

RESOLUTION OF STRESSED ASSETS**Bad bank ready, 15 cases adding up to Rs 50,000 cr to be shifted by March 31**

Govt banks will hold majority in ARC; pvt banks will own 51% or more in debt resolution company

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 28**BUILD UP TO BUDGET
2022-23****India bought Pegasus as part of defence deal with Israel in 2017: NYT**

Report: FBI bought spyware for domestic surveillance but decided against its use

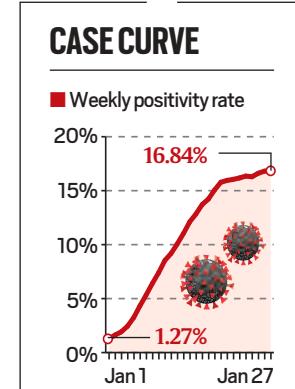
KRISHNA KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28
THE INDIAN government bought Israeli spyware Pegasus in 2017 as part of a \$2-billion package for weapons including a missile system, *The New York Times* reported Friday.

Flagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi's landmark visit to Israel in July 2017—the first by an Indian Prime Minister to that country—the *NYT* report said that visit came even as "India had maintained a policy" of what it called "commitment to the Palestinian cause," and "relations with Israel were frosty."

The year-long investigation, the newspaper reported, revealed that the Federal Bureau of Investigation, too, had bought and tested the spyware "for years with plans to use it for domestic surveillance until the agency finally decided last year not to deploy the tools."

The report details how the spyware was used globally, by Mexico to target journalists and dissidents, and by Saudi Arabia against women's rights activists and associates of columnist Jamal Khashoggi who was killed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

3rd wave has likely peaked in India, key indicators show

MACRON SPEAKS WITH PUTIN TO COOL UKRAINE TENSIONS
EYE ON STRATEGIC TIES, INDIA CALLS FOR PEACEFUL RESOLUTION
PAGES 5, 12

son on an average, had gone up to almost 3, the highest during the entire pandemic, in the first two weeks of this month. This meant that every infected person was passing on the disease to at least three more on an average, resulting in a very high speed of transmission. However, this number has fallen to 0.9 for the period between January 25 and 27, Sitabhra

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

KIRAN PARASHAR
UDUPI, JANUARY 28

"IF THE government thinks wearing the hijab is a crime, and does not allow my daughter to attend the final exams, let her stay at home... We want our daughter to study well and excel in life but why are her rights being snatched?"

It's a decision driven by despair. His daughter, a Class 12 student, is among six Muslim girls who have been denied entry into their classrooms at a Government



The Government Pre-University College in Udupi. Express

Pre-University College in Karnataka's Udupi since January 1 for wearing the hijab.

"We are being treated like criminals for demanding the fundamental right to practise our religion. My classmates were not allowed to talk to me and if someone was seen talking to us, they were pulled up," said the student.

Ever since these six students were kept out of classrooms, the issue has been gaining steam until the college in communally polarised coastal Karnataka was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Khan Sir, the teacher who can explain all, but RRB: 'Beyond me'

lion from his videos breaking down intricate topics into easily understandable details, denies instigating the applicants. However, the 29-year-old says, the workings of the RRB are beyond his comprehension. Talking to reporters on January 26, Khan said: "The RRB people do not know the ground reality." Adding that the government "can't be blamed for everything", he said it was good the Railways has decided to hear out students.

Khan opened his G S Research Centre at Patna coaching hub Chak Musallahpur over five years ago. The centre comprises a big hall with tin shade

that can accommodate about 1,000 students at a time.

However, Khan really took off when he started his YouTube channel in 2019, and soon gained an audience for his videos explaining things in Hindi, with a lot of vernacular and proverbs thrown in. In 2021, he started an app called 'Khan Sir Official', that has one million-plus downloads.

A teacher in the area said around 12,000-15,000 students used to attend classes at G S Centre in batches before Covid struck. Khan has earlier said he charges fees as per the paying capacity of a student. There is no other teacher at the coaching



Faisal Khan, a.k.a. Khan Sir, has built a YouTube following of 14.5 million from his videos. Express

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY

**Maharashtra: SC sets aside House action against 12 BJP MLAs**

Suspension for a year illegal, can only be for session term, says Bench

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

RULING THAT the Maharashtra Assembly's July 5, 2021 resolution suspending 12 BJP MLAs for one year following alleged misbehaviour in the House was "unconstitutional, substantively illegal and irrational", the Supreme Court said Friday that the legislators could not have been suspended beyond the tenure of that session.

The BJPs hailed the ruling, saying it is a "vindication" of its stand and "a huge setback" for the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition in the state.

The bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar, ruling on a plea by the suspended MLAs, declared the resolution "non est in the eyes of law" and "ineffective in law, insofar as the period be-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Quota in promotions: Top court says can't lay down yardstick

For State to collect quantifiable data on inadequacy of representation: Bench

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

DECLINING TO dilute conditions it had stipulated earlier for providing reservation in promotions to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the Supreme Court said Friday it "cannot lay down any yardstick for determining inadequacy of" their "representation" in public employment.

The bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao, Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai pointed out that the court even in the past had refused to lay down any yardstick and had left it to states to determine the factors relevant for deciding adequate representation, depending upon the promo-

tional posts in question.

Reiterating the position, the bench said "laying down of criteria for determining the inadequacy of representation would result in curtailing the discretion given to the State Governments. In addition, the prevailing local conditions, which may require to be factored in, might not be uniform".

Pointing out that the court, in its 2006 judgement in M Nagaraj vs Union of India, had "made it clear that the validity of law made by the State Governments providing reservation in promotions shall be decided on a case-to-case basis for the purpose of establishing whether the inadequacy of representation is supported by quantifiable data", the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

ital protest" by them had drawn "some eight million tweets". "I just tweeted once, and it had nothing provocative."

Khan admitted though that, during his classes, he told students how the RRB had changed the format for the exams, leaving many applicants apprehensive that they would not get the jobs for which they had applied back in 2019. The forms released at the time did not mention any change.

"The RRB examinations are very important. A government job means a lot. I have two students who work as daily wagers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

V Anantha
NageswaranENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

WITH THE Economic Survey to be presented on Monday, and the Union Budget for 2022-23 on Tuesday, the Government announced the appointment of Dr V Anantha Nageswaran as its Chief Economic Advisor (CEA), adding in a statement that he has assumed charge.

Economist Nageswaran has been an author, teacher and consultant and has taught at several business schools and institutes of management in India and in Singapore, the Union Finance Ministry said in a statement. He has written articles for *The Indian Express*, including one in which he listed the benefits of structural reforms set in motion on November 8, 2016, through de-monetisation.

The CEA plays a key role in bringing out the Economic Survey, which presents the economic report card of the Government during the year and suggestions on possible reforms. The Survey this year will likely be a trimmed down version, with only one volume as against the usual two.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

3rd wave has likely peaked in India, key indicators showAMITABH SINHA
PUNE, JANUARY 28

THE DAILY national count of Covid-19 cases has been falling for a week now. Active cases have been going down for four days. The weekly positivity rate has remained almost stable for a week.

By all indications, the third wave seems to have already peaked, and it has happened at a level well below the peak of the second wave.

The cases can rise again, but current trends suggest that it is unlikely to go very high. The reproduction number, or R, which is a measure of how fast the virus is spreading in the population, has fallen below 1 after more than a month, according to calculations by researchers at Chennai-based Institute of Mathematical Sciences.

The R-value, which estimates the number of people getting infected by an already infected per-

HIS STUDENTS can decode all the theories of science but cannot understand how the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) thinks, says Faisal Khan a.k.a. Khan Sir. In the protests that have broken out in mainly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh over recent RRB exam results, the head of a coaching institute and popular YouTuber is among six teachers booked on the charges of instigating the applicants.

Khan, who has built a YouTube following of 14.5 mil-

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BATAGUR BASKA: THE SUNDARBANS MAY BE THE LAST HOPE FOR THESE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED RIVER TURTLES

Decline of habitat, threat from predators and the demand for turtle meat have, over the decades, led to dwindling numbers of the Batagur baska in south Asia

ENTERTAINMENT



KAPIL SHARMA I'M NOT DONE YET REVIEW

Indisciplined Netflix standup special is for the comedian's fans

TECH



ONEPLUS BUDS Z2 REVIEW

Noise cancellation that makes the music better

EXPRESS AUDIO

Express Conversations: Ramchandra Guha

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Writer-historian Ramchandra Guha spoke to Monojit Majumdar about the Indian Republic, undermining of public institutions, rewriting of history, and the abandoning of national icons by the Cong, allowing the BJP to appropriate them

FROM PAGE ONE

Bad bank ready

but eventually both NARCL and IDRCL will have requisite approval. NARCL will acquire and aggregate identified non-performing asset (NPA) accounts from banks while IDRCL will handle the debt resolution process, he said.

To a query on why there was back and forth on the bad bank structure with the RBI, Khara said: "I think there is no difference in original construct and what has finally come into existence. This is a structure which has been envisaged for the first time, and whatever time has been taken, it is essentially to iron out some of the issues which could have possibly come up in future. So, they have all been ironed out and they have been appropriately addressed. And so, that the functioning of both entities should be smooth, and they should be in a position to achieve the objective for which they're brought into existence."

Concerns mainly arose on the dual ownership structure and operational mechanism with the setting up of two separate entities NARCL and IDRCL.

NARCL will acquire and aggregate the identified NPA accounts from Banks while IDRCL under an exclusive arrangement will handle the debt resolution process. This exclusive arrangement will be as per the scope defined in the 'Debt Management Agreement' to be executed between the two entities, Khara said.

"This arrangement will be on a 'Principal-Agent' basis and final approvals and ownership for the resolution shall lie with NARCL as the Principal. This is as

per the structure originally envisaged," he said.

Normally, a single entity to be accountable as owner and for recovery of the assets is in practice. The Indian Banks Association (IBA) is learnt to have wanted to have the dual structure with AMC as a privately held entity, to be out of the purview of the regulatory entities. But now 'Principal and Agent mechanism' has been put in place to address regulatory concerns, wherein final approvals will be done by NARCL as the Principal.

The asset resolution will be done in a phased manner. While a total of 38 accounts aggregating Rs 82,845 crore have been identified for transfer to NARCL, it will be done in a phased manner. In the first phase, at least 15 accounts worth Rs 50,335 crore will be transferred to the proposed bad bank by March 31.

Initially, an estimated Rs 2 lakh crore worth of bad assets was planned to be transferred to the 'bad bank'. However, Khara said some of these accounts have already been resolved.

12 BJP MLAs

impugned resolution is unreasonable, irrational, and arbitrary and liable to be set aside," it said.

Pointing out that suspension is a disciplinary measure, the bench said suspension for a period of one year "would assume the character of punitive and punishment worse than expulsion" as it "has the effect of creating a de facto vacancy though not a de jure vacancy".

Suspension beyond the remainder of the ongoing session would also be "violation of basic democratic values" as "the con-

stituency would remain unrepresented in the Assembly" and this "would also impact the democratic set-up as a whole by permitting the thin majority Government (coalition Government) of the day to manipulate the numbers of the Opposition party in the House in an undemocratic manner," the bench said.

The Opposition will not be able to effectively participate in the discussion/debate in the House owing to the constant fear of its members being suspended for a longer period" and "there would be no purposeful or meaningful debates but one in trepidation and as per the whims of the majority. That would not be healthy for democracy as a whole," it said.

Writing for the bench, Justice Khanwilkar pointed out that the "dispensation... to order withdrawal of member (suspension)" is contained in Rule 53 of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Rules.

According to this, the "Speaker may direct any member who refuses to obey his decision, or whose conduct is, in his opinion, grossly disorderly, to withdraw immediately from the Assembly" and "the member... shall do so forthwith and shall absent himself during the remainder of the day's meeting. If any member is ordered to withdraw a second time in the same Session, the Speaker may direct the member to absent himself from the meetings of the Assembly for any period not longer than the remainder of the Session".

The Speaker, therefore, is expected to exercise the power only in case of "grossly disorderly" conduct and "in a graded objective manner", the bench said. It said: "Suspension beyond the Session would be bordering on punishing not only the member concerned, but also inevitably impact the legitimate rights of the constituency from where the member had been elected".

It would "entail... unnecessary (unessential) deprivation. And longer or excessive deprival would not only be regarded as irrational, but closer to or bordering on perversity," it said.

It said the "cadre which should be the unit for the purpose of collection of quantifiable data in relation to promotional posts would be meaningless if data pertaining to representation of SCs and STs is with reference to the entire service".

Stating that there should be review of the data collected, it said the period of review should be "reasonable".

Sinha said the R-values of most of the states had also declined below 1 during this period. The states which still have R-values greater than 1 include Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Jammu and Kashmir. But here also the R-values are showing a declining trend. The only exception to this is Mizoram where the reproduction number is still showing a rise, Sinha said.

This dip in the R-values is getting reflected in the daily case counts as well. On Thursday, 2.51 lakh new cases were detected, well below the 3.47 lakh that were discovered a week earlier, which remains the highest daily count in the third wave so far. The peak of the second wave was at 4.14 lakh.

If the current trends hold, and cases continue to decline, India would have defied predictions of the third wave peak reaching 8 or 10 lakh cases a day. Also, India's third wave trajectory would be remarkably different from most other badly affected countries, where the peak of the Omicron wave was two to four times higher than their previous peaks.

Of course, many more cases are likely to have gone undetected in India during the current wave compared to the previous

two waves, because of the largely asymptomatic nature of infections caused by the Omicron variant. Also, a large number of people probably never got themselves tested.

But while that could have kept the official case count somewhat low, the fact that the positivity rate is now stabilising indicates that the energy of the third wave might actually be dissipating fast.

The weekly positivity rate rose from less than 1 per cent in the last week of December to a shade below 17 per cent now, but this has remained between 16 and 17 per cent for a week. Test numbers have remained stable, with 17-18 lakh samples being tested every day on average for the last two weeks.

Most of the states are reporting far fewer cases now than they were doing a week ago, as a result of which active cases at the national level have begun to come down for the first time in a month.

As on Thursday, there were about 21 lakh active cases in the country. Four days ago, this number was about 22.5 lakh, which has been the highest level during the third wave till now. During the second wave, the active cases had gone as high as 37 lakh. At least 16 states and union territories have seen their active cases decline in the last one week.

Quota

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The court said that "before providing for reservation in promotions to a cadre, the State is obliged to collect quantifiable data regarding inadequacy of representation of SCs and STs" but the exercise of collection of information "cannot be with reference to the entire service or 'class/group', but it should be referable to the grade/category of post to which promotion is of providing reservation".

Jagdish and wife Vaishali also worked as schoolteachers, at different schools in Kalol and Gandhinagar, till about three years ago, when Jagdish joined younger brother Mahendra Patel's garment business in Kalol city. A few months ago, the family left the rented accommodation in Kalol and moved back to their ancestral home in Dingucha. As per local authorities and police, a fortnight ago, Jaswant's cousin Jagdish, a schoolteacher, said: "We are absolutely devastated."

Baldev and his bedridden wife Madhu Patel, also the deputy sarpanch of Dingucha, were at the village on Friday with relatives for a 'besna' ceremony.

With the cost of the return of the bodies prohibitive, the cremation will be performed in Canada.

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Quota

3

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2022

THE CITY

POLICE FILE REPORT IN HIGH COURT

Probe pending in over half of 758 riot cases, 6 chargesheets filed in 3 months

SOFIAHSAN

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

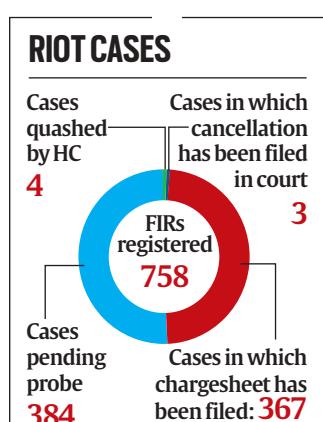
SINCE OCTOBER 2021, the Delhi Police has filed chargesheets in only six cases registered in connection with the 2020 Northeast Delhi riots even as investigation continues to remain pending in more than 50% of the total 758 FIRs, the status report filed by the police before Delhi High Court reveals.

In October, police had told the court that chargesheets have been filed in 361 cases.

In the status report placed before the court on Friday, police said that chargesheets have been filed in 367 cases and investigations are pending in 384. Cancellation has been filed in three cases while four FIRs were quashed by the High

2021 directed the police to file a fresh status report containing details of all the cases which were registered in connection with the riots. A bunch of petitions connected to the 2020 violence, including those seeking an independent SIT probe into the entire episode and action against political leaders who allegedly gave hate speeches prior to it, are pending before the court.

Court last year. In at least 235 cases out of the 367 cases where chargesheets have been filed, po-



lice said supplementary investigation is pending.

A total of 758 cases were registered in connection with the riots, including 695 being investigated by Northeast Delhi Police. Sixty-two cases were transferred to the Crime Branch and three dedicated SITs have been set up to probe them, said police, adding that one of the cases alleging a larger conspiracy is being investigated by the Special Cell.

According to police data, only 92 cases have reached the stage of actual trial where prosecution evidence is being presented. A total of 209 cases are at the stage of 'argument on charge'.

While accused have been discharged in five cases, acquittals

have taken place in four.

"All FIRs arising out of or registered in connection with the riots which took place in Northeast district in February and March 2020 have been or are being investigated promptly and diligently in accordance with law by the Delhi Police," said the agency in its reply to the court.

With regard to the police case alleging larger conspiracy behind the riots, in which student activists remain behind bars under the UAPA, police Friday told the court that the main chargesheet followed by two supplementary chargesheets has already been filed before the trial court.

"Further investigation is in progress," it said.

Umar Khalid bail hearing: SPP draws parallels between riots and 9/11 attack

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

Umar Khalid was arrested in a Delhi riots UAPA case

have documents available that he was part of the group. There is a foundation to show that violence is likely to happen."

The SPP also told the court that Khalid's concern for mob lynching was selective, and to corroborate his arguments, spoke about an incident from his own childhood: "When I was a kid, I told my father I wanted a pet; which breeds should I go for? My father told me don't bother for a breed and pick any pup from the road... My friend is very concerned about mob lynching... (but) mob lynching for him is selective. His concern is equally selective. I (Umar) claim myself to be atheist and not religious. That is the way he wants to portray himself."

Prasad argued that the issue for the accused was "not CAA-NRC but the issue was you had to somehow embarrass the government and take steps which will

reflect in international media".

Arguing that Khalid was Sharjeel Imam's mentor, the SPP said both of them were "two sides of the same coin". Prasad spoke about Imam invoking three issues — Babri Masjid demolition, Ayodhya and Triple Talaq — in his speeches. He conceded that Babri and Ayodhya may be religious in nature but told the court that the "issue of Article 370 was not connected with religion. You are trying to make it an issue for the whole of India and somehow want to colour it".

"A lot of arguments were made that the investigation is communal. You associate with people who do not believe in democracy, nationalism and

courts and the Constitution," Prasad told the court.

He further said the accused used to speak about saving the Tricolour, but during the secret meeting where the conspiracy of the riots was hatched, the "Constitution was missing but a book on the RSS can be seen".

"Where the Constitution is missing you have an RSS book. You won't even keep Tricolour. You will keep a book on RSS," Prasad told the court.

On the last date of hearing, the SPP told the court that all 25 sites, where anti-CAA protests were held in Delhi, were picked because of their proximity to mosques, but were "purposefully given secular names".

"Just before 9/11 happened when all people were involved, they reached a particular place and took training. A month prior to that, they moved to their respective positions. That is what is relevant in this case also," Prasad told the court.

The SPP added, "The person who was behind 9/11 never visited the US. The conspiracy meeting happened in Malaysia. There were no WhatsApp chats available at the time. Today we

DU issues notification on discontinuation of M.Phil programmes

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

DELHI UNIVERSITY has issued an official notification that its existing M.Phil programme will be discontinued from the coming academic year, in line with its decision to implement the National Education Policy.

In a marathon meeting in August 2021, the university's Academic Council had passed the proposal to implement the NEP 2020 from the coming academic year, with 16 elected members dissenting. This went on to be approved by the Executive Council as well. This entails that the University will shift to a four-year undergraduate programme from 2022-2023 and scrap its M.Phil programmes.

The latest notification from the office of the Chairperson Research Council states, "In the light of E.C. Resolution No. 8 dated 31.08.2021, the existing M.Phil Programme run by various Departments of the University of Delhi will be discontinued from the Academic Year 2022-2023 in line with the NEP 2020."

As of the current academic year, DU offered 39 M.Phil programmes in diverse areas of study such as History, Mathematics, Education, Economics, Library Information Science, Anthropology, Social Work, and languages such as Hindi, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Arabic and Italian.

As for the implementation of the four-year undergraduate programme, the University is currently seeking suggestions and feedback on a draft undergraduate curriculum framework it has created to this end.



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Inspired by movie, youths kidnap, kill boy

New Delhi: Two youths were arrested for kidnapping an 18-year-old boy for Rs 10 lakh ransom before allegedly killing him in North Delhi's Burari. DCP (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi said the accused, both aged 19, and residents of Burari, were inspired by Bollywood film *Apaharan*.

"The location of Rohan's phone was found at UP's Moradabad. Around 200 CCTVs were analysed and one of the accused was apprehended in the early hours of Wednesday," Kalsi said. At his instance, the body was recovered from a plot at Harit Vihar, and his associate was nabbed. ENS

a ransom of Rs 10 lakh. On Sunday around 11.30 pm, police were informed that Rohan had left with the accused but didn't return. Rohan's father runs a business," said the DCP.

