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PMLA CASE

HC grants bail to Kappan 26 months after arrest, says no money trail

**Kappan to be released after court's break, says lawyer****ASAD REHMAN**
LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 23

MORE THAN two years after he was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Police while heading to the Hathras home of a young Dalit woman who died after an alleged gangrape, journalist Siddique Kappan was granted bail Friday by the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court in a money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate.

In his order, Justice Dinesh Kumar Singh said "except for allegations that Rs 5,000 was transferred in the bank account of co-accused, Atikur Rahman, there is no other transaction, either in the bank account of the accused-applicant or in the bank account of co-accused".

Kappan had been granted bail by the Supreme Court on September 9 this year in an Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act case after being booked by the UP Police for alleged links with the radical Popular Front of India — the Centre banned the PFI

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE WORLD

**RUSSIA WANTS WAR TO END, SAYS PUTIN****2 DEAD, 4 WOUNDED IN PARIS SHOOTING**
PAGE 16

16 Army men killed as truck falls off mountain road in North Sikkim

Four injured, truck fell while taking sharp turn: Defence**DEBRAJ DEB**
AGARTALA, DECEMBER 23

SIXTEEN INDIAN Army personnel including three Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) were killed and four injured Friday when a truck carrying them fell off a mountain road while negotiating a sharp turn at Zema in North Sikkim.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh



Remains of the truck in Zema, North Sikkim on Friday. ANI

and Home Minister Amit Shah were among those who expressed anguish over the loss of lives and wished the injured

speedy recovery. Zema is near Lachen, around 130 km from state capital Gangtok.



In a statement, Defence spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Mahendra Rawat said, "In a tragic road accident, involving an Army truck on 23 December 2022 at Zema, North Sikkim, sixteen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

SAFETY NET WITH SAVINGS

For one year from Jan, Govt makes foodgrains free for 81 crore people

Covid's PMGKAY merged with NFSA entitlement of 5 kg per person per month**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

COMBINING FISCAL prudence and the imperative of safety net, the Union government Friday said it would provide free foodgrains to beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act, 2013, as per their entitlement, for a year beginning January 2023. It has, however, discontinued the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana launched in April 2020 amid Covid-19 under which 5 kg of free foodgrains was provided to every person on top of the NFSA entitlement of 5 kg foodgrains at subsidised rates.

"The Central government provides foodgrains to people — rice at Rs 3 per kg, wheat Rs 2 per kg, and coarse grains Rs 1 per kg —

EXPLAINED Softening post-Covid

FOR THE first time, India will have a Central food security legislation which gives the poor a 'right' to receive 5 kg foodgrains free of cost. Earlier, the poor — about 81.34 crore people comprising 75 per cent living in rural areas and 50 per cent in urban areas — paid a small price of Rs 3 per kg for rice and Rs 2 per kg for wheat. The decision softens the blow the poor may suffer with the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana being discontinued by the end of the month. Under PMGKAY, the government provided 5 kg foodgrains free on top of the NFSA entitlement of 5 kg subsidised foodgrains.

under the NFSA. Now, the Prime Minister has taken a historic decision to provide food security to the poor free of cost across the country," Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal said briefing reporters on the Cabinet decisions.

The NFSA covers about 81.35 crore people and Goyal said the Centre would bear the entire cost of Rs 2 lakh crore to provide them food security. Asked if the government has decided to discontinue the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, he said, "It has been merged (with the NFSA). The free portion of

that scheme has been added to the NFSA. Now, the entire quantity of 5 kg and 35 kg under the NFSA would be available free of cost. There is no need for additional foodgrains."

The NFSA covers 50 per cent of the urban population and 75 per cent of the rural population. There are two categories of beneficiary households under the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

CABINET APPROVES REVISION IN OROP
PAGE 7

Intranasal vaccine gets clearance as booster option in Covid fight

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

RAMPING UP its anti-Covid measures amid a surge in cases in other countries, mainly China, the Government has added Bharat Biotech's intranasal vaccine IncoVacc to its vaccination programme as a mix-and-match, or heterologous, booster dose. IncoVacc is the world's first intranasal vaccine to be approved as a booster dose.

The vaccine, which is deliv-

EXPLAINED As third dose only

INCOVACC WILL be available as a booster dose only to adults who have got 2 doses of either Covaxin or Covishield. It will not be administered to any other category, for now, including those who have already taken booster dose.

ered without a needle through the nose, will be available in a few days at private centres across the country. It is expected to be available as an option on the Government's vaccine management platform, CoWIN, from late Friday.

This is the second heterologous booster to be included in the vaccination programme after Corbevax in August. IncoVacc received the nod from the country's apex drug regulator as a primary dose in September and as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Charles Sobhraj freed after 19 years in jail, deported within hours to France

'I am going straight to my family... I hope to live for many years to come'**EXPRESS EXCLUSIVE****RITU SARIN**
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

WHILE IN prison in Kathmandu, Charles Sobhraj would make the occasional phone call to me — just as he did while I covered his trial in India and during his stint in Tihar Jail. The calls from Kathmandu were mostly when he was taken out of jail for a court hearing or a visit to the hospital.

