRENDRA SINGH RAMA S/o LATE BACHAN SINGH RAMA & SAVITRI RAMA W/o VIRENDRA SINGH RAMA both R/o F-30A, St. No.81, Mahavir Enclave Part-3, Delhi-49 have disowned their son GAURAV RAMA & his wife KAJAL & their Children due to their misbehavior, quarrelling & threatening to send them to jail, getting fed up and upset with them, sever all their family ties, evict them from all their movable and immovable property, they themselves and whoever deals with them will be responsible for any of their actions and transactions in future, my client and any member of my client's family will not be responsible.

SHASHI KANT (Advocate)
Ch.No. D-209, Karkardooma Court, Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client PRADEEP SETHI S/O SH. MADAN LAL SETHI R/O UKI Flat No 135-B, SECOND FLOOR, BLOCKPOCKET-10 PITAMPURA, DELHI-11034 purchaser of DD No. 135-B, SECOND FLOOR, BLOCKPOCKET-10 PITAMPURA, DELHI-11034 has disowned the said person from lease hold to free hold in DDA. Original document is. Demand Cum Allotment Letter has been lost. An FIR vide Lt No. 1566/2022 dated 19-01-2022 has been filed in P.S. Crime Branch Delhi for loss of documents. Any person claiming any right, interest, holding any objection or found in possession of original document, may withdraw same with above named person at above address/phone No. 921374351 within 15 days from the date of publication of the notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (L&H Housing UGI), D-Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

KAMAL SINGH (Advocate)
Enrt No. D-7482014

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Sunil Singh Advocate, on behalf of my client Smt. Nirmala Gupta W/o Lt. Sh. Jagdish Chander R/o 34, Saket Kunj Apartments, Plot No. 8, Sector-9, Rohini, Delhi-110085, caused this Notice to inform the general public that my client has debarred and disowned her son Sh. Bharat Aggarwal, daughter in law Smt. Kiran Aggarwal and grand children, namely Mokshada Aggarwal and Sharanya Aggarwal from her all movable and immovable properties in all manners because of their conduct. My client has no concern with her son, daughter in law and grand children in any manner. If any person deals with Sh. Bharat Aggarwal and Smt. Kiran Aggarwal and their children, in any manner, in that case such person would be doing so at his/her own risk.

SUNIL SINGH ADVOCATE
Chamber No. 58, Civil Side, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-110054
Mob. 9654224557

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that my client Shri Mahinder Kumar Sharma S/o Sh. Hari Chand Sharma resident of 207/15, Parkash Mohalla Gali No. 5, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065 has disowned/debarred his son namely Pankaj Sharma and his wife Sonia Sharma from all his movable / immovable properties/assets due to their misconduct/ misbehaviour towards my client and severed all his relations with them. Anybody dealing with Pankaj Sharma and his wife will do so at his/her/their own risks and responsibilities. My client shall not be held responsible for any kind of act done by them.

Sd/- **SANJEEV CHAUDHARY** (ADVOCATE)
Chamber No. 26, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi-110001

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE

The Dy. Chief Engineer/TMC/Linc, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-tender under One Packet System for the under noted work:-

1.	Name of work and location	POH (Periodic Overhaul) of VPR-59 machine at NR TrackMachine Workshop including mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical, cabin repair and other ancillary works.
2.	Completion period of the work	120 days
3.	Approx. cost of work	Rs. 23.37 Lakhs
4.	Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)	Rs. 46800/-
5.	Cost of Tender Document (to be deposited Online)	Rs. Nil.
6.	Date & Time for submission of E-Tender and opening of tender	Tender document remain available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 28.01.2022 upto 15:30 Hrs. on 21.02.2022. Tender Bids may be uploaded from 07.02.2022 upto 15:30 hrs on 21.02.2022 on IREPS web site. The tender will be opened soon after 15:30 hrs on 21.02.2022.
7.	Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	The detailed tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in . Above tender document will be available for online submission of offer on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 07.02.2022 to 21.02.2022. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender documents. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board at the above office.

Tender Notice No. 1-W-DyCTMC-L-08-21-22-VPR-59 Dated: 20.01.2022. 139/22

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



A-35001/1/2018-Sectt.

GURUGRAM METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Plot No. 03, Sector-44, Gurugram

Dated: 14th January, 2022

PUBLIC NOTICE

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FROM RESIDENTS/ NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS FOR NOMINATION OF PERSONS TO RESIDENTS ADVISORY COUNCIL OF GMDA TO REPRESENT CIVIL SOCIETY.

A Residents Advisory Council (RAC) is being constituted under Section 11 of GMDA Act, 2017. Applications are invited for nomination to RAC in terms of Rule 20 of the GMDA Rules, 2018 as under:

- One member shall be nominated from amongst Non-Governmental Organisations working in the field of Environmental Conservation, Water Conservation or Solid Waste Management in Notified Area:
- One member shall be nominated from amongst residents who have practical and significant experience in Urban Planning, Architecture and Engineering:
- Not more than two members shall be nominated from amongst residents who have been in Civil or Military Service:
- One member shall be nominated from amongst residents who have significant contribution in the fields of Law and Legal Affairs, Literature, Art, Culture, Sports, Education and Health:

A detailed Public Notice with application form has been published on the website of GMDA at www.gmda.gov.in. The closing date of receipt of applications in the pre-scribed proforma is 31st January, 2022. The applications may be submitted to the undersigned by E-mail or by Post or by hand.

Sd/-
(S.K. Chahal)
Joint Chief Executive Officer,
Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority
Tel: 0124-2746604, E-mail: jtceo.gmda@gov.in

7053/Hry

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Rajesh Kumar, advocate on behalf of my client Shri Sanjay s/o Late Bachchal Part r/o E-14, Sector-II, Phase-III, J.J.Colony,Dwarka, New Delhi-110078 caused this notice to inform



@ieExplained

#ExpressExplained

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

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

DASHBOARD, AS ON JAN 19

689
DAYS SINCE
PANDEMIC
BEGAN

New cases

3,17,532

Active cases

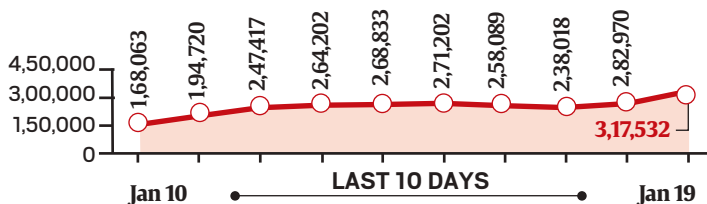
19,24,051

Deaths

491

Weekly CFR: 0.93% | Overall CFR: 1.39% | Total deaths: 4,87,693

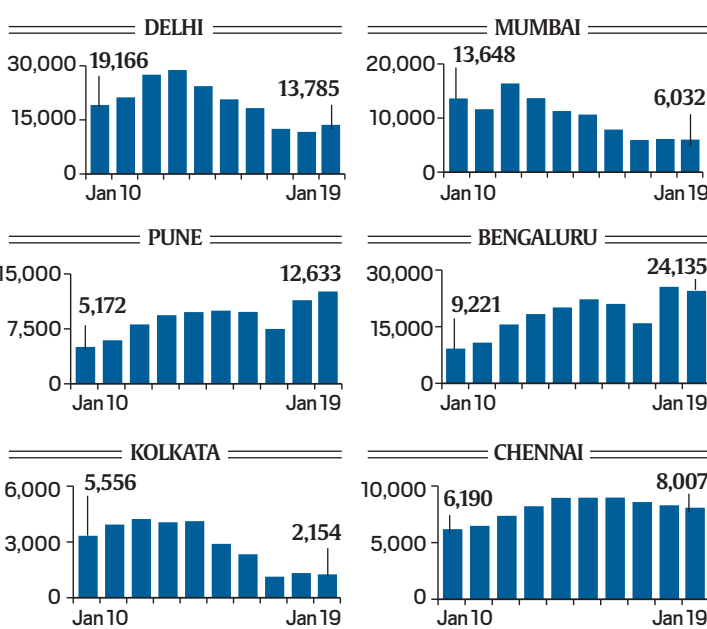
NEW CASES, DAILY



SURGE IN THE STATES

State	ON JANUARY 19			Weekly positivity
	New Cases	Active Cases	Deaths	
Maharashtra	43,697	2,64,708	57	20.96%
Karnataka	40,499	2,67,679	21	15.98%
Kerala	34,199	1,69,091	134	30.07%
Tamil Nadu	26,981	1,70,661	35	16.24%
Gujarat	20,966	90,726	12	11.86%

CASES IN THE CITIES, LAST 10 DAYS



TOTAL TESTS

70,93,56,830

TESTS ON JAN 19

19,35,180

WEEKLY POSITIVITY

15.78%

OVERALL POSITIVITY

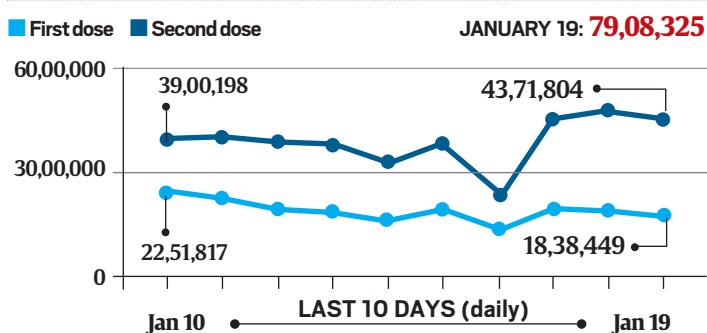
5.39%

INDIA TOTAL DOSES

159,67,55,879

(Adults 1st dose: 88,07,79,229; adults second dose: 67,13,07,622;

15-18 age group first dose: 3,84,93,979; precautionary doses: 61,75,049)



SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

IAS officers & central posting

The Centre has proposed to amend the rules for central deputation of IAS officers. How is deputation done at present, why has it caused Centre-state tussles in the past, and what are the proposed changes?

SHYAMLAL YADAV

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

THE CENTRE has proposed amendments to the IAS (Cadre) Rules in order to exercise greater control in central deputation of IAS officials, which has often been at the centre of tussles between the Centre and the states.

What is current rule on deputation?

Central deputation in the Indian Administrative Service is covered under Rule-6 (1) of the IAS (Cadre) Rules-1954, inserted in May 1969. It states: "A cadre officer may, with the concurrence of the State Governments concerned and the Central Government, be deputed for service under the Central Government or another State Government or under a company, association or body of individuals, whether incorporated or not, which is wholly or substantially owned or controlled by the Central Government or by another State Government. Provided that in case of any disagreement, the matter shall be decided by the Central Government and the State Government or State Governments concerned shall give effect to the decision of the Central Government."

As on January 1, 2021, out of around 5,200 IAS officers in the country, 458 were on central deputation.

What are the proposed amendments?

On December 20, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) wrote to various state governments that "... various state/joint cadres are not sponsoring adequate number of officers for central deputation, as part of the Central Deputation Reserve. As a result of this, the number of officers available for central deputation is not sufficient to meet the requirement at Centre."

The letter proposed to insert an additional condition in Rule 6(1): "Provided that each State Government shall make available for deputation to the Central Government, such number of eligible officers of various levels to the extent of the Central Deputation Reserve prescribed under Regulations referred to in Rule 4(1), adjusted proportionately by the number of officers available with the State Government concerned vis-à-vis the total authorized strength of the State



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with then chief secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay, who was the centre of a Centre-state tussle last year. Express Archive

cadre at a given point of time. The actual number of officers to be deputed to the Central Government shall be decided by the Central Government in consultation with State Government concerned."

To the existing condition that "in case of any disagreement... the State Government or State Governments concerned shall give effect to the decision of the Central Government", the proposed amendment adds the words "within a specified time".

The Centre has sought comments within January 25, and sent reminders to state governments. It has written that "in specific situations, where services of cadre officers are required by the Central Government in public interest, the Central Government may seek the services of such officers for posting under the Central Government." A few states have responded, including West Bengal, which has raised objections.

What are West Bengal's objections?

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is the Minister for DoPT, that the proposals are "against the spirit of cooperative federalism" and "will affect administration of the state". "By insisting on officers to be made available for deputation through the proposed amend-

ment, not only will the administration of States be affected but also it would become impossible to assess and plan the administration of a State - by engaging such officers who form part of the Central Deputation Reserve, fraught with the uncertainty of their sudden deputation by the Centre," she has written.

How are officers sent on central deputation today, and how could the amendments affect it?

The Centre asks every year for an "offer list" of officers of the All India Services (IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service) willing to go on central deputation, from which it selects officers.

While Rule 6(1) says that in case of disagreement, the state shall give effect to the decision of the Centre, this has not been possible in several cases of conflict. Even the proposed amendment leaves the state with an escape route by stating that the number of officers to be sent on deputation shall be decided by the central government "in consultation with the State Government concerned". And while the Centre mandates the state governments to provide a list of officers, the officer too must be willing, with Rule 6(2) stating: "no cadre officer shall be deputed to any organisation or body of the type referred

to in item (ii), except with his consent". Item (ii) covers certain kinds of organisations.