"The location of Rohan's phone was found at UP's Moradabad. Around 200 CCTVs were analysed and one of the accused was apprehended in the early hours of Wednesday," Kalsi said. At his instance, the body was recovered from a plot at Harit Vihar, and his associate was nabbed. ENS

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STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS (UNAUDITED) FOR PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021

Sr. No.	Particulars	3 months ended 31 Dec 2021	3 months ended 30 Sep 2021	3 months ended 31 Dec 2020	9 months ended 31 Dec 2021	9 months ended 31 Dec 2020	9 months ended 31 March 2020	(₹ crore)
								Unaudited
1	Interest earned (a)+(b)+(c)+(d)	8,987.28	9,249.65	8,642.19	27,386.57	25,961.59	34,569.13	
	(a) Interest on loans and advances	8,213.56	8,300.16	7,735.48	24,883.57	23,044.41	31,196.24	
	(b) Income on investments	773.72	949.49	906.71	2,503.00	2,917.18	3,372.89	
	(c) Interest on balances with Reserve Bank of India and other inter bank funds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	(d) Others	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
2	Other Income	72.70	-24.22	5.37	70.03	23.65	102.04	</td

CORONAVIRUS
IN THE CAPITALVACCINATIONS IN
LAST 24 HOURS
70,267OMICRON
CASES
549DELHI: TOTAL
CASES
18,19,332Total
HOSPITAL BEDS
15,428
ICU BEDS
4,448
Tests
13,565
3,753Jan 27 Jan 28
Cases 506 376
Deaths 2 0NOIDA
Jan 27 Jan 28
Cases 1,671 1,545
Deaths 3 3PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: 1,805
OXYGEN SUPPORT 553
VENTILATOR SUPPORT 151Jan 27 Cases 4,291 Recoveries 9,397 Deaths 34 Tests 44,903
Jan 28 4,044 8,042 25 47,042
Total 29,152* 17,64,411 25,769 3,47,39,495**9 ARRESTED, 2 MINORS APPREHENDED: POLICE****Woman raped and paraded: Fear made family live in secret for two months**MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

FEARING THAT his family could be attacked anytime, the husband of a young woman, who was allegedly gangraped by her neighbours and paraded on the streets in Delhi's Shahdara district, said they had moved to a new house two months ago and were "living in secret".

Such was the fear of the accused, he said, that his parents asked him and his wife to leave home and shift elsewhere. "Even my family couldn't stand by us and asked us to leave. What they did to my wife has scarred us for life," the woman's husband told *The Indian Express* on Friday.

On Wednesday, some of the accused barged into the woman's house and abducted

Narrating the sequence of events, the husband said there

BRIEFLY**SDMC to give bicycles to Class IV students in its schools**

New Delhi: Bicycles will be provided to 5% of meritorious students in Class IV studying in South MCD schools, the municipal corporation announced Friday. The move comes ahead of the civic polls slated for April. Education committee head Nitika Sharma said bicycles will be given to students based on their academic performance in Class III. A proposal in this regard was approved in the South MCD's standing committee meeting on Friday.

Hit by tanker, security guard dies

New Delhi: A security guard died after allegedly being hit by a water tanker in Southwest Delhi's Sarojini Nagar Friday morning. According to police, the incident came to light around 6.15 am after they received a call about the accident. "The victim, Jai Parkash Bharti, a resident of Pilanji village, was a guard at a private security firm. He was hit by a water tanker near Sarojini Nagar market. The offending vehicle drove away from the spot," a senior police officer said. A case under relevant sections has been registered. The offending vehicle has been identified with the help of CCTV cameras and a team has been sent to nab the accused, police said. ENS

The city has 966 registered

centres that issue PUC certificates to ensure that vehicles comply with emission norms.

Environment Minister Gopal Rai said, "North India, including Delhi, faces grave air pollution particularly in winter. With this policy

in place, vehicles will be mandated to have their PUC certificate with them at the fuelling station.

Pollution levels of every single vehicle will be kept in check from time to time. The policy will effectively help us ensure that pollut-

ing vehicles do not pollute in Delhi and residents can enjoy cleaner air."

A communication from the Delhi government said that enforcement of PUC certification was found to be effective when conducted at fuel pumps. In October last year, the Transport Department had issued a circular deploying enforcement staff at petrol pumps to check PUC certificates of vehicles that came in for refuelling. This was in anticipation of air pollution levels rising in winter.

According to the Decision Support System for Air Quality Management in Delhi, which uses a modelling method to ascertain the contribution of different sectors to particulate matter levels, the transport sector was estimated to contribute around 13.38% of the PM 2.5 levels in the city on Friday.

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BALLOTIN

Independent Manipur MLA joins JD(U)

Impah: An Independent MLA from Manipur's Jiribam announced on Friday that he was joining the Janata Dal (United). Ashab Uddin said he was joining the party because he wanted to work for the people of the state and did not want any hindrance, which was not always possible as an Independent MLA. Uddin was one of the two independents who backed the BJP while it was staking claim to form a government although the Congress had won the most seats in 2017 polls. **ENS**

Punjab CM's brother files nomination as Independent

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's brother Manohar Singh Friday filed his nomination from Bassi Pathana seat in Fatehgarh Sahib district as an independent candidate. Denied a ticket by the Congress, Manohar will be contesting against the party's sitting MLA Gurpreet Singh G.P. **ENS**

Barely 10% of Congress and AAP candidates are women; SAD-BSP's share the lowest

NAVJEEVANGOPAL
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 28

IN AN election where parties have been trying to outdo each other to attract women voters, a demographic that comprises at least half the state's 2.12 crore voters, the number of women candidates remains abysmally low in Punjab.

The 117 candidates of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)-BSP alliance, only five are women. That's around 4 per cent of the total candidates. Of the five, four are of the SAD, which is contesting on 97 seats, and one of the Mayawati-led BSP, which is contesting on 20 seats.

The Congress, which has launched a high-profile campaign in UP revolving around women – even promising to set aside 40 per cent of its tickets for them – has announced tickets on 109 seats in Punjab, of which the party has given only 11 (10 per cent of total seats) to women.



Jeevanjot Kaur (AAP), Nimisha Mehta (BJP), Farzana Alam Khan (PLC), Jasdeep Kaur (SAD)

The AAP, which is attempting to project itself as a change from established parties, has announced tickets on all 117 seats, giving only 12 (10 per cent) of those to women.

The BJP-led alliance that has Captain Amarinder Singh's Punjab Lok Congress and SAD (Sanyukt) as partners, has given tickets to eight women out of 106 candidates announced so far (around 7.5 per cent of total candidates).

While the representation to women in terms of tickets announced by all parties remains low, that has not stopped political parties from going all out to get their votes.

The SAD was the first off the blocks when its chief Sukhbir Singh Badal announced Rs 2,000 per month to every woman head of BPL families with 'blue ration cards', if the SAD-BSP alliance is

voted to power in the state.

In December last year, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal had announced Rs 1,000 per month for every woman of Punjab aged 18 or above. Earlier this month, Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) chief Navjot Singh Sidhu promised Rs 2,000 a month to every woman homemaker in Punjab, in addition to eight cooking gas cylinders free of cost every year, if the Congress forms the government.

Among the 11 women candidates fielded by the party are former chief minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal (Lehra constituency); two sitting Cabinet ministers Aruna Chaudhary (Dinanagar-SC) and Razia Sultan (Malerkotla); sitting MLA Rupinder Kaur Ruby (Malout-SC) who won in 2017 on an AAP ticket and is now with the

Congress; and debutant Malvika Sood (Moga), the sister of actor Sonu Sood.

On the gender skew in the party's candidates, Sunil Jakhar, senior Congress leader and poll campaign committee chief in Punjab, said, "I can only say that nobody has been denied a ticket because of their gender. The problem is that you have to nurture them prior to elections. It is not something that happens overnight. Priyanka Ji was there [in Uttar Pradesh]. She worked on the ground to bring women aspirants up. In Punjab, the process has started and I think it will take a while for them to establish themselves in the political arena. In coming times, we can expect more women claiming their rightful place in politics." Among the AAP women candidates are two sitting MLAs Baljinder Kaur (Talwandi Sabo)

and Saravjit Kaur Manuke (Jagraon-SC); singer-turned-politician Anmol Gagan Maan (Kharar); and Jeevanjot Kaur, who has been fielded from the high-profile Amritsar East seat.

AAP MLA from Dribha and Leader of Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema said, "We have given maximum tickets to all those women candidates who were active on the ground."

Of the four women fielded by SAD, at least two of them, Jasdeep Kaur and Sunita Chaudhary, are first-timers and relatives of Akali leaders. Jasdeep was declared party nominee from Khanna after the Punjab and Haryana High Court dismissed her husband Akali leader Yadwinder Singh Yadu's plea to contest the polls. Yadu was booked in 14 FIRs, including criminal cases. Sunita Chaudhary, who will contest from Balachaur, is daughter-in-law of former Akali MLA, late Chaudhary Nand Lal.

The most high-profile of the four Akali contenders is Jagir Kaur, nominee from Bholath.

SAD spokesperson Daljit Singh Cheema said, "The party always makes an effort for women to get maximum representation... But there are practical difficulties. Assembly constituencies are huge and in some of them, it becomes difficult even for men to travel long distances and campaign."

I HEREBY DECLARE



IMMOVABLE ASSETS:

Self: ₹40,500,00
Wife: ₹2,81,04,000

LOANS FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS OR INDIVIDUALS: Nil

PENDING CRIMINAL CASES: 87

PROFESSION: Social service

SOURCES OF EARNING: Agriculture, pension and business
EDUCATION: LLB (Honours) in 1974

HASHTAG POLITICS



• BJP campaign video: Yogi again

The BJP released a campaign video on social media platforms ahead of the UP elections. Taking a dig at the previous Akhilesh Yadav government, the party said UP has changed for the better in the last five years under Yogi Adityanath.

831 LIKES, 453 RETWEETS IN 10 HOURS

• Trinamool promises pre-approved credit cards to Goan youth

TMC promised a 'Yuva Shakti Card' that will allow Goans to take need-based credit for skill development and help them to start businesses. "It's a collateral-free pre-approved credit card with a limit of Rs 20 lakh at 4% interest rate to the Goan youth," it said on Twitter.

118 LIKES, 53 RETWEETS IN 8 HOURS

Yogi speaks graveyard, riots in attack on Opposition

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

SP-RLD tie-up 'solid', say 'sons of farmers' Jayant and Akhilesh

AMIT SHARMA
MUZAFFARNAGAR,
JANUARY 28

DESCRIBING HIMSELF and his alliance partner Jayant Chaudhary, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief, as "sons of farmers who know very well their economic pains and tribulations", Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday asked farmers to be wary of the BJP, alleging that the saffron party-led Centre had withdrawn the controversial farm laws only for the sake of votes.

The former chief minister assured farmers that if their alliance forms the government after winning the upcoming UP Assembly elections, they will not allow the implementation of any such "anti-farmer laws".

Addressing the first joint press conference with Jayant days after forging the SP-RLD alliance, Akhilesh claimed that the ruling BJP would be defeated in the UP polls. Taking a swipe at UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the BJP's decision to field him from his home turf Gorakhpur, he said, "Baba Ji (Adityanath) ka palayan ho chuka hai. Unhe BJP ghar bhej diya. Ab BJP ka UP se palayan hoga (Adityanath has been sent back home by the BJP leadership). The only thing left now is the BJP's exodus from UP."

The SP chief reached the venue of the press conference here late by around three-and-



Jayant Chaudhary, Akhilesh Yadav in Muzaffarnagar, Friday. PTI

half hours since, according to him, his chopper was not given clearance to fly from Delhi for reasons not told to him.

In a tweet earlier, Akhilesh posted a picture with a helicopter in the background, stating "My helicopter is still detained in Delhi without assigning any reason and not being allowed to go to Muzaffarnagar, whereas a top BJP leader has just flown from here.

This is a desperate conspiracy of the losing BJP." He told the press conference that he was "thankful" to the person who somehow got permission for his chopper to take off from Muzaffarnagar.

With polling around the corner, the BJP is reaching out to the Jat community in western UP from where Jats had taken part in

significant numbers in the farmers' protest. After Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a meeting with Jat leaders in Delhi on Wednesday, the BJP leaders even made overtures to the RLD president urging him to join hands.

Jayant said the RLD's alliance with the SP is "solid" and aimed at furthering the cause of farmers. The SP chief avoided direct replies to questions related to issues such as "exodus" from Kairana, the BJP's "propaganda" against Muslims and the SP not fielding any Muslim candidate from all the six assembly seats in Muzaffarnagar district.

"The BJP leaders are raising up very old issues... Jayant and I are sons of farmers and we know very well their economic pains and tribulations," he said.

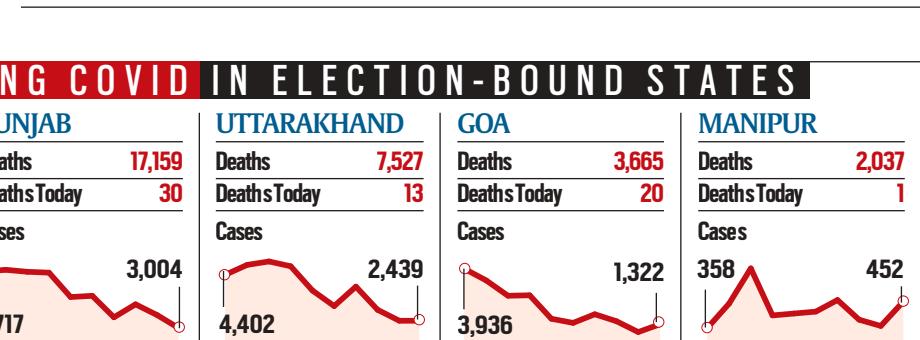
"The money meant for building the boundary walls of graveyards used to be grabbed by goons of the SP and with the misuse of that money, such elements used to misbehave with our sisters and mothers," the Chief Minister said during an interaction with people in Meerut's Hastinapur constituency.

Adityanath again attacked the SP over the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots and said that the opposition party, which was in government at the time, "engineered" the violence.

"If you want your state to be free from riots and want that bulldozers should continue to raze properties of the mafia elements, then you will have to empower BJP through your ballot for a second term in Uttar Pradesh," the Chief Minister asserted on Friday.

REACHING OUT

Aam Aadmi Party convener and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal on his arrival at Jalandhar on Friday. He is leading the party's campaign in poll Punjab. ANI



Candidates shuffled around here, the constant remains caste, party base

ABHINAV RAJPUT
GARH MUKTESHWAR,
JANUARY 28

GROUPS OF three to four people sit around bonfires at every intersection, burning up tree trunks around a line of shops selling furniture – the mainstay of livelihoods in Garh Mukteshwar. Overlooking them are electricity poles enveloped with inanimate faces of contenders who will fight for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly from this seat in Hapur district.

In the last few weeks, key parties have changed their minds about their candidates for the constituency that votes on February 10. And caste appears to have a major role.

It is of little surprise that even the offices of prominent parties – the SP, BSP and the BJP – are located within a two-kilometre stretch in the town. The first in the row is the office of the Samajwadi

Party's Ravinder Chowdhary, who belongs to the Gujar community that makes up for around 10% of the constituency's 3 lakh voters.

His supporters say he will win with ease on the back of the substantial Muslim and Gujar voters in the area. "Chowdhary saheb will not have any difficulty in winning, the Muslims voters (which make up for a quarter of the voter base) are completely backing us and he himself is a local Gujar. There are other castes also in our support," said Manmeet, an SP supporter who goes by just his first name.

The SP initially picked an outsider to fight from the constituency: Naina Devi, who comes from an influential political family of Meerut. She was replaced by Chowdhary weeks later, with the SP saying the SP changed its strategy because the Mayawati-led party

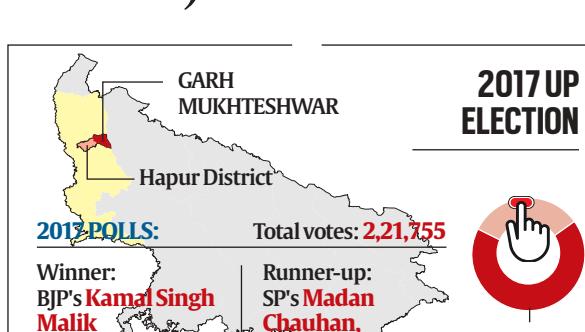
fielded a three-time legislator from the constituency.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) announced Mohammad Arif as their candidate, but changed it to Madan Chauhan – also a former minister in the Akhilesh Yadav-led SP government from 2015 to 2017.

The party believes Chauhan, a Rajput leader, may get the backing of his 40,000-member strong community in the region, but it is also banking on the support of over 45,000 Jatav voters. The Jatavs have traditionally supported the BSP in Garh Mukteshwar and comprise over 15% of the population.

"I have done enough in the region to get votes from all castes... got roads built, government guest houses were built and ghat beautification was done by me," Chauhan says, referring to the time he was an MLA from Garh Mukteshwar (2002-2017).

SEAT WATCH



"The switch to Chauhan is why the SP was forced to field another candidate, BSP leaders say. SP supporters, however, disagree and instead point to Devi's lack of "local connect".

"Naina Ji even campaigned for a day but since she had no local connect, she could not gather enough supporters, she could not handle press questions on issues that are important in this constituency and seeing that the

community apart from support of the upper castes that have normally veered towards the BJP.

The three parties are relying on their conventional ideological base along with their candidates' caste and community support. The SP is pinning its hopes on the Muslim and Gujar voters; the BSP on Rajputs and Dalit voters; and the BJP on Jats, Rajput and Brahmins.

The Congress, however, is an outlier. A Jat woman contestant, Congress's Abha Chaudhary expressed confidence that she is the choice for several castes and women in the constituency.

"I have the support from each caste, including Jat, Brahmins and especially women due to our women centred campaign," she says, referring to the party's outreach to women voters for these assembly elections. While parties insist on these probabilities, the people of the town are concerned over their livelihoods.

Residents depend largely on the sale of furniture and like many small businesses, the two years of pandemic have been hard.

Salik Chand, a Jat, is one of them. He owns a shop that sells modha, stools that are made from bamboo. "Our income is largely dependent upon tourists who buy this. But with Covid, tourism is down and so is our business. The income has fallen down by more than 30% the furniture that we make are even exported but the government has not done anything to promote this," he says.

There are thousands more like him, he adds, and many who make such furniture at their homes and sell them in cities or on highways.

The UP town also counts on hukteshwar tourism. The Garh Mukteshwar ghat, on the banks of river Ganga, hosts a Kartik Mela related to the Hindu epic Mahabharata. Every October-November, over 25 lakh pilgrims

throng the town and trigger a rush of business activity - from renting out rooms for tourists to running eateries and selling flowers for religious rituals. But the crowds have long thinned.

Vinod Mishra, a kirana shopkeeper in Braj Ghat in Garh assembly constituency, says, "This area has the potential to be developed as a tourism hub like Haridwar but has never been promoted that way. If that happens, we will also earn more."

For others too, their lives have been upended. Sachin Kaushik, a sugar cane farmer in the region, says, "The payment by mills (to farmers) is delayed... no one talks about that... what about our issues, I see party workers are all always discussing which caste will vote for them... Each party has its own caste loyalty and needs some own (votes) from different castes. The candidate that is able to get that will win."

"But we will be in the same condition that we have been."

DHANBAD JUDGE DEATH PROBE

Explain why 2 brain profiling tests on accused: HC to CBI

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, JANUARY 28

THE JHARKHAND High Court, which is monitoring the probe into the alleged murder of Dhanbad Additional Sessions Judge Uttam Anand last year, has pulled up the CBI for conducting brain fingerprinting tests on the two accused twice — four months apart — which gave contradictory results.

Chief Justice Ravi Ranjan and Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad asked the CBI to produce its internal manual or guidelines on investigation to check if there is any provision that allows the test — Brain Electrical Oscillation Signature (BEOS) profiling — a second time if the accused showed "intention" to kill in the first.

On July 28 last year, the judge was on a morning walk when an autorickshaw veered towards him on an empty road and knocked him down. The incident was caught on CCTV cameras.

The police had arrested two suspects, Lakhani Verma and Rahul Verma, both residents of Dhanbad, after which the CBI took over the probe and re-registered a case.

In its charge sheet filed in a Dhanbad court on October 20, the CBI claimed that Rahul was a "professional thief who keeps looking for vulnerable targets", and that he and his accomplice Lakhani had been "looking for a chance to execute the plan". It remained silent on what the plan was and on the crime motive.

During the last weekly hearing on January 21 of the CBI's probe progress, the court observed that in the first brain profiling test on the two accused in September last year, one of them indicated that he had been given an assignment to hit the judge. However, the CBI got the tests conducted again in January this year in which the accused indicated he was not even present when the incident happened.

The bench said: "This court has perused BEOS report wherein the results of two ac-

IS conspiracy case: NIA files charges against ex-Cong MLA's kin, others

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

THE NIA has filed a chargesheet against a family member of former Congress MLA from Karnataka, late B M Idinabba, among others, in connection with a case of Islamic State (IS) conspiracy to recruit from India.

The chargesheet was filed against eight accused, including Deepthi Marla and Ammar Abdul Rahim. Marla's husband Anas Abdul Rahim is son of B Masha, whose father Idinabba was a former Congress MLA. Idinabba died in 2009.

Ammar Rahim is Anas's brother. Marlah had been arrested earlier this month.

Others charged in the case were identified as Mohd. Waqar Lone; Mizha Siddeeqe; Shifa Hanis; Obaid Hamid Matta; Madesh Shankar; and Muizamil Hassan Bhat. "Investigation has revealed that all eight accused charged in the case are affiliated with...ISIS and were involved in radicalising, recruiting, organising terror funds and grooming like-minded gullible Muslim youth through different secured social media platforms to perform Hijrat to ISIS-controlled territory for joining ISIS," NIA said. NIA registered a case in the matter in March 2021.

"During investigation, it has been revealed that after the decline of ISIS Caliphate in Syria/Iraq, Deepthi Marla and Mohd. Ameen had visited Kashmir in January and March 2020 for Hijrah (religious migration) and for engaging in terrorist acts and supporting the activities of ISIS," the NIA stated.

BSF constable injured in gunfight with smugglers

Chandigarh: The BSF on Friday foiled a cross-border drug smuggling bid and recovered 58 kg heroin after an exchange of fire with Pakistani smugglers along the Indo-Pak border in Punjab's Gurdaspur district that also left a force personnel, head constable Gyan Singh, injured, police said.

EXPLAINED
E The BEOS
test method

BRAIN ELECTRICAL Oscillation Signature profiling, also known as brain fingerprinting, is a neuro-psychological method of interrogation in which the suspect's participation in a crime is investigated by studying his brain's electrical activity as a response to the accused being shown a video clip or sound clips among others.

cused persons... to the effect that one of the accused persons indicated that he was given an assignment to hit Judgesahab, i.e., late Uttam Anand."

"...The said accused person took help of another accused person to execute his plan. On 28.07.2021, when they saw Judgesahab, one of the accused persons asked another accused person to accelerate his auto's speed and thereafter, one of the accused persons had seen Judgesahab falling down on the road with the hit of auto."