On August 15, 2016, when his release seemed imminent, Sobhraj replied to questions I sent him by email, with a caveat: the interview, he insisted, should



Sobhraj in 2016; and (right) his prison cell then. Charles Sobhraj



be published only on his release from Kathmandu jail. Since then, however, his release kept getting delayed — in 2017, he had a heart surgery and then came the Covid pandemic.

In the interview, Sobhraj spoke about his arrest from a casino in Nepal in 2003, his stint in Delhi's Tihar Jail between 1976 and 1997, and the book and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

INSIDE

ICICI CASE: CHANDA & DEEPAK KOCHHAR ARRESTED BY CBI**CYCLE POLO PLAYER, 10, DIES; KERALA GOVT SEEKS PROBE****NDTV: ROYS SELL 27.26% STAKE TO ADANI**
PAGES 10, 19

70 kids' deaths: Gambian panel holds cough syrup manufacturer Maiden culpable, seeks legal action

Report comes after Indian authority gave clean chit, said no causal link data shared**ANONNA DUTT**
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

A SELECT committee of the Gambian National Assembly has concluded that the deaths of 70 children due to acute kidney injury are linked to their consump-

tion of four contaminated syrups made by Indian pharma firm Maiden Pharmaceuticals. The committee, in its report submitted this week, has recommended that Maiden be blacklisted, its products banned in the Gambian market and legal action be pursued against the company.

Between June and November this year, 82 children were confirmed to have suffered acute kidney injury in the Gambia. Of them, 70 died.

"The Select Committee is convinced that Maiden Pharmaceuticals Ltd. is culpable and should be held accountable for

exporting the contaminated medicines that was linked to the death of at least 70 children," according to the report. It added that the syrups were contaminated with diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol.

The committee said that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

His big brother gave up cricket for him, 23-yr-old from Jammu repays faith with Rs 2.6-cr IPL deal

PAGE 1 ANCHOR**PRATYUSH RAJ**
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

HE WAS once a promising batsman, but sacrificed his career to take over the family business after his father Himanshu Sharma died of kidney failure in 2015. Vikrant Sharma's decision allowed his younger brother Vivrant to pursue his cricketing dream.

On Friday, that family deci-

sion paid off when Vivrant, the 23-year-old J&K leg-spinning all-rounder, was picked by Sunrisers Hyderabad for Rs 2.60 crore — 13-fold his base price — at the IPL mini-auction in Kochi.

And yet, Vivrant's day of joy was tinged with regret. "If my father had been alive, he would have been very happy. But still, my journey has just begun. Papa's demise hit us. My brother took over the business (acid and chemicals) and told me to focus on cricket. He had played at the inter-university level. He was my idol and I used to copy his batting stance. I was a right-handed bats-



Vivrant Sharma was picked up by Sunrisers Hyderabad

man and switched just to mimic my brother, and the change stuck," Vivrant told *The Indian Express* from Ahmedabad where J&K was involved in a Ranji Trophy game against Gujarat.

Friday also marked several record-breaking buys at the IPL with Punjab Kings shelling out an all-time high of Rs 18.25 crore for England all-rounder Sam Curran. Two other all-rounders — Cameron Green (Mumbai Indians, Rs 17.5 crore) and Ben Stokes (Chennai Super Kings, Rs 16.25 crore) — also triggered frenzied bidding in Kochi.

In Jammu, meanwhile,

Vivrant's mother Sunita Mangotra is a high-school teacher who made sure that her son chased his dream single-mindedly. "She has been the backbone of our family. She is one of the most strong-willed women I have seen. She always told me, 'don't worry, just follow your dream and make sure you reach there'," Vivrant said.

Last year, Vivrant was with Sunrisers Hyderabad as a net bowler, picked after his senior in the J&K team, Abdul Samad, shared videos of his bowling with the team management.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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NEW GENERAL STUDIES BATCHES STARTING FROM FEBRUARY 2023

First-time councillor, ex-DU prof is AAP's MCD mayor pick

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THE AAP has named Dr Shelly Oberoi as its mayor candidate and Aale Mohammad Iqbal, son of AAP's Shoaib Iqbal, as its deputy mayor candidate for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi Friday.

A former visiting assistant professor at Delhi University and a first-time councillor, 39-year-old Oberoi contested the elections from former Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta's home turf of East Patel Nagar and defeated the candidate from there, Deepali Kumar, by 269 votes. BJP has had a strong-hold in the area so far.

After being nominated for the mayor post, Oberoi thanked Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia, and tweeted, "Feeling honoured and big responsibility on the way. Shall give my best and fulfil the expectations of the general public and respected party members."

Her main focus, she said, will be fulfilling the 10 guarantees promised by the CM and working together with all councillors to shake off the city's 'garbage



Dr Shelly Oberoi, the mayor candidate, contested the polls from former Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta's home turf of East Patel Nagar

capital' tag. "Over the next few months, we will all work together to make Delhi the city that it should have been. The BJP, during its 15-year tenure, turned Delhi into the 'garbage capital of the country'. We will work together to ensure Delhi becomes clean again and to fulfil the promises made by the CM and deliver the 10 guarantees."

She further said they will fix all problems that the BJP could not resolve during their rule. "Our

aim is to make Delhi better together with everyone. We will soon work by preparing a blueprint for cleaning the capital; we will start by clearing the mountains of garbage. All 250 councilors will come together to clean and transform Delhi... they have already started working in their respective wards."