In January 2021, a West Bengal-based lawyer, Abu Sohel, filed a PIL in the Supreme Court seeking Rule 6(1) be struck down. He contended that because of the rule, states have to bear the brunt of arbitrary actions taken by the Centre, while the rule makes it difficult for the Centre to enforce its will on a state that refuses to back down. The court, ruling on March 1, did not find any merit in the petition.

In cases of tussle, how often has the Centre has its way?

Usually, the states have had their way. Among the latest examples was a tussle involving Alapan Bandyopadhyay, an IAS officer of the 1987 batch, now retired and serving as Chief Adviser to West Bengal CM Banerjee. Last year, when he was due to begin an extension of three months after retiring as Chief Secretary, the Centre asked him to report on the day of his retirement. Bandyopadhyay did not do so, and the Chief Minister did not relieve him either.

In December 2020, the Centre asked that three IPS officers, who were in charge of security when BJP president J P Nadda's motorcade was attacked outside Kolkata on December 10, allegedly by supporters of the Trinamool Congress, be sent on deputation to the Centre. The state refused, citing a shortage of IPS officers, and the Centre did not insist either.

Prominent examples in other states include a tussle between the Centre and the J Jayalalithaa government in 2001. On June 29, 2001, a month after Jayalalithaa took oath, the state police's CB-CID raided former chief minister M Karunanidhi's home and arrested him along with his DMK colleagues Murali Maran and T R Baalu, then ministers in the NDA government of A B Vajpayee. The following month, the Centre asked the state government to send three IPS officers on central deputation. Jayalalithaa refused, and wrote to other Chief Ministers for their support to protect the rights of the states.

In another tussle involving Tamil Nadu, IPS officer Archana Ramasundaram was deputed to the CBI in 2014, but the state government refused to release her, and suspended her when she defied the state's order and joined the CBI. She is today one of the members of the Lokpal.

The concern over 5G and flight safety

AASHISH ARYAN

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

FLIGHTS TO the United States from India resumed on Thursday as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) cleared the landing of more aircraft even in low-visibility conditions, despite the rollout of C-band 5G technology.

Following the announcement, Air India resumed flights from India to the US, with the first flight for John F Kennedy International Airport in New York departing in the morning.

Why had AI suspended its US flights?

On January 14, the FAA warned that the rollout of new 5G technology by AT&T and Verizon in the allotted 3.7-3.98 GHz (giga-hertz) band could potentially lead to interference with onboard instruments such as radar altimeters.

Commercial passenger and cargo airlines had also warned of an impending "catastrophic" aviation crisis if the rollout of 5G went ahead as planned.

Early on Wednesday, AI announced it would not be operating eight India-US flights — on the Delhi-New York, Delhi-Chicago, Delhi-San Francisco sectors — that day "due



An aircraft lands in Arlington, Virginia, on Wednesday. Despite concerns over the 5G rollout, the US has cleared landing of more aircraft. AP

to deployment of the 5G communications in the US".

Besides AI, US-based American Airlines and Delta Airlines operate direct flights between the countries. These carriers, too, cancelled their flights on Wednesday.

The deployment of 5G by AT&T and Verizon, two of the biggest wireless communications service providers in the US, has triggered concern among airlines, who have said that the frequencies used by the telecom companies is very close to the frequencies used by onboard instruments such as

radar altimeters, which operate in the 4.2-4.4 GHz range.

How do flight radar altimeters help in safe flight operations?

For all airborne vehicles — an aircraft, spacecraft, or even a missile — an altimeter is crucial to gauge the altitude and the distance covered.

Altimeters are of three main kinds: barometric, laser, and radio or radar altimeters. Most commercial passenger and cargo aircraft use a combination of all these altimeters along with global positioning system (GPS) to determine their path, as well as factors such as height above sea level, presence of highrises, mountains, and other obstacles, and the likely flying time.

The radio or radar altimeter is a very small, low-power radar system that operates in the 4.2-4.4 GHz frequency microwave C-band. The high frequency of these altimeters enable aircraft makers to install small antennae that produce powerful signals that can be relayed quickly and accurately.

Why is there concern about radar altimeter interference specifically in the United States?

Although the rollout of 5G by telecom

service providers has been a cause of concern for aviation everywhere, the situation is critical in the US, which auctioned 5G bandwidth in 2021 in the 3.7-3.98 GHz on the C-band spectrum range. This band is very close to the 4.2-4.4 GHz range in which radio or radar altimeters operate, airline companies have complained.

According to industry experts, there are chances of interference of the two bands as telecom service operators, in order to extract the full value of 5G and give customers the best experience, push operations to the highest band possible. Altimeters too need to operate at higher frequencies in order to get the most accurate readings possible.

What is the situation in India?

In India, where 5G is yet to be rolled out, the frequency range for 5G telecoms operations is pegged around 3.3-3.68 GHz. It is learnt that the Federation of Indian Pilots has, in its meetings with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), expressed concern about the frequencies being close together.

The DoT however, assured them that there would be no interference as the frequencies for commercial 5G services were at least 530 MHz away from those used by altimeters.

EXPLAINED YOUR MONEY

Brent at 7-year high: how are economy, markets and investors impacted?



KARUNJIT SINGH & SANDEEP SINGH

OIL PRICES are at their highest levels since 2014 — Brent crude hit \$88.3 per barrel on Thursday, up 27% since December 1, when it was trading at \$69.5.

Brent has spiked 8 per cent over the past week, rocking stock markets that were otherwise relatively steady in spite of the third wave of Covid-19 across the country.

Over the last six trading sessions, the benchmark Sensex at the BSE has lost 1,771

points (2.9%) over fresh concerns around inflation, current account deficit, fiscal deficit, and even the currency.

Why is crude rising?

The spike has been driven primarily by fears of supply side disruptions. The attack by Yemen's Houthis on fuel trucks in Abu Dhabi, in which three people including two Indians were killed, and the tensions between Russia, the world's second-largest oil producer, and Ukraine have raised concerns. The outage on an Iraq-Turkey pipeline on Wednesday heightened worries.

There is also concern over the growing imbalance between demand and supply — the former did not see the moderation that was initially expected as the Omicron wave began.

Further, the key oil producing countries have kept supply on a gradually increasing schedule in spite of the sharp increase in

global crude prices. Earlier this month, OPEC decided to increase overall daily production by only 400,000 barrels in February, even though its own prediction is for demand to rise by 4.15 million barrels per day in 2022.

How will it impact the Indian economy?

The rise in crude prices poses inflationary, fiscal, and external sector risks. Crude oil-related products have a direct share of over 9% in the WPI basket and, according to a report by Bank of Baroda chief economist Madan Sabnavis, a 10% increase in crude would lead to an increase of around 0.9% in WPI inflation.

"Our baseline forecast for WPI is 11.5-12% for FY22 and 6% in FY23, which might increase by around -0.9-1% because of increase in crude prices," says the report.

India imports more than 80% of its oil requirement, but the share of oil imports in its total imports is around 25%. Rising oil prices will impact the current account deficit — the

difference between the values of goods and services imported and exported.

"In FY22, the share of oil imports in India's total imports has increased to 25.8% (Apr-Dec'21) as oil prices inched up. With oil prices on an uptrend again, the oil import bill is likely to swell further. This will have an impact on India's external position. We estimate that a 10% hike in oil prices will lead to an increase of India's CAD by US\$ 15bn or 0.4% of GDP. This will have a negative impact on INR," Sabnavis said in his report.

The rise in crude oil prices is also expected to increase the subsidy on LPG and kerosene, pushing up the subsidy bill.

How do high oil prices impact consumers?

High crude oil prices contributed to the increase in petrol and diesel prices that hit record highs across the country in 2021. Pump prices fell in November as the central govern-

ment cut excise on petrol and diesel by Rs 5 and Rs 10 per litre respectively, and most states followed by cutting Value Added Tax.

Petrol and diesel are currently Rs 95.41 and Rs 86.7 per litre in the national capital. Since the tax cuts in November, oil marketing companies have not revised prices, even as Brent crude fell from about \$84.7 per barrel at the beginning of November to under \$70 at the beginning of December. Higher crude prices now could result in higher fuel prices for consumers, even though they did not get the full benefit of the fall in crude prices in November and December.

What can be the impact on investor sentiment and markets?

Investor sentiment has taken a beating over the last few days in line with rising crude prices. Foreign portfolio investors who had invested a net of Rs 3,950 crore until January 11, have turned net sellers over the last seven

trading sessions, pulling out a net of Rs 12,825 crore from Indian equities, leading to a fall of nearly 3% in the Sensex.

Even domestic institutional investors who invested a net of Rs 6,919 crore between January 1 and 14, have turned cautious, and invested a net of only Rs 239 crore over the last four trading sessions.

The rupee has fallen nearly 1% against the dollar over the last week, and was trading at 74.45 on Thursday.

"While the rise in crude oil prices is a concern for the Indian economy, I think the market is more worried about its impact on US inflation and the subsequent reaction by the Federal Reserve. The Fed may further advance plans to hike interest rates," Minral Singh, CEO and CIO, InCred Asset Management, said.

Fund managers say markets are likely to remain volatile in the near term, and investors should not react to daily news flows in regard to their investments.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Bomb disposal team arrive after a blast at the crime scene. *Reuters*

PAKISTAN

Bomb blast kills 3, including 9-year-old : Cops

Lahore: A bomb blast ripped through a crowded market in eastern Pakistan on Thursday, killing three people and wounding over 20, police said. "It was a bomb blast," a police spokesman Arif Rana told Reuters, saying a time device rigged to a motorcycle exploded outside a shop in the market. A nine-year-old boy is among the three dead, he said. A newly formed separatist group based in south-western Balochistan province claimed responsibility in a text message sent to a Reuters reporter. It said a bank was the target of the attack. Police said they were investigating, saying it was premature to link this to Pakistan Super League (PSL) Twenty20 cricket tournament scheduled to start in a week or so. **REUTERS**

UNITED STATES

Harris will be Biden's running mate in 2024

Washington: US President Joe Biden has said vice-president Kamala Harris would be his running mate if he stood for office again in 2024. President Biden made this emphatic assertion on Wednesday amid US media reports alleging dysfunction among her staff and doubt on her standing within the administration. Harris, 57, is the first woman and first woman of colour and Asian American person ever sworn in as US vice-president. **PTI**

UNITED KINGDOM

Texas synagogue hostage-taking: 2 men arrested

London: British police say they have arrested two people in connection with a hostage-taking at a synagogue in Texas. Counter Terrorism Police North West said one man was arrested on Thursday in Birmingham, central England, and another in the city of Manchester. They were being held for questioning and have not yet been charged. Malik Faisal Akram, a 44-year-old British citizen, took four people hostage at a Texas synagogue in a 10-hour standoff that ended in his death. Two British teenagers were arrested as part of the investigation on Sunday and later released without charge. **AP**

GATHERING STORM IN EAST EUROPE

Biden says Putin 'will move in'

White House delivers grim prognosis for Ukraine, warns Kremlin will pay 'serious and dear price'

DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 20

PRESIDENT BIDEN said on Wednesday that he now expected President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia would order an invasion of Ukraine, delivering a grim assessment that the diplomacy and threat of sanctions issued by the US and its European allies were unlikely to stop the Russian leader from sending troops across the border.

"Do I think he'll test the West, test the US and NATO, as significantly as he can? Yes, I think he will," Biden told reporters during a nearly two-hour news conference in the East Room of the White House. He added, almost with an air of fatalism: "But I think he will pay a serious and dear price for it that he doesn't think now will cost him what it's going to cost him. And I think he will regret having done it."

Asked to clarify whether he was accepting that an invasion was coming, Biden said: "My guess is he will move in. He has to do something."



US President Joe Biden

The President later acknowledged that Putin's move might not amount to a full-scale invasion of the country.

Still, Biden's comment went well beyond the current intelligence assessments described by White House officials, which conclude that Putin has not made a decision about whether to invade. The comment is also likely to provoke concern in Ukraine and among NATO allies, because Biden acknowledged that if Putin conducted only a partial invasion, NATO nations could be split on how strongly to react.

"It's very important that we

keep everyone in NATO on the same page," Biden said.

Pentagon officials say that such an invasion, intended to split and destabilise Ukraine, would most likely extend Moscow's control of eastern regions of the country, where a grinding war with Russian-backed separatists has been underway in the eight years since Russia annexed Crimea.

But the President also seemed to contradict some of his own aides, who have said in the past week, in background briefings for reporters, that there would be no distinction between a small incursion into Russian-speaking territory in Ukraine and a full attack on the country. An invasion is an invasion, one State Department official said last week.

A half-hour after the President ended his news conference, Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary, issued a clarification of his remarks, saying that Biden would treat any move over the border as an invasion — but was reserving judgment on how NATO would respond to other kinds of attacks. **NYT**

Swift response if Russia sends troops to Ukraine: US

Berlin: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned on Thursday that there would be a "swift, severe" response from the US and its allies if Russia sends any military forces into Ukraine.

Blinken's comments in Berlin appeared to be another effort to clear up any confusion about the position of the US and its NATO allies after US President Biden was heavily criticised for saying a "minor incursion" by Russia would elicit a lesser response.