This detail is significant as the CBI in its charge sheet had not mentioned it.

The court then cited the second BEOS report. "We have also seen the subsequent BEOS... he (the accused) took U-turn in the subsequent BEOS report... stating that he was not present in the auto... He also revealed that he has no idea about the accident," the bench said. It then asked the CBI what led it to subject the accused to the second BEOS test.

After the CBI said it did so as no clue emerged in between, the bench said, "This court is not in agreement with such explanation of conducting second BEOS test after lapse of about 4 months wherein a complete contradictory recording has come up the said accused persons."

MARITAL RAPE

HC to Centre: Are you withdrawing 2017 response?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

THE DELHI High Court on Friday asked the Centre to clarify whether it wants to withdraw its reply which was filed in 2017 in response to the petitions seeking criminalisation of marital rape.

The Centre has earlier told the court that it wants to place a fresh and constructive stand before the court in the matter, which has remained pending since 2015.

"Take instructions on that as well," the court told Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma after advocate Karuna Nundy, representing one of the petitioners, asked whether she should address arguments on Centre's earlier affidavit or it was being withdrawn.

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

The Centre in 2017 submitted that striking down the exception "may destabilise the institution of marriage apart from being an easy tool for harassing the husbands".

'YEARS PASSED LIKE A FAMINE'

Rajasthan: Unemployed for a decade, tribal man dies by suicide

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, JANUARY 28

ED: Deshmukh, family laundered unaccounted income of Rs 29.8 crore

Court takes cognisance of supplementary charge sheet

KHUSHBOO NARAYAN
MUMBAI, JANUARY 28

AN ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) probe has found that Anil Deshmukh, the former home minister of Maharashtra, and his family have allegedly laundered unaccounted income of Rs 29.83 crore between 2005 and 2016. This, according to the prosecution complaint (chargesheet) filed by the ED against Deshmukh and his sons in a money laundering case before a special court.

The court on Friday took cognisance of the supplementary chargesheet.

The ED has alleged that Deshmukh, along with his wife Aarti, sons Hrishikesh and Salil, and daughter-in-law Ridhee Deshmukh, have together declared income of only Rs 6.53 crore in their income tax returns between 2009 and 2020. The agency said the Deshmukhs have acted as a "unit" and even though they did not have "sufficient income" as per their tax returns, they have set up a "formidable empire".

The central agency has alleged that the Deshmukhs used



Former Maharashtra Home minister Anil Deshmukh

DESHMUKH HANDED OVER UNOFFICIAL LIST SUGGESTING COPS FOR TRANSFERS: KUNTE

Mumbai: Former Maharashtra additional chief secretary (Home) Sitaram Kunte told the ED that former state home minister Anil Deshmukh, who is being probed for money laundering, "at times" used to "hand over an unofficial list containing suggestions in respect of certain police officers/certain posts with regard to transfer and postings" of police officers, which were "usually" included in the final transfer and posting order.

"unaccounted money" to set up several businesses such as warehousing, hotel and restaurant,

colleges and a trust through "dummy directors".

According to the ED, of the Rs 29.83 crore unaccounted income, Rs 9.82 crore was routed to various projects such as construction of three colleges run by Anil Deshmukh's Shri Sai Shikshan Sansthan Trust, a warehouse and acquiring a restaurant.

The agency has also alleged that another Rs 13.25 crore was routed to Sai Shikshan Sansthan for its day-to-day needs and Rs 2.12 crore was used to buy a piece of land at Worli in Mumbai — owned by Premier Port Links Private Limited, a company where the Deshmukhs have a stake.

The ED has alleged that a part of Deshmukh's unaccounted money has also been routed to a Nagpur-based hotel, Travotel Suites, which has been operational since 2015-16. The probe has found that Hrishikesh had "diverted" funds for acquiring the land where the hotel has been built. Apart from this, the hotel runs a restaurant called Mocha Sky and the central agency has alleged that the profit from the restaurant business is deposited with Hrishikesh in cash.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at an NCC rally in New Delhi on Friday. Prem Nath Pandey

Misinformation, drugs, real-virtual balance key challenges for youths: PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

DRUG ABUSE, misinformation, and balance between the real and the virtual worlds are the three key challenges facing the country's youth today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday addressing a National Cadet Corps (NCC) rally in the national capital.

He said that digital technology and information have presented great opportunities to people, but "on the other hand, there are dangers of misinformation", he said, appealing people not to fall prey to rumours.

"One more challenge in front of you is the deteriorating balance between virtual and real life," the Prime Minister said. He then urged the NCC to train cadets to find the balance and help others too.

PM Modi, at the rally in New Delhi's Cariappa ground, said that the third issue he wanted to highlight was the addiction to drugs by the young people.

"You all are aware of how addiction can ruin our young generation... So in the schools and colleges where there is NCC or NSS, how can drugs reach there? As a cadet, you should stay free from drugs and keep your campus drugs-free as well," he said.

The youth can play a major role, the Prime Minister said, in the "Vocal for Local" campaign — the government's initiative to boost the use of India-made products and services.

"If the youth of India decide that they will only use items which have been made by an Indian, by the sweat and toil of an Indian, then the fate of India can change," Modi said.

He urged the cadets to think of "nation first" as the country celebrates 75 years of Independence through the government's "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav". PM Modi said: "No power of the world can stop the country whose youth starts moving ahead with the thinking of nation first."

PM Modi said in his letter to Rhodes: "Over the years, you have developed a profound connection with India and its culture."

PM Modi's global outreach: Letters to researchers, sportspersons

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi made a special effort to reach out to foreign academics, researchers, scholars, singers and sportspersons on the occasion of India's 73rd Republic Day through personal letters sent to each of them.

Some of the recipients of the letter include Polish researcher Krzysztof Iwanek, cricketers Jonty Rhodes and Chris Gayle, professor and president of the German Institute for Global and Area Studies, Amrita Narlikar, and others.

In his note to Iwanek, whose area of expertise also lies in Indian history and politics, PM said: "I decided to write to you and a few other friends of India, with a sense of gratitude for your affection towards India and a hope that you continue to work closely with our nation."

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Narayan Meena

in his General Nursing and Midwifery diploma would no longer have made the cut, said Dhanush Ram.

His father Bhanwar Singh Meena, 65, told *The Indian Express* over the phone that he sat for exams for new vacancies, but was not selected when the results came late last year. "The same day

he stopped eating for three days and kept crying. Everyone at home (in the district's Nakatpura village) pacified him. We kept him with us for 15-20 days."

"All these years, he lived and prepared in Jaipur, Dholpur, and even in Gangapur (Sawai Madhopur). After the results late last year, we comforted him and he seemingly recovered after about 15-20 days," added Name Narayan's uncle Rambajan Meena, a retired headmaster.

"Then he said that he wants to go back to Dholpur to prepare, saying that as one more examination is left," the father said.

After he had resumed living in Dholpur by himself, the results for Patwari posts were declared.

"Following the results on January 25 he again went into shock," said

uncle Rambajan. "He died by suicide in the intervening night of January 25-26."

Family members say they then went to Dholpur to bring back the body and discovered the note. "I had five sons, of which four were studying. I am about 64-65 years old and can't work as a labourer anymore. So I have one of my sons work as a labourer and he supports the family," Bhanwar Singh said.

While Name Narain was the eldest, the next, Madan, 26, lives in Jaipur and is preparing for a job with the Railways. The third one is a labourer and the youngest two are school students of Class 11 and Class 12. Two other daughters are married.

Madan is preparing for the Railway Recruitment Board's Non-Technical Popular Categories

AFTER SC SETS ASIDE MAHARASHTRA BJP MLAs' SUSPENSION

MVA says will discuss with legal experts on next course of action

VISHWAS WAGHMODE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 28

THE MAHARASHTRA Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government on Friday hinted that the Supreme Court's decision to quash the suspension of 12 BJP MLAs was a setback to legislative sovereignty and said it would chart its course of action after consultations with legal experts even as the BJP welcomed the apex court order. Former chief minister and BJP Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis welcomed the SC judgment and said the verdict was a "tight slap on the face" of the MVA government.

"According to the ED, of the Rs 29.83 crore unaccounted income, Rs 9.82 crore was routed to various projects such as construction of three colleges run by Anil Deshmukh's Shri Sai Shikshan Sansthan Trust, a warehouse and acquiring a restaurant.

The agency has also alleged that another Rs 13.25 crore was routed to Sai Shikshan Sansthan for its day-to-day needs and Rs 2.12 crore was used to buy a piece of land at Worli in Mumbai — owned by Premier Port Links Private Limited, a company where the Deshmukhs have a stake.

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Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,PUSHPA DAVI CHADHA,W/O SHADI LAL CHADHA,R/O SD-452,TOWER-APARTMENT, PITAMPURA,DELHI-110034. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PUSHPA DEV. 0040600706-4

I Arun Gauba S/o M.L. Gauba R/o House No-K-306, Central Park-1 Golf Course Road, Sector-42, Gurgaon Galleria DLF-4 Farruhnagar Gurgaon Haryana-122009, have changed my name to Arun S Oberoi 0070770349-1

My Wife's Name has been wrongly Published in my Service Records as Vanita whereas Correct Name is Vanita Sandeep Sonawane (No.15574855M Naik; Sonawane Sandeep Kashinath) 105, ENGR REGIMENT vide affidavit no. B-265 dated 16/11/2021 0090298035-1

I,pratibha, W/o-Raj Kumar, Add-210 sant nagar new delhi-110065, changed my name to pratibha Rani. 0040600701-4

I,hitherto known as Richa Vashisth,W/o Deepak Vashisth, residing at,H.No.-17, Mandir Marg, Chhajipur, East-Babarpur, Shahdara,Delhi-110032,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Richa Deepak Vashisth. 0040600701-6

I,Sukhwinder Pal Singh Lamba S/o,Raghbir Singh Lamba R/o-H.No.9/2-nd-Floor,DLF-City Phase-2,Gurgaon, Haryana-122002,have changed my name to Sukhwinder Singh Lamba. 0040600716-7

I,Sudesh W/o Narendar Kumar R/o-36 Ashiana, Apartments, Harsh,Vihar Pitampura Delhi-110034,have changed my minor son name,from Keshav aged-17.years to Keshav Sharma. 0040600701-8

I,Sardar Darshan Singh / S Darshan Singh,S/o Sujan Singh,R/o-N-174,Gali No.9, Vishnu Garden,Tilak Nagar, Delhi-110018 have changed my name to DARSHAN SINGH 0040600644-1

I,Sandeep Kumar Jajoo,S/o Pawan Kumar R/o-H.No.180, Gali.No.7,East Azad-Nagar Delhi-110051,have changed my name to Sandeep Jaju,for all purposes 0040600701-3

I,Royas Joseph Eattakkal,S/o Joseph Eattakkal Thomas,R/o JB-32-D,Hari Enclave, Haringar,Delhi-110064 have changed my name to ROYAS JOSE 0040600647-1

I,Rekha,D/o-Devender Chauhan,R/o-H.No.F-920, Inder-Enclave,Phase-2, Kirari Suleman Nagar,Delhi-86, inform that my father's name, wrongly written,in my document as Devanand, instead of Devender Chauhan 0040600706-2

I,Ravi sonkar,S/o Ganeshi Lal, Add-32-B, DBA-Flats, Taimoor-Nagar, New Friends, Delhi, Changed my name to Ravi Shanker. 0040600701-2

I,Raj Ranji,W/O-Sh. Ravinder Kumar,R/o-9/4414,Gali.no-7, Ajit Nagar,Gandhi Nagar, Delhi-110031,inform that Rani and Raj Rani are one and the same person. 0040600706-1

I,Pooja Sachdeva,W/o Vikram Mehta,R/o C-40-second Floor, Vijay Vihar Phase-2, Delhi-110085,have changed my name Divya Mehta,for all purposes. 0040600716-3

I,Mubarik Hussain,S/o Nasruddin R/o-A-15 A DDA-Flat Munirka,New Delhi-110067, have changed my name to Praveen,for all future purposes. 0040600716-8

I,Mohd Hanif,S/o-Abdul Masid, R/o-B-24, Gali.No.2,Shastri Park, Delhi-110053,that name of my father,mistakenly written,in my passport no. K3340105 as Abdul Majid, Instead of Abdul Masid 0040600706-3

I,Jatin Kashyap S/o Manoj Kashyap R/o C-227/27, Gurur Nanak Pura, Laxmi Nagar Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Jatin Singh 0070770352-1

I,Mayank S/o Devender Kumar Gosain R/o-H.No-2/F,F,Gali.No-3,Ram Chander Enclave,Mohan Garden,Uttam-Nagar, Delhi-110059,have changed my name to Mayank Gosain. 0040600716-4

I,Mamta W/o Manish Bhaskar R/o-9/36 Eklaya Vihar Sector-9,Vasundhara Ghaziabad U.P.-201012,have changed my name to Mamta Bhaskar. 0040600701-1

I,Adesh Tyagi, age 50 yrs, S/o Anand, R/o-Vill- Chandpur, Post- Shahpur, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh-251318, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Adesh Kumar for future purposes. 0070770283-1

I Reeta Devi D/o Late Sh. Shiv Prakash Pandey W/o Sh. Sharshan Tiwari R/o 29-C, Ganesh Nagar, Extn-Kashkar Pur Baramad, Kashkarpur East Delhi, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Kajal Prakash for all purposes 0040600625-9

I,Deputy khari s/o nawab singh khari, H.No 5764/6, new chandrawal kamla-nagar, Delhi-110007, have changed my name to Daksh khari,for all future purposes. 040600716-9

I,Assad S/o Wahid Husain R/o-1-2, First-Floor,Street No.9, Sangam Vihar,Wazirabad Delhi-110084,have changed my name to Asad Wahid,for all purposes. 040600701-5

I,Arpit Bindal,S/o Ram Dhyan Bindal,R/o-45A Riviera, Apartment Mall,Road Civil, Lines Delhi-110054, changed my minor daughter name Myra to Myra Bindal. 0040600701-7

I,Anjali D/o Narendar Kumar R/o-36, Ashiana Apartments, Harsh Vihar Pitampura Delhi-110034,have changed my name to Anjali Sharma. 040600701-9

I,VIJAY KUMAR, R/o Village-Khairana, P/O Bewal, Tehsil-Kanina, Distt.-Mohindergarh, Haryana-123021,have changed my son's name from AYUSH KUMAR to AYUSH SHARMA. 0040600716-6

I,Shally W/O Kuldeep Chauhan R/o 306-F, Pocket-2, Mayur Vihar, Phase -1, New Delhi -110091 have changed my name to Shally Chauhan. 0070770337-1

I,RENU SHARMA, W/o Vijay Kumar, R/o Village-Khairana, P/O Bewal,Tehsil-Kanina, Distt.-Mohindergarh, Haryana-123021,have changed my name from RANU to RENU SHARMA. 0040600716-5

I,Qamar Aleem S/o Khalique Ahmad R/o Flat No-H.801, Amaatra Homes, Plot No.GH-02C, Sector-10, Greater Noida West, Gautam Budh Nagar, UP-201308 have changed my name to Qamar Aleem Saifi. 0040600656-1

I,Mayra Rajeev D/o Sh. Abhishek Mishra, A562E, 2nd Floor, Block A, Sushant Lok-1, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001 have changed my name from Mayra Rajeev to Myra Mishra for all future Purpose. 0040600672-1

I,Manoj Kumar Sharma s/o Janardan Sharma, R/o 89A, Gali No.1, Gupta Enclave, Vikas Nagar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Manoj Kumar, permanently 0040600658-1

I,Manoj Kumar S/O Pyare Lal, born on 22-08-1986 residing at 3/9 KAD Road Shriha Suncity Indirapuram Ghaziabad-201014, have corrected my Father's name spelling Pyre Lal to Pyare Lal in passport vide affidavit dated 13 Dec 2021 at Gurgaon. 0050191085-1

I,Manju Kumari alias Manju, D/o Karan Singh And W/o Girija Singh, R/o UG 2 T-7, Civitech Florencia, Park Sapphir Ram Prasha Greens, Sec-7, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh 201010, have changed my name to Manju Singh. 0070770351-1

I,Deepak Kumar S/O Sukhdev Raj Wadera, R/o A-36, Near Sadqi Nagar, Sanwal Nagar, Delhi-110049, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Deepak Kumar Wadera. 0070768560-2

I,Kashish S/o Surender Manocha,R/o A-55, GF,New Moti Nagar Delhi-15,have changed my name to Kashish Manocha. 0040600716-1

I,Atul Sharma R/o C-1204, 12th Floor Uniraj Heights, Rai Nagar Extension, Ghaziabad, UP-201017. Have changed the name (added surname) of my daughter (age 02 years) Dhruvi to Dhruvi Sharma for all future purposes. 0040600678-1

I,Mohd Nadim S/o Akhlaq Mohammad R/o/H.8035, Gali Tyre Wali, Bara Hindu Rao, Delhi-110006 have changed my name to Mohammad Nadeem for all purposes. 0040600625-8

I,MAHESH KUMAR JAIN S/O Surender Kumar Jain R/o D 184, Ashok Vihar, Phase 1, Delhi 110052 have changed my name to MANEESH KUMAR JAIN 0040600655-1

I,Prachi D/o Late Raj Kumar,R/o No.31/21,Gali No.5, Madanpuri, Gurgaon, (Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Prachi Arora. 0040600716-2

I,Pooja Sachdeva,W/o Vikram Mehta,R/o C-40-second Floor, Vijay Vihar Phase-2, Delhi-110085,have changed my name Divya Mehta,for all purposes. 0040600716-3

I,Mubarik Hussain,S/o Nasruddin R/o-A-15 A DDA-Flat Munirka,New Delhi-110067, have changed my name to Praveen,for all future purposes. 0040600716-8

I,Mohd Hanif,S/o-Abdul Masid, R/o-B-24, Gali.No.2,Shastri Park, Delhi-110053,that name of my father,mistakenly written,in my passport no. K3340105 as Abdul Majid, Instead of Abdul Masid 0040600706-3

I,Jatin Kashyap S/o Manoj Kashyap R/o C-227/27, Gurur Nanak Pura, Laxmi Nagar Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Jatin Singh 0070770352-1

I,Mayank S/o Devender Kumar Gosain R/o-H.No-2/F,F,Gali.No-3,Ram Chander Enclave,Mohan Garden,Uttam-Nagar, Delhi-110059,have changed my name to Mayank Gosain. 0040600716-4

I,Mamta W/o Manish Bhaskar R/o-9/36 Eklaya Vihar Sector-9,Vasundhara Ghaziabad U.P.-201012,have changed my name to Mamta Bhaskar. 0040600701-1

I,Adesh Tyagi, age 50 yrs, S/o Anand, R/o-Vill- Chandpur, Post- Shahpur, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh-251318, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Adesh Kumar for future purposes. 0070770283-1

I Reeta Devi D/o Late Sh. Shiv Prakash Pandey W/o Sh. Sharshan Tiwari R/o 29-C, Ganesh Nagar, Extn-Kashkar Pur Baramad, Kashkarpur East Delhi, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Kajal Prakash for all purposes 0040600625-9

LOST & FOUND

I, Pallavi Goyal, W/o Dicky Goyal, R/o Q-12, Sec-12, Noida, U.P., have lost my original Property Documents (Transfer Memorandum) vide no 4567 dated 23-05-2016 of Plot AG-51, sec-144, Noida. Cont.: 9818044893, 0070770308-1

I,Amriddin,S/o Salauddin,R/o-B-140 Gali,No.2,Indra-Vihar, Delhi-110094,have lost my original LIC-Policy Bond policy.no.128044623, please finder Contact-9810170784. 0040600710-1

I,Arpit Bindal,S/o Ram Dhyan Bindal,R/o-45A Riviera, Apartment Mall,Road Civil, Lines Delhi-110054, changed my minor daughter name Myra to Myra Bindal. 0040600701-7

I,Anjali D/o Narendar Kumar R/o-36, Ashiana Apartments, Harsh Vihar Pitampura Delhi-110034,have changed my name to Anjali Sharma. 040600701-9

I,VIJAY KUMAR, R/o Village-Khairana, P/O Bewal, Tehsil-Kanina, Distt.-Mohindergarh, Haryana-123021,have changed my son's name from AYUSH KUMAR to AYUSH SHARMA. 0040600716-6

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

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

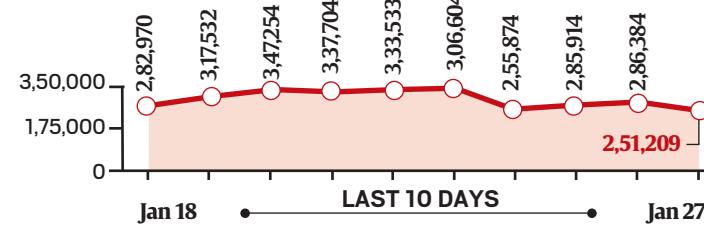
DASHBOARD, AS ON JAN 27

697
DAYS SINCE
PANDEMIC
BEGAN

New cases 2,51,209 | Active cases 21,05,611 | Deaths 627

Weekly CFR: 0.29% | Overall CFR: 1.35% | Total deaths: 4,92,327

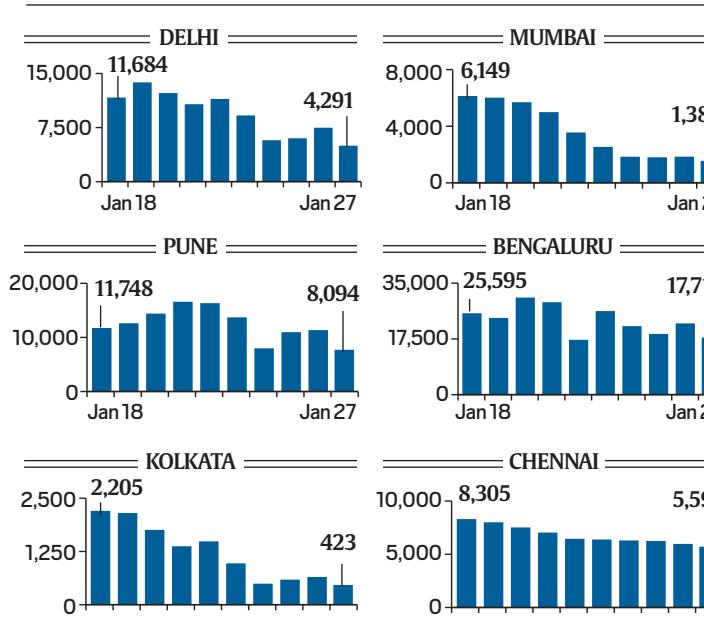
NEW CASES, DAILY



SURGE IN THE STATES

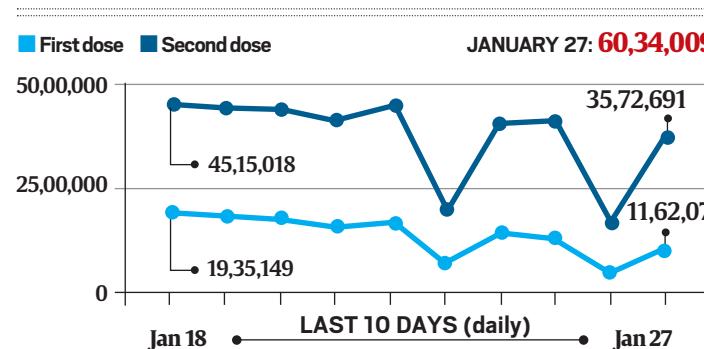
State	ON JANUARY 27			Weekly positivity
	New Cases	Active Cases	Deaths	
Kerala	51,739	3,10,202	153	46.23%
Karnataka	38,083	3,28,741	49	22.71%
Tamil Nadu	28,515	2,13,534	53	19.71%
Maharashtra	25,425	2,87,397	53	20.42%
Andhra Pradesh	13,474	1,09,493	9	30.66%

CASES IN THE CITIES, LAST 10 DAYS



TOTAL TESTS 72,37,48,555
TESTS ON JAN 27 15,82,307 | **WEEKLY POSITIVITY** 16.84% | **OVERALL POSITIVITY** 5.61%

INDIA TOTAL DOSES 164,44,73,216
 (Adults 1st dose: 89,09,39,447; adults second dose: 69,88,03,190;
 15-18 age group first dose: 4,43,89,137; precautionary doses: 1,03,41,442)



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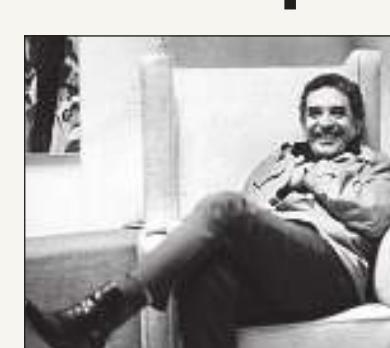
Gonzalo García Barcha.