Born and brought up in Delhi, Oberoi joined AAP as an activist in 2013 and was the party's state Mahila Morcha vice-president till 2020. She holds a PhD in management studies from IGNOU's School of Management Studies and is a lifetime member of the Indian Commerce Association. Besides DU, she has also taught at several other universities like NMIMS, IP and IGNOU.

The party also announced names for standing committee members — Aamil Malik (Ward No 246, Karawal Nagar), Raminder Kaur (Ward No 100, Harinagar), Mohini Jeenwal (Ward No 218, Seemapuri) and Sarika Choudhary (Ward No 142 Jangpura). The names were announced after the party's Political Affairs Committee met at Kejriwal's home in the morning.

Congratulating the candidates, Kejriwal tweeted: "Congratulations and best wishes to AAP candidates ... God bless (you) all to make our beloved Delhi clean."

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, "Every political party is free to develop its leadership but the names announced for the posts of mayor, deputy mayor and standing committee members of the MCD has surprised Delhiites. The party (AAP) totally neglected major segments of Delhi's population — Poorvanchal and Vaishya Samaj."

The mayoral election will be held on January 6, 2023. The members nominated by the Lieutenant Governor cannot vote during the mayoral polls. Only the elected councillors, 14 MLAs of the Delhi Assembly and MPs representing constituencies that cover wholly or partly the corporation area are eligible to vote. If the BJP does not oppose, Oberoi will become the first mayor of the reunified MCD. The new mayor's tenure will end in April 2023, when mayoral polls will be held again with new candidates.

Sisodia writes to L-G: 'Interfering in work'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

IN A new flashpoint between the AAP and the Delhi L-G, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has written a letter to Vinai Kumar Saxena accusing him of "interfering" with the government's day-to-day work and "sidelining" elected ministers by giving direct orders to bureaucrats.

"I am constrained to address the present communications to you in light of certain extremely worrying developments which have been brought to my notice, namely, that your office has of late, in the recent past, resorted to the practice of calling for files

from various departments through their respective secretaries, chief secretaries and transacting business thereon such as approving the issuance of notifications etc, completely bypassing the concerned minister as also the cabinet," wrote Sisodia in the letter.

The L-G House refused to comment on the letter.

Calling the L-G's actions "violations" of the Supreme Court, he wrote, "I am constrained to record that this unwholesome development apart from being contrary to settled tradition and practice pertaining to the transaction of business of the government, is contrary to the applicable constitutional provisions enshrined in Article 239AA, the

extent statutory regime put in place by the GNCTD Act, 1991 and, last but not the least, the law laid down by a constitution bench of 5 Ld. Judges of the Supreme Court in the judgement in state (NCT of Delhi) v Union of India and Anr., (2018) 8 SCC 501."

He also criticised the L-G over his recent decision to recall 11 files pending with the Delhi government for environment clearance. Sisodia wrote that the L-G is not vested with any independent decision-making authority in respect of any matter pertaining to transferred subjects and is in fact bound to act on the "aid and advice" tendered to him by the Council of Ministers.

"It is most humbly submit-

ted that the recent actions of Your Excellency giving orders directly to officers on transferred subjects bypassing the Council of Ministers is contrary to law and orders of Hon'ble SC. However, if I am incorrect, those provisions may be indicated which empower his Excellency to issue such orders," Sisodia wrote.

"I therefore beseech you to reconsider the advisability of the course of action which I believe has been put into motion and take timely and necessary corrective steps so as to eschew avoidable controversy and embarrassment which would doubtless not be in the best interest of the residents of the NCT of Delhi," the letter read.

Delhi govt schools to shut for winter break from Jan 1-15

New Delhi: Delhi government schools will be closed for winter vacation from January 1-15, the DoE said in a circular Thursday. However, students from classes IX-XII will attend compulsory remedial classes from January 2-14 for revision. **ENS**

Uttar Pradesh Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Pashu Chikitsa Vigyan Vishwavidyalaya Evam Go Anusandhan Sansthan, Mathura (U.P.) -281001

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* As per citizen charter of Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas.

[#] For vulnerable population – Children under 5 year age, old age groups, pregnant women, predisposed health conditions ie illness of respiratory, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular systems, outdoor working people

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AFTER L-G MEETING EARLIER THIS WEEK