"If any Russian military forces move across the Ukrainian border and commit new acts of aggression against Ukraine, that will be met with a swift, severe, united response from the US and our allies and partners," Blinken said. **AP**

Russia accuses West of plotting 'provocations' in Ukraine

Moscow: Russia accused the West on Thursday of plotting "provocations" in Ukraine and disguising its alleged intentions by fomenting concerns about Moscow planning aggressive military action in the neighbouring country.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova alleged that Ukrainian and Western claims of an imminent Russian attack on Ukraine were a "cover for staging large-scale provocations of their own, including those of military character."

"They may have extremely tragic consequences for the regional and global security," Zakharova said. She pointed to the delivery of weapons to Ukraine by British military transport planes in recent days, claiming that Ukraine perceives Western military assistance as a "carte blanche for a military operation in Donbas." **AP**

sion of Ukraine could be bloody and expensive, experts wrote, potentially damaging Russia's economy and Putin's political standing. So far, Putin does not appear to be preparing to go to war. By making an invasion seem possible, Putin can try to win other concessions, such as a freer hand in Eastern Europe, experts argued.

5. So the risk of war is low?

Not necessarily. Even skeptics acknowledge it is possible, given the lack of transparency about Putin's thinking. Analysts believe war is the most likely outcome. Putin has lost patience with Ukraine and believes the US would not go to war over it. He also craves a historical legacy that a territorial expansion could ensure, by helping reverse the catastrophe of the Soviet collapse. **NYT**

Will there be war in Ukraine?

1. Why is Putin threatening war with Ukraine?

The answer is that most diplomats and experts aren't entirely sure. "It's not clear what Russia's central demand is," Blinken told reporters in Kyiv. Even Putin's top advisers may not know what he is trying to accomplish and how seriously he is considering an invasion. "The expert opinion that I can authoritatively declare is: Who the heck knows?" said Fyodor Lukyanov, a Russian foreign-policy analyst.

2. Why is the US so alarmed?

A successful invasion would establish Russia as a dominant, expansionist power in Eastern Europe. It would make other democracies (like Taiwan) worry that they could be vulnerable to takeover by nearby

authoritarian countries (like China).

3. What does Putin say his rationale is?

Perhaps the best-known statement of Putin's 20-plus years as Russia's dominant political figure came from an annual state-of-the-nation speech in 2005 at the Kremlin. The collapse of the Soviet Union, he said, was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe".

Ukraine was arguably the most painful loss for Moscow. Putin often cites their deep ties. But Ukraine has drifted toward the West in recent years.

4. What isn't Putin saying?

Some observers believe that the troop buildup is a mixture of bluff and distraction. A full-scale invasion

Ex-Pope Benedict faulted for handling of abuse cases when he was archbishop

ELISABETTA POVOLEDO

ROME, JANUARY 20

A REPORT released on Thursday faulted Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI for what the authors called misconduct in his handling of at least four cases of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic priests when he was the archbishop of Munich, according to the law firm that handled the investigation.

The report on the handling of clerical sex abuse of minors in the diocese of Munich and Freising covered the period between 1945 and 2019. Benedict was archbishop of Munich and Freising from 1977 to 1982 and had oversight over the clerics.

"In a total of four cases, we came to the conclusion that the then-archbishop, Cardinal Ratzinger, can be accused of misconduct," said one of the authors of the report, Martin Pusch, referring to Benedict. The law firm Westpfahl



Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Spilker Wastl, which drafted the report commissioned by the archdiocese of Munich and Freising, said that Benedict had firmly denied any wrongdoing. The Vatican said on Thursday that it would read and examine the report in coming days and give it "due attention," said the Vatican spokesman, Matteo Bruni.

The report also accused other senior church figures in the archdiocese of Munich and Freising of mishandling sexual abuse cases.

Cardinal Reinhard Marx, who is one of Pope Francis' closest advisers and who has led the diocese since 2007, offered his resignation as head of the archdiocese last year to take responsibility for sexual abuse by priests over the past decades. **NYT**

US researchers test pig-to-human transplant in brain-dead body

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JANUARY 20

RESEARCHERS ON Thursday reported the latest in a surprising string of experiments in the quest to save human lives with organs from genetically modified pigs.

This time around, surgeons in Alabama transplanted a pig's kidneys into a brain-dead man — a step-by-step rehearsal for an operation they hope to try in living patients possibly later this year.

"The organ shortage is in fact an unmitigated crisis and we've never had a real solution to it," said Dr Jayme Locke of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, who led the newest

study and aims to begin a clinical trial of pig kidney transplants.

Twice this fall, surgeons at New York University temporarily attached a pig's kidney to blood vessels outside the body of a deceased recipient to watch them work. And earlier this month, surgeons at the University of Maryland Medical Center gave a dying man a heart from a gene-edited pig that so far is keeping him alive.

For a little over three days, until the man's body was removed from life support, the pair of pig kidneys survived with no sign of immediate rejection, her team reported Thursday in the American Journal of Transplantation.

Taliban arrest activist, sisters for 'insulting Afghan values'

Kabul: The Taliban stormed an apartment in Kabul after sundown, smashing the door in and arresting a woman rights activist and her three sisters, an eyewitness said on Thursday. A Taliban statement appeared to blame the incident on recent women's protest, saying insulting Afghan values will no longer be tolerated. The activist, Tamana Zaryabi Paryani, was among about 25 women who took part in an anti-Taliban protest on Sunday against the compulsory Islamic headscarf, or hijab, for women.

The spokesman for Taliban-appointed police in Kabul tweeted that Paryani's post was a manufactured drama. A spokesman for the Taliban intelligence, Khalid Hamraz, would neither confirm nor deny the arrest. **AP**



MEANWHILE

RARE CORAL REEF FOUND OFF TAHITI COAST

Deep in the South Pacific, scientists have explored a rare stretch of pristine corals shaped like roses off the coast of Tahiti. The reef is thought to be one of the largest found at such depths and seems untouched by climate change or human activities. A French researcher said she first saw the corals during a recreational dive with a local diving club months earlier. What struck her was that the corals looked healthy and weren't affected by a bleaching event in 2019.

UK govt accused of 'blackmail' to keep PM Johnson in power

ELIZABETH PIPER & KATE HOLTON

LONDON, JANUARY 20

A SENIOR Conservative lawmaker accused the British government on Thursday of intimidating and attempting to "blackmail" those lawmakers they suspect of wanting to force Prime Minister Boris Johnson out of power.

Johnson, who won a large majority in 2019, is facing growing calls to step down over a series of scandals, including admitting he had attended a party at his Downing Street office at a time when Britain was under a strict Covid-19 lockdown.

"Johnson, 57, has vowed to fight on, saying he would lead the Conservative Party into the next election and warning a law-



Johnson's office said if there was evidence, allegations would be looked at. *Reuters*

maker who defected to the main opposition Labour Party on Wednesday that he would win back his seat.

But in yet another blow to his shaky standing, William Wragg, chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee which oversees constitutional issues and standards, accused the government of blackmail.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Covid booster provides effective antibody shield against Omicron: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, JANUARY 20

A THIRD DOSE of Covid-19 vaccine increases the level of antibodies that can effectively neutralise the Omicron variant, according to a study published in The Lancet journal.

Researchers from Francis Crick Institute and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), UK, found that antibodies generated in people who had received only two doses of either the AstraZeneca or the Pfizer vaccine were less able to neutralise Omicron compared with Alpha and Delta variants.

They also found that antibody levels dropped off in the first three months following the second dose but a third "booster" dose raised levels of antibodies that effectively neutralise the Omicron variant.

The study found that in people who had received the Pfizer

vaccine for all three doses, antibody levels against Omicron after a third dose were similar to those previously reached against Delta after only two shots.

Overall, antibody levels were nearly 2.5 times higher against Omicron after three doses compared to after two jabs, according to the researchers.

Higher levels of antibodies against Omicron were also found in people who received two doses of either vaccine and also reported previously having Covid symptoms, compared with those who didn't have disease symptoms in past.

While levels of antibodies alone do not predict vaccine effectiveness, they are a good indicator of protection against severe Covid, the researchers noted.

The study confirms that three doses of vaccine are essential to boost antibodies to quantifiable levels and maximise the amount of protection against severe disease and hospitalisation.

FIRMS TO MAKE CHEAP VERSION OF MERCK PILL FOR POOR NATIONS

Brussels: Nearly 30 generic drugmakers in Asia, Africa and the Middle East will make cheap versions of Merck & Co's Covid-19 pill, under a landmark UN-backed deal to give poorer nations wider access to a drug seen as a weapon in fighting the pandemic. Under the deal, negotiated by the UN-backed Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) with Merck, the US company will not receive royalties for the sale of the low-cost version of the pill while the pandemic continues. The MPP said the deal stipulated the pill would be distributed to 105 less-developed nations. **REUTERS**

NEW ZEALAND WON'T USE LOCKDOWNS

Wellington: Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Thursday an outbreak was inevitable and the nation would tighten restrictions as soon as one was detected. But she also said that New Zealand would not impose the lockdowns that it has used previously, including for the Delta variant. Ardern said that within 24 to 48 hours of Omicron being detected in the community, the nation would move into its "red" setting. That would allow businesses to remain open and domestic travel to continue, but would require schoolchildren to wear masks and limit crowds to 100. **AP**

Top university system in US adds caste to protected bracket

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 20

A TOP university system in the United States has announced to add caste as a protected category, a move that has been welcomed by several rights groups fighting against caste-based discrimination in this country.

California State University System, that has over 23 campuses and eight off-campus centers enrolling 485,550 students with 55,909 faculty and staff, announced the addition to its list this month.

"The entire California State University aspires to uphold the values of Inclusive Excellence by creating an environment where all of our talented and diverse students and employees are welcome and encouraged to succeed," Joseph I. Castro, Chancellor of California State University said.

"I commend the incredible work and dedication of the students, employees, and other partners whose efforts ensure that our policies align with our bold aspirations," Castro said.

California State University is the largest four-year public university system in the United States. Adding caste as a protected category ensures that all 23 of CSU campuses are able to be a place of access and equity for all students, Equality Lab said.

"This victory in getting caste protections is, though long overdue, also historic. It's just the end result that is historic but the process itself," said Manmit Singh from San Francisco State University student and lead organiser. **PTI**



FIRST AID ARRIVES IN TONGA: Personnel wearing personal protection equipment unload humanitarian relief supplies sent by New Zealand at Fua'amotu International Airport on the island of Tongatapu, Tonga on Thursday. *Reuters*

THE DISABLED MAN WAS PAINTING HIS HOUSE WHEN WAVES STRUCK

This Tongan 57-year-old 'real life Aquaman' survives 27-hour swim

REUTERS

WELLINGTON, JANUARY 20

A 57-YEAR-OLD Tongan man who said he swam around 27 hours after getting swept out to sea during Saturday's devastating tsunami has been hailed a 'real life Aquaman'.

The eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano on Saturday killed at least three people, sent tsunami waves rolling across the archipelago, damaging villages, resorts and many buildings and knocked out communications for the nation of about 105,000 people.

Lisala Folau, who lived on the small, isolated island of Atata which has a population of about 60 people, was swept out to sea when the waves hit land at about 7 pm on Saturday, he said in a radio



Lisala Folau (centre) with people of Atata island in Nuku'alofa. *Reuters*

dio interview to Tongan media agency Broadcastcom Broadcasting.

Folau said he was painting his home when he was alerted about the tsunami by his brother, and soon the waves had gone

through his lounge.

He climbed on a tree to escape but when he got down another big wave swept him away, he said. The 57-year-old said he is disabled and cannot walk properly. "I

just floated, bashed around by the big waves that kept coming," he told the radio station.

Folau said he kept floating, and slowly managed to swim 75 km (47 miles) to the main island of Tongatapu, reaching the shore 27 hours later at about 10 pm on Sunday.

Reuters was unable to contact Folau or verify the events. The story of Folau's heroics went viral among Tongan groups on Facebook and other social media.

"Real life Aquaman," said one post on Facebook, referring to the comic book and film character. "He's a legend," said another post. Atata, which is about 8 km north-west of Tonga's capital Nuku'alofa, or a 30-minute boat ride, has been almost entirely destroyed in the tsunami that hit the islands. Tongan naval boats are still surveying the smaller islands and evacuating people to the main islands.

POLICY WATCH
INDO-US TIESData Protection Bill:
US flags storage,
cross-border flow
at ICT group meetAASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

A US government delegation — led by Matt Murray, a senior official in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs of the Department of State — is learnt to have flagged concerns on certain aspects of cross-border data flow in the Data Protection Bill proposed by India, sources in know of the development said.

At the annual meeting of the India-US working group on information and communication technology (ICT) Thursday, the US delegation highlighted that the proposed Bill had “some limiting factors” when it came to cross-border flow of personal and non-personal data, as well as storage of data located in servers outside Indian borders, they added.

The working group also discussed aspects of standardisation of 5G technology, an industry official who attended the meeting said. The Indian government delegation was led by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology Secretary Ajay Sawhney.

The working group on ICT, which was started in 2005 after a summit between former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and former US President George Bush, meets on an annual basis in India or the US to discuss various aspects of co-operation in the space of information and communication.