The confirmation

DURING THE course of conversations with his biographer Gerald Martin, whose *Gabriel García Márquez: A Life* (1998) chronicles the extraordinary life and career of the Nobel Prize-winning Colombian writer, Márquez once remarked, "All human beings have three lives: public, private, and secret."

Eight years after his death in April 2014 at the age of 87, Márquez's own secret life came to light recently when the Colombian newspaper *El Universal de Cartagena* published a news report, confirmed to the Associated Press by two relatives of the writer, about a closely guarded family secret — Márquez's child with Mexican writer and journalist Susana Cato, with whom he had an extra-marital relationship in the 1990s.

The daughter, Indira Cato, now in her 30s, is a documentary film producer based out of Mexico City. Márquez, who was married to Mercedes Barcha for over 57 years, also had two sons with her, Rodrigo and

Gonzalo García Barcha in Mexico City in 1976. *The New York Times*

Yet, when Guerra approached immediate members of the family for confirmation, he was met with a wall of silence. It would only be after the death of Barcha in 2020, that the family would confirm that they knew of and kept in touch with Indira — and had not spoken of it in Barcha's lifetime to spare her the heartbreak.

Guerra went about confirming the news with Márquez's trusted biographers Martin and Dasso Saldívar, and it would be the latter who would offer the proof, courtesy Márquez's long-time friend, Guillermo Angulo.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Jats and the BJP in UP

What is the history and politics of — and around — the Jat community of Western Uttar Pradesh? Who have been their leaders, how have they voted, and why is this history important in the coming Assembly elections?

SHYAMLAL YADAV

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

HOME MINISTER Amit Shah's outreach to Jayant Chaudhary — which the RLD leader rebuffed saying he was not a 25-paisa coin that would flip — indicated the importance that the BJP attaches to Jats and their main political platform in Western Uttar Pradesh.

The RLD and its partner, the Samajwadi Party (SP), are trying to win back this part of the state where the BJP has done well in recent elections. When the Centre withdrew the three farm laws in November, it had its eyes more on Western UP than anywhere else.

Who are the Jats?

The 1891 census recorded 1,791 different communities of Jats. K S Singh, editor of the *People of India* series, noted "there are Hindu, Muslim and Sikh Jat", and "these divisions regulate their marriage alliances". Jats are a predominantly farming community mostly concentrated in Haryana, UP, Delhi, and Rajasthan.

Jats want to be included among the OBCs in the central list. In UP, Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, they are already categorised as OBC. Jats of Rajasthan — except those in Dholpur and Bharatpur — are also OBC in the central list.

Jats are a politically powerful community, and can influence the results of nearly 40 Lok Sabha seats and around 160 Assembly seats in UP, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Delhi. In UP, they are concentrated in the western districts, mainly cultivate sugarcane, and are the state's richest farming community.

Who have been their prominent leaders?

In the 1950s and '60s, Devi Lal and Ranbir Singh Hooda were prominent Jat leaders of (undivided) Punjab. In Rajasthan, there was Nathuram Mirdha, and in UP, Chaudhary Charan Singh.

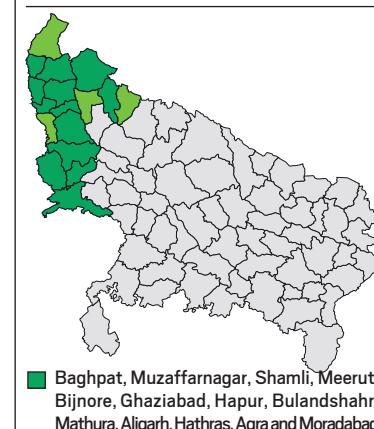
After the creation of Haryana in 1966, leaders such as Bansi Lal emerged. Jats are more than 25% in Haryana, and have long dominated its politics.

Until his demise in 1987, Charan Singh remained among the tallest Jat leaders of the country, and had a following among other castes too. He was Chief Minister of UP twice, Deputy Prime Minister and, for a little less than six months in 1979-80, Prime Minister.

In UP, Charan Singh led the farmer communities away from both the Congress and Bharatiya Jana Sangh, precursor of the BJP, which had a large number of MLAs from these communities after the elections of 1967.

Charan Singh's legacy was inherited by his son Ajit Singh, but the arrival of Mandal and Hindutva fundamentally changed politics in UP — and the Jats under Ajit Singh made several adjustments to remain relevant over the

ZONE OF INFLUENCE



Charan Singh with Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1983. Express Archive

next quarter century.

that did not materialise for several years.

The RLD went back to an alliance with the BJP in 2009, contested nine seats, and won five. But in 2011, Ajit Singh joined the ministry of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In the next two Lok Sabha elections, both Ajit Singh and his son Jayant Chaudhary lost. Ajit Singh passed away after contracting Covid-19 last year.

How did the Jats do in UP in the Mandal-kamandal years?

The BKJP was Ajit Singh's ninth political switch. In the UP elections of 1996, he sought the support of farmer leader Mahendra Singh Tikait, and entered into a seat adjustment with Mulayam Singh's SP. He contested 38 seats but won just eight.

The RLD fought the 2002 elections in alliance with the BJP, and won 14 of the 38 seats it contested. It joined the BJP-BSP government headed by Mayawati, but the RLD's alliance with the BJP broke soon afterward.

When Mulayam took oath in 2003, Ajit Singh's MLAs joined the government. But again, only a few months before the elections of 2007, the RLD pulled out of the government.

Post 2007, the RLD lost relevance. In the BSP wave of 2007, the RLD contested 254 seats and won only 10. In 2012, when Ajit Singh was Union Civil Aviation Minister, the RLD fought with the Congress, and won just nine seats.

How has the BJP done among Jat voters?

It was always understood that the BJP transferred its votes to RLD candidates, but the reverse did not happen.

The 'new' BJP of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah decided not to have an alliance with RLD, but instead field its own Jat candidates. The communal riots in Muzaffarnagar in 2013 led

to a strong polarisation, and boosted the Modi wave in the Lok Sabha elections of 2014.

In the 2017 Assembly elections, the out of the 94 seats in Western UP, the RLD, the party of the Jats, won just one seat.

Among the farmer communities, Yadavs are considered anti-BJP, and an SP votebank. The Kurmis are thought to vote for candidates from their community, cutting across party lines. The other big chunk of OBCs — Maurya-Shakya-Saini-Kushwaha — voted solidly for the BJP in 2014, 2017, and 2019, but the recent exodus of powerful leaders from this group has come as a blow for the party.

The Muzaffarnagar violence finally broke the old alliance of Jats and Muslims forged by Charan Singh. However, Jats had been gradually moving closer to the BJP's Brahmin-Bania-Thakur combination for several years prior to that break. The traditional influence of the Arya Samaj over the community was a factor in this.

After V P Singh implemented the Mandal Commission report to counter his powerful Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal, the Jats were annoyed. Over the years, the distance between the Jats and other farming communities, who were categorised as OBC, increased.

What is the state of play ahead of the elections that begin on February 10?

In 2017, the BJP fielded 15 Jat candidates; 14 won. This time, the party has fielded 17 candidates from the community. The RLD has fielded 12 Jat candidates, and the SP six.

There is anger in the community over the now withdrawn farm laws, and issues like the payment of sugarcane dues. For Akhilesh Jayant, the coming back together of Jat and Muslim voters is crucial; the BJP is trying to polarise the election along Hindu-Muslim lines.

Moderna's HIV vaccine: promising, miles to go

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS

PUNE, JANUARY 28

BIOTECH FIRM Moderna has started trials on an mRNA vaccine against HIV. First doses of the experimental HIV vaccine antigens were administered at George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Washington DC this week. Fifty-six individuals will be randomised in four groups and safety/immunogenicity results will be available in 2023.

The technology

Based on the same technology as Moderna's Covid 19 vaccine, the experimental HIV vaccine uses mRNA, or messenger RNA, which teaches the body's cells how to make

proteins that trigger immune response. It uses a novel approach to elicit broadly neutralising HIV-1 antibodies (bNabs) and eventually target multiple HIV strains. bNabs are produced by certain types of B cells, which are rare: one in 300,000 B cells have this capability.

The immunogens being tested were developed by teams at the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) and Scripps Research, and delivered via Moderna's technology.

"While the proof-of-principle study was encouraging, it used a protein with an adjuvant to induce a response that was as was hoped — capable of neutralising and preventing infection with neutralisation of susceptible HIV strains. It did not use mRNA, but there is no reason to suppose that the mRNA that has been designed will not lead to the production of the expected protein and broadly neutralise

during acute HIV infection) or prevention.

"The closest positive effectiveness was achieved in the THAI (RV144) trial i.e. around 30%. Recently, Johnson & Johnson's vector platform vaccine trial in South Africa (Imbokodo) was stopped due to disappointing results. Hence an mRNA platform to deliver immunogens capable of inducing bNabs is promising technology that needs to be explored in trials," Dr Pujari said.

However, it's early days yet. "This is a start and we do not know how it will go, but we hope that using good science will move us further along," Dr Kang said.

Dr K Madan Gopal, Senior Consultant-Health, NITI Aayog, said: "mRNA technology has a distinct advantage and the platform can be easily adapted to develop a vaccine against HIV variants... let's hope for the best."

A beautiful secret: Garcia Márquez and the daughter he named Indira

PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

In an article published in *El País*, Gustavo Tatis Guerra, the journalist who broke the identity of Gabo's daughter, wrote, "On the day of Gabriel García Márquez's death, on Maundy Thursday, during that April of brilliant light and omens near the ocean in San Antero, someone alluded to an unconfirmed rumour that the author of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) had a daughter, and that it was a closely guarded secret... It was a rumour that resurfaced suspiciously during García Márquez's funeral and memorial at the Palacio de las Bellas Artes in Mexico City, and remained in the air like a wind that opens and closes doors, without bringing credible reason or verifiable information."

Guerra went about confirming the news with Márquez's trusted biographers Martin and Dasso Saldívar, and it would be the latter who would offer the proof, courtesy Márquez's long-time friend, Guillermo Angulo.

Susana Cato in Mexico City in 1976. *The New York Times*

Who is Susana Cato?

10



THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2022

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

MAKING CONNECTIONS

India-Central Asia Summit focused on overland connectivity, security. Both sides need to turn political will into outcomes

ININDIA WAS AMONG the first countries to recognise the Central Asian Republics after the collapse of the Soviet Union three decades ago. Delhi, which had privileged access to Soviet Central Asia thanks to its special relationship with Moscow during the Cold War, hoped for a quick flowering of ties. Despite the much celebrated historical and civilisational relationship between India and Central Asia and the rekindled geopolitical romance, Delhi has struggled to build a productive relationship. India's annual trade with the region has been stuck at around \$2 billion. China's trade with the region in contrast stands at more than \$40 billion. As the US enthusiasm for Central Asia faded within a decade, Russia's deep structural links endured, and a rising China became an important economic partner. India seemed quite marginal to the region. As in other parts of the extended neighbourhood, the gap between India's reach and grasp appeared quite large.

This week's summit — the first ever with the five leaders of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan — was about overcoming the persistent obstacles to a productive economic relationship and finding a new basis for political engagement and security cooperation. In fact, the five leaders were scheduled to join the Republic Day celebrations this week in a powerful demonstration of the region's collective interest in India. But the pandemic forced the shift to a virtual mode. That the leaders of the five Central Asian states, already part of the so-called Shanghai Cooperation Organisation led by Russia and China — India is also a member — are willing to engage India in a separate format suggests that there is considerable interest in deeper ties. Although Delhi's weight may not match that of Moscow or Beijing in the region, India does figure prominently in Central Asia's strategy of diversifying their regional relations.

As it looked to the revitalisation of ties, the summit's focus was on two important themes. In the first, they addressed the principal constraint on developing deeper ties — lack of connectivity between India and land-locked Central Asian Republics. Pakistan's refusal to give overland trade and transit facilities to India and the political instability in Afghanistan have meant the natural routes between India and Central Asia have remained blocked. The two sides have now set up a joint working group that will intensify the effort to use Iran's Chabahar port to promote "free movement of goods and services between India and Central Asia". Complementing the focus on overland connectivity is the emphasis on security. The return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan has shaken the Central Asian governments, all of whom are vulnerable to the forces of terrorism and religious extremism. The shared interest between India and Central Asia in containing the forces of destabilisation emanating out of Afghanistan is encouraging the two sides to institutionalise political coordination and deepen security cooperation. The challenge now is to turn the proclaimed political will into concrete outcomes on connectivity and security.

FLYING HOME

After almost seven decades, Tatas regain control of Air India.

But the sale does little to shore up government's coffers

ALMOST SEVEN DECADES after ceding control of the airline, the Tata group on Thursday regained Air India. Last year, the group had emerged as the winning bidder for the airline, with a bid of Rs 18,000 crore. With this acquisition, the Tatas will gain 100 per cent ownership in Air India, Air India Express, and a 50 per cent stake in the ground handling firm AI-SATS. This sale marks the first major outright privatisation of a public sector entity in recent years. Though there has been criticism of the pace and manner of the government's privatisation programme, the symbolism of this sale is hard to ignore.

The Tatas will now face the arduous task of turning around the airline. This will be challenging, more so at a time when the aviation industry is grappling with the fallout from the pandemic. It will also have to deal with a plethora of legacy issues, ranging from an ageing fleet to human resources. According to the bidding conditions, the Tatas will have to retain all employees for a one-year period. The group must also contend with claims on international assets of Air India by Devas Multimedia and its investors who are trying to enforce its arbitration awards. Reportedly, Air India is seeking an end to the case on grounds that the ownership change prevents any claims of recovery of arbitration awards. Then there is the issue of the group's other competing airlines — Vistara and AirAsia India — to contend with. It is possible that the Tatas will at some point consider integrating their aviation ventures under a single entity.

Though this is a milestone, by itself, it does little to shore up the government's disinvestment proceeds. Of the Rs 18,000 crore winning bid, only Rs 2,700 crore is to be paid to the government, while the group will retain the balance, Rs 15,300 crore, in the form of debt. Data from DIPAM shows that the government's proceeds from disinvestment remain well short of the target — as against a target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore, collections till now had been only Rs 9,330 crore. On its part, the government is hopeful of the LIC IPO culminating by the end of March, though, considering the intricacies of such a transaction, it is not clear if it can be concluded by then. Similarly, the privatisation process of BPCL as well as that of the public sector banks is also expected to spill over into the next year.

TOP OF THE GAME

Charan Singh will be remembered for his role in helping India regain its supremacy on the hockey field

WITH THE DEATH of former hockey captain Charan Singh, who died at 90 on Thursday at his home in Una, India has lost another member of the golden generation. The crafty midfielder belonged to an era when hockey was one of the key sources of national pride and the players were among the first heroes of post-independence India. In the last few years, many of those stars, Balbir Singh Dosanjh, Balbir Singh Junior and Keshav Datt, have passed away. Many of these players were forgotten, remembered in a snippet or two in once-in-four-years compendiums of Olympic trivia. Charan Singh, though, will always be remembered as one of the key men responsible for India regaining its supremacy on the hockey field.

'Padma Shri Sahab', as Charan Singh was fondly called in his hometown, started playing for the national team in the early 1950s, fighting his way into a star-studded midfield comprising the likes of Leslie Claudio, Datt and Joe Antics. His absence in the final of the 1960 Olympics, due to an injury, was seen as one of the reasons why India lost to Pakistan, conceding the champion's tag to their arch-rivals. But four years later, Charan Singh captained the Indian team that defeated Pakistan to win the gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics. They did so with calmness, grace and humility — traits associated with Indian teams of that era.

While a lot needs to be done to preserve the legacy of these legends, it's reassuring that India is clawing its way back to the top of world hockey. Coincidentally, India's resurgence has begun in the same city — Tokyo — where it reclaimed its lost glory under Charan Singh. The bronze at the Tokyo Olympics last year has breathed fresh life into the dying sport. But players and administrators recognise that this is just the beginning. For, the revival won't be complete until the team reaches the top of the Olympic podium, as the yester-year stars did, so effortlessly.



S MAHENDRA DEV

THE FIRST ADVANCE estimates released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed that GDP in constant prices in FY 22 was 1.26 per cent higher than the pre-Covid year of FY20. In other words, India had a growth rate of 0.63 per cent per annum in the post-Covid period. Although the impact of Omicron is less on the economy, the loss of GDP in the last two years is high. Also note that the pre-Covid year FY20 had a low base with 4 per cent growth of GDP. Therefore, the need to focus on higher growth in the forthcoming budget and in the medium term, that is, beyond India@75, is obvious.

There are several challenges in creating quantity and quality of jobs in the economy: (a) Unemployment rate is high in both rural and urban areas; (b) decline in work participation rates, particularly for women; (c) recovery in employment is still below the levels of the pre-Covid period. According to CMIE, the employment in December 2021 was 2.9 million less compared to that of 2019-20; (d) 85 per cent of the workforce is still in informal sector; (e) less than 5 per cent of India's workforce has formal skill training; (f) manufacturing and services need structural change; (g) focus on MSME sector is needed for higher employment.

There is a need to have policies in the forthcoming budget and in the medium term for achieving higher economic growth and jobs. Some of these policies are discussed below.

First, the last budget has given a push to capital expenditure and infrastructure. This has to be continued in the next budget and in the medium term. The government outlined an infrastructure project pipeline worth more than Rs 102 lakh crore and asset monetisation pipeline of Rs 6 lakh crore to be implemented in the medium term. Continuing focus on infrastructure and capex by the government is important as it is a key driver for the "future of India". Of course, all these plans on infrastructure depend on effective implementation and creating appropriate models of infrastructure and also on generating the required finance.

Second, it is well known that rise in exports is one of the main engines of growth and also important for employment creation. Export growth in India has increased and is expected

Meet objectives of growth, jobs by expanding fiscal space, fiscal deficit can be stabilised in medium term

to reach \$400 billion by the end of FY22. One worrying aspect of India's export performance is the failure in expanding the share of labour intensive products in the export basket. In the post-Covid situation, there are several opportunities for India to occupy the space vacated by China to boost exports. However, one problem in recent years is that India's trade policy has become more protectionist by increasing import tariffs. India should also join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) for integrating our industries with the value chains in Asia.

Third, there is hardly any disagreement that India needs to aim at the larger growth of the manufacturing sector for higher economic growth and creating more productive jobs. However, the share of manufacturing in GDP and employment has hardly increased over time.

Similarly, there are a lot of opportunities for India in the service sector. The top global service brands like Google, Airbnb, Amazon, LinkedIn, McKinsey, Master Card, Visa, FedEx covering hospitality and consulting firms or food and beverages like Starbucks are from the US. Brand and customer centricity are important here. India can also think of more business in the service sector. Growing startups including unicorns in manufacturing and services is part of this effort.

Fourth, banking reforms are important as bank credit growth is a key indicator of economic growth. In the immediate term, interest rates may rise in India and at the global level due to rise in inflation. This may increase the cost of capital. Credit to GDP ratio in India is only around 55 per cent compared to 100 per cent and 150 per cent in many other countries. Credit should flow to all categories of economic agents like firms, households etc. It is true that bank credit growth increased to 9 per cent in December 2021. But, NPA is still a problem for Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) and others. The macro stress tests for credit risk mentioned in the Financial Stability Report released by the RBI "indicate that the gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio of

SCBs may increase from 6.9 per cent in September 2021 to 8.1 per cent by September 2022 under the baseline scenario and to 9.5 per cent under a severe stress scenario. SCBs would, however, have sufficient capital, both at the aggregate and individual levels, even under stress conditions". The bad bank, a key initiative of the last budget, is yet to take shape. The role of fintech companies in the financial sector has increased significantly. They may not be able to replace banks although they are competing on payments. The banks also have to focus now on ESG (environment, social and governance) while giving credit. Big technology and digital push is also needed for banks.