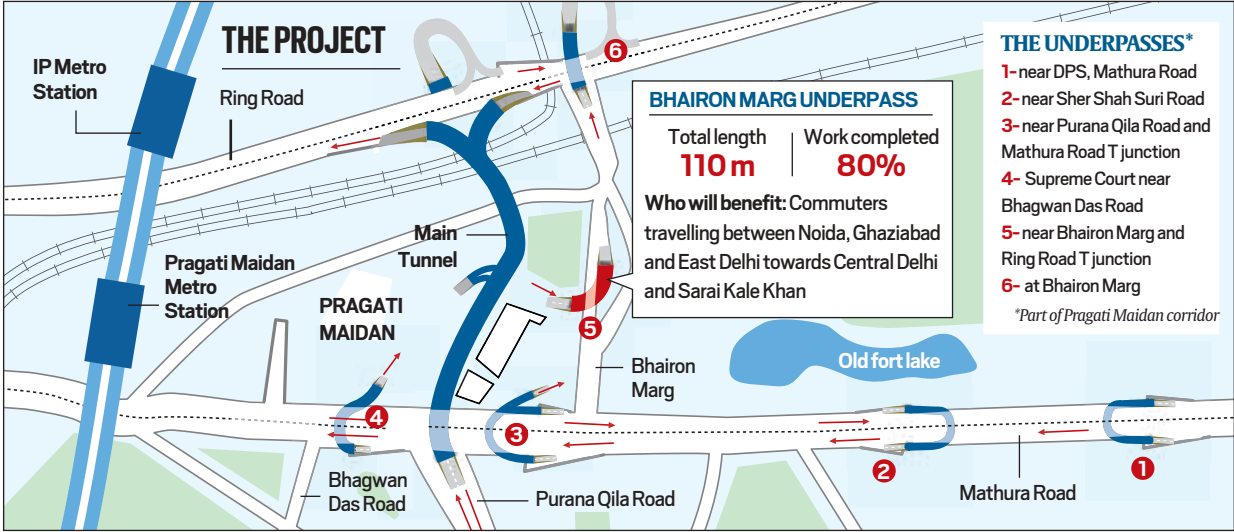
Last underpass on Pragati Maidan stretch likely to be wrapped up by February-end

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THE BHAIRON Marg underpass, part of the Pragati Maidan integrated corridor, is expected to be completed by the end of February next year, said officials, adding that 80% of work is complete.

This will benefit commuters travelling between Noida, Ghaziabad and East Delhi towards Central Delhi and Sarai Kale Khan, who can expect a smooth and signal-free commute. Currently, commuters use the Ring Road and then take a U-turn towards Sarai Kale Khan, which causes massive traffic jams on Ring Road and Bhairon Marg and other connected roads.

The Integrated Redevelopment of Pragati Maidan comprises six underpasses and one tunnel. While five underpasses and the 1.36-km tunnel were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June and are now operational,



the last underpass – between Bhairon Marg and Ring Road T junction – was held up.

Officials said construction was delayed due to technical issues as the underpass passes beneath a busy railway track. Besides, the location is also very close to the Yamuna river and

faced waterlogging issues during the monsoon.

Officials said Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena recently held a high-level meeting with the Public Works Department (PWD), the executing agency, and Northern Railways and directed the departments concerned to expedite the work and complete it by February. Official sources said the LG also visited the construction site.

The total length of the underpass is 110 metres. Work on a 73-metre-long portion has been completed through box pushing technique, said officials.

“80 per cent of the work is now completed but work on the remaining portion had been pending since May due to lack of coordination between the PWD and Railways,” said sources.

After the meeting on December 20, the matter was also taken up with Union Railway

Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Following this, the railways gave two blocks of six and four hours each, instead of the earlier single four-hour block, for pushing earth below the tracks.

According to an official overseeing the project: “The speed of pushing during the initial days was 10–15 mm per day. Now, it has increased to 450–500 mm per day.”

Tunneling work at this site involves three-lane box pushing, where designated boxes of earth under the surface are pushed out using manpower and heavy equipment like mobile cranes and rotors while simultaneously ensuring that the sides and roof of the portions tunneled do not cave in by using RCC strengthening measures, said officials.

“Tunneling below the railway tracks, which is a tricky exercise anyway, has become even trickier at this location as the tracks on the surface over here are curved and not straight. Besides, it is very close to Yamuna which is also an issue,” said officials.

Bajrang Dal disrupts namaz in Gurgaon again



A video grab shows the group at an open ground in Gurgaon's Sector 69, Friday. Express

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

A GROUP of Bajrang Dal members disrupted namaz at an open ground in Gurgaon's Sector 69 Friday. In videos of the incident, Bajrang Dal members were seen telling people who had gathered for the weekly prayers to leave and not to pray in open spaces.

“This is not Udaipur; this is Gurgaon,” Amit, who is a part of the Bajrang Dal, is heard saying in one of the videos. He was among those who protested against offering namaz in open spaces in Gurgaon last year as well. He told the media that the people who had arrived to pray were “from outside”.

“It does not matter whether they have permission to pray at six locations or not. We will not allow namaz to take place in the open. We will scale up the protests if prayers continue in the coming weeks,” he said.

Praveen Saini alias Praveen Hindustani, district coordinator of the Bajrang Dal, told the media, “They are lying and saying that they have been praying here for 15 years... *CM saab ke spashit aadesh hain ki khulle mein namaz nahi hogi* (the CM has clearly said that namaz will not happen in open spaces).”

One of the members of the group that disrupted the namaz is heard saying in the video, “We did not even know that Muslims

come in thousands and pray here... What happened is that a few Fridays ago, I was passing by and there was a traffic jam. That was when I realised namaz is offered here. People come even from outside for namaz here... *Hume bahut ghabrahat hui...* They are gathering here today, tomorrow somewhere else... This when the Haryana government has said namaz should not be offered in open spaces.”

Police said they had sent a team to the area and were looking into the matter. No complaint has been received so far, they added. Police sources said namaz is currently being offered at six locations in Gurgaon – at three locations in Udyog Vihar, near water tank in Sector 43, Leisure Valley and at HUDA ground in Sector 69.