This is the second time the US delegation has raised this issue. At the working group's last meeting, held in October 2020, a senior delegate from the US government had suggested that the two nations should discuss critical issues such as how a company could safely move personal as well as non-personal data across

The India-US working
group on ICT also
discussed aspects of
standardisation of 5G

borders without it being compromised in any manner.

“This year some of the delegates from India suggested establishment of a bilateral platform in which industry voices can also participate so that the mechanism is updated regularly,” a source said. Industry officials from the US too raised the issue and requested the Indian government to hold wider consultations before the Data Protection Bill is introduced in Parliament.

“Building on this dialogue, we ask the government to hold a wider stakeholder consultation before the revised Data Protection Bill is introduced in parliament. There are several novel proposals which have been suggested by the Joint Parliamentary Committee which require further deliberation and input from impacted stakeholders,” said Kumar Deep, India country manager for Information Technology Industry (ITI) Council.

Last December, the Joint Committee of Parliament on Personal Data Protection Bill tabled its final report in Parliament. The Bill, which now includes non-personal data in its ambit, will simply be known as Data Protection Bill.

It was first introduced by former Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on December 11, 2019, in the Lok Sabha and immediately referred to the standing committee on December 16 the same year. The committee's report was presented in the Lok Sabha by its chairperson PP Chaudhary and laid in the Rajya Sabha by Congress MP Jairam Ramesh.

ASK FOR REMOVAL OF GST ON ADDITIONAL INTEREST CHARGED IN DEFAULTS

Banks seek easing of norms for
valuation of stressed assetsSUNNY VERMA
& GEORGE MATHEW
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, JAN 20

A RELAXATION in stressed asset valuation norms, streamlining of NPA provisions, reduction in the tenure of tax-saving fixed deposits, and removal of GST on additional interest charged in case of defaults — these are among the banking sector's proposals to the government ahead of the Budget.

Sources said banks have pushed for a relaxation in the valuation norms for stressed assets in order to comply with the Reserve Bank of India's strict mandate to dispose off assets in a time-bound manner. The proposals, moved by the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), includes a reduction in the tenure of tax-saving fixed deposits from five years to three years.

Banks end up disposing such items at a price which is far lower than the commercial price/stamp duty valuation. The government should make an amendment by way of providing for an exemption from applying Section 43CA valuation in such cases, the IBA has said in its pre-Budget proposals to the government, according to industry sources.

Given the language of the section, banks are forced to pay taxes on notional profits in order to comply with RBI regulations on time-bound sale. Section 43CA prescribes that in case the consideration of a land, building or both (not being capital asset) is less than the value adopted as per stamp duty regulations, the latter will prevail.

“This creates a situation where the bank sells such assets without there being any ulterior motive of tax evasion. For income-tax however, the ready reckoner rate is applied,” IBA said.

The IBA said banks that enter into resolution deals with stressed borrowers often receive land, buildings etc in settlement of such debts. These items are listed as non-banking assets in financials of the bank. Banks receive strict mandate from the RBI to dispose of such non-banking assets in a time-bound manner. Given the strict timelines which are enforced by the banking regulator, banks are not able to do a commercial price discovery, IBA said.

Section 43CA valuation

BUILD UP TO
BUDGET
2022-23

measure is put in place in order to discourage sale value reduction in favour of cash exchanges. Being regulated entities, banks cannot indulge in such activities. Further, in order to comply with RBI regulations, time-bound disposal is mandated, thwarting price discovery.

“Alternatively, in such cases, the valuation report which is received from a reputed valuer can be considered to be the fair market value of such non-banking asset,” it said.

In another proposal, the IBA said banks are receiving notices with respect to applicability of

Goods and Services Tax (GST) on additional interest charged for delay in payment of EMIs. Also, notices are received whereby the department is contending to levy the tax on short interest paid by the banks on premature closure of deposits. This is despite CGST having issued a clarification on June 28, 2019 that GST will not be applicable in the event of additional interest collected due to default in repayment of EMI.

As per the normal industry practice, banks levy additional interest (over and above the sanctioned rate) on the customer in case of default/ delay in payment of loan EMIs or non-compliance of conditions of the loan. Also, regarding deposits placed with the banks, the bank generally pays lower interest in case of premature closure of the deposits.

In case of loan transactions, additional interest is charged because of increase in risk for the bank due to non-payment or non-compliance of conditions. Further, in case of deposits, interest is paid at a lower rate because of reduction in tenor of the deposit.

Banks have also proposed that annual issuance of TDS certificate

(Form 16A) should be allowed (as in the case of Form 16-Salary) instead of quarterly. “Since now Form 26AS has been stabilised, we suggest to discontinue issuance of Form 16A on quarterly basis,” the IBA said. The Income Tax department is currently relying on the 26AS for giving credit to the deductee and hence there is no requirement of quarterly TDS certificate.

Banks recognise an account as NPA in terms of RBI guidelines — after irregularity of 90 days. However, Rule 6EA of the Income Tax rules prescribes a period of 180 days to recognise an account as NPA. Such an anomaly gives scope for unnecessary disputes. Therefore, the timelines under Rule 6EA should be amended in line with RBI extant guidelines, IBA said.

IBA's proposals have come at a time when the RBI has said gross NPA ratio may rise from 6.9 per cent in September 2021 to 8.1 per cent in September 2022 under the baseline scenario and 9.5 per cent under the stress scenario. Credit growth, which is now at 9.2 per cent (Y-o-Y basis), is expected to hit double digits soon.

Rising yields
and inflation
drag Sensex
by 1,844 pts
in 3 daysENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 20

DOMESTIC STOCK markets on Thursday lost 1 more per cent as weak global cues continued to hit sentiment. The benchmark Sensex lost 634 points to 59,464.62 and the NSE Nifty Index fell 181 points at 17,757 amid the selling pressure.

With this, the Sensex has fallen 1,844 points in the last three days.

The rupee also slipped 7 paise to close at 74.51 against the US dollar, tracking a weak trend in the equity market.

According to analysts, rising crude oil prices and high inflation have hit the global stock markets. Brent crude futures were down 27 cents, or 0.3 per cent, at \$88.17 a barrel by 1448 GMT after dropping more than \$1 in earlier trade.

The continuous rise in bond yields globally, which is driving the market away from riskier assets, also impacted the sentiment amid speculation that the US Federal Reserve is likely to deliver more than a 25-basis-point rate hike in March. Benchmark 10-year note yields were last at 1.825 per cent, after reaching 1.902 per cent in overnight trading on Wednesday.

‘FDI flows
to India slip
26% in 2021’

Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows into the country last year were 26% lower, mainly as large M&A deals seen in 2020 were not repeated, UNCTAD said



Global FDI flows showed a strong rebound in 2021, growing 77% to an estimated \$1.65 trillion, from \$929 billion in 2020, surpassing pre-Covid-19 level, according to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Investment Trends Monitor

Developed economies saw the biggest rise by far, with FDI reaching an estimated \$777 billion in 2021 — three times the exceptionally low level in 2020

United States saw increase by 114% to \$323 billion

Source: UNCTAD/PTI

PFS vs independent dirs: Panel
to look into ‘governance issues’ENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 20

ADAY after three independent directors on the board of PTC India Financial Services (PFS) resigned over corporate governance issues and other matters, PTC India Ltd, the parent firm of PFS, said a senior level committee of the company is looking into alleged governance issues in PFS.

“We are closely monitoring the situation and observed that there are differences of opinion at operation and the board level of PFS on few issues. These issues are being looked into by a senior level committee of the company,” said Rajib

EXPLAINED **The back story**

THE INDEPENDENT directors have alleged that certain actions of the Chairman of the Board and Managing Director of the company are “ultra-vires” and “in violation” of the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013.

K Mishra, Director (M&BD) & CMD in-charge, PTC India.

PFS refuted the allegations and

stated that the matter will be addressed at the board level. The three independent directors who resigned are Kamlesh Shivji Vikamsey, Santosh B Nayar and Thomas Mathew T, as per a filing.

In the resignation letters, they have alleged that certain actions of the Chairman of the Board and Managing Director of the company are “ultra-vires” and “in violation” of the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013. The independent directors have also referred to the issues regarding Rs 125 crore-bridge loan given to NSL Nagapatnam Power and Infratech Pvt Ltd.

PFS shares crashed by 18.32 per cent to Rs 20.95 on Thursday.

‘Amazon writes
to Future Retail
dirs; again says
willing to assist’

New Delhi: Amazon has written to the independent directors of Future Retail Ltd (FRL) saying any sale of small format stores by the company without the consent of the US e-commerce giant would be in violation of injunctions, and reiterated its willingness to assist the cash-strapped retailer in addressing financial concerns.

“Please note that any sale of small format stores without obtaining the consent of Amazon would be in violation of the injunctions...,” the letter, a copy of which was seen by PTI, said.

Amazon and FRL did not respond to queries seeking comments. PTI

BRIEFLY

Better.com CEO

New York: Vishal Garg, CEO of US homeownership firm Better.com, who recently fired nearly 900 employees over a Zoom call, is returning to his position over a month after “taking time off”.

AIFF duty relief

New Delhi: All India Football Federation (AIFF) has been exempted from Customs duty & Integrated GST over import of certain goods for organising the AFC Women's Asian Cup in India.

OneWeb pact

New Delhi: Bharti Group-backed OneWeb and Hughes Network Systems inked a strategic six-year distribution pact for satellite broadband services. PTI

Spice Xchange

New Delhi: Minister of State for Commerce & Industry Som Parkash launched India's first virtual platform for spice exports ‘Spice Xchange India’ at a hybrid event in Kochi and online Thursday.

Camry Hybrid

New Delhi: Toyota Kirloskar Motors (TKM) launched the New Camry Hybrid, at ex-showroom price of ₹41.7 lakh. Atul Sood, associate VP—sales & strategic marketing, said “it has been designed for a greener and sustainable future.” ENS

Unity SFB

New Delhi: Unity Small Finance Bank (SFB) said the RBI approved appointment of former CAG Vinod Rai as its chairman. PTI

HUL net up 16.7% in Q3, flags near-term challenges

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 20

DESPITE MODERATION in market growth and significant levels of commodity inflation, Hindustan Unilever on Thursday reported a 16.76 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 2,243 crore for the quarter ended December 2021, as against Rs 1,921 crore in the same period of a year ago.



HUL CMD Sanjiv Mehta said the company performed well despite moderation in market growths. File

The company's total income grew 10.23 per cent to Rs 13,183 crore for the December quarter as against Rs 11,959 crore a year ago. Growth in the quarter was competitive and profitable with domestic consumer growth of 11 per cent. “Business fundamentals remained strong with handsome market share gains in all our divisions, both urban and rural markets and across price segments. Underlying volume growth at 2%

was significantly ahead of the market,” HUL said.

HUL Chairman and MD Sanjiv Mehta said, “We have delivered a strong and resilient performance in the quarter despite moderation in market growths and significant levels of commodity inflation. I am particularly pleased that the growth is extremely competitive with our market share gains being highest in more than a decade.”

In the near-term, operating en-

vironment will continue to remain challenging, HUL said.

“In this scenario, we will manage our business with agility, continue to grow our consumer franchise whilst maintaining our margins in a healthy range. We remain confident of the medium to long term potential of Indian FMCG sector and HUL's ability to deliver a consistent, competitive, profitable and responsible growth,” he said.

‘EV tax relief: Govt, Tesla in stalemate’

New Delhi: Talks between the government and Tesla over potential tax benefits are deadlocked as the government is not keen to give the company any breaks without a commitment to manufacture locally, sources said.

Tesla wants to import and sell its electric vehicles in India and has for nearly a year pitched officials to reduce

tariffs. But official sources said they have been unconvinced by Tesla as the company has not yet shared any firm plan to invest in the country. A third person with knowledge of Tesla's thinking said discussions with the government have reached a “weird stalemate”. “Things are not moving ahead (for Tesla).” The source said Tesla told officials it is open to

sourcing more auto parts locally and eventually moving towards manufacturing, but the government sources have indicated they want firm commitments.

Tesla did not respond to a request for comment. The Prime Minister's Office and Ministries of finance and industries did not respond to a request for comment. REUTERS

Share claims details with Jet
staff: NCLAT to Jalan-KalrockENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

A TWO-MEMBER bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Thursday told the Murari Lal Jalan-Kalrock Capital consortium, the winning bidder for Jet Airways, to share portions of the resolution plan pertaining to claims of employees with the airline's workmen.

The Association of Aggrieved Workmen of Jet Airways (India) Ltd had sought a copy of the approved resolution plan and the latest direction has come on a plea filed by the association. The order comes nearly seven months after the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) cleared the plan last June.

Headed by Chairman Justice Ashok Bhushan, the NCLAT bench said as the consortium's plan has already been approved by the NCLT, it “is no more confidential” and a copy should be provided to the aggrieved person. WITHPTI

Order against
HCL Tech stayed

New Delhi: The NCLAT stayed insolvency proceedings initiated against HCL Technologies on a plea filed by a creditor. A two-member NCLAT bench, while admitting the petition filed by HCL Tech MD-CEO C Vijayakumar stayed an NCLT order of January 17 to initiate insolvency.