Lastly, the K-shaped recovery of the economy is still continuing. A large part of the corporate sector has been able to manage the pandemic and the stock market is doing well. On the other hand, the informal workers, including daily wage labourers, migrants, MSMEs, the contact intensive sectors etc, have suffered a lot with the loss of incomes and employment. The policies have to focus on giving a push to the MSME sector, increasing investment in agriculture and rural infrastructure, a social sector push including bridging divides in health and education, social protection measures like foodgrain distribution, cash transfers, MGNREGA in rural areas, urban employment guarantee schemes etc. This will also create demand for the economy.

On economic growth and jobs, we have to double our efforts to cover the losses and reach a normal steady growth. The forthcoming budget and medium-term policies should focus on them. The goal of achieving a \$5 trillion dollar economy by 2024-25 may get delayed by one or two years. The monetary policy is already very accommodative and this may not continue as there are headwinds like rising inflation. In the near term, fiscal policy has to play an important role in achieving the objectives of growth and jobs by expanding fiscal space while the fiscal deficit can be stabilised in the medium term. Increase in private investment may take some more time.

The writer is director and vice chancellor, IGIDR, Mumbai



SANJAY KAUL AND UMA MAHADEVAN-DASGUPTA

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION Policy, 2020 has rightly highlighted the importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE), vital for the young child's early cognitive, social, and emotional development. However, the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) finds only 13.6 per cent of children enrolled in pre-primary schools. Therefore, the nearly 1.4 million anganwadis of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) across India must provide ECCE for the millions of young children in low-income households.

Admittedly, with its overriding focus on health and nutrition, ECCE has hitherto been the weakest link of the anganwadi system. Multiple administrative duties have left anganwadi workers with little time for ECCE.

The existing system at best serves the age group of 3-6 years, ignoring infants and toddlers. Nevertheless, a child's early learning begins at birth, initially through stimulation, play, interactions, non-verbal and verbal communication, and gradually through observation and cues from the immediate environment and increasingly structured activities. Unfortunately, due to a lack of parental awareness compounded by the daily stresses of poverty, disadvantaged households are unable to provide an early learning environment.

Many low-income families have begun to send their children to low-cost pre-schools. However, these mostly have a developmentally inappropriate teaching approach.

Some educationists have suggested that owing to the high workload of anganwadi workers, ECCE in anganwadis would remain a

THE YOUNGEST LEARNERS

Early childhood care and education in anganwadis is necessary and feasible

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non-starter — and, therefore, all government primary schools should open pre-primary sections, with anganwadis limiting themselves to the 0-3 age group. This proposal has multiple logistical challenges and is fiscally unsustainable. It would require a massive outlay to build over a million classrooms with a million nursery teachers and helpers — even a conservative estimate would put the additional annual outlay at over Rs 30,000 crore. Moreover, with child stunting levels at 35 per cent in India, would children enrolled in preschools not require supplementary nutrition and health monitoring? If so, would the nursery teacher not also get overburdened? More critically, experience suggests that existing government pre-schools are mostly a downward extension of primary school, and do not impart age-appropriate ECCE.

A meaningful ECCE programme in anganwadis is not only a more intelligent and cost-effective strategy but is also feasible to implement through seven concerted actions.

First, to design and put in place a meaningful activity-based ECCE framework that recognises the ground realities with autonomy to reflect the local context and setting.

Second, routine tasks of anganwadi workers can be reduced and non-ICDS work, such as surveys, removed altogether. Many anganwadi helpers have studied upto matriculation. With training and an additional incentive, helpers can be redesigned as childcare workers and handle routine work.

Third, anganwadi hours can be extended by at least three hours by providing staff with an in-

crease in their present remuneration, with the additional time devoted to ECCE. Karnataka has already taken the lead; its anganwadis work from 9.30 am to 4 pm. This will have the added benefit of serving as partial daycare, enabling poor mothers to earn a livelihood.

Fourth, ICDS needs a change in policy mindset, both at central and state levels, by prioritising and monitoring ECCE. This will additionally require all ICDS functionaries to be fully trained in ECCE, including assessment through group activities and child observation.

Fifth, anganwadi workers must be re-oriented to closely engage with parents, as they play a crucial role in the cognitive development of young children. Responsive parenting requires both parents to play an active role in ECCE activities at home; therefore, anganwadi workers should be asked to consciously engage with fathers too. Appropriate messaging and low-cost affordable teaching materials can be designed and made accessible to parents.

Sixth, ICDS must supply age-appropriate activity-based play material in adequate quantities regularly, and anganwadi workers encouraged to utilise them in a liberal manner.

Finally, states should invest in research and training to support early childhood education, and ensure that the ECCE programme is not a downward extension of school education.

Kaul is an ex-IAS officer and former secretary, school education, Karnataka. Mahadevan-Dasgupta is an IAS officer and former principal secretary, women and child development, Karnataka



JANUARY 29, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

TALKS WITH PAK

THE FOREIGN MINISTERS of India and Pakistan will meet on January 29 to begin a joint pursuit of a no-war pact, but there are enough indications that the search for such a pact will be long and fairly slow-paced. What is significant is that the two foreign ministers will sit together. The talks will be exploratory in nature. The two ministers may have more rounds of discussions, either in Islamabad or New Delhi, before coming to the brass tacks. This is mainly because of persisting suspicions and varying perceptions of the context in which the talks are taking place. The Indian government which was initially sceptical about Pakistan's sug-

gestion of a no-war pact said that it will approach the "talks with an open mind, serious approach and a positive desire to ensure a satisfactory outcome".

CPM ON CHINA

SHARP CRITICISM BY several state units and individual delegates forced the central leadership of the CPI(M) to modify the strong pro-Soviet and anti-China line taken in its draft resolution at the 11th Party Congress at Vijayawada. The critics succeeded in forcing the steering committee to name both the Soviet Union and China in the list of friendly countries.

RANGA'S PLEA REJECTED THE SUPREME COURT dismissed the petition of Ranga with severe strictures on the advocate representing him for casting "unfounded insinuation against judges". "The advocate should have known that the case of Billa and Ranga has been given the most careful and sympathetic consideration," they said.

SHETTY NO MORE

SHETTY, STUNTMAN OF Indian films, has died of a heart attack. *Pokkiri Raja*, a Tamil film in which he acted with superstar Rajinikanth, was his last film.

New Delhi

In Northeast, work to be done

Conversations must go beyond the insider-outsider binary.
Laws such as AFSPA must be reviewed



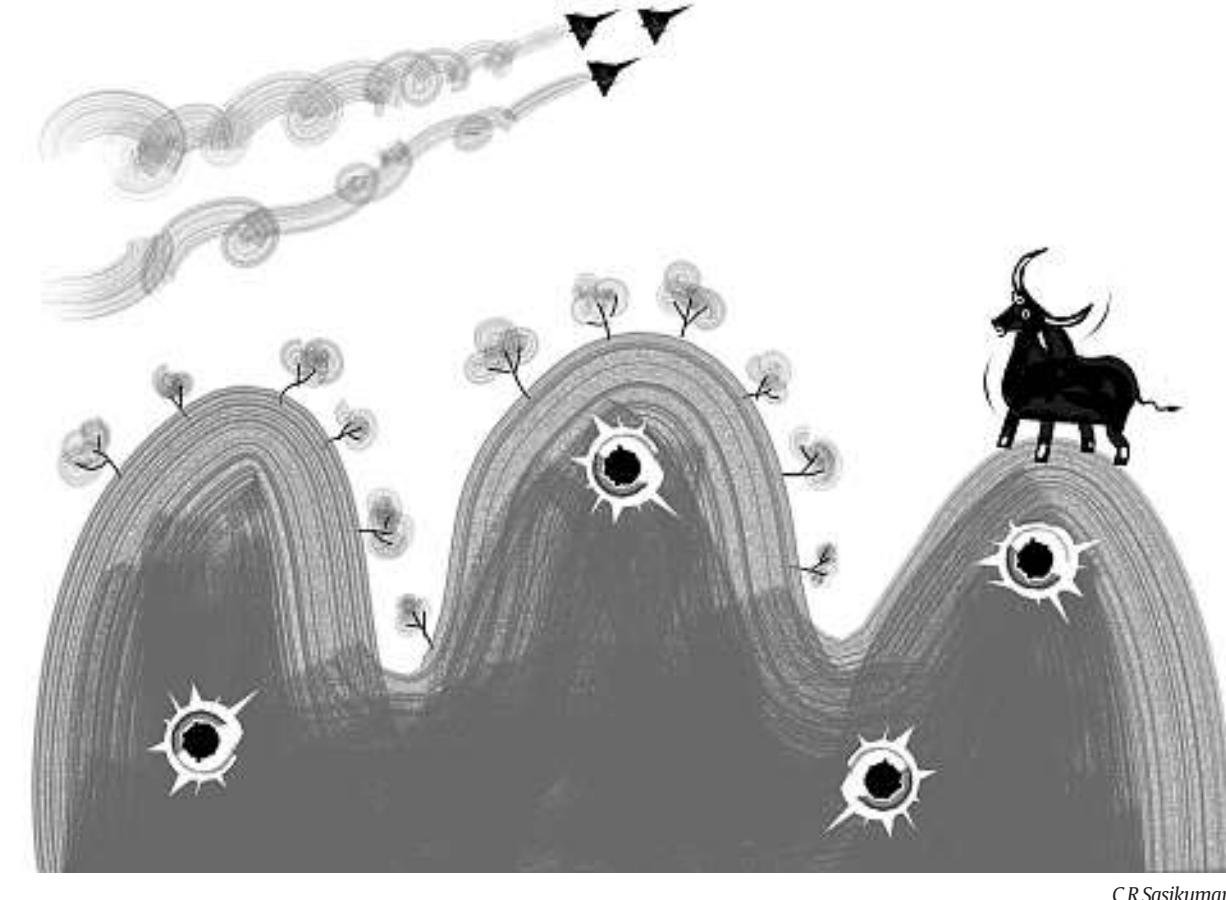
KHAM KHAN SUAN
HAUSING

LIKE EVERY YEAR, the imagery of a powerful and deeply diverse nation was meticulously demonstrated this Republic Day through an impressive military parade, the display of India's air power and the diverse themes exhibited by the states, Union Territories and government departments in their colourful tableaus. Away from New Delhi, the state/UT capitals saw a similar pageantry interspersed by speeches by governors, chief ministers and other dignitaries. Although the themes and content of the pageantry and speeches have changed over time, what remains constant about Republic Day is the display of the state's power and the demonstration of patriotism.

Such exercises are, no doubt, an integral part of state and nation-building. We may, however, ask: Is the extraordinary display of the might and diversity of the country on a few occasions such as Republic Day enough? I contend that while such displays are necessary, they need to be accompanied by an enduring commitment to our constitutional ideals and values in ways that embed the state and the nation in the popular psyche. From the perspective of the country's Northeast, conversations in two areas are in order.

The first is the commitment to the ideal of "equal" and "group-differentiated" citizenship rights. The founding fathers of the country recognised early on that a realistic way to politically integrate the different tribal groups in the Northeast was to reconcile our constitutional commitments to equal citizenship rights with the imperative of accommodating group-differentiated rights. This was a realistic solution to two exigencies: The popular mobilisation for "self-rule" in parts of the Northeast – the 1951 Naga plebiscite, for instance, was reported to have been supported by "99.9 per cent of the Naga population" – and the region being governed by disparate customary laws. Affirmation of the differential rights of tribal groups on land through customary laws and religious practices undergirds the institutional protection enshrined in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution – they apply to tribal areas of several parts of the Northeast today.

However, this institutional arrangement often becomes problematic as it's founded on an unequal two-tiered rights regime that distinguishes tribal "citizens" from non-tribal "denizens" by permanently excluding the latter from de jure ownership and acquisition of land/property in tribal areas. The 73rd year of our Republic occasions serious thinking on envisioning institutions that accommodate the distinctive needs of non-tribal "outsiders". It is equally imperative to realise that this problem is no longer restricted to the non-tribals. Thanks to extensive land-grabbing by the dominant tribal elites, often in connivance with the non-tribal "outsiders" who have become the de facto landowners, the vast majority of tribals face large-scale landlessness with serious economic consequences. Unless the inherent flaws in the asymmetric institutions are immediately addressed, they can im-



C R Sasikumar

plode and unleash bloody fratricidal conflicts.

It is also imperative to underline that the sons-of-the-soil movements in Assam and Tripura since the 1970s – embers of which are present in the persistent drive to privilege the *khilorigas* (autochthonous) over "illegal" immigrants in Assam – are driven by a pervasive sense of insecurity about identity and landownership. The situation is made more precarious by the inability of the state to control "illegal" immigration. Such movements become steeped in a majoritarian way of thinking that targets the Bengali Muslims as "illegal" outsiders irrespective of the fact that many of them are indigenous to Assam. The sectarian emotions and sense of insecurity unleashed by the National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 to permanently disenfranchise Muslim "immigrants" is a reminder of this slippery slope where our commitment to fraternity and equal citizenship rights has been severely tested.

The second set of conversations to embed the state into the popular psyche in ways that help consolidate nation-building pertain to renewing our commitment to democracy and constitutionalism. Such a commitment needs to be anchored in daily plebiscitary attempts, not only to promote democratic justice but also to check abuse of state power – a situation exacerbated by the pandemic when the state has invested itself with extraordinary powers. This invariably has to be a mutually reinforcing commitment from the top and bottom.

From the top, the Indian state needs to commit itself to promoting substantive democracy by protecting the rule of law and enlarging democratic settings to leverage power-sharing within and across groups/communities. Institutions should be tailored to give various groups, including women, effective voice and

participatory rights not only in democratic deliberations but also in policymaking and implementation. From the bottom, the onus is on groups like the Nagas and Bodos that enjoy autonomous "self-rule" to be accommodative of, and willing to share power with women, other tribal and non-tribal groups to foster democratic justice.

onus is on groups like the Nagas and Bodos that enjoy autonomous "self-rule" to be accommodative of, and willing to share power with women, other tribal and non-tribal groups to foster democratic justice.

It is also imperative for the state to acknowledge its abuse of power and renew its commitment to constitutionalism. To begin with, labelling human rights activists as anti-nationals and jailing them under draconian laws like UAPA on flimsy grounds such as criticising the government, or other such pretexts should stop. It also needs to accept the fallacy and inefficacy of relying on its "coercive monopoly of power" to crush movements in the region through the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) and dismissing these movements as "law and order" problems. The persistence of the Naga armed movement and the proliferation of other such movements in the Northeast only illustrate the inefficacy of such means. Instead of winning the hearts and minds of the Naga rebels and deepening nation-building, AFSPA has become what the B P Jeevan Reddy Committee (2005) rightly called a major instrument of "oppression" and "alienation" in Northeast India. AFSPA has militarised Indian democracy and is seen as the cause for several human rights violations. The recently botched encounter in Oting in Nagaland's Mon district undertaken by the 21 Para Special Forces, that killed 14 innocent people of the Konyak community, is a case in point. There has been a widespread campaign for the withdrawal of the AFSPA after this incident.

The depiction of state grandeur on Republic Day is mesmerising. It can be made more meaningful by renewing our commitment to the cardinal ideals and values enshrined in the Constitution.

The writer is professor and head of the department of political science, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The US is now attributing both its internal and external problems to China. This is a serious political depravity and a trick that can fool nobody."

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

The inequality epidemic

Pandemic has bared a system that privileges some, treats others as expendable. New, inclusive social contract is needed



HARSH MANDER

THE PANDEMIC HAS dramatically laid bare the catastrophic public costs of inequality. Thousands of lives could have been saved if much greater investments had been made in public health provisioning. The explosion of mass hunger and joblessness and the dislocation of millions of working poor people could have been averted had labour protection, social security, and wage levels of workers been secured.

"Inequality Kills" is the apt title of a devastating report by Oxfam India released at the time of the World Economic Forum in Davos. For India's super-rich, the pandemic became a time to swell their wealth dizzyingly. The worst year of the pandemic for India was 2021. In this year, the net wealth of just one Indian billionaire, Gautam Adani, multiplied eight times, from \$8.9 billion in 2020 to \$50.5 billion in 2021. The net worth of Mukesh Ambani doubled to \$85.5 billion in 2021, rocketing him from India's to Asia's richest man. In fact, Ambani added Rs 90 crore to his wealth every hour right from March 2020, the start of the pandemic. In 2021, the number of dollar billionaires in India expanded by 39 per cent. India is home today to the largest number of dollar billionaires, after the US and China, with more billionaires than France, Sweden and Switzerland combined. In 2020, 98 families held more wealth than 555 million Indians. India's top 10 per cent owned 45 per cent of the country's wealth. Three-fifths of India's top 100 added \$1 billion or more to their wealth in 2021 over the previous year.

But just as the humanitarian crisis today could have been prevented, the alternative is eminently feasible if people and government commit themselves to the goals of the Constitution. India spends only 3.54 per cent of its budgetary resources on healthcare, much less, as noted by Oxfam, than other middle-income countries like Brazil (9.51), South Africa (8.25) and China (5.35). Income inequalities reduce life chances in India even more for those disadvantaged by caste, gender and religious identities. A Dalit woman, for instance, has 15 years lower life expectancy than an upper-caste woman. Confronted by a broken and starved public health system, even the poor have to rely on private health providers, and 60 per cent of health spending in India is out-of-pocket, among the highest in the world, and a major cause of poverty. In the pandemic, the exclusions were even more spectacular. Oxfam found middle-class families spending Rs 4 lakh a day in private hospitals during the second wave – something a casual worker earns in 1,000 days.

The starting point of our vision of a new India is for the state to assume responsibility to provision quality healthcare, education, food, pension, clean water and housing, free or in affordable ways for all citizens. Economist Prabhat Patnaik, in his contribution to the India Exclusion Report brought out by the Centre for Equity Studies, says that to resource all of this would demand a public resolve to expand taxation of the super-rich. Sufficient to fund all of this, he calculates, is two taxes levied only on the top 1 per cent of the population – a wealth tax of 2 per cent and an inheritance tax of 33 per cent. Our government is doing the opposite; it withdrew the wealth tax in 2015 and reduced the already low levels of corporate tax. The result is regressive taxation burdening the poor and abysmally low public spending.

Those who care for a kinder world must not miss this moment when the pandemic has revealed to us the horror of our moral collapse; of economic and social arrangements that privilege some lives, but treat the rest as expendable. The struggle of our times must be for a new social contract based on solidarity and inclusion.

The writer is a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow and Chairperson of the Centre for Equity Studies

Imagining the republic

Where many different types of people and species live together in harmony



SAMEENA DALWAI

DO WE LIVE in the republic of India? I live in three different spaces, and I can tell you they are distinct because of the status that dogs and cows enjoy in each of them.

The first is the elite India that I watch operate on a university campus. It is like the European Union in many ways. A beautiful oasis amidst rough hinterlands, with paved roads, shaded pathways, lush-green lawns and fruit-bearing trees. Just like in Europe, entry is strictly guarded and boundaries demarcated. It is fed by an army of workers from the surrounding areas – guards, cleaners, cooks, carpenters, and plumbers.

Here, dogs have an enviable status. Our students love dogs; they hug, kiss and cuddle them. They fight with guards who try to shoo them away and threaten the administration with media exposure if dogs are treated with cruelty. They buy milk packets, tear them with bare hands and empty them for the dogs to lap up. Merely 200 metres away, infants and toddlers of migrant workers live in huts with no doors and do without milk.

The dogs are overfed and oversized. They have lost their natural alacrity but show their canine streak by barking at all hours. They also understand class. They wave their tails at people wearing shorts and snarl at those in uniforms or with dupattas on their heads.

Pets are a profitable industry in the affluent world, with special foods, clothes, toys

and beauty parlours to cater to them. India is the fastest growing pet care market in the world and is expected to grow at 14 per cent annually to become a \$490 million market by 2022. Some of these pets threaten wildlife; cats kill 2.4 million birds every year and dogs have contributed to the extinction of nearly a dozen wild bird and animal species.

The love I see on campus, perhaps, is a kind of possession, just as the Victorian wife, horses, dogs were all subjugated and loved, turned into trophies.

The land surrounding our pristine campus is plagued by *gaurakshaks*, the protectors of cows. This is the space that the RSS extols as Bharat, though the ancient name of the country is not theirs to claim. Here, people worship the cow as a mother and insist that calves of gods live inside it. The protection of cows has little to do with their welfare. When we pass through the towns of north India, the dramatic rise in the number of stray cows, growing thinner over summer months and crowding the roads unattended, is evident.

Gaurakshaks threaten Muslims and Dalits, who they suspect of killing and eating cows. Over 60 incidents of attacks and murders have been reported since 2010 as mobs of *gaurakshaks* have descended upon suspects with terrifying results. The vigilantes are aided by state governments, which have already passed laws banning cow slaughter and

enlisted police units to enforce it.

This "Bharat" is trying to live on its past historical glory, on land ownership, on the slavery of Dalits, on the unpaid "on demand" labour, both domestic and sexual, of women. Here, the identity of the self comes from "not being them", the proof of love comes from hating others. So, love for the cow equals hate for Muslims. Love for the country equals hate for Pakistan, China. Love for women equals hate for anyone who might take them away and panic about love jihad.

But there is a third kind of space that exists in the country – let's call it Hindustan, which survives on agriculture and allied sectors like animal husbandry. Here, cows are important as they give milk and milk products, leading to extra income and stability in lean times. People love their animals like family members and are ready to make many sacrifices for them. In the fodder camps run by Mann Deshi Mahila Bank in rural Maharashtra, thousands of farmers stay out in the open for a few days so that their cattle can get water and fodder.

Children and animals are introduced to strangers by their names.

Kids play with dogs here too. They guard the farms at night and keep the farmers company. Shepherd communities travel with their goats and sheep in search of grasslands. Their dogs help them keep the herd intact. Children run along with the dogs to

bring back wandering goats. Life is hard and sparse – the dogs get food that people can spare and kids are as agile as their dogs.

Even under normal circumstances, hunger is common in poor communities. India ranks very low in the Global Hunger Index. Only 15 countries – sub-Saharan African nations such as Congo, Somalia or war-torn Afghanistan and Yemen – are below us. In the past decade, hunger has intensified as income gaps have widened. According to the World Inequality Report 2022, the top 10 per cent of Indians hold 57 per cent of national income, while the bottom 50 per cent's share is 13 per cent.