ACP Sadar, Sanjeev Balhara, said, “Today afternoon, some members of the Bajrang Dal started sloganeering and disrupted namaz prayers at a ground in Sector 69. The incident remained peaceful. The said ground is HUDA land and is among six locations where namaz is offered. We are yet to receive a complaint in the matter. If a complaint is received, legal action shall be taken accordingly.”

Gurgaon had witnessed protests over offering of namaz in public places from members of right-wing outfits and locals earlier too.

Aaftab refuses to take voice test, court rejects plea

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THOUGH Aaftab Poonawala, accused of killing his live-in partner Shraddha Walkar, told a Delhi court that he does not consent to a voice sampling test, the court Friday rejected it by observing that even though he had a right to a fair trial, “it is true that fair investigation is required in larger public interest”.

Metropolitan Magistrate Vijayshree Rahtor directed police to produce the accused before CFSL, CBI Lodhi Colony, at 9.45 am on Saturday for the test. The court said it “can be conducted even if the accused does not consent to it”.

A voice sample is like a fingerprint impression, signature or specimen handwriting of an accused.

By giving the voice sample, the accused merely gives ‘identification data’ to the investigating agency.

Aaftab was produced via video conferencing before the judge and said he will go with his lawyers, who opposed the police application, for the test.

Special public prosecutor Amit Prasad relied on a slew of judgments to argue that “at the stage of investigation and for collection of evidence, the accused has no right to be heard”.

The court said even though the “accused is not willing to give voice sample for voice sampling test, however, I am of the considered view that accused can still be asked to give the voice sample to investigating agency for reaching the ends of justice and also for fair investigation”.

“True, a fair trial is a right of the accused, but it is also true that fair investigation is required in larger public interest as the offence cannot escape and crime

cannot go unnoticed merely because the accused is not ready to aid in the investigation,” the court said.

It further said there is “no such prohibition of compulsory consent of recording accused in handwriting, fingerprints impression and voice sampling test” and that the “voice samples procured for purpose of investigation cannot be considered as testimonial compulsion”.

“This is only the method by which investigating agency collects material against the accused for... attaining ends of justice,” it said.

On December 20, police had moved an application for the voice sample test. Aaftab's lawyers could not meet him despite the fact that one of his lawyers was present during this hearing and knew of the application, the court said.

Aaftab had told the court he would like to consult with his lawyers. His lawyer, M S Khan, told the court he wanted a copy of the application since the rights of his client would be decided. However, the court said this “cannot be possible as the nature of the application was well within the knowledge of the counsel for accused”.

Taking note of the fact that the lawyers did not meet Aaftab, the court said these were “merely delaying tactics on part of the accused”. The court relied on a slew of Supreme Court judgments which held that accused can be asked to give “handwriting, fingerprints, voice sample, etc. for the purpose of just and fair investigation”.

It said during the investigation stage, police will only collect evidence against the accused and present them in its final report and the accused would get a chance to defend himself during trial.

Man held for killing live-in partner, dumping body in Kullu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GHAZIABAD, DECEMBER 23

THE GHAZIABAD police Friday arrested a man for allegedly killing his live-in partner and dumping her body in a forested area in Himachal Pradesh. The accused has been identified as Raman. The victim, Divya, had been missing since May.

DCP (Trans Hindon) Deeksha Sharma said, “The mother of the deceased had complained that her daughter was missing since May and suspected the accused of being involved. He confessed to taking her to Kullu in Himachal Pradesh. He strangled her with a scarf and threw her body in the jungle there. Shimla Police had recovered her body the same month; the identity has since been confirmed from tattoos, etc as that of the victim.”

The contact and travel history of the accused has been examined.

The family had initially filed a missing person's complaint when their daughter first went missing. In the FIR filed on December 18, based on another complaint by the family, they alleged that Divya and Raman had a two-year-old daughter, and that Raman got married to someone else despite their relationship, which had led to quarrels between the two. They alleged Raman and his family had also insisted Divya abort their second child, which she refused.

Police said the vehicle used by the accused has been recovered. The FIR has been registered under IPC Sections related to kidnapping and murder. Raman is from Vasundhara in Ghaziabad, said police.

Minor kidnapped, sexually assaulted

New Delhi: A minor girl was allegedly kidnapped by unknown persons and sexually assaulted in Outer Delhi. The girl went missing from her house on Wednesday and was found a day later. Police said they have identified the accused and raids are on to arrest him. “After raids and searches by staff and PCR teams, she was found. She is stable,” said DCP (Outer North) Devesh Mahla.

Police said the minor was found at a nearby park, where the accused had left her after allegedly raping her. “Doctors said she was sexually assaulted. We registered a case of rape and POCSO Act,” said the DCP.

Her family said she was playing near the house when a man came and picked her up. While the father alleged police didn't take their complaint seriously, police denied the allegations and said they registered an FIR as soon as he approached them. **ENS**

TUG OF WAR

Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora and senior officers play tug of war during the inauguration of the newly-constructed ‘Commando Obstacles’ at Police Parade Ground, New Police Lines, Kingsway Camp on Friday. Praveen Khanna

Rahul's day in Delhi to span 23 km, touch Ashram, Red Fort

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THE CONGRESS'S Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi will cover a roughly 23 km stretch in Delhi, starting from Badarpur border where it enters the city from Haryana, and culminating at Red Fort, with a two-hour break at Ashram in the afternoon. It will pass through Nizamuddin, India Gate, ITO, Delhi Gate and Daryaganj.