Videocon lenders
invite fresh Eols

New Delhi: The consortium of lenders of Videocon Industries has invited fresh expressions of interest (Eols) for the group after the NCLAT rejected the approval of Rs 2,692 crore bid by Twin Star Technologies. PTI

Government of India, Department of Atomic Energy, Heavy Water Plant (Kota) e-Tender invitation notice no.-HWP/KSTORES/2021/601/6

Online item rate tenders are invited through e-Tendering mode for “Material Handling by Loading/Unloading, Shifting, Counting and Stacking or Stores Material (as and when required) in HWP(K) at Anushakti for one year during 2022 - 23” by General Manager, Heavy Water Plant (Kota), Post: Anushakti-323033, Via - Kota (Rajasthan) for and On behalf of the President of India, from approved, eligible and experienced contractors. Estimated cost of work: ₹ 26,37,967/-

Tender document can be viewed/downloaded from 21.01.2022 (10:00 hrs) to 31.01.2022 (14:30 hrs). The last date for online submission of tender is 31.01.2022 (14:30 hrs). The technical bids will be opened on 03.01.2022 at 15:00 hrs.

The detailed NIT and Tender Documents are available on the website <https://procure.gov.in/e-procurement> for free to view/download. The detailed NIT can be seen at website www.hwb.gov.in For further information please contact Telephone no. 01475- 242201/242228, fax -01475- 242228 on all working days.

General Manager
For & on behalf of President of India

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU, HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Tiruvannamalai Highways (Construction & Maintenance) Circle

TENDER NOTICE

T.N.No. 18/2021-22/HDO **Dated: 13.01.2022**

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender under two cover system through online only will be received upto 02.03.2022 / 12.00 hours by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Tiruvannamalai Circle for CRIDP 2021-2022 (CMRDP 4 Laning), 2 Works pertaining Vellore and Kallakurichi (H) C&M Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 27.01.2022 onwards in the Government website <https://tntenders.gov.in>. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Circle, Tiruvannamalai.

"சோதனை கடந்து கதந்திரம் கடைநீதோம். சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம்"

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : 32/2021-2022/KWA/PHC/TVLA(RT-1). JJM-2021-22 WSS to Kozhencherry Panchayath - Phase-II - Supplying and Laying Distribution System and Providing FHTC's(III SLSSC). EMD : Rs. 500000/-.

Tender fee : Rs. 16800. Last Date for submitting Tender : **09-02-2022 02:00:pm.** Phone : 04692600162. Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in.

Superintending Engineer PH Circle, Pathanamthitta

SBI

Networking & Communication Department, State Bank of India, Global IT-Centre, Sec-11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400614.

CORRIGENDUM-2

Please refer to RFP No.SBI/GITC/NW&C/21-22/814 dated 23.12.2021 for procurement of 4G LTE Connectivity for Offline ATMs. Corrigendum-2 dated 20.01.2022 can be accessed under Procurement news at Bank's website <https://www.sbi.co.in> or <https://bank.sbi> or e-Procurement agency portal <https://etender.sbi/>

Place: Navi Mumbai **Sd/- Deputy General Manager** (Networking & Communication Dept.)

Date: 21.01.2022

KMML The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd.
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking)
(An ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 & SA 8000 Certified Company)

Sankaramangalam, Chavara - 691 583 Kollam, Kerala, India, Phone: +91-476-2651215 to 2651217. Fax : +91-0476-2680101. Email: contact@kmml.com, URL: www.kmml.com

SHORT E-TENDER NOTICE

No	Tender Id	Name of the Work
1	2022_KMML_467442_1	For the supply of CHLORINATOR BRICKS
2	2022_KMML_467397_1	For fabrication and supply of Heavy Ends Condenser E215
3	2022_KMML_467383_1	For fabrication and supply of Condenser Column Cooler E204-205
4	2022_KMML_466985_1	For the supply of Current Transformer


Chavara 20.01.2022 sd/-DGM(Mts) For The Kerala Minerals And Metals Ltd

5 2022_KMML_467679_1 Excavation of iron oxide from third pond in as is where is condition and shifting to old ponds in KMML

6 2022_KMML_469002_1 Design, supply, installation, testing & commissioning of new 40TPH Boiler plant project at TP unit of KMML on turnkey basis

Chavara 20.01.2022 sd/-HOU(TP/TSP) For The Kerala Minerals And Metals Ltd

Our Products: Titanium Dioxide, Titanium Tetra Chloride, Nano Titanium, Titanium Sponge, Rutile, Zircon & Silimanite



NMDC Limited

(A Government of India Enterprise)

Khanji Bhavan, T-30-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad - 500 028.
 CIN: L13100TG1958GO001674

CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT

Tender Enquiry No: HO(Contracts)/NISPLDCP(Bal Work)/RT/2022/130, Dated : 21-01-2022

NMDC Limited, A "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites **online bids** from prospective **domestic** bidders for "Completion of Balance work of Lime & Dolomite Calcination plant (2 Nos. of 500 TPD Capacity Lime Kilns and 1 No. of 300 TPD Capacity Dolomite Kiln with one Lime Sizing Unit of 25 t/hr capacity) for 3.0 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant at Nagarnar near Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh State" on divisible turnkey basis from experienced, reputed and competent Tenderers. MECON Limited is the consultant for this package.

The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and / or downloaded from NMDC website <http://www.nmdc.co.in>, Central Public Procurement Portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> and MSTC portal <http://www.mstccommerce.co.in> from 21-01-2022 to 11-02-2022.

For Accessing the Bid document from NMDC website, the bidder has to register as "New User" in Bid section at NMDC's website link - <http://www.nmdc.co.in/nmcdtender/default.aspx>.

For accessing the bid document from MSTC, bidders to visit website link - http://www.mstccommerce.co.in/eprochome/nmcd/buyer_login.jsp and search Tender Event No. NMDC/HO/75/21-22/ET/369. Bidders are requested to register as 'New Vendor' for downloading the tender document. For further help refer to 'vendor guide' given in MSTC website.


The bidders are requested to submit their bids through online mode and details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT.

The Bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website / CPP Portal / MSTC website for the forthcoming, if any, at a future date.

For further clarification, the following can be contacted :

1. Chief General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad, Fax No. +91-040-23534746, Tel.No. +91-040-23532800, email : steelcontracts@nmdc.co.in
2. Sr. General Manager (NMDC Project), MECON Limited, Ranchi, Fax No. +91-651-2482214, Tel. No. +91-0651-2483508, email : projnmcd@meconlimited.in

Chief General Manager (Contracts)

	<p align="center">UJVN LTD.</p> <p>H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road Dehradun-248006</p> <p>Telephones: 0135- 2763808 & Fax: 0135-2763508</p> <p>CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC25866 Website: www.ujvnl.com</p>
	<p>Ro.No.- 48</p> <p align="right">Dated- 19.01.2022</p>
	<p align="center">e-Tender Date Extension Notice-01</p> <p>Dates of online bids invited through e-NIT no 15/UJVNL/03/EE (Civil-II)/Vyasi HEP/2021-22 by Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil-II), Vyasi HEP, Lakwahr Bhawan, Dakpathar, Distt- Dehradun (Uttarakhand) for the work of " Construction of Shops and Dispensary Center for Project affected people of Vyasi Project at Hathiyari, Dehradun " is hereby extended as below-</p> <p>Last Date & time for submission of bid on portal : 29.01.2022 up to 17:00 Hrs.</p> <p>Last date & time for submission of offline original document : 01.02.2022 at 15:00 hrs in office of The Executive Engineer (Civil-II), Vyasi Project, Lakwahr Bhawan, Dakpathar (Dehradun)</p> <p>Other term & conditions will remain same. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the UJVNL website www.ujvnl.com and e-procurement portal http://uktenders.gov.in EE(Civil-II)</p> <p align="center">"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"</p>

Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
 Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- xenmhchdg@yahoo.in
Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS/2021-22/297/e-tendering, Dated: 19.01.2022
 On the behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-tenders are invited from original equipment manufacturers or their authorized dealers/ representatives or reputed and experienced firms for the below mentioned works:

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	EMD Amount (In rupees)	Time of completion (in days)	AA Accorded Vide No:	TS No	Position of Funds
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Repairs to 18 Hp VVRs installed in Govt. Medical College, Baramulla.	1.16	200	2400	5	GMC/Bla/2021/ 2538-44 Dt:-02.11.21	MED/K/ TS/119, Dt: 26.11.2021	Available

1. Downloading of Bids:- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.iktenders.gov.in from **19.01.2022 (18.00 hrs)** and can be downloaded from **19.01.2022 (18.00 hrs)**.

2. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site **20.01.2022 (10.00 hrs) to 25.01.2022 (14:00hrs)** in two (02) covers.

3. Opening of Bids :- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on **25.01.2022 at 16.00 hrs or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar**

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

MHCHD/TS/9804-08
Dt:-19-01-2022


DIPK-16945

ऊर्जा विभाग झारखण्ड सरकार विद्युत कार्यपालक अभियन्ता विद्युत कार्य प्रमण्डल, इंजीनियरिंग हॉस्टल नं०-2, धुर्वा, राँची					
अति अल्पकालीन ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट सूचना					
ई-निविदा प्रसंग सं०-Energy/EWD/Ranchi/67/2021-22 दिनांक-20/01/2022					
सं.	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (रूपये में)	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य	अग्रघन की राशि	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
1.	डोरखंडा, राँची स्थित जैप-1 के परिसर में सुरक्षा लाईट, बगीचा लाईट, पाथवे लाईट एवं पेड लाईट के अधिष्ठापन का कार्य।	1,40,65,525=00	10,000=00	2,82,000=00	30 दिन
2.	वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि	28.01.2022			
3.	निविदा जमा करने की तिथि	29.01.2022 के 10.30 बजे अपराह्न से 07.02.2022 के 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक			
4.	निविदा खोलने की तिथि	08.02.2022 को 2.00 बजे अपराह्न में			
5.	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता	विद्युत कार्यपालक अभियन्ता, विद्युत कार्य प्रमण्डल, राँची।			
6.	निविदा खोलने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता	मुख्य विद्युत अभियन्ता-सह-मुख्य विद्युत निरीक्षक, ऊर्जा विभाग, झारखण्ड, राँची।			
7.	ई प्रोक्योरमेंट प्रकोट का फोन नं०	0651-2490069			

नोट :- निविदा से संबंधित विस्तृत जानकारी हेतु वेबसाइट <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> में देखा जा सकता है।

Information and Public Relations Department Government of Jharkhand Suchana Bhawan, Ranchi		
Very Short Tender		
Sealed tenders are invited from eligible reputed qualified firms/companies with sound Technical and Financial capabilities for end to end maintenance of existing Website, online e-Advertisement Application of Print Media & Electronic Media along with the establishment and operation of related outsourced process.		
1. The following table provides a quick overview of the key activities and some important information about this Tender:		
Sl. No.	Particulars	Details
1.1	Tender Reference No.	67, dated 20-01-2022
1.2	Tender issuing Authority	Information and Public Relations Directorate, Government of Jharkhand, Suchana Bhawan, Ranchi.
1.3	Name of the Project	Tender for Strengthening, Automation and Networking of Suchana Bhawan, Information & Public Relations Department (IPRD), Govt. of Jharkhand(GoI)
1.4	Date of issue of tender document	21-01-2022
1.5	Last date and time of submission of tender document	11-02-2022, 3:00 pm
1.6	Date of opening of Bids	11-02-2022, 4:00 pm
1.7	Cost of tender document	The bidders are required to submit the tender cost in the form of a demand draft of Rs.5,000/- (Five Thousand) in favour of Secretary IPRD payable at Ranchi with Technical Bid. This amount is non refundable.
1.8	Address of communication / submission of proposal	Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Jharkhand, Suchana Bhawan, Ranchi. Tel: 0651-2281522, 0651-2282458

 <h1 style="margin: 0;">KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)</p> <p style="margin: 0;"># 49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khaniya Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru – 560 001.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Phone No. 080-22265383, website : www.kiadb.in</p>			
No. IADB/ENGG/ETND/DPR-10/13917/2021-22		Date: 20.01.2022	
<h2 style="margin: 0;">NOTICE INVITING TENDER</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">(Through GOK e – Procurement Portal Only)</p>			
<p>KIADB invites tenders from reputed consultants/firms under two cover bid system having an office at Bengaluru with vast experience and proven record of similar nature of works of Providing Consultancy Services for Providing Consultancy Services for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR), Economic Analysis, Surveying, Layout Plan, Design, Preparation of Estimates, Cost Structure etc., for the proposed Koloru-Ganajuru Industrial Area, Haveri Taluk and District.</p> <p>The last date and time of receipt of tender is : 09.02.2022 upto 04:00 pm</p> <p>Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in 25.01.2022 onwards.</p>			
DIPR/DDU/Zen/R.O:2944/2021-22		Sd/- Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru	
STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19. NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.			
 <p>Wear Mask</p>	 <p>Follow Physical Distancing</p>	 <p>Maintain Hand Hygiene</p>	

 **Metro Railway, Kolkata**
India's First Metro

Dr. CSTe/Tele, Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-Tender against Open Tender due to open on **16.02.2022** at **15.30 hrs.** Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. **Name of Work:** Up gradation of Software for existing CCTV System of North South Section of Metro Railway, Kolkata. **Tender Value:** ₹ 20,43,760. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 40,900. **Completion of Work:** 12 months. **Documents:** All relevant documents can be viewed at website <https://www.ireps.gov.in>. The tender/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tender/bidders can participate on e-Tendering. All relevant documents can be viewed at the time of participating in e-Tender.