In this marginalised population, love means giving oneself. Love for the land is experienced by applying oneself to it – by giving labour, care, sacrifice. Love for the country too is shown by the same. There are norms of equity which resonate with socialist idealism – from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. The members of this Hindustan sat at the Delhi border for a year and forced the mighty government to give in.

What is the idea of a republic but for many different types of people, species to exist together in harmony? Maybe we have a republic after all – perhaps overshadowed by the other two, but it exists.

Dalwai is a writer and a law professor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JOB CRISIS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The missing jobs' (IE, January 28). Major employers in the industry have been complaining that most of the youth in the employable age are not skilled enough to be employed. The question is how an entire generation of youth stepping in the job market is not employable when they are educationally qualified and eligible.

The answer lies in the nature of private educational institutions, especially those pertaining to engineering and management ones, that have mushroomed of late. Graduating from such institutions after paying hefty fees, a large section of the youth suddenly realises that the country's economic system doesn't need them.

Pritam Singh, Jaipur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The missing jobs' (IE, January 28). Reports of unruly protesters resorting to violence against the recently published results of a public recruitment examination signal the widespread desperation among the youths for a job in the public sector. The hooliganism is unacceptable and the right to protest should be practised responsibly. At the same time, the performance of the Railways Recruitment Control Board should be a subject of wider debate, the recent uproar is over the result of a public examination whose notification was released in 2019, the first stage of the examination was conducted in 2020, and the result was published in

2022. The examination was a computerised test, whose result shouldn't take three long years, and the next stage of the process is still not over.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Barasat

KERALA'S ERROR

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Watching the watchdog' (IE, January 28). It is surprising that Kerala, which is often held up as a model state with respect to freedom of expression and human development, should stoop to diluting the Lokayukta's powers. It will be a blemish on the state's record if it allows earlier adverse orders by the Lokayukta to cloud its judgment. The Lokayukta must be allowed to perform its duties unhindered. This should be the message for other states as well.

Hemanth Contractor, Pune

AT THE FRONTLINES

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Stepping up together' (IE, January 28). It's heart warming to read a doctor's account of the pandemic. In the early stages of the outbreak, there were reports of people ostracising physicians and healthcare workers. There have been, no doubt, some errors by the medical community in the past two years. However, these frontline workers have played a big role in boosting our capacity to live with this capricious virus.

Bisakha Maity, Patna

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2022

THE WORLD



MEANWHILE

AUSTRALIA TO PROTECT GREAT BARRIER REEF

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison promised a further A\$1 billion (\$703 million) to protect the Great Barrier Reef to support thousands of tourism jobs, just months out from a federal election. The reef, one of Australia's best-known natural attractions but under threat from global warming, has been a lightning rod for criticism of the ruling conservative coalition's support for fossil fuels.

Minor shoots
mother, siblings
in Pak 'under
PUBG influence'

Lahore: A 14-year-old boy shot his entire family, including mother and two minor sisters, allegedly "under the influence" of online game PUBG, police here in the capital of Pakistan's Punjab province said on Friday.

Nahid Mubarak, a 45-year-old health worker, was found dead along with her 22-year-old son Taimur and two daughters aged 17 and 11 in Lahore's Kahna area last week.

Her teenage son who remained unharmed and is the lone survivor turned out to be the murderer, police said.

"The PUBG addict boy confessed to have killed her mother and siblings under the influence of the game. He has developed some psychological issues because of spending long hours of the day playing the online game," police said, adding that "On the day of the incident, Nahid scolded the boy over the matter. Later, the boy took out his pistol from a cupboard and shot her and his three siblings dead in their sleep."

Next morning, the boy raised an alarm and the neighbours called the police. The boy that time told police that he was on the upper storey of the house and did not know how his family was killed, police added. PTI

The claims have caused public anger, led some Conservative lawmakers to call for Johnson's resignation and triggered intense infighting inside the governing party. Gray is looking into almost 20 incidents. This week police opened an inquiry into an undisclosed smaller number of them found to meet the force's criteria for investigating the "most serious and flagrant" breaches of coronavirus rules. AP

Lanka to amend controversial anti-terror law

Colombo: Sri Lanka will amend a controversial anti-terror law that gives police sweeping powers to arrest suspects without trial to fully align it with international standards, amid mounting pressure from the EU and the UN Human Rights Council over concerns it violates human rights.

The government issued a gazette notification on Thursday

saying the Prevention of Terrorism Act will be amended. Enacted in 1979, the PTA allows authorities to make warrantless arrests and searches if a person is suspected of involvement in a "terrorist activity."

The move comes ahead of the March session of the UNHRC in Geneva where Sri Lanka's rights and progress accountabil-

JILL LAWLESS
LONDON, JANUARY 28

DOUBT ABOUT the timing and content of a key report into lockdown-breaching parties within the British government deepened Friday when police said they wanted parts of it to remain unpublished until they finish a criminal investigation.

The Metropolitan Police force said it had asked for civil servant Sue Gray's report to make only "minimal reference" to the events being investigated by detectives, "to avoid any prejudice to our investigation."

The request could further delay the publication of the report, which had been expected this week and whose findings could deliver a major blow to Prime Minister Boris Johnson's fragile grip on power.

The senior civil servant is probing allegations that the Prime Minister and his staff flouted restrictions they imposed on the country in 2020 and 2021 to curb the spread of the coronavirus with "bring your own booze" office parties, birthday celebrations and "wine time Fridays."

The claims have caused pub-

lic anger, led some Conservative lawmakers to call for Johnson's resignation and triggered intense infighting inside the governing party. Gray is looking into almost 20 incidents. This week police opened an inquiry into an undisclosed smaller number of them found to meet the force's criteria for investigating the "most serious and flagrant" breaches of coronavirus rules. AP

SEEKING TO COOL UKRAINE CRISIS

Macron speaks to Putin as Russia hints at possible diplomatic opening

NYT & REUTERS
PARIS, JANUARY 28

IN THE hopes that direct communication could help cool the escalating tensions surrounding Ukraine, President Emmanuel Macron of France held a phone call with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on Friday morning, as Russia's foreign minister suggested that there may be room to negotiate with the US.

The foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, said the United States' response to its security demands contained "a kernel of rationality" for a possible compromise on issues like missile deployments and military exercises.

However, Russia has put a much broader set of issues on the table – essentially calling for a reshaping of the post-Cold War security arrangements in Europe and a retreat of NATO forces from Eastern Europe. That is a nonstarter for the United States and its Western allies.

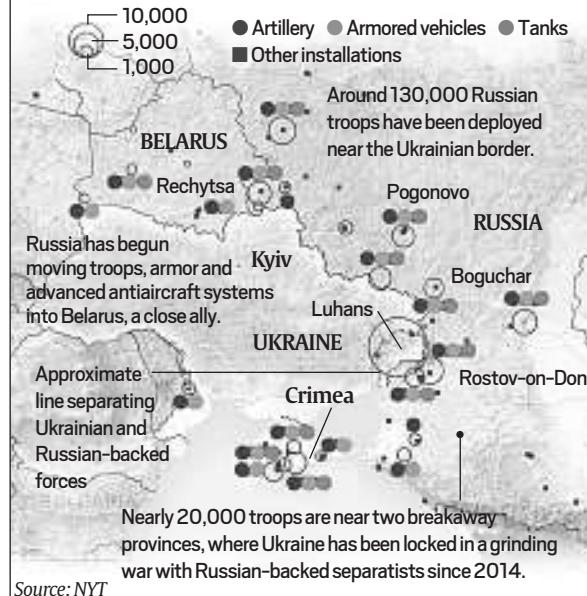
Lavrov's comments on Friday, while guarded, offered the prospect of room for negotiation on secondary matters related to broader security concerns in Europe. So, the situation remained one of both contradiction and confrontation.

Military forces continued to surround Ukraine en masse. The Pentagon said that in the past 24 hours, more Russian forces were being moved into the region. Meanwhile, the United States and its European allies continued to send arms to Ukraine as NATO stepped up its defensive positions in Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile, in a phone call on Thursday with President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, Biden "reaffirmed the readiness of the United States along with



Ukrainian soldiers trained on Thursday in the Volnovakha district in eastern Ukraine. NYT

ARMS AND TROOPS AROUND UKRAINE

Source: NYT

its allies and partners to respond decisively" if Russia launched a military incursion, according to a White House statement. Biden is considering dispatching several thousand US troops, along with warships and aircraft, to the region, although officials say he has so far ruled out deploying more forces directly to Ukraine.

At the center of the maelstrom, in Ukraine, the government urged the public to remain calm, played down the immediacy of the threat and expressed concern about the heightened messaging from both the West and Russia.

The White House still believes there is "a distinct possibility" that Russia could launch an invasion in February, said Emily Horne, spokeswoman for the National Security Council, although American officials do not believe Putin has decided whether to attack.

Neither Paris nor Berlin see the threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine with the same urgency as Washington or the countries closer to Ukraine.

Biden and Putin have not spoken one-on-one since early December.

The Biden administration called a meeting of the UNSC on Monday, which could make for a face-to-face debate between the US and Russia.

Russia on Friday that it could call a vote to prevent the UN SC from meeting publicly on Monday.

"I can't recall another occasion when a Security Council member proposed to discuss its own baseless allegations and assumptions as a threat to international order from someone else. Hopefully fellow UNSC members will not support this clear PR stunt shameful for the reputation of UNSC," Polyanskiy said.

Russia's Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy tweeted on Friday.

Putin, Xi to discuss European security: Russia

REUTERS
MOSCOW, JANUARY 28

RUSSIAN AND CHINESE presidents Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping will spend a "lot of time" discussing security in Europe and the set of demands Moscow has made of the West when they meet for talks next week, the Kremlin said on Friday.

Putin will travel to China to attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics on February 4 against the backdrop of a tense confrontation with the West over Ukraine.

The talks will be closely watched in Washington and elsewhere for clues to the direction of the Russia-China relationship, which has grown closer as both countries' ties with the West have deteriorated.

"I think this time of course a lot of time will be spent on an exchange of views on international issues, including strategic stability in Europe, security guarantees for Russia, security in Europe and Russia's dialogue with the US and NATO, and regional problems," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said.

Putin is set to fill a void left by foreign dignitaries after some Western countries announced they would not send state officials to the Games because of China's human rights record. Putin has said he opposes diplomatic boycotts. Russia has cultivated closer ties with China since 2014 when its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine soured relations with the West.

World tops 10 bn vaccine doses

THE NEW YORK TIMES
JANUARY 28



In the wealthiest countries, 77 per cent of people have received at least one dose. NYT

Experts urge UK to back patent waiver for vaccine parity

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, JANUARY 28

SEVERAL INDIAN-origin scientists are among hundreds of worldwide experts to urge the UK to back a temporary waiver of intellectual property rules for Covid-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to achieve greater vaccine parity worldwide.

India and South Africa had introduced a proposal at the WTO for such a patent waiver for fairer vaccine access for the developing world, but the issue remains deadlocked at the multilateral arena.

Epidemiologists Professor K. Srinath Reddy of the Public Health Foundation of India and Dr Deepa Gurdasani of London's Queen Mary University, Bioengineer Manu Prakash, Associate Professor at Stanford University, Professor Amitava Banerjee of University College London, and Professor Harish Nair of the University of Edinburgh are among 320 scientists calling on technology sharing for global vaccination coverage to boost the fight against variants of concern. PTI

WHO examining abuse allegations

TOKYO: The World Health Organization said it is looking into allegations a regional director in Asia bullied staff, used racist language and leaked sensitive vaccine data to Japan, accusations the official denies.

WHO said in a statement to Reuters on Thursday

"it is aware of the allegations and is taking all appropriate steps to follow up on the matter," following a report on the complaints by the AP Takeshi Kasai, the Manila-based director of the Western Pacific region, acknowledged being "hard on staff" but rejected charges of racism.

WHO has conducted space product and technology cooperation with countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Argentina, Pakistan, and Nigeria, the white paper said.

Beijing will advance the construction and application of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) remote-sensing satellite constellation, it said.

China has signed cooperation agreements for the BRICS Remote-Sensing Satellite Constellation, cooperated with the European Space Agency on earth observation satellite data exchange, and built the China-ASEAN Satellite Information Offshore Service Platform and the Remote-Sensing Satellite Data-Sharing Service Platform, it said.

Releasing the white paper, China's National Space Administration deputy head Wu Yanhua said the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS), jointly proposed by China and Russia, is expected to become operational by 2035, the state-run Global Times reported.

TEMPORARY DIVERSION / RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS

In order to upgrade the infrastructure & enhance safety standards, South Western Railway will undertake the Pre-Non-Interlocking for activity 6 days from 29.01.2022 to 03.02.2022 & Non-Interlocking Works for 4 days from 04.02.2022 to 07.02.2022 for commissioning of Phase-I Penukonda Yard. To execute this work South Western Railway will take traffic blocks. During this period the following trains will temporarily be affected on the date shown as under:

DIVERSION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Train Name	Diverted Route	Dates from originating station
22684 Lucknow - Yesvantpur Express	Via Dhone Jn. - Renigunta - Jolarpettai - Krishnarajapuram - Yesvantpur Jn.	03.02.2022
12628 New Delhi - KSR Bengaluru Karnataka Express	Via Guntakal Jn. - Renigunta - Jolarpettai - Bengaluru Cantt.	Upto 31.01.2022 & 04.02.2022

RESCHEDULING OF TRAIN

12628 New Delhi - KSR Bengaluru Karnataka Express 29.01.2022 to 02.02.2022 and 06.02.2022 likely to be rescheduled depending upon the arrival at Bengaluru City.

For any kind of information such as timings, composition and stoppages enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 may please be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations.
All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139 • Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in & download Railmadad app.



NORTHERN RAILWAY
visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

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[Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/northernrailway)
[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/northernrailway/)

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5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru – 560 001.
Phone No. 22267900, Fax : 22267901 website : www.kiadb.in
email: mdcbtc23@gmail.com

No. CBICTITL/CFO/E-Auction-03/14219/2021-22 Date: 28.01.2022

PAPER PUBLICATION

This is to inform that Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor-Tumakuru Industrial Township Ltd (CBIC-TITL), intends to invest its Surplus Funds in the short term deposits with Nationalized Bank. The details of the quantum of amount and period to be kept in short term deposits are as under:

Rs.150.00 Crores.	For 3 Months (91 days) in Nationalized Banks.
Three FDs will be issued each Rs.50.00 Crores.	For 6 Months (181 days) in Nationalized Banks.

The complete details of the E-Auction can be downloaded from the e-portal of the Government of Karnataka at the below address: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Schedule of Various Events For e-Auction is as below:

- 1) Date of E-Auction can be Downloaded: 29.01.2022
- 2) Last Date to upload the Declaration in Annexure-B in the e-portal: 05.02.2022 on or before 15.30 Hrs.
- 3) Date and time of opening: 08.02.2022 after 16.00 Hrs.
- 4) Live Bidding: 10.02.2022, Commences at 11.00 Hrs. & Concludes at 13.00 Hrs.

DIPR/DDU/Zen/R.O:3109/2021-22

Chief Financial Officer, CBIC-TITL, Bengaluru

STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.



Follow Physical Distancing



KJM VARMA
BEIJING, JANUARY 28

CHINA ON Friday announced plans to boost space cooperation with Pakistan, including the development of a space centre and launching of more satellites for its all-weather ally.

Pakistan figures many times in a white paper titled "China's Space Programme: A 2021 Perspective", released by the State Council or the Central Cabinet, outlining future expansion plans for China's burgeoning space industry, which has successfully launched missions to the Moon and Mars.

China will "give priority to developing communications satellites for Pakistan and to cooperating on the construction of the Pakistan Space Centre", the white paper said.

China is currently building its own space station, which is expected to be ready by this year.

In 2018, China helped Pakistan to launch two satellites – Pakistan's first optical remote sensing satellite PRSS-1, and a smaller observation craft PakTES-1A. In 2019, the two countries signed an agreement on space exploration, marking a new phase in space science cooperation between the close allies.

13

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2022

ECONOMY

SENSEX: 57,200.23 ▼ 76.71 (-0.13%) NIFTY: 17,101.95 ▼ 8.20 (-0.05%) NIKKEI: 26,717.34 ▲ 547.04 HANG SENG: 23,550.08 ▼ 256.92 FTSE: 7,462.99 ▼ 91.32 DAX: 15,232.55 ▼ 291.72



GOLD

₹47,777



RUPEE

₹75.07



OIL

\$88.83



SILVER

₹61,652

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of January 27

International market data till 1900 IST

SECTOR WATCH GLOBAL CRUDE

How boiling oil prices impact govt, personal Budgets

SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28Crude oil pump jack, Texas.
Prices hit a 7-year high of \$91.70, intra-day. Reuters file

RISING TENSION between Russia and Ukraine are leading to a fresh flare up in oil prices, with the Brent breaching the \$90-a-barrel mark overnight on Thursday, the first time since 2014. Some analysts have started forecasting oil prices to hit \$100-110 per barrel in near future as prospects of supply disruptions and rising demand support prices. Prices have surged sharply from a low of \$65.88 recorded on December 2, 2021. If prices continue to inch up, this will put pressure on both the Centre and state to review taxes.

Why are fuel prices rising?

Crude oil prices have risen sharply since the beginning of the year as the wave of infections caused by the Omicron variant of Covid-19 has not led to lower demand. Key oil producing countries have also kept crude oil supplies on a gradually increasing production schedule despite rising demand. OPEC+ had agreed to sharp cuts in supply in 2020 but the organisation has been slow to boost production since then.

What is the impact on rising oil prices on Budget and inflation?

The Budget for this year has assumed oil prices to average around \$65 per barrel. In October, prices rose to as much as \$86 per barrel, before sliding down again to \$65.86.

On Friday, Brent hit a 7-year high of \$91.70, rising \$1.25, or 14 percent, to \$90.59 by 11:09 am ET.

Rising prices feed into inflation as well as increase the amount of LPG and kerosene subsidy. On the positive side,

EXPLAINED

E. government revenues on taxes of oil and oil products has also been rising over the last 2 years. Retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index, has already risen to a five-month high 5.59 per cent in the month of December. Wholesale price index-based inflation rose to 13.56 per cent in December.

High inflation will force the government to cut taxes on oil and oil products, especially since rising prices are a key factor ahead of elections in seven states. "Oil prices are a big factor for budget to be presented next week and overall fiscal math of India that imports more than 85% crude requirements. Oil import bill is already up by more than 70 per cent from last year, it affects the balance of payment adversely. Oil marketing companies haven't increased retail prices for last 80 days due to the upcoming elections and given the under recovery already built in, FM (Finance Minister) may not have the headroom to increase excise duty and rather should build in provision for a cut in case oil goes to three digits," Debasish Mishra, partner at Deloitte India, said. Full report on www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

State borrowing

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry gave additional borrowing permission of Rs 5,186 crore to Rajasthan and Rs 2,123 crore to Andhra Pradesh for undertaking stipulated power sector reforms.

PFS issues

New Delhi: PTC India said its board has directed its risk management committee to look into corporate governance issues at PTC India Financial Services (PFS).

SBI Formosa

New Delhi: State Bank of India's recent fundraise of \$300 million by issuing Formosa Bonds is a testimony of the confidence reposed by the overseas investors in India's growth story, Chairman Dinesh Khara said. PTI

SpiceJet dispute

New Delhi: The Supreme Court gave SpiceJet 3 weeks to resolve dispute over \$24.01 million in dues with Credit Suisse AG and stayed the Madras High Court order on the airline's winding up. FE

AUSFB profit

New Delhi: AU Small Finance Bank reported a rise in profit after tax at Rs 302 crore for quarter ended December 2021. Gross non-performing assets fell to 2.6% against 3.2% over a quarter ago. ENS

India, China trade

New Delhi: In 2021, exports to China rose 34% to \$22.9 billion while imports rose 28% to \$87.5 billion and trade deficit widened to \$64.5 billion, as per Commerce Ministry data. PTI

Panel: Private banks lag in crop loan disbursals in Maharashtra

GEORGE MATHEW & SUNNY VERMA
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, JAN 28

PRIVATE SECTOR banks are lagging their state-owned peers in crop loan disbursements in Maharashtra, with lenders even charging high interest rates and bad loans under Self Help Groups (SHGs) remaining at a high level.

At the recent meeting of the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) for Maharashtra, the RBI representative observed that the performance of private sector banks under crop loan disbursement at 35 per cent, is significantly less and need considerable attention by state heads of these banks.

The case of ICICI Bank charging "exorbitant" interest rates in the case of government-backed credit schemes was also highlighted at the SLBC meeting.

Government sponsored schemes include Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) loans, PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANIDHI) loans.

The achievement under the annual credit plan (ACP) and crops

BELOW TARGET

■ The achievement under the annual credit plan and crops loans in Maharashtra has fallen below the target set by the State Level Bankers' Committee

loans in Maharashtra has fallen below the target set by the SLBC. The committee, with Bank of Maharashtra as the lead bank, asked banks like Punjab & Sind Bank, Canara Bank, PNB, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank to gear up for improving their performance under crop loan disbursement.

As against the ACP target of Rs 4,61,080 crore under the priority sector, the achievement is 38 per cent for the second quarter, SLBC Maharashtra said. Further, as per the three-year comparative performance under crop loan disbursement as of September 30, 2021 is more as compared to last year, absolute growth is less, according to SLBC.

The achievement under the annual credit plan (ACP) and crops

remaining period of the financial year," says the minutes of the last SLBC meeting on November 26.

According to SLBC minutes, the meeting was informed on the issue of "exorbitant" rate of interest (ROI) charged by ICICI Bank on the proposals of government-sponsored schemes (GSS). "The Convenor SLBC Maharashtra appealed to ICICI Bank to redress the issue. ICICI Bank to relook into the matter to reduce ROI applicable on GSS," it said.

Representative of ICICI Bank informed house that at present two per cent ROI is reduced by bank on GSS and assured once again to relook into the issue," SLBC minutes said.

Indicating that private banks are lagging behind, the SLBC said, "private sector banks should focus on achievement of targets under the priority sector lending." It asked member banks to make further efforts to achieve or surpass the set target under ACP 2021-22.

Although crop loan disbursement achievement as of September 30, 2021 is more as compared to last year, absolute growth is less, according to SLBC minutes.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

34 US states, DC say Apple stifles competition

Oakland: Apple is stifling competition through its mobile app store, attorneys general for 34 US states and the District of Columbia said Thursday, as they appealed some against a ruling that let it continue some restrictive practices.