After a day's march through Delhi, the yatra will halt for around 9 days before resuming on January 3.

Former MLA Narender Nath, coordinator for the yatra in Delhi, said AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi is likely to participate in Delhi, as is Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge. Actor and Makkal Needhi Maiam president Kamal Haasan is also likely to join the yatra here, Narender Nath said. “We have been working on publicity and mobilisation. The public appears to be enthusiastic and everybody in the party has been involved, including former MLAs and MPs,” he said.

The publicity for the yatra has been in full swing with posters, hoardings and flags lining the yatra route from Faridabad onwards.

At Badarpur border, the Delhi leg of the yatra will begin with the flag being handed over to DPCC president Anil Chaudhary by Uday Bhan, president of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee. With the Delhi stretch concluding in the evening, Rahul Gandhi will then visit Rajghat, Shanti Van, Shakti Sthal and Veer Bhoomi to pay homage.

While Nath said a large gath-



ering is expected even at the Badarpur border, the second Congress leader said around 30,000 people have registered to participate. The party had invited people to register for e-passes to be a part of the yatra. Chaudhary had said earlier this week that buses would be arranged from different parts of Delhi to take people to the yatra. The party had also made senior leaders in charge of the yatra in each parliamentary constituency.

According to an advisory issued by Delhi Traffic police, the yatra will cross the border at 6.30 am, reach Jaidev Ashram near Ashram Chowk at 10.30 am, concluding at Red Fort about 6.30 pm. Police anticipate heavy traffic along the route, and have advised commuters to bypass it and use public transport. They also advised travellers going to ISBT, railway stations and airports to plan trips well in advance.

RELATED REPORT, P8

Study begins on real-time sources of air pollution in Delhi



Part of the project is a mobile lab that will collect data on pollution levels in different parts of the city. Prem Nath Pandey

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THE REAL-TIME source apportionment study for Delhi which is expected to help identify the sources of air pollution in the city in real time has begun and will help Delhi take action to reduce pollution based on its findings, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday.

The project is being implemented by IIT Kanpur, IIT Delhi, and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), along with Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC). After a review meeting on the study, Kejriwal said: “We have ordered officials to immediately take action to reduce pollution based on the study's findings. The Delhi government will place the analysis before CAQM (Commission for Air Quality Management) so the Centre, too, can act upon the problem.”

According to a communication from the Chief Minister's office, the team from IIT Kanpur informed officials at the meeting that “the secondary inorganic aerosols which travel long distances contribute to a large proportion of the air pollution mix”.

What the study involves

THE study involves a super-site, where equipment has been set up to monitor parameters like particulate matter and other gaseous pollutants, determine sources of pollutants in real time, and generate forecasts on hourly, daily, and weekly basis.

They identified biomass burning of wood and stubble, vehicular emissions and construction and road dust as other major sources of PM2.5 over the past month.

Kejriwal has directed the Environment Department and the DPCC to take action to identify the sources and locations of pollution based on the information that the study generates. The project was approved by the cabinet last year and a MoU was signed by the Delhi government with IIT Kanpur. Part of the project is a mobile laboratory which will collect data on pollution levels to determine their sources in different parts of the city.

The Ashram flyover is being extended to connect directly to the DND Flyway. The PWD is yet to confirm the completion date. Abhinav Saha

New Delhi

Delhi court summons Kamal Nath's nephew in fertiliser scam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

A DELHI court on Friday summoned Ratul Puri, nephew of former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, in a money laundering case involving an alleged fertiliser scam.

The ED investigation stems from a CBI case in which accused persons entered into a criminal conspiracy during 2007-14 to defraud IFFCO and Indian Potash Limited by fraudulently importing fertilisers and other materials for fertiliser production at inflated prices and claimed higher subsidy from the central government, causing loss of several crores of rupees.

The CBI had alleged that money was paid through hawala operators and intermediaries and group companies of Rajiv Saxena, who is an accused in AgustaWestland case also, were used for receipt of commission from supplier of fertilisers. Puri was accused by the ED of assisting the accused by concealing proceeds of crime and by showing it to be untainted property.

The court said there is sufficient material on record to take cognizance of the offence under Section 3 read with Section 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The court agreed with the ED allegations that Saxena transferred the proceeds of crime to individuals like Sanjay Jain, who was directly connected with the activity of concealing the proceeds of crime by layering it through the group of companies of Rajiv Saxena, Alankit group of companies, Rayon Trading company and Moser Baer India Ltd. company of Ratul Puri, "whereby he came to acquire an amount of Rs 78,39,82,343 which was nothing but proceeds of crime".

Five other accused were, however, not summoned by the court due to lack of sufficient material against them.

New Parliament, G20 stage, Ram temple: How BJP will set stage in '23 for Modi '24

THE NEERJA CHOWDHURY COLUMN
Weekly insight into what's changing in national politics — and why

THE IMPOSING Taj Mahal hotel in Mumbai was lit like a bride in India's Tricolors. So was the iconic Gateway of India. The streets of Mumbai had been cleaned up — at least for those three days when G-20 delegates of the Development Working group were meeting in the metropolis, hosted by India now the head of the G-20 group for a year.