Tender Notice No.: S&T/Work- 26-2021
Dated: 19.01.2022

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDERING NOTICE

e-tender Notice No. 59 of 2021-22 (Open)-Engg/DDU
 On line (through e-tendering) for the following work is invited by PRMD/Engg/DDU for and on behalf of the President of India from experienced and financially as well as technically sound contractors including those enlisted with the Railway, CPWD, BSNL, MES, PWD and other public sector undertakings.

Tender No.14-DDU-SRDE-I-21-22

1. Name of work with its location:
 Provision of anti flood majors at newly constructed under construction LHS at LC No. 22,40 48 and 49 in AR-SSM Section under ADEN/XBKJ. 2. **Approx. cost of the work:** Rs. 1,78,96,767.75 3. **Earnest Money:** 2,39,500.00 4. **Closing date & time for submission of e-tender:** 14.02.2022. Up to 12:00 hrs. 5. **Website particulars of e-tendering:**
www.irfps.gov.in

**For Divisional Railway Manager
 East Central Railway, DDU**

PR01529/DDU/ENG/21-22/22-2323

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

e-tender Notice No.-80 of 2021-22 (Open)-Engg/DDU
 On line (through e-tendering) for the following work is invited by DRMI/Engg/DDU for and on behalf of the President of India from experienced and financially as well as technically sound contractors including those enlisted with the Railway, CPWD, BSNL, MES, PWD and other public sector undertakings:-

Tender No.53-DDU-SRDEN-II-21-22

1. Name of work with its location:
 Provision of 04 Nos. Escalators at Sasaram & Gaya under jurisdiction of Sr. DEN (II)/MGS. **2. Advertised Value:** Rs. 1,98,07,836.96 **3. Earnest Money:** 2,49,00,000

Tender No.54-DDU-SRDEN-II-21-22

1. Name of work with its location:
 Dismantling of track laid on washable apron presently in bad condition & converting line No. 182 of Gaya into ballast track under ADEN/Gaya **2. Advertised Value:** Rs. 1,45,81,238.49 **3. Earnest Money:** 2,22,900.00 **4. Closing date & time for submission of e-tender:** 09.02.2022, Up-to 12:00 hrs. **5. Website particulars of e-tendering:** www.ireps.gov.in

**For Divisional Railway Manager
 East Central Railway, DDU**

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender No. 2021/MP/ENG/CR/NT/STP/WT-07
 e-Tender is invited on Behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work:-

1. **Name of the work with its location:** "Design, Development, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of Sewage Treatment Plant of 165 KLD Capacity complete in all respect including civil Engineering works at Coach Midlife Rehabilitation Workshop Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh with warranty period of 02 years and comprehensive AMOC for 08 years on Turnkey Basis.
2. **Approx. Cost of the work:** Rs. 2,36,50,813/-.
3. **Earnest money:** Rs. 2,68,300/-.
4. **Date and time for closing of tender:** 02.02.2022 up to 13.00 hrs.
5. **Website particular and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.:** Tender can be downloaded from IREPS website: www.ireps.gov.in and detailed can be seen from the notice board at Office of CAO/MP, Chamberan Bhawan, J.C. Road, Patna-800001.

Any e-tenders which is sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or by hand will not be accepted. All such manual submission of tender even if it is on firm's letter pad or received in time will not be accepted.

The above e-tender document along with full information is available on website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

For Dy. Chief Engineer/CRNT Workshop Projects
 Indian Railways, Patna

PR011536/MP/ENG/CR/NT/STP/WT-07

OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

E- Tender notice no. : SG-66 – 1 – E- DHN – 2021 – 22

Sealed tenders are invited for and on behalf of president of India from competent and experienced contractors for execution of the work mentioned below:-

- 1. Name of work with its location and Completion Period:** Design, manufacture, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Solid State Interlocking (Electronic Interlocking) System conforming to RDSO Specification No. RDSO/SPN/1992/2019 version 2.0 and RDSO/SPN/203/2011 for big yards with latest amendments at 02 Stations i.e. GOMOH & HAZARIBAGH ROAD Stations in Dhanbad Division of E. C. Railway, including Indoor & Outdoor Signaling Works. Section:- Dhanbad Division. Twenty Four (24) Months.
- 2. Approx. cost of the work:** Rs. 25,44,00,716.25 (Rupees Twenty Five Crore Forty Four Lakhs Seven Hundred Sixteen and Twenty Five paise only) 3.
- Earnest Money to be deposited:** Rs. 14,22,00,00/- (Rs. Fourteen Lakhs Twenty Two Thousand only) 4.
- Last Date & Time for Submission of tender and Opening of tender:** 15/02/2022 upto 13.00 Hrs. and 15/02/2022 at 13.30 Hrs.
- 5. Website particulars, Notice Board Location where complete details of tender can be seen and Address of the Office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.:** www.ireps.gov.in on the Notice Board of Principal Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/East Central Railway/Hajipur & Dy. Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Works, East Central Railway Dhanbad and can be purchased from the office of the Principal Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, East Central Railway at Hajipur or from the office of the Dy. Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Works, Dhanbad (2nd floor) Divisional Railway Manager Office, East Central Railway Dhanbad (Jharkhand) - 826001.
- 6. Dy. Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Works, East Central Railway Dhanbad,**

PR/01531/DHN/WPT/21-22/60

FIFA set to enforce limits on players on loan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
GENEVA, JANUARY 20

FIFA IS finally ready to enforce limits on the number of players clubs can send and take on loan internationally, two years after new rules were delayed by the pandemic.

The plans FIFA outlined on Thursday aim to stop wealthy clubs stockpiling players they have signed, encourage developing their young talent, and promote competitive balance in soccer.

However, curbs that should take effect in July have limited scope — players aged 21 and under are exempt from FIFA's rules — and need further cooperation from national soccer federations to pass their own measures. Clubs will be limited to a maximum of eight players loaned in and eight players loaned out at any one time in the 2022-23 season. The quotas will be cut to seven in the season after and six from the season starting after July 1, 2024.

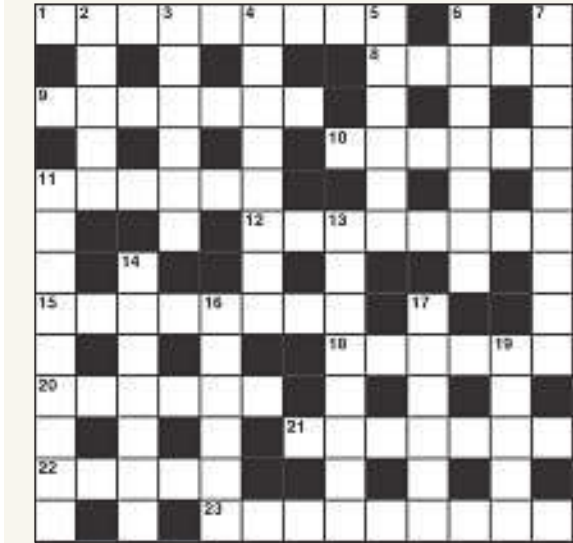
Clubs will also be restricted to the number of deals they can do with a favored trading partner in another country: Three players in and three players out at any given point with the same club. Short-term deals should also be barred. The minimum loan deal will be between two transfer windows — typically these are in January and June-August during the European offseason — and the maximum period will be one year.

Sub-loaning of a player already sent out on loan will be barred. FIFA said its proposed rules do not apply to players aged 21 and younger, and club-trained players. That means a club with a well-stocked academy such as Chelsea could send out an unlimited number of homegrown teenagers to wherever it chose.

FIFA's rules also apply internationally, to cross-border deals between clubs from different countries. In each FIFA member country, applying and enforcing a separate set of rules could lag behind. "At domestic level, FIFA's member associations will be granted a period of three years to implement rules for a loan system that is in line with the principles established at international level," the Zurich-based governing body said.

FIFA has worked since 2017 on finding ways to modernize and clean up the player transfer market which involves thousands of deals and is worth billion of dollars each season. Among the concerns — wealthy clubs hoarding players which shrunk the pool of available talent and controlled access to them for less wealthy rivals seeking loan deals. FIFA's stakeholder committee proposed new limits on the loan system in 2020 that were due to apply later that year and would be phased in over three seasons. The pandemic put that on hold. On Thursday, FIFA said the loan system proposal will go to the next meeting of its ruling council, likely in March, and apply for international deals from July 1.

CROSSWORD 4643



- Across**

 - 1 The nearest route to the sea (5,4)
 - 8 Perfume from far Oman (5)
 - 9 Something that is said to encourage activity (3,4)
 - 10 Place fee of corruption (6)
 - 11 Layer backs a horse for example (6)
 - 12 Made rare concoction of sugar (8)
 - 15 He remains detached in the main (8)
 - 18 What a baby may play with will make one nervous (6)
 - 20 Things said about fifty planets (6)
 - 21 Money making gifts (7)
 - 22 One-man woman (5)
 - 23 He may investigate an insect and its changing form (9)
- Down**

 - 2 Entertainment means there's a great time after work (5)
 - 3 Demonstrates it's in error (4,2)
 - 4 Put in charge again (8)
 - 5 Second largest European currency (6)
 - 6 Downtrodden shoe cleaner (7)
 - 7 Furniture dealers are familiar with it (4,5)
 - 11 Be prone to ambush (3,2,4)
 - 13 Result of the match (8)
 - 14 Rejoiced in godlier fashion (7)
 - 16 Gives someone a sharp reminder? (6)
 - 17 Witness at a trial (6)
 - 19 Plant that means a great deal to us (5)

Solutions Crossword 4642: Across: 1 Tellers, 4 Darts, 7 Ions, 8 Foregone, 10 Demolition, 12 Strain, 13 Result, 15 Conclusion, 18 Side drum, 19 Abut, 20 Rotor, 21 Egghead. Down: 1 Tried, 2 Landmark, 3 Shorts, 4 Drew one out, 5 Riot, 6 Sherbet, 9 All in order, 11 Durable, 12 Scissor, 14 Accuse, 16 Noted, 17 Edit.

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.

There can be no daily democracy without daily _____. — Ralph Nader (11)

DVEII

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

EOUCNP

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

HXIST

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

AHUUZH

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

SOLUTION: I/VIDE, SIXTH, POUNCE, HUUZAH
Answer: There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship. — Ralph Nader



Calm overcomes storm

Medvedev vanquishes raucous crowd and Kyrgios to advance to Rd 3

REUTERS
MELBOURNE, JANUARY 20

WORLD NO.2 Daniil Medvedev kept his calm amid a raucous crowd to put an end to the Nick Kyrgios show in the second round of this year's Australian Open on Thursday, dumping out the mercurial local hope with a clinical 7-6(1), 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 win.

The atmosphere at the floodlit Rod Laver Arena was more like a Davis Cup match than a Grand Slam with the sellout 50% capacity — due to COVID-19 health protocols — cheering every Kyrgios point on Melbourne Park's main showcourt.

"I came to win this match and I am happy I managed to do it," a stone-faced Medvedev said in his on-court interview, repeatedly asking the crowd to quieten down. "The only choice is to keep calm when you get booed between first and second serve."

Kyrgios egged on the crowd to get behind him from the onset, with his repeated chest thumping, but also rebuked them for interrupting him during his service motion.

The Australian was warned for an audible obscenity as he repeatedly engaged with the chair umpire, accusing him of starting the shot clock early between points, while also getting a time violation for not being ready to receive serve.

Ahead of the match Kyrgios said that he believed Medvedev was currently the best player in the world despite having beaten him both times in their previous meetings.

The Russian showed why — staying calm and composed in the face of partisan support and his opponent's usual antics.

Frustrated by Medvedev's robotic precision, the former world number 13, who has slipped to 115th in the rankings, kept shaking his head in disbelief and told the crowd: "I am doing everything I can. I can't serve any bigger," he kept muttering during a changeover, signalling with his hand that Medvedev was managing to return his rocket serves with ease.

Kyrgios did manage to stage a fightback in the third set and a no-look 'twener' while chasing back from a Medvedev lob sent the crowd wild as the showman won the point, poking out his tongue and performing a few dance moves in celebration.

But Medvedev, who fired 68 winners in the match, soon regained control.

A double break in the fourth set made it look easy in the end for last year's Australian Open finalist and he will next meet 57th-ranked Botić van de Zandschulp of the Netherlands for a place in the fourth round.

Murray frustrated

Five-time runner-up Andy Murray only lasted two rounds. Two days after winning his first match at the Australian Open in five years,



Australia's Nick Kyrgios goes for a twener during his second round match against Russia's Daniil Medvedev. AP

the former No. 1 lost to 120th-ranked Taro Daniel 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

"I'm really, really disappointed. Very frustrated. A tough loss for me, that's for sure," Murray said.

Raducanu exits

This time British teenaged sensation Emma Raducanu did not have all the solutions to a Grand Slam puzzle as a combination of a blistered racket hand and an inspired Danka Kovinic de-railed her Australian Open challenge in the second round.