Thursday's remarks, led by the state of Utah and joined by Colorado, Indiana, Texas and others, came in a lawsuit in an appeals court against app store fees and payment tools between "Fortnite" videogame maker Epic Games and

Apple. "Apple's conduct has harmed and is harming mobile app-developers and millions of citizens," the states said. "Apple continues to monopolize app distribution and in-app payment solutions for iPhones, stifle competition, and amass supracompetitive profits within the almost trillion-dollar-a-year smartphone industry."

Apple's first-quarter revenue was \$123.9 billion, 11 per cent up from last year and profit was \$34.6 billion. REUTERS

Dahod Smart City Development Limited (DSCDL) invites online E-Tenders for "Design, Engineering, Procurement, Construction of New Library Building & Refurbishment of Existing Atal Library at Dahod on Design Build and Operate basis including Operation and Maintenance of entire facility for period Five Years". Tender ID: 503204

Estimated Cost (In Rs.)

EMD (In Rs.)

Tender Fee (In Rs.)

Last Date for online Submission of Tender Document Date/Time

FIRST ROUND

India, UK engage in 'productive' FTA talks

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, JANUARY 28

INDIA AND THE UK Friday announced conclusion of a "productive" first round of free trade agreement talks, held virtually between officials of both governments.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) said during the course of the two-week round, which began earlier this month following the visit of UK Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan, technical experts from

both sides came together for discussions in 32 separate sessions covering 26 policy areas.

The DIT reiterated an end of the year timeline for the negotiations, saying that both teams maintain a "shared ambition" to conclude negotiations by the end of 2022.

The policy areas covered in this round included trade in goods, trade in services including financial services & telecommunications, investment, intellectual property, customs and trade facilitation, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, among others. PTI

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NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Jan 29, 2022

TATA Power-DDL invites tenders as per following details:

Tender Enquiry No. Work Description	Estimated Cost/EMD (Rs.)	Availability of Bid Document	Last Date & Time of Bid Submission/ Date and time of Opening of bids
TPDDL/INS/ENQ/200001374/21-22 Tailormade Group Mediclaim Insurance Policy	NIL	29.01.2022	14.02.2022:1400 Hrs/ 14.02.2022:1530 Hrs

Complete tender and corrigendum document is available on our website www.tatapower-ddl.com → Vendor Zone → Tender / Corrigendum Documents

Contracts - 011-6611222

For Details, pls visit www.msticindia.com

SD/-, MANAGING DIRECTOR

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : 65/2021-22/KWA/PHC/D1/TVM(RT1) & 47/2021-22/KWA/PHC/D2/TVM(RT2). Jai Jeewin Mission (2021-2024)-Thiruvananthapuram District- Providing Functional Household Tap Connections in Mudakkad and Venganoor Grama panchayats including pipe line works. EMD : Rs. 2,00,00/- Each. Tender fee : Rs. 10,000/- Each. Last Date for submitting Tender : 18-02-2022 03:00 pm. Phone : 0471-2322303. Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in. www.etenders.kerala.gov.in.

Superintendent Engineer

PH Circle, Thiruvananthapuram

Visit www.etenders.kerala.gov.in for more details.

■ Engagement of CJB Backhoe Loader for Material handling operation in CCU, Palakkad, Cherthala. ■ Construction of Retaining wall and DR packing in approach road between Tower no.9 and Tower no.10 in rowper at mines. ■ Miscellaneous Civil work at Plant. ■ Contract for stock transfer of 1000 MT of bulk cement from Malabar Cements Ltd, Valayal, Palakkad to MCL Cements Grinding Unit, Pallipuram, Cherthala, Alapuzha Dt. ■ Repair of Kiln feed building at Plant.

■ Supply of Reactive power compensation system. ■ Supply, Erection, Manufacturing and Commissioning of Solid flow meter 30 TPH. ■ Design, Engineering, Manufacturing and Supply of Cement Mill 1st Chamber Bottless Shell Liner Plates with High Chrome Metallurgy. ■ Disposal of Scrap, Thc: MSTM. ■ Disposal of MS and Chrome Steel Scrap at Plant. ■ Disposal of Old Vehicle Honda City and Mahindra Bolero. ■ Disposal of Obsolete and Non Operational Heavy equipments at Plant.

For Details, pls visit www.msticindia.com

SD/-, MANAGING DIRECTOR

DATE: 29.01.2022

BY, GEN. MANAGER (CONTRACTS & MM)
ENGINEERING SERVICES

"Har Ek Kaam Desh Ke Naam"

CIN: L23309KA1954G0J000787

Bharat Electronics Limited, Bengaluru Complex, Jalihalli Post, Bengaluru - 560 013, invites applications for Engagement of reputed and experienced agencies for carrying out the work of "Engagement of Contract Workers for Carrying Out Miscellaneous Works in BE-BG".

The approximate cost of the each work Rs.1100 Lakhs per annum.

For pre-qualification criteria and further details visit website [https://eprocurebel.co.in](http://eprocurebel.co.in). All Corrigendum / Amendments / Changes will be issued in Newspapers. Hence, prospective agencies are advised to keep visiting the Website [https://eprocurebel.co.in](http://eprocurebel.co.in) on regular basis.

SD/-

BY, GEN. MANAGER (CONTRACTS & MM)
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Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Berhampur
Established by the Ministry of Education, Government of India

e-Tender Notice

IISER Berhampur invites e-Tenders for the below-mentioned goods/services:

NIT No. & Date	Detail of Goods	Last Date of Submission
IISERBpr/S&P/GTE/2021-22/31 dated 28-01-2022	Casy Cell Counter TT with Consumables and accessories	February 17, 2022 (15:00 Hrs)
IISERBpr/S&P/GTE/2021-22/32 dated 28-01-2022	Odyssey DLX System	February 17, 2022 (15:00 Hrs)

For participation, please visit the website i.e. <https://www.lenderwizard.com/IISERB>. Complete details of specification of goods and services, and tender documents are available on the Institute website i.e. <http://www.iiserbpr.ac.in/tender.php> and <https://eprocure.gov.in>. Any corrigendum etc will be notified on the above websites only.

क्रय एवं भेदभाव अधिकारी
Stores and Purchase Officer

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a lady namely **Radha** along with three children (1) **Roshan 4 Yrs** (2) **Gaurav 2 Yrs** (3) **Gulabo 1 Yrs** 6 Months, W/o: **Ashok**, R/o: **H.No. E-57/B-256, Jhuggi Sunder Nagri, Delhi** has been missing since 08.01.2022 from her house. In this regard DD No. 54 A dated 09.01.2022 has been lodged at Police Station Nand Nagri, Delhi. The description of missing lady is as under:

Name: Radha, Age: 28 Years, Height: 4'8", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Normal, Wearing: Red Colour Saree and Chappal in Feet.

If anyone has any information about this missing lady please inform P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO Police Station, Nand Nagri, Delhi
DP/1320/NE/2022 Ph: 011-22137761, 8750870733

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ**E - TENDER NOTICE**

TENDER NOTICE No. AGC-ELG-T-17-2021-22 Date: 24.01.2022
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (General) N. C. Railway, Agra on behalf of President of India invites "Open Tender" through on line only (E-Tendering) for the following works.

Sr. No.	Tender No.	AGC-ELG-T-17-2021-22
1.	Name of work with its location & Completion Period	Electrification work for under floor lathe at coaching depot Agra Cantt. Completion period 06 months.
2.	Approx. Cost of the work	Rs. 1444010.89

For Full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railway Website www.ireps.gov.in. Tenders can only be submitted through web portal www.ireps.gov.in upto 16:00 hrs. on 16.02.2022.

94/22(AN)

[] North central railways | www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in [] @ CPRONCR

भारत सरकार, रक्षा मंत्रालय
(Govt. of India, Ministry of Defence)
रक्षा सम्पद कार्यालय
DEFENCE ESTATES OFFICE
दिल्ली मण्डल, दिल्ली छावनी (DELHI CIRCLE, DELHI CANTT.)
दृष्टान्त: 011-25686971, 25684006, फैक्स: 011-25684005, ई-मेल: deodell-stats@nic.in

E-AUCTION NOTICE

The Defence Estates Officer Delhi Circle, Delhi Cantt invites online bids through E-Auction from interested & eligible contractor/bidders/firms etc. for Disposal of different kinds of 248 Nos of Standing/fallen trees located at 54 ASP, Air Force Station, Gurugram, (Haryana).

The terms & conditions of e-auction, details of trees and other requisite details will be available at <https://e-auction.gov.in> from 29/01/2022 at 10:00 hrs. The e-auction will be start on 21/02/2022 at 10:00 hrs and end on same day at 17:00 hrs.

For any other enquiry regarding e-auction call on 011-25684006, Monday to Friday during working hours i.e. 10:00 hrs to 17:00 hrs

Note: Trees may be shown on site on 07/02/2022 at 11:00 hrs on production of valid identity proof.

No. 3/175/DEO/54 ASP/Tree board/IGLOOS/FMS-7461

Dated: 28/01/2022

-Sd/-
Vinit B. Lotte
Defence Estates Officer
Delhi Circle, Delhi Cantt

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified male namely **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown was found dead on 23.01.2022 at Bus Stop, Bhavbhuti Marg, Minto Road, Kamla Market, Delhi**. In this regard DD No. 33-A dated 23.01.2022 has been lodged at Police Station, Kamla Market, Delhi. Dead body has been preserved in MAMC mortuary for 72 Hrs for identification. Identification of unidentified dead body is as under:

Name: Unknown, Age: About 40-45 Years, Height: 3', Complexion: Shallow, Built: Medium, Face: Long, Wearing: White and Blue Colour Sweater.

If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

SHO Police Station Kamla Market, Delhi
DP/1223/CD/2022 Ph.: 011-22230623, 8750870424

**GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
IRRIGATION DIVISION, DUMKA**

e-Tender Ref. No:- WRD/IRR.DIV.DUMKA/TURNKEY- 01/2021-22 Dated:- 28.01.2022

LOCAL/NATIONAL TURNKEY COMPETITIVE BIDDING

(Complete Job with Five Years OM&M)

NAME OF WORK	Masulia Ranishwar Megalift Irrigation Scheme on Turnkey basis with 5 (Five) years Operation, Maintenance and Management (OM&M) (complete job).
ESTIMATED COST (Rs.)	1198.9161371 Crore (Rupees one thousand one hundred and ninety eight crore ninety nine lakh sixty one thousand three hundred seventy one only).
TIME OF COMPLETION	3 Years (Three Years)
PERIOD OF AVAILABILITY OF BIDDING DOCUMENT ON WEBSITE	FROM : 01.02.2022 at 5:00 PM to 11.03.2022 upto 5:00 PM
TIME AND DATE OF PRE BID CONFERENCE (PHYSICAL AS WELL AS ONLINE)	Date-08.02.2022 Time- 02:00PM at 1 st Floor, Conference Hall, Nepal House, Doranda, Ranchi (Jharkhand)
PERIOD OF ONLINE SUBMISSION OF BIDS	Date- 01.02.2022 at 5:00 PM to Date-11.03.2022 upto 5:00 PM
LAST DATE AND TIME FOR RECEIPT OF EMD AND COST OF BOQ OF BIDS IN THE OFFICE OF EE, IRRIGATION DIVISION, DUMKA	Date- 14.03.2022 upto 5:00PM
DATE AND TIME OF OPENING PRE QUALIFICATION BID	Date- 15.03.2022,2:00 PM
DATE AND TIME OF OPENING OF TECHNICAL BIDS	To be Announced after Pre-qualification Bid
DATE AND TIME OF OPENING OF FINANCIAL BIDS	To be Announced after Technical Bid
PLACE OF OPENING OF BIDS	Chief Engineer office, WRD, Deoghar
OFFICER INVITING BIDS	Executive Engineer Mob. No.-+919801476699 Email ID- edmkirr@gmail.com
HELP LINE NO. OF E-PORCUMENT CELL	+919155826458, +918789068351 Email ID- wrdcedeo@gmail.com

PR 262615 Water Resource(21-22).D Executive Engineer Irrigation Division, Dumka

झारखण्ड सरकार
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, खूंटी।

ई० प्रोक्योरेसेन्ट अंति अल्पकालीन निविदा आमत्रण सूचना (चतुर्थ कॉल)

T. Reference No. :- DWSD/KH-08(CLUS/SVS)/2021-22, Date 28.01.2022

SL.No.	Name of Work				
A)	Construction of Solar based Mini Pipe Water Supply Scheme (SVS) in different Block comprising of suitable R.C.C./Framed Structure ESR distribution line sources (as required) and FHTC all complete job in the different blocks of District- Khunti under D.W. & S. Division, Khunti.	Cluster Name	Block	Estimated Cost (Lakh)	Bid Security (Lakh)
1	1 (A)	Torpa	811.83	8.12	10,000.00
2	1 (B)	Torpa	789.71	7.90	10,000.00
3	3 (A)	Arki	969.18	9.70	10,000.00
4	3 (B)	Arki	927.79	9.28	10,000.00
5	4 (A)	Arki	873.66	8.74	10,000.00
6	4 (B)	Arki	914.42	9.15	10,000.00
7	5 (B)	Karra	642.69	6.43	10,000.00
8	6 (A)	Karra	646.73	6.47	10,000.00
9	6 (B)	Karra	708.34	7.09	10,000.00
10	7 (A)	Karra	958.88	9.59	10,000.00
11	7 (B)	Karra	836.92	8.37	10,000.00
12	13	Murhu	973.14	9.74	10,000.00
13	14 (B)	Murhu	667.26	6.68	10,000.00
14	15 (B)	Murhu	570.96	5.71	10,000.00
B)	Date of Tender Uploading on Website	02.02.2022/05:00 PM.			
C)	Document Download Start Date from Website	02.02.2022/05:00 PM.			
E)	Bid Submission Start Date	02.02.2022/05:00 PM.			
F)	Bid Submission End Date	09.02.2022/05:00 PM.			
G)	Last date of Submission of Cost of BOQ, and EMD (Hard Copy)	10.02.2022/02:00 PM.			
H)	Date of Opening of Tender	11.02.2022/05:00 PM.			
I)	Name & Address of Office Inviting Tender	Executive Engineer, Drinking Water & Sanitation Division, Khunti.			
J)	Name & Address of Opening Officer	Executive Engineer, Drinking Water & Sanitation Division, Khunti.			
K)	Contact No. of Procurement Office	06528-299928			
L)	Helpline No. of e-procurement cell	Mo. No.: 7717776462			

नोट:-विशेष जानकारी के लिये वेबसाइट- <http://jharkahndtenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, खूंटी।

PR 262682 Drinking Water and Sanitation(21-22)D

उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे

खुली ई-निविदा खुली

मुख्य विकासकार्यालय विभाग, बीकानेर द्वारा भारत के राष्ट्रीय रेलवे के अंतर्गत निर्माण प्रयत्न में दिनांक 21.02.2022 को 15:00 बजे कार्य का अवधि है और ऐसी निविदा आमत्रण की जाती है।

कार्य का नाम: उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे बीकानेर मंडल की बीकानेर एवं लालगढ़ रेलवे बीकानेर टार्मिनोंसे की साझाई का कार्य एवं मेनेइंजिनियरिंग टार्मिनोंसे के कर्तव्यों के लियाँ आपका कार्य है।

कार्य की अवधि: दो वर्ष। निविदा फॉर्म शुल्क: ₹10,000/-। धरारात्रि राशि: 2,68,000/-।

अनुमति लागत: ₹2,35,94,094/-।

Cricket scam: Former India Blue woman player arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

SURAT, JANUARY 28

THE ECONOMIC Offences Wing (EOW) of Surat Police has arrested cricketer Sapna Randhawa, who played three matches for India Blue Women at the Women's Twenty20 Challenger Trophy back in 2010 for allegedly duping a male cricketer from Surat of Rs 27.10 lakh.

As per the allegation, Sapna took money from Bhavik Patel by promising him opportunities at national-level tournaments. Sapna was arrested on January 26 from Himachal Pradesh. Police informed that Patel, a cricketer who plays for Lalbhai Cricket Academy in Surat, lodged a complaint with the city police crime branch on January 20. Patel alleged that he played only one Ranji Trophy match for Nagaland against Jharkhand in Hyderabad in 2019. As per his complaint, Sapna took Rs 27.10 lakh from him, promising his selection in the Ranji Trophy, a T20 game, three one-day matches and two Tests. After playing one Ranji Trophy fixture, when he asked Sapna about other matches, the latter allegedly gave different excuses before she stopped taking his phone calls.

Speaking on the matter, Surat police commissioner Ajay Kumar Tomar said: "Bhavik Patel was introduced to Sapna Randhawa by one Ram Chauhan, who had organised a cricket tournament at Hathras in Uttar Pradesh in 2018. Patel played in that tournament. Sapna told Patel to fork out cash to play in national-level cricket tournaments. Sapna and others had prepared fake documents for Bhavik Patel to allow him to represent the Nagaland Cricket Association in a Ranji trophy match, against Jharkhand at Hyderabad." He added: "We have sought help from the BCCI to get more details in this case. There are a few more people in this gang, presently absconding. But we will arrest them soon. This gang has duped around 20 young people from different states of Rs 75 lakh in the same way."

Sapna, 32, had a very short career at national level, playing just three Women's T20 Challenger Trophy games 12 years ago. Mainly a left-arm medium bowler, she didn't get a single wicket in those matches. The India Blue Women of the 2010 vintage had Mithali Raj and Snehal Pradhan in their ranks. Reema Malhotra was the captain. A lot of players, discarded in their own states, have switched bases to play first-class cricket after the Committee of Administrators (CoA) allowed the associate and affiliate members of the BCCI to participate in all domestic tournaments.

ICC bans Taylor for corruption

Banned for 3 and a half years for not reporting approach to ICC on time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, JANUARY 28

FORMER ZIMBABWE captain Brendan Taylor was on Friday banned for three and a half years by the ICC for failing to report a 2019 spot-fixing approach by an Indian businessman on time and was also handed a one month suspension for failing a dope test which was linked to his intake of cocaine during the episode.

In a statement, the ICC said Taylor admitted to being in breach of the provisions of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code (Articles 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4 and 2.4.7). "Former Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor has been banned from all cricket for three and a half years after he accepted breaching four charges of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code and, separately, one charge of the ICC Anti-Doping Code," the ICC said. On January 24, Taylor made a stunning disclosure that he was blackmailed after "foolishly" taking cocaine during his meeting with an Indian businessman.

Taylor had claimed that he was invited by the businessman to India to discuss "sponsorships" and potential launch of a T20 event in Zimbabwe besides an offer of USD 15,000 in October 2019. He did not name the businessman in question and the ICC also identified him as merely Mr S.

The 35-year-old, who played 205 ODIs, 34 Tests and 45 T20s before retiring last year, said he was also given a part payment to spot fix matches, which, according to him, he never did. He tested positive for stimulant Benzoylecgonine, a cocaine metabolite, which is specified as a Substance of Abuse under the Code. The in-competition test was conducted on Taylor on September 8, 2021 Zimbabwe's match against Ireland. "This one-month suspension will run concurrently with the suspension of three and a half years under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code. Mr Taylor will be free to resume his involvement in the game on 28 July 2025," the ICC stated. "Taylor's period of ineligibility was reduced to one month because he was able to establish that he had ingested the substance out of competition, that it was unrelated to sport performance, and because he is currently undergoing a rehabilitation treatment programme." Taylor will be free to resume the game on July 28, 2025.

ICC said the decision is final. In a heavily redacted report, ICC said Taylor reported the corrupt approach to its Anti-Corruption Unit on March 31, 2020, which happened the previous November.

In or around September 2019, Taylor was contacted by the businessman to ask if he would be interested in playing in the 2019 edition of the Afghanistan Premier League (the 2019 edition of which ultimately did not take place).

\$15k, clothes, new phone and compromising video

The official publication of the proceedings of the hearing between the International Cricket Council and Brendan Taylor brings to light that the former Zimbabwe captain wasn't upfront about his meeting with the Indian businessman when he made a delayed admission about the approach.

Taylor not forthright

ON MARCH 31, 2020 Taylor reported an approach from an Indian businessman (Mr S) which happened in November 2019. However, when he first disclosed the approach, Taylor made no mention of him getting a request from the businessman about fixing matches before he accepted \$15,000. Taylor did mention that he received the money but first said it was as part of an appearance fee. "In subsequent interviews, however, Mr Taylor changed his story and accepted that while he had initially travelled to India believing that he would be paid an appearance fee of US\$15,000, at the end of his trip when the payment was actually made to him, it followed a discussion around corruption and a request for him to be involved in corrupting matches in exchange for payment," the report said.

Agent's warning

During the course of interviews, Taylor said when Mr S first contacted him, he referred him to his agent. A red flag was raised by the agent when he told Taylor 'not to waste his time as he has a bad feeling about Mr S'. The businessman had first called Taylor to enquire if he was keen to play in the Afghanistan Premier League. But a month later (after the agent had warned him), Taylor got another call and this time he travelled to India. This time, Mr S told Taylor he wanted to discuss starting a T20 tournament in Zimbabwe and would pay him \$15,000 for his time.

New phone, clothes

On reaching India, Taylor was given a new Samsung S10 phone. Taylor claims, in interviews, that he took the phone because his phone was 'busted up'. Mr S also paid for new clothes for Taylor.

Looking for another player

At the end of the trip, Taylor met Mr S and his associates and this time there was a discussion about spot-fixing in international games. Mr S told Taylor he could make \$35,000 for engaging in spot-fixing. Mr S also told Taylor that he wanted to rope in one more player to fix



Former Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor during 2015 WC. File

international matches.

Compromising video

Taylor said that he had initially refused to be involved in fixing but accepted the money because Mr S told him that he had a compromising video which he would release to the media and Mr Taylor's wife. Taylor, in his post on Twitter earlier this week, had said he had consumed cocaine during the trip to India.

Call during B'desh series

Taylor next heard from Mr S in mid-March 2020, while he was on tour with Zimbabwe in Bangladesh. Mr S called him and said that while he had not worked for him before that point, now was the time to do so. Taylor stated that he refused to do any work for Mr S. Taylor then received a message from the businessman saying that he would release the compromising video.

\$15k unreturned

Taylor, according to the official publication, still has the US\$ 15,000 which he said is being looked after safely by a friend. Taylor said he was clear that neither he, nor his family nor his friends can benefit from this money (whether directly or indirectly) in any way.