Of course, critics were quick to point out that slums near the airport were hidden by large hoardings, as was done in Ahmedabad when Donald Trump visited India. But it did not take away from the beauty of the heritage buildings in India's most resilient city — and a sense of feel-good it brought — even temporarily to its residents.

After their deliberations on issues of sustainable growth, the G-20 delegates were taken to the picturesque, 2000-year-old Kanheri caves, highlighting India's linkages to the Buddhist world, not lost on the Japanese or the Chinese. By choosing the Taj Mahal hotel, the scene of terror attacks by terrorists from Pakistan in 2008, India wanted to emphasise, subtly, — and this too was not lost on the delegates — that terrorism remained the world's collective challenge.

Mumbai earlier this month gave a foretaste of what is likely to follow in the coming year but on a grander scale. And as another year comes to a close, it's time to look ahead, at the preparations the Narendra Modi-led BJP, and indeed the Opposition parties, are making for 2023 and for the big electoral battle that lies ahead in 2024.

In the last years, we have



The Taj Mahal Palace hotel at Colaba in Mumbai last week. Pradip Das

seen Modi the Hindu hriday samrat, Modi the nationalist, undertaking a surgical strike after Pulwama, Modi the welfareist doling out free rations during Covid besides gas cylinders. Earlier, there was the jan dhan yojana and a plethora of schemes which reached something, even small amounts, in the hands of many.

There is Modi the aspirationalist, who sells big dreams to make people feel good about themselves despite the economic distress they may face. The OBC Modi has not yet got full play. This, too, is expected in January 2023 with the judgment by Justice G Rohini in the ongoing case to decide the redistribution of quota within the OBC reservations — and it may help the most backward castes, being wooed by the BJP.

But what we are likely to see in 2023 is Modi portrayed as the Vishwa Guru. With India the president of the G-20, foreign policy is likely to drive BJP's narrative next year. Though the leadership of G-20, a powerful group of industrialised nations and influential developing nations, is given by rotation, India has got it for the

year 2023. Will this help in the run up to the general elections due in mid 2024?

It is an opportunity the ruling party has seized and the prime minister is pulling out all stops to make the September summit of the G20 a significant milestone. Two hundred events are planned through the year all over the country to showcase its cultural heritage, its development, and spruce up its cities as well as tourist destinations; hopefully, they will increase the tourist footprints.

But what it is likely to do for sure is to add to an already larger than life image of the prime minister who will be leading from the front, hosting world leaders from powerful nations, including US, China, Russia, France, UK, Germany.

The summit will be watched with interest by the world. But it will be watched even more closely by Indians at home. As it is, many, particularly young Indians, say they are attracted to Modi because he has enhanced India's image globally.

It may be wishful thinking but it is possible that the ruling

party may scale down the contentious part of its agenda in the run-up to the G-20 summit — like ED raids against opponents and aggressive attacks on the opposition, which have done its image damage to show that India is a vibrant and functioning democracy.

There are three events around which the BJP narrative is likely to emerge in 2023. These are the opening of the new Parliament due in February-March, hopefully in the second half of the Budget session of Parliament; the G-20 summit in September and then the opening of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, most likely at the beginning of 2024. Today, the mandir signifies not so much the building of a long sought-after temple in Ayodhya; its message is more about Modi — that he delivers what he says he will do. This, too, will be part of the narrative.

Interspersed between these events are state elections. The BJP is on a shaky ground in Karnataka due to go to the polls in the summer of 2023. Since the G-20 presidency lasts until December 2023, the BJP is bound to encash the newly cre-

ated fervour for Modi after the September summit to build a momentum for the crucial winter elections due in Telangana and the north Indian states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The BJP has a high stake in all these elections. These will set the tempo for the Big Battle in 2024.

From the big picture to the details, the party has been concentrating its attention on 144 Lok Sabha seats in the last six months. These are seats where the BJP came second or third in the 2019 elections. Union ministers were put in charge of these constituencies, under the watchful eye of Amit Shah and JP Nadda, to examine the difficulties and suggest what the party could do to win these seats. Most of these constituencies are in the southern states and in West Bengal, where the party is not strong.

But victory in some of these seats could offset the loss, due to anti-incumbency, of some of the 303 seats it won last time. The party has added 16 more seats to this list which were won by Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal(U) and he is now on the other side of the fence. It is focusing as much on micro-management as on the macro sweeps.

What could upset the BJP's well-laid plans is China, Covid and the economy. China is trying to spoil the copybook with skirmishes in Tawang and the border. With the abrupt end to China's zero-Covid policy, the upsurge is being watched carefully lest it yield a new variant. How does the economic recovery play out in 2023 given the looming recession in the US?

And what does all this mean for the Opposition? That will be next week's column. For the moment, the Opposition can take comfort in the dictum politics rarely moves as per a script.

Neerja Chowdhury, Contributing Editor, The Indian Express, has covered the last 10 Lok Sabha elections.