The 17th seed, who rocketed to fame by winning last year's U.S. Open as a qualifier without losing a set, gritted her teeth through the discomfort to stay in contention in a tense clash but fell to a 6-4-4-6-6-3 defeat.

KEY RD2 RESULTS

Men's singles: Taro Daniel (JPN) bt Andy Murray (GBR) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4; 11-Jannik Sinner (ITA) bt Steve Johnson (USA) 6-2, 6-4, 6-3; 15-Roberto Bautista Agut bt Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-1, 6-0, 6-3; 4-Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE) bt Sebastian Baez (ARG) 7-6(1), 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4; 2-Daniil Medvedev (RUS) bt Nick Kyrgios (AUS) 7-6(1); 6-4; 4-6; 6-2

Women's singles: Shuai Zhang (CHN) bt 12-Elena Rybakina (KAZ) 6-4 (Retired); 14-Simona Halep (ROU) bt Beatriz Haddad Maia (BRA) 6-2, 6-0; Danka Kovinic (MNE) beat 17-Emma Raducanu (GBR) 6-4, 4-6, 6-3; Alize Cornet (FRA) bt 3-Garbine Muguruza (ESP) 6-3, 6-3; 7-Iga Swiatek (POL) bt Rebecca Peterson (SWE) 6-2, 6-2.

Players allege lax Covid testing

Melbourne: Australian Open organisers insisted on Thursday their COVID-19 protocols have been "really successful" despite some top players pointing to lax testing at the first Grand Slam of 2022. Frenchman Ugo Humbert has tested positive and world number three Alexander Zverev of Germany believes there is probably more contagion going undetected.

The tournament director said all players had to test on arrival then again between day five and seven of the Jan. 17-30 competition whose start was overshadowed by the deportation of unvaccinated men's world number one Novak Djokovic. "On top of that there's mandatory symptom testing and every single day each player is provided with an antigen kit that they can pick up at hotel or here on site," Craig Tiley told Australia's Channel 9. However, two-time Grand Slam winner Garbine Muguruza also spoke of slack protocols, saying testing was optional at the Melbourne Park major with results not regularly monitored. "I test every two days by myself in my room," the Spaniard said on Thursday.

REUTERS

In a chock-a-block year, women's hockey team must hit the road running

MIHIR VASAVDA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 20

IN THEORY, this isn't a return to the hockey field after the Olympics but for all practical reasons, when India's women's hockey team plays against Malaysia in the Asia Cup on Friday, it will be their first tournament since the path-breaking campaign at the Tokyo Olympics.

Last month, India travelled to South Korea for the Asian Champions Trophy. The team began its new cycle with a resounding 13-0 win over lowly Thailand. But after a Covid-19 case in the group, the rest of the players were forced to spend the remainder of their time inside the hotel, resulting in them withdrawing from the competition.

Coach Janneke Schopman, who called that experience a 'scarring' one, will be hoping the Asia Cup, being held in Muscat, will be a smooth ride on that front. With a World Cup spot at stake, the team will not be able to afford to sit out from this one.

In hindsight, the Asia Cup is where the turnaround well and truly began for India. In 2017, they became the champions and qualified for the 2018 World Cup, where they came agonisingly close to qualifying for the semifinals for the first time ever. They took that confidence into the Asian Games, where they won the silver, went on to qualify for the Olympics (it was the first time they made the cut for back-to-back editions) where they finished fourth.

Now, as the new season gets underway, the Asia Cup will mark the beginning of a busy 2022 for the defending champions, who have been starved for competition. Three days after the Asia Cup ends, India will make its FIH Pro League debut against China (in Muscat, presumably because of the travelling restrictions caused by the pandemic) on January 31.

The Pro League concludes on June 22 and on July 1, the World Cup — India will have to finish in the top four at the Asian Cup to qualify for it — will get underway in the Netherlands and Spain. Less than two weeks after the World Cup concludes, the team will be off to Birmingham for the Commonwealth Games and a month later, they'll be in Hangzhou for the Asian Games, where a berth for the Paris Games will be up for grabs.

For Schopman, who was the team's analytical coach at the Tokyo Games, the two continental tournaments at the start and the end of the season — Asia Cup and Asian Games — will be critical in terms of qualifying for the two biggest events, the World Cup and the Paris Olympics, respectively. And both sets of events are interlinked — the Asia Cup will give a glimpse into how well can the team do at

"If we look at the stats from the games, we still have some gains to make to be in the top six of the world. I think from the Olympics we've got that belief that we have a place at the top of world hockey. But we need to improve and need to keep improving. They (the players) want to be right there with the other teams on the top"

JANNEKE SCHOPMAN
INDIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM COACH

the Asian Games; and the World Cup often gives an indication of the team's readiness for the Olympics.

Same philosophy

Schopman isn't looking to deviate from the playing philosophy instilled by former coach Sjoerd Marijne. Under Marijne, the team had remarkably improved its fitness, which enabled them to play fast-paced give-and-go hockey. This enabled the team to exceed expectations at the Olympics, but Schopman is conscious about the reality, and the steps that need to be taken to build on the Tokyo show.

"If we look at the stats from the games, we still have some gains to make to be in the top six of the world," she said before leaving for Muscat. "I think from the Olympics we've got that belief that we have a place at the top of world hockey. But we need to improve and need to keep improving."

The team, during their camp in Bangalore, has focussed on their off-the-ball movements. Schopman wants the players to be strong when they have possession and create more scoring opportunities, but at the same time, keep the defence tight. Many times in the past, this balance had been lacking. It helps that Schopman has been with the team for close to three years now. But the rest of the coaching staff has changed; most importantly, the team's strength and conditioning coach Wayne Lombard. The South African was credited with turning around the fitness of the players. But he quit after the Olympics and has been replaced by compatriot Taren Naidoo, who has worked with him in the past.

The playing group, more or less, remains stable although captain Rani Rampal, who is recovering from an injury, has not travelled with the group.

Goalkeeper Savita Punia will be leading the team, who seem to be relishing the pressure of expectations on them. "They (the players) want to be right there with the other teams on the top," Schopman says. "They don't want to be one-day wonders."

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4721

Difficulty Level 1s
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 4720



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
This is bound to be a stressful time at work for Arians, although every effort will bring great rewards in future months. Even those of you who are happily resting or retired, are being urged to achieve something of importance with your time.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
This is no time for stick-in-the-muds. If you approach your affairs in the spirit of what other people, the mysterious 'they', will or won't allow, you will surely miss some splendid opportunities. If you have a wild scheme, but you're a little nervous, ask friends to help.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You should begin to take a more businesslike line. That does mean, of course, looking at joint financial affairs, but it's also a matter of organising other affairs properly, including, of course, love affairs. Someone who has done you a favour is waiting for their thanks.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You may rely on close partners more now than over the past week. That doesn't mean that they will be any easier to deal with, but that you should trust there is reason in their madness, and that they do, in fact, know what they're talking about.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
You should allow for delays or disruptions in all personal affairs and very close, working partnerships. Be wise and allow more time for essential tasks than normal, and also see that you have sufficient cash in your pocket. You should let others take the lead when it's clear that they know best, so be alert to those moments when you should play a supporting role.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Being so sensible, you will realise that real life itself is actually not that sensible at all. There does still seem to be too much on your plate, but you should understand that taking a day off here and there will probably not make much difference in the long run.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
It is difficult to establish what people at home really do feel. All we can say with certainty is that there'll be moments when emotions are running high and that some people are likely to say the opposite of what they mean. You'll be holding the middle ground, mainly because you've got certain goals to achieve and you don't want other people getting in the way.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)
Job applicants, interviewees and all with important suggestions to propose, should press ahead with confidence, full of faith in your own ideas. All of you should be prepared to impress people simultaneously with your charm, sensitivity, and charisma.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)
Your innate capitalist skills should be brought out today, and those of you in a mood to strike a hard bargain could do very nicely, thank you. You are likely to be in a serious mood, realising that, at the heart of everything you do, you should have a real sense of purpose.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
The Moon spends the bulk of the day making powerful alignments with your sign, so you are probably in with a rather good chance of getting your own way. The problem is, what exactly do you want anyway? If you can't make up your mind, so be it.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
You are open to exploitation, but then you might actually profit from doing what you're told. The point is that you'll be faced with new experiences that are not of your choosing, and in the process you'll gain wisdom and maturity. That has to be welcome news.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
The Moon sets a course past a sociable region of your chart, so don't tuck yourself away in your cocoon. It may take courage, but you should put yourself forward as the person who can get others organised, whipping the reluctant into line. If you're not listened to at first, say it again, louder and clearer.



Need of hour: A clear gameplan for Iyer

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
KOLKATA, JANUARY 20

WHAT'S THE role of Venkatesh Iyer in the team? That's one of the many puzzles floating around the Indian ODI team that plays a brand of outdated cricket.

There are quite a few issues from the run-getting pace of the top order to lack of wicket-taking bowlers in the middle overs to lack of finishers but Iyer's case is a good example as any to capture the confusion in the camp. The stand-in captain KL Rahul, and more so head coach Rahul Dravid, cannot absolve themselves of the mismanagement of the seam-bowling all-rounder who made his ODI debut on Wednesday.

Absence of a seaming all-rounder in white-ball cricket has been the team's biggest weakness of late, which got exposed at the T20 World Cup last year, when picking a half-fit Hardik Pandya backfired. Iyer was fast-tracked to the Indian team after the tournament because the selectors saw him as an option to fill the void. The team management selected him ahead of Suryakumar Yadav for the first ODI, ostensibly to use him as an all-rounder. Neither was he given a single over, nor was the southpaw utilised properly as a batsman.

If he hasn't impressed the team management as a bowler then why has he been picked and wasted low down in the order where he can't even show his batting prowess? What was the communication between the selectors and the management? The top order, as it stands now, is clustered with batsmen who like to take their time. Something needs to change there to seize the momentum.

Iyer would be actually ideal there as in case he succeeds, it will give India a breakthrough from rigidity they have slipped into. And they wouldn't get a better chance than these bilateral series to try out options.

The ongoing series against the Proteas, or any bilateral series for that matter in the lead-up to the 2023 World Cup, is sort of inconsequential for India in terms of results. Being the hosts of the ICC event, India aren't part of the World Cup Super League, as they will qualify automatically. From that perspective, bilateral series offers Dravid and company the chance to plug the void/loopholes and zero in on the right players and right combination.

In September last year, on a sluggish Sharjah pitch, Kolkata Knight Riders captain Eoin Morgan had brilliantly used Iyer's bowling against Delhi Capitals to take control of the middle-overs. Iyer got two important wickets. In fact, the KKR team management deserves a lot of credit for Iyer's rapid rise.

Conditions at the Boland Park had a pretty home/Asian feel yesterday. South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen and Temba Bavuma built a partnership that asphyxiated India under the scorching sun. Shardul Thakur and Bhuvneshwar Kumar were going for plenty, in excess of seven and six runs per over respectively. The spinners were neutered by Van der Dussen's sweep. But Rahul was seemingly oblivious to using his sixth bowling option, Iyer to be precise, whose change of pace might have come in handy.

Little wonder then that Sunil Gavaskar wasn't impressed at all. "Only the captain has the answer as to why Venkatesh wasn't bowled even once. He is a new player who has just made a name for himself in the last four-five months. That is why he is in the Indian team. But oppositions don't know much about him," the legendary former India captain told Sports Tak, adding: "Had he given an over, something else could have happened."

Iyer's non-use as a bowler was contrary to what Rahul had said at the pre-match press conference. "Yes, fast-bowling all-rounders are always an asset. They balance the team out. So, very excited about Venkatesh Iyer; he is really looking good at the nets and it's a great opportunity for him."

And yet again, a mistake was repeated.



By not bowling Venkatesh Iyer in the first ODI, the team management missed a trick. Pushing him up the batting order could be the way to go too.

The three home T20Is that the 27-year-old played against New Zealand, he didn't bowl in the first two before getting three overs in the third and taking a wicket for 12 runs. At a time when Hardik is frequenting the treatment room and Iyer is considered his backup, not making the optimum use of the player's all-round ability doesn't serve any purpose. Bilateral ODI and T20I assignments give India the opportunity to bed in new players before the T20 World Cup later this year followed by the 50-over showpiece next year.

Wasted as a batsman

As a batsman also, Iyer was wasted in the first ODI. He came in at No. 6 in the 34th over, when the asking-rate had shot up to seven-plus. The team management probably needs to be more flexible rather than its apparent effort to groom the newcomer solely as a finisher.

Opening the innings has been Iyer's forte. He scored 370 impactful runs in 10 games for KKR in the last year's IPL batting upfront. Like the majority of modern-day top-order batsmen, Iyer, too, prefers to take the aerial route to counter the field restrictions in Powerplay. Yesterday, he got out to a short ball from Lungi Ngidi, playing aerially and picking out Van der Dussen at deep mid-wicket. It could have been a four in Powerplay overs, just two fielders manning the deep field.