During the hearing, it was agreed that Taylor's return to participation in cricket, following the expiry of his period of ineligibility, is conditional upon him demonstrating, to the ICC's satisfaction, that nobody close to him has benefitted from the money.

Source: ACU publication

India beat China 2-0 to win consolation bronze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUSCAT, JANUARY 28

LAST EDITION champions India defeated China 2-0 to register a consolation third place finish at the women's Asia Cup hockey tournament here on Friday. The Indians left behind the disappointment of their semifinal defeat to Korea and controlled the proceedings in the first two quarters, scoring two goals in the process, to go into half time with a 2-0 lead against China.

They, however, failed to score any more goals in the second half. The Indians started brightly and earned a couple of penalty corners and from one such situation, Sharmila Devi gave her side the lead in the 13th minute, scoring from a rebound after Gurjit Kaur's initial flick was saved by the Chinese defence. India continued in the same vein in the second quarter and had the better share of chances. The Indians kept up the pressure on the Chinese defence with relentless raids and secured another penalty corner in the 19th minute which was converted by Gurjit with a superb drag-flick to make the scoreline 2-0.

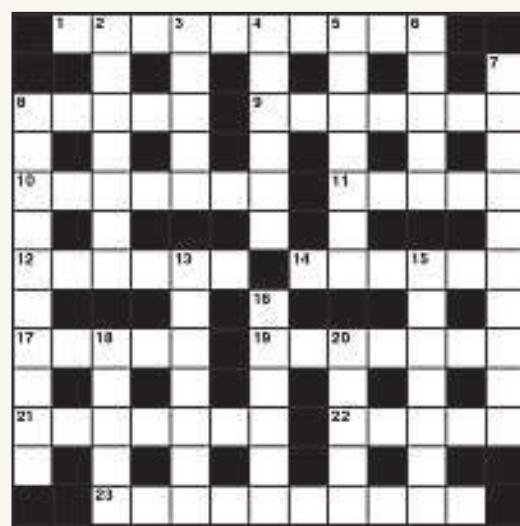
China responded swiftly, securing a penalty corner which was brilliantly kept away by India captain and goalkeeper Savita Punia. Down by two goals, China came out with more intent after the change of ends and tried to put pressure on the Indian defence but to no avail. The Indians kept up the pressure on the Chinese defence at the start of the fourth and final quarter but failed to create any clear cut chances.

China earned a penalty corner 10 minutes before time but the Indians defended in numbers to thwart any danger to their



Sharmila Devi and Gurjit Kaur scored one goal each as India scored a 2-0 win over China in women's Asia Cup in Muscat on Friday.

CROSSWORD 4650



ACROSS

- 1 Called from the cinders? (10)
- 8 Goes on green (5)
- 9 Change of raiment for a girl (7)
- 10 She is given two articles set in a case (7)
- 11 Patent feature of a hover train (5)
- 12 Prompt delivery (6)
- 14 Mike's love turns out to be from the North (6)
- 17 Nerve broken? Not at all (5)
- 19 Knight sent back fish and meat dish (7)
- 21 Not unwilling to try a tea break (7)
- 22 Is taken aback? (5)
- 23 Acts as a dismantler? (5,5)

DOWN

- 2 Sign of fever perhaps and rash (7)
- 3 Not flush but accepted by the social clique (5)
- 4 Even when frayed it should be kept (6)
- 5 Apprehensive over bursting into sunrise (7)
- 6 Doctor, I have reduced energy (5)
- 7 Seagoing vandals (10)
- 8 Asian poets can be so ardent (10)
- 13 It may have a standing charge for motorists (3,4)
- 15 Tide description of a monk? (2,5)
- 16 Cleans down (6)
- 18 Call on half-a-dozen to take a seat (5)
- 20 Refuse to fight (5)

Solutions Crossword 4649: Across: 1 Such as, 4 Lieder, 9 Aspirin, 10 Dikes, 11 Oddly, 12 On and on, 13 Reading lamp, 18 Fiancee, 20 State, 22 Outdo, 23 Eclipse, 24 Tidier, 25 Spines. Down: 1 Seadog, 2 Copied, 3 Arrayed, 5 India, 6 Dukehorn, 7 Rising, 8 Encountered, 14 Enacted, 15 Last lap, 16 Afloat, 17 Sewers, 19 Close, 21 Aspen.

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.

No complaint... is more common than that of a scarcity of money. - Adam Smith (8,2,5)

TAEOR

EISCCN

TOPIS

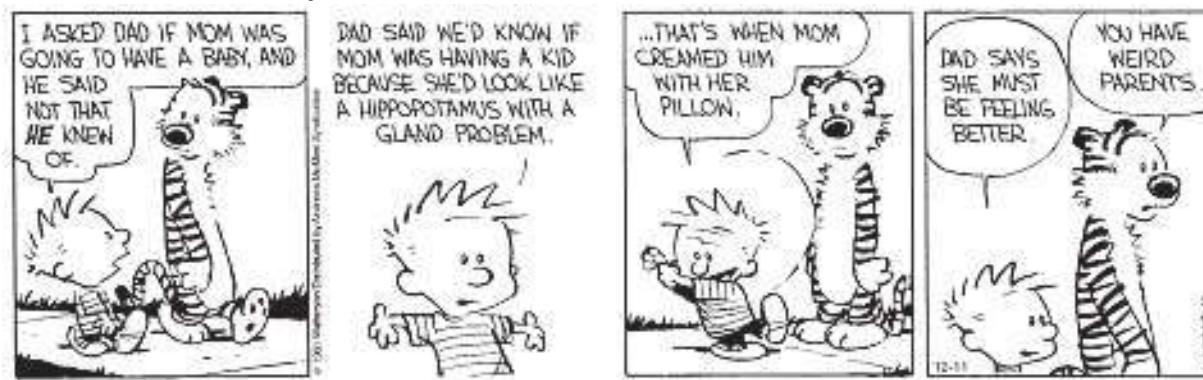
ALFMYY

Answer: No complaint... is more common than that of a scarcity of money. - Adam Smith (8,2,5)

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Dreams, imagination and intuition are important at the moment and are vital to any solution to practical problems, but you can't get away without hard, practical work. You may also look closely at domestic questions to see if they can be solved by an unusual approach.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

It's a serious moment, yet one when you can consider strange new options. You may be taking responsibility for group affairs, yet be careful not to over-commit yourself. Recent delays in communication should be lifted and long-awaited news could arrive soon.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

If you're following up career proposals, then you might usefully spend the next few days planning interviews, making applications and plotting your next great move. Directness and honesty about your thoughts and feelings will be appreciated by those closest to you.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Venus, ruler of love and affection, makes a temporary withdrawal from stressful relationships, hopefully easing some of the tensions which are bedeviling personal and professional relationships. If you have offended anyone, then you might be wise to apologise now, not next week.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

One reason for hold-ups may have been your doubt about a particular course of action. However, over the coming days the sheer speed of developments may take you by surprise. Secret information may cause a change of plan, but if you do change your mind, you'd better let other people know about it.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

You may have been shouldering more than your fair share of responsibility for acquaintances or colleagues. The current period presents you with a chance to redress the balance and set the record straight. If you do this now, you'll no doubt avoid unnecessary hassles some way down the line.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Your lunar alignments encourage an independent point of view. You may also, as it happens, devote as much time as is necessary to sorting out domestic problems. A few days engaged in consulting family and friends and implementing overdue improvements will save trouble later.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

Powerful planetary patterns continue, as does the uncertainty about where current developments are leading. Changes over the coming few days may at first be so subtle that their meaning will not be clear until next week. Mind you, that's not too long to wait.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

The financial situation remains critical, and you may be tempted to sit on the fence, waiting for a resolution. However, if you are too passive, you must expect to risk making a loss. Perhaps the central issue is your willingness to spend money on relationships or subsidise a loved one.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

The simultaneous movements of the Sun and Uranus are about to have an effect on your emotional life that will be as dramatic as it is difficult to control. A breath of fresh air could revitalise an old partnership, and can only add to your quality of life.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

The Moon is on your side, so it's only to be expected that family members and people you live with should be backing you to the hilt. Not for the first time your planets show the possibility of dramatic financial dealings and agreements. Yet illusions you hold so fondly now, may be rudely shattered before long.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Plans for domestic change which were initiated earlier in the year but were never completed should be brought to a successful conclusion soon. The only things required are a little determination and a large dose of confidence. Above all, you should believe in yourself.



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4728



Raf & tough

Nadal beats Berrettini in four sets, will face Medvedev for a record 21st career Grand Slam title

CHRISTOPHER CLAREY
MELBOURNE, JANUARY 28

RAFAEL NADAL moved within one match of a record-breaking 21st Grand Slam men's singles title by defeating Matteo Berrettini of Italy, 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, in the semifinals of the Australian Open.

Nadal, the 35-year-old Spanish star, is tied with his longtime rivals Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic for the men's record.

But neither Federer nor Djokovic played in this year's tournament. Federer is still recovering from knee surgery and Djokovic, a nine-time Australian Open champion, was deported on the eve of the tournament after his visa was revoked by the Australian government and his appeal was rejected.

Nadal, the only member of the Big Three in Melbourne, has carried the torch surprisingly well after missing most of the second half of the 2021 season with a chronic foot problem that he said threatened his career. When he did return to action in late December for an exhibition in Abu Dhabi, he contracted Covid-19 and developed symptoms at home in Majorca, Spain before making the long trip to Australia.

But he won a warm-up tournament at Melbourne Park before the main event and has now swept through six more matches to reach his sixth and most unexpected Australian Open final. He has won this title just once, beating Federer for the title in 2009. Since then, he has experienced plenty of tennis heartache in Rod Laver Arena: losing a five-hour-and-53-minute final in 2012 to Djokovic and another marathon to Federer in 2017 despite holding a 3-1 lead in the fifth set.

Now he has a chance to set himself apart. "For me it's all about the Australian Open more than anything else," he said when asked about the prospect of winning No. 21. "I was lucky to win in 2009 but never thought about another chance in 2022."

On Sunday, Nadal will face No. 2 Daniil Medvedev, who defeated No. 4 Stefanos Tsitsipas. Nadal has a winning record against both younger men and now has a 2-0 record against Berrettini, the strapping 25-year-old Italian who has a big serve and heavy forehand and plenty of charisma, but also has a comparatively weak backhand that Nadal exploited repeatedly. Djokovic did the same when he defeated Berrettini in last year's Wimbledon final, and for the first two hours of Friday's match, Berrettini looked frustrated and increasingly forlorn as Nadal kept him off balance and out of sorts with a barrage of crisply sliced serves and high-bouncing forehands.

"I think I started the match playing great," Nadal said. "The first two sets have been the best so far since a long time."

Berrettini had no break points on Nadal's serve until the eighth game of the third set, but with Nadal serving at 3-4, Berrettini sprinted to his right and hit a forehand passing shot winner down the line that appeared to surprise both men. Nadal was soon serving at 0-40 and two points later, Berrettini was able to break him for the first time, slapping a forehand winner. He then served out third set, baring his teeth to his support team as he strutted past Nadal to his chair before the fourth set.

"He's a very solid player, very dangerous," Nadal said. "And in the third, I knew at some

COMEBACK MAN

The win ensured Nadal:
6 Reached his sixth Australian Open final
29 Entered his 29th Grand Slam final
500 Recorded his 500th win on hard court

We need to suffer, and we need to fight. That's the only way I am where I am today. Honestly it means a lot to me to be in the final again here.

RAFAEL NADAL

point he is going to go for the shots. I didn't play a good game with my serve at 3-4, but he played some great shots. The passing shot down the line was unbelievable."

But the patterns of play were still in Nadal's favor as he continued to focus his attacks on Berrettini's backhand. The Italian did hit a two-handed winner to get to 15-30 on Nadal's serve in the opening game of the fourth set, but Nadal won a cat-and-mouse exchange on the next point as Berrettini missed a backhand slice off a good drop shot.

Though Berrettini kept hustling and rippling through his forehands, he could not sustain his comeback, losing his serve in the eighth game of what turned out to be the final set. "We need to suffer, and we need to fight," Nadal said, summing up his philosophy over his nearly 20-year career. "That's the only way I am where I am today. Honestly it means a lot to me to be in the final again here."

Both Federer and Djokovic have taken aim at No. 21 in a Grand Slam final and missed. Federer had two match points on his serve against Djokovic in the 2019 Wimbledon final and failed to convert. Djokovic faced Medvedev in last year's U.S. Open final and lost in straight sets.

Now it is Nadal's turn, even as he continues to say that finishing ahead of Federer and Nadal in the Grand Slam chase is not his obsession or priority. "I will sleep just as well after I retire whether it happens or does not happen," he once said in an interview.

But a second Australian Open title would certainly be most welcome.

Barty aims to end Aus drought

Reuters adds: Ash Barty will carry the weight of a nation on her shoulders when she faces big-hitting American Danielle Collins in Saturday's Australian Open final, as she seeks to end her country's 44-year wait for a home champion. The world number one has lost just 21 games to reach her maiden final at Melbourne Park and is primed to become the first local since Chris O'Neil in 1978 to win the Australian Open.

Barty, who won the 2019 French Open and is the reigning Wimbledon champion, is also unbeaten in 10 matches this season.



Rafael Nadal celebrates after defeating Matteo Berrettini 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 in the semifinal. AP

Medvedev's rant at umpire, & 'sting operation' that caught Tsitsipas for illegal coaching

GAURAV BHATT

JANUARY 28

DURING HIS 7-6(5), 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 win in the Australian Open semifinal over Stefanos Tsitsipas, Daniil Medvedev went on a belligerent rant. The Russian lost his temper late in the second set, berating the chair umpire and accusing his opponent of being coached illegally by his father-coach Apostolos from the sidelines. The meltdown seemingly prompted a 'sting operation' to catch Tsitsipas.

Medvedev's meltdown

Deep in the second set — after serving a pair of double faults that handed Tsitsipas a crucial break — Medvedev received a code violation for an audible obscenity. He then launched into a tirade. "Bro, are you mad? Bro, are you mad? For what? His father can coach every point? Are you stupid?" Medvedev launched at chair umpire Jaume Campistol. "His father can talk every point! His father can talk every point! His father can talk every point! Willyou answer my question? Can you answer my question? Please? Can his father talk every point? Oh my God, you are so bad, man. How can you be so bad in a semi-final of a Grand Slam? Look at me! I'm talking to you!"

Tsitsipas capitalised on the break to serve out the set, and Medvedev continued to berate the umpire, asking for Tsitsipas to get a code violation for on-court coaching. "Next time it should be a code violation. If you don't do it, you are — how can I say it — a small cat," seem-



Daniil Medvedev argues with chair umpire Jaume Campistol. AP

ingly alluding to the term "pussy".

'Sting operation'

Almost an hour later, Tsitsipas was caught receiving on-court coaching. Medvedev's outburst had prompted an official — Greek umpire Eva Asderaki-Moore — to position herself in the tunnel below the Tsitsipas box to potentially catch the father-son duo in the act. Channel Nine's cameras picked up Asderaki-Moore signalling for a code violation, drawing a laugh from Tsitsipas. In the commentary booth, Sam Groth and Jim Courier termed it a "sting operation". Co-commentator Todd Woodbridge questioned Tsitsipas senior's actions, wondering what purpose they served. Medvedev won five straight games afterwards to seal the match.

Tsitsipas' coaching episodes

Tsitsipas had already been given code vio-

lations for coaching in his third-round and fourth-round matches against Benoit Paire and Taylor Fritz respectively. During the Fritz match, chair umpire Damien Dumusois warned Tsitsipas, after which the 23-year-old was seen motioning to his father to calm him down.

In the post-match press conference on Friday, Tsitsipas said that he feels he is unfairly targeted by officials. "I'm used to it. They've been targeting me already a long time. I feel like I've gotten a few in the past, and the umpires are always paying attention to my box, never paying attention to the opponent's box. I feel I have been a victim of that for a long time now."

He added he had spent "countless hours trying to figure it out with" his father. "My father, he's a person that when he gets into something when there is a lot of action, his medicine is to talk, and you can't stop it. It's something that he does from nature," the 2021 French Open finalist said. "That was also one of the reasons last year I went out publicly on one of my social media platforms and said that I think coaching should be allowed, simply because coaches do it anyway."

Coaching rules

While on-court coaching is an offence on the ATP Tour, the WTA Tour has allowed on-court coaching since 2008. According to WTA rules, a player can request her coach for advice once each set. However, on-court coaching is forbidden at Grand Slams for both men and women. On the men's side, the only exception for on-court coaching is team events such as Davis Cup and Laver Cup where team captains are on court with the players.

BRIEFLY

Djokovic felicitated amid fresh Covid-19 test doubts

Budva (Montenegro): Tennis star Novak Djokovic received honors at a small Adriatic Sea resort in Montenegro on Friday even as doubts re-emerged about the positive COVID-19 test he used to try to compete in the Australian Open. The BBC on Friday reported discrepancies in the serial numbers of tests Serbian authorities administered to Djokovic in the days prior to his trip to Australia, suggesting possible irregularities in the way they were issued. Senior Serbian health officials have previously said that Djokovic's test was valid and issued by a relevant institution.

ATK Mohun Bagan favourites in derby

Margao: ATK Mohun Bagan will start as favourites against a struggling SC East Bengal in their second day of the ongoing Indian Super League season here on Saturday. The first derby this season was a walk in the park for the Mariners (3-0) who have since then not had a great season so far but for their rivals, the plane never took off as it took two head coach changes to win their first game, after 11 unsuccessful attempts. East Bengal got the better of Mohun Bagan the last time on January 27 in 2019, making it a long wait for their voiceless fans for a taste of victory.

Odisha Open: George stuns 3rd seed Dey

Cuttack: Kiran George upset third seed Subhankar Dey 21-16 10-21 21-19 to advance to the men's singles semifinals while in-form shuttler Malvika Bansod also cruised to the last four round in the women's event at the Odisha Open badminton tournament. The 21-year-old Indian will meet compatriot Ansal Yadav, who beat qualifier Tharun Mannepalli 21-15 23-21, in the semifinals on Saturday. Malvika registered a 21-13 16-21 21-17 victory over fellow Indian Tanya Hemant in a grueling 58-minute quarterfinal contest.

Aditi off to a flying start at LPGA event

Boca Rio (US): Indian golfer Aditi Ashok got off to a flying start at the Gainbridge LPGA with a superb 6-under 66 to be Tied-third and three short of leader Lydia Ko (63) here. Aditi, who missed the cut last time she played here at this course, was in sparkling form, finding the first 17 green in regulation. She faltered only once on the 18th and it ended in a bogey. Another Indian, the LPGA debutant Nishtha Madan, who is playing on an invite, had a struggle with 5-over 77 that began with a birdie but then had five bogeys and a double against one more birdie on 12th.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Women allowed into stadium as Iran seal WC spot

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN, JANUARY 28



Due to Covid restrictions, the Iranian government allowed 10,000 spectators in the 100,000-seat Azadi stadium in Tehran, including more than 2,000 women. AP

It was the second major soccer event that Iranian women have watched in the stadium. In 2019, for the first time in decades, hundreds of Iranian women were allowed to watch Persepolis play the Kashima Antlers of Japan in the Asian Champions League final

from 30 metres, and with the goalkeeper only able to parry the shot Lautaro Martínez followed up to slot home the rebound.

"We knew it was going to be difficult at high altitude and after a long flight," said Di María. "The important thing is that we come away with a win. Everything is always much easier when Leo is here. The important thing is that we keep working like we've been doing and bringing joy to Argentina."

The result, which was also achieved without the presence of talismanic coach Lionel Scaloni, who was isolating at home due to COVID-19, marks Argentina's 28th game without defeat.

Brereton's goal was the first against Argentina in seven qualifiers. "Today we were without the best in the world and our coach as well but we got the victory and this is also for them," said Di María.

The result was a huge blow to Chile's hopes of qualifying for Qatar. They are seventh, on 16 points, in the 10-team South American qualifying group with only three matches to play.

The top four qualify automatically and the fifth-placed team goes into a playoff with a side from the Asian confederation.

Brereton was preparing to be substituted when Rodrigo de Paul fired in a fierce drive

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, JANUARY 28

SIX INDIAN under 19 players who missed out on league games of ICC under 19 World Cup due to Covid-19 outbreak have been cleared to participate in the quarter-finals match against Bangladesh. However, one under-19 player who flew to the Caribbean as a backup player has also tested positive and is undergoing an isolation period.

Last week, before the second league game against Ireland, six Indian players, out of the 17-member squad, were ruled out of selection. The six players were Sidharth Yadav, Manav Parikh, Vasu Vats, captain Yash Dhull, SK Rasheed and Aaradhyu Yadav missed out on two league games. Among the infected, it was reported that Dhull had the worst symptoms.

The Indian board had sent five players as a backup for players who missed out due to the Covid-19 break in the Indian dressing room. These players were Uday Saharan, Abhishek Porel, Rishabh Reddy, Ansh Gosai and Pushpendra Singh Rathore.

It is learnt that one player tested positive while others will be available for selection.

"All six players who had missed out will be available for selection.

They even did practice in the West Indies. However, one player who tested after reaching the West Indies has been isolated," a BCCI official said.

It was reported that the players caught the virus from a support staff member. After winning the Under-19 Asia Cup in the UAE, the Indian team had travelled to the Caribbean via Amsterdam.

A support staff member, who is fine

now, had tested and caught the infection in transit and it was believed the players contracted the virus from him. The entire squad had been sequestered for five-day hard quarantine in Guyana. They had three RT-PCR tests taken in that period but the reports took as long as 48 hours and the third test report was only made available on the seventh day.

The BCCI has been in constant touch with management and the coaching staff.

9 Canada players test positive

Tarouba (Trinidad): Two Plate competition matches of the ICC Under-19 men's Cricket World Cup, involving Canada were on Friday cancelled after nine players from the team tested positive for COVID-19.

The matches -- Canada vs Scotland and Canada vs either of Uganda or PNG -- were to be played on Saturday and Sunday at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy here. The players will now undertake a period of isolation where their welfare will be monitored by the event medical team, the ICC said in a statement.

Because of the COVID-positive cases, the Canadian team has insufficient available players to be able to take any further part in the event.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
U-19 World Cup: Playing tonight, India vs Bangladesh, 7.30pm, Live on Star Sports Network