Union ministers Piyush Goyal and Anurag Thakur during a briefing after the Cabinet meeting on Friday. Anil Sharma

Cabinet nod for revision in pensions paid under OROP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THE UNION Cabinet on Friday approved a revision in the pensions paid to retired defence personnel and their families under One Rank One Pension (OROP) at an annual additional expenditure of Rs 8,450 crore and arrears of Rs 23,638 crore.

At a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Cabinet approved the increase that would be applicable from July 1, 2019.

"Pension of the past pensioners would be re-fixed on the basis of average of minimum and maximum pension of defence forces retirees of calendar year 2018 in the same rank with the same length of service," a government statement said.

The revision would be applicable to all retired defence personnel up to June 30, 2019, but not including those who took pre-mature retirement till July 1, 2014. The government said the revision would benefit over 25.13 lakh pensioners, including 4.52 lakh more recent retirees, and their families.

"Pension for those drawing above the average shall be protected. The benefit would also be extended to family pensioners, including war widows and disabled pensioners," the statement read.

The arrears would be paid in four half-yearly installments, except for those who receive special, liberalised family pension and gallantry award winners, who will get it in one installment.

The total arrears from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022 amounted to Rs.23,638 crore and this expenditure was "over and above the ongoing expenditure on account of OROP," the statement said.

"The government took a historic decision to implement OROP for the defence forces personnel/family pensioners and issued policy letter on November 07, 2015 for revision of pension w.e.f. July 01, 2014. In the said policy letter, it was mentioned that in future, the pension would be re-fixed every 5 years. Approx. Rs 57,000 crore has been spent @Rs 7,123 crore per year in eight years in the implementation of OROP," the statement read.

MONGOLIA

67 years of bilateral relations with India

ADVERTORIAL



MESSAGE

GANBOLD DAMBAEV

Ambassador of Mongolia to the Republic of India

MONGOLIA and India are commemorating the 67th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries this year. The official establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955 was based on age-old bonds and historical, spiritual and cultural links that bind our nations. Today, Mongolia and India enjoy a strategic partnership, which gives us an opportunity to broaden our relations in all aspects of cooperation.

Oil refining is one of the pioneering projects in terms of economic cooperation between our two governments. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee for Excellence in Information & Communication Technology and the Mongolia-India Friendship school are the projects that will contribute to the further development of our bilateral collaboration.

The Defence Ministers' visit in September and October 2022 is clear evidence of our defence cooperation development.

Cooperation in infrastructure, agriculture, husbandry production, education and medical sectors has many mutual benefits for both countries and we are working on the implementation of joint projects.

Mongolians refer to India as the Land of Lord Buddha. During his historical visit to Mongolia in 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a sampling of the Lord Buddha Banyan tree. The Government of India sponsored the new publications of the Mongol Kanjur, which are collections of the Lord Buddha's teaching, and presented to the Mongolian monasteries, universities and libraries. Last June, the relics of Buddha were brought by India's Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju and displayed in Mongolia. Many Mongolian monks are studying in India, while many Mongolians visit India as pilgrims. These and many more spiritual interactions are reflections of how close we are - spiritually and culturally.

According to an old legend, in ancient Mongolia, scholars and monks used to go to India and on the way back, carried water from the Ganga river. They pour the water into the valley of one of the Eastern provinces of Mongolia. This is how the beautiful lake Ganga was created in Mongolia. In this regard, I believe that Mongolia can offer Indians a unique tourist destination. You can drive the whole day and see only wild animals and enjoy the limitless vastness of the East. You can roam in the famous Gobi desert in the South, climb snow-peaked mountains or hike in their foothills in the West and stay with reindeer herders in the subarctic taiga forest with pure fresh-water lakes in the North of Mongolia. Hopefully, the establishment of direct flights between our capitals in the near future will make difference for all of us.

Age-old bonds turn to modern bonhomie

INDIA and Mongolia are ancient lands of Asia and the historic and cultural collaboration between the two countries are fascinating and unique. The link between these two lands goes back to when Indian culture and ideas spread to Central Asia and Siberia. Indians consider the Mongol's veneration of Sanskrit a matter of special privilege and hold the country in high esteem for preserving the language in translation and through manuscripts — the vast collection of the precious Sanskrit text on Indian philosophy, poetry, logic and astronomy — over centuries.

According to some Mongolian scholars, Buddhism traversed to Mongolian steppes through Tibet. During the Hunnu State of the 3rd century BC and later during the period of the Great Mongol Empire Buddhist monks, and several traders from India visited Mongolia. In 552 BC, Lama Narendrayash from the State of Udayana (Northern India) with some others visited Nirun state. For most Mongols, India is the land of Buddha, and therefore, Lamas and students from Mongolia used to travel to Nalanda, which was once the largest residential university in India to study Buddhism.

Former Indian Prime Minister, the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, said in 1978, "The historic and cultural collaboration between India and Mongolia is most fascinating and unique and is as old as the history of the spread of Indian culture and ideas into Central Asia and Siberia. We hold the people of Mongolia in high esteem for preserving in translation, as well as in manuscripts, the vast collection of our precious Sanskrit text on our philosophy, poetry, logic and astronomy lost by us over centuries. In modern times, several Mongols visited India — the land of Buddhism."

India established formal diplomatic relations with Mongolia on December 24, 1955, becoming the first country outside



the Soviet bloc to establish diplomatic relations with the land. Since then, there have been numerous