Ahead of the game, Rahul had spoken about promoting himself up the order in Rohit's absence. A bolder approach from him and the team's head coach was desirable. Rahul was batting in the middle-order in ODIs of late and there was no harm in opening the innings with two left-handers. Also, for a new player like Iyer, whom the team management will want to have a good look at, using him as a floater is likely to augur well; how he is reacting to batting in different positions and situations. Unlike the Rahuls, the Shreyases, the Suryakumars and the Pants, Iyer is an unknown quantity in international cricket and the more he gets a chance to bat and bowl, the quicker will be his development.

When Rohit Sharma comes back, is Rahul going to partner him? Most likely, not. So playing Iyer at top now gives the management to test out what an aggressive approach might bring to the team. Unless they try, they are never going to find out and will auto-pilot their way through tried and failed methods.

On the face of it, the second ODI against South Africa on Friday is a must-win game for India to keep the three-match series alive. So it needs to be seen if the team management brings in an extra batsman to shore up an iffy middle-order, at the expense of Iyer. In the grand scheme of things, however, that would be a regressive step, for the youngster needs to play at a stretch to get into the international groove.

2nd ODI: Live on Star Sports network; 2 pm onwards

Just another day in office for Iran

Having battled odds to play football, the Melli Baanovaa bring same resilience to hold higher-ranked India

MIHIR VASAVDA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 20

FOR 5,000 years, *ghormeh sabzi*, has been a staple in Persian cuisine; an intrinsic part of the culture that's passed down through generations.

But Maryam Irandoost hates it. So deeply that she stopped eating one of Iran's biggest delicacies. For her, the popular stew was a symbol of prejudice. "I have... been asked why a girl should play football; (it is) better to cook *ghormeh sabzi*," she told the-afc.com.

We've heard stories about women's football in Iran. Mostly, it started with their dream to watch a match inside a stadium and ended rudely and abruptly, with the giant gates slammed shut on their faces. Then, there was the tale of the 'Blue Girl', Sahar Khodayari, which shook the collective consciousness of the football world. In March 2019, Khodayari committed suicide after she was threatened with a jail term for trying to enter Tehran's Azadi Stadium to watch her favourite club play.

It's criminal in Iran for women to watch the world's most beloved sport inside a stadium. And for those who dare to play, the path, let's just say, isn't always smooth.

Iran's men's team is one of the best in Asia but their women, ranked 70th in the world, have often been embroiled in controversies. Iranian women have, in the past, been banned for wearing hijabs. They've also been accused of 'fielding male players disguised as women', twice – once in 2015 and then again last year when the gender of goalkeeper Zohreh Koudaei, whose heroic effort denied India a win, was questioned by Jordan, whom Iran defeated to qualify for their first-ever Asian Cup.

Irandoost, the daughter of former Iranian player and coach Nosrat Irandoost and one of the game's pioneers in her country, made it her life's mission to uplift women's football and change 'this perception'.

When the time came, on Thursday, Irandoost's team invoked, to quote her, 'the Iranian spirit'. Making their Asian Cup debut, the tournament's lowest-ranked team battled for every second that they were out on the field to eke out a hard-fought point against hosts India under lights at Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium.

India's coach, Thomas Dennerby, had predicted before the match that Iran would be a 'tough nut' to crack. They'd put bodies behind the ball, the Swede had said, and would force India to make all the moves. Dennerby's reading of Iran was spot on. Unfortunately for him, his team could not find the answers to the questions they knew beforehand.

This was a landmark match for India as well. They were making a comeback to the Asian Cup after 19 long years, a period during which the women's game had plummeted to new lows in terms of the way it was administered and played across the country.

However, on their return on the continent's biggest platform, India left the field frustrated and wondering what more could they have done to break down a resilient Iran.

In fact, India would consider themselves lucky to get away with a point, for one of the few chances Iran created in the first 15 minutes of the match had looked like finding the back of the net. Iran came close to taking the lead twice, both times through their forward Negin Zandi. But her one shot – a looping header from a free-kick – hit the crossbar and another left India goalkeeper Aditi Chauhan scrambling before it sailed agonisingly wide off the upright.

But once India settled on the ball, they were the ones calling the shots for the remainder of the match. For a team that hadn't played a meaningful international competition since the 2014 Asian Games, India were sharp with their passing, showed commendable fitness levels as they ran tirelessly and created almost a dozen scoring chances.

In the first half, the speedy Manisha



Iran ranked 70th in the world held India (55th) to a goalless draw in their opening game of the Asian Cup. Amit Chakravarty

Kalyan was impressive with her many darting runs and dangerous crosses; in the mid-field, Indumathi Kathiresan and Anju Tamang fed the forwards with pin-point passes for almost the entire match; and in the second half, substitute Dangmei Grace made an impact and came close to scoring several times but a goal eluded the team.

India hit the bar, came millimetres close to scoring and were once denied by an incredible save by Koudaei, who pulled the ball back from the goal-line and pushed it wide, much to the disbelief of the Indian players.

For Iran, on the other hand, the point must feel as good as a win. "This was important for us," Irandoost said after the match. "It was a tough match, but we were able to show our Iranian spirit."

Dennerby, though, was disappointed, knowing full well this was his team's best chance to get all three points. India next play higher-ranked Chinese Taipei, a tie they'll have to win to remain in contention for a place in the quarterfinals. "It all came to technical skills. In a competition like this, you are not given goals, you have to score goals," he said. "We were technically better... but the (Iranian) girls were fighting."

'Fighting' was the easy part for Iran's players. They've been doing just that for the entire career.

China outclass Taiwan

Reuters adds: Wang Shuang scored twice as eight-time champions China started their Women's Asian Cup campaign with a 4-0 thrashing of Taiwan in Mumbai on Thursday. China have not won the title since 2006 but Shui Qingxia's side made the perfect start in the tournament's opening game in Group A at the Mumbai Football Arena.

Wang's goals bookended a convincing performance from her team, the former Paris St Germain midfielder putting China ahead from the penalty spot with less than three minutes on the clock.

Zhang Linyan had been bundled over inside the penalty area just 90 seconds into the game by Pan Yen-hsin and referee Abirami Naidu pointed to the spot. Wang coolly rolled the ball into the corner, sending goalkeeper Cheng Ssu-yu the wrong way.

Sam Kerr, an Australian star with Indian connect



Sam Kerr's father Roger Kerr was born to an Englishman who was a boxer and an Indian mother who played basketball.

12 YEARS ago, Australia's Sam Kerr scored her first-ever international goal for her country against South Korea in the 2010 AFC Women's Asian Cup. Tomorrow in Mumbai, the 28-year-old will face Indonesia while being two goals shy of becoming Australia's leading goal scorer – Tim Cahill's 50 goals for the Socceroos.

Fifa award runner up

A few days ago, Kerr, who is in India, had to miss out on a ceremony where she was adjudged as the runner-up in the FIFA Best Women's Player of The Year award.

Indian grandmother

Sam Kerr's father Roger Kerr was

born to an Englishman who was a boxer and an Indian mother who played basketball. He moved from Kolkata to Australia, where his youngest child of four started to play Aussie Rules but switched to football at age 12 and then three years later made her international debut for Australia.

A star across continents

In just a span of four years, Kerr has won herself six golden boot awards. These awards have come across three continents. She won the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) golden boot three years in a row from 2017 to 2019 and simultaneously won the W-League in Australia in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 season. She then made a move to the Chelsea women's team where she won the FA Women's Super League golden boot in the 2020-21 season.

Life in England

At Chelsea, Kerr scored 21 goals in 22 appearances for the club and led the team to their first ever Champions League final. She has already won two titles with the Blues and also won the League Cup and the Community Shield in her first season with the London club.

Near miss in Tokyo

Kerr's crowning moment almost came at the Tokyo Olympics. Having scored six goals from as many appearances, the Matilda's striker took her country to the fourth spot at the Games and missed out on a medal after losing to the United States of America 4-3 in the bronze medal match.

ENS

BRIEFLY

Athletes advised to use burner phone in China

London: National Olympic Committees in some Western countries are advising their athletes to leave personal devices at home or use temporary phones due to cybersecurity concerns at next month's Winter Games in Beijing. Many NOCs said they will provide their athletes and staff with temporary devices to avert security risks and combat any surveillance during the Games taking place from Feb. 4-20 in China. "It should be assumed that every text, email, online visit, and application access can be monitored or compromised," the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee said in an advisory. It suggested using rental or disposable laptops and phones while in Beijing or wiping all data from personal devices before and after travelling there. It also recommended that members install virtual private networks (VPNs) on devices before leaving the States. Despite safeguards in place to protect their systems and data, there should be "no expectation of data security or privacy while operating in China," the USOPC added. **REUTERS**

Long jumper misses Winter Games cut

London: Former Olympic long jump champion Greg Rutherford's hopes of adding a winter Games medal to his London 2012 gold were dashed after he failed to make the cut for Britain's bobsleigh squad for Beijing. Sprinter Montell Douglas, who competed at the 2008 Beijing Summer Games, was selected however as brake in the two-woman bob piloted by Mica McNeill. She will be the first female athlete to represent Britain at Summer and Winter Games in separate sports. Rutherford, 35, made his international bobsleigh debut under pilot Lamin Deen at a World Cup race in Winterberg, Germany as part of a four-man team, finishing 17th out of 21. Deen's squad failed to achieve three top-12 finishes in the World Cup season, however, missing out on qualification for the Games. Douglas, 35, reached the final of the 4x100m relay at Beijing 2008 and took up bobsleigh in 2016. "I'm over the moon to be representing women. There have been many male summer and winter Olympians, so I'm more thrilled." **REUTERS**

Openers Harnoon, Angkrish do the job for India

PRATYUSHRAJ
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

ANGKRISH RAGHUVANSHI, 16, the youngest player in the India Under-19 team, moved to Mumbai from Delhi at the age of 11. His opening partner, Harnoor Pannu, who'll turn 19 later this month, was 12 when he shifted his base to Chandigarh from Jalandhar. They are from sporting backgrounds, moved cities to pursue their dreams, and enrolled in cricket academies with good facilities.

On Wednesday, the openers, miffed with their poor outing against South Africa in India's opening match of the U-19 World Cup, set the tone with a 164-run stand in a 174-run win over Ireland.

Avneesh Raghuvanshi, Angkrish's father, has represented India in tennis, and mother Malika has played basketball for the country. Angkrish's younger brother Krishang is also a budding tennis player. Raghuvanshi's coach is former India and Mumbai all-rounder Abhishek Nayar, and the youngster has lived at his coach's residence for the last five years.

Crickets runs in Harnoor's family. Harnoor's grandfather Rajinder Singh Pannu



Angkrish Raghuvanshi (left) and Harnoor Pannu had an opening partnership of 164 runs.

played first-class cricket for Punjab and coached the DAV College, Jalandhar team for 30 years (1965-1995). Harnoor's father Birender, a lawyer by profession, has represented Punjab U-19. His uncle Bhupinder Singh Junior was player of the tournament in the inaugural U-19 Asia Cup held in Dhaka in 1989. Harnoor's elder brother Jasnoor Pannu has represented Punjab at the U-16 and U-19 levels.

Raghuvanshi was honing his skills under

the watchful eyes of Nayar, while around 1600 km away Pannu was doing the same at an academy in Chandigarh, where his uncle Harminder Singh Pannu was a coach.

Harnoor and Angkrish struck fluent half-centuries, and a 17-ball 39 by Rajvardhan Hangargekar in the slog overs helped India put up a challenging total of 307 for 5. Nishant Sindhu led the side as Dhull and Rasheed are in isolation. Speaking to *The Indian Express* from Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago, Pannu said: "I got out cheaply in the first match, and I was miffed the way I got out. We were determined to give the team a good start, and luckily we managed to put on a good partnership."

Harnoor hit 12 fours in his 101-ball knock of 88 and was looking set for a century before left-arm spinner Matthew Humphreys trapped him in front. The in-form southpaw, who was player of the match, batted with elegance. His drives and flicks were exquisite.

"I should have scored the hundred but nevertheless happy to get some runs under my belt," adds Pannu, who amassed 251 runs in the recently-concluded Asia Cup. The opener also scored a century against Australia in a World Cup warm-up game.

Angkrish struck 10 fours and two sixes in

his run-a-ball 79 and was the aggressor among the duo.

He completed his half-century by hitting a six. He cut, pulled and also drove aggressively. He was visibly unhappy with the way he got out. "I wanted to guide the ball for a boundary and ended up slicing it to the wicketkeeper. Not an ideal way to get out when you are well settled. Should have scored a century," Raghuvanshi told the broadcasters during the innings break.

Sindhu (36) and Raj Bawa (42) shared a 64-run stand for the third wicket, ensuring that the platform created by the openers was well-utilised for a big score and Hangargekar's five sixes took India past the 300-run mark. For Ireland, Muzamil Sherzad (3/79) was the most successful while Jamie Forbes (1/38) was the most economical.

For India, Aneeshwar Gautam (2/11), Garv Sangwan (2/23) and Kaushal Tambe (2/8), took the bulk of the wickets.

BRIEF SCORES: India U-19: 307 for 5 in 50 overs (Harnoor Singh 88, Angkrish Raghuvanshi 79; Muzamil Sherzad 3/79, Jamie Forbes 1/38) **Ireland U-19:** 133 all out in 39 overs (Scott MacBeth 32, Joshua Cox 28; Kaushal Tambe 2/8, Aneeshwar Gautam 2/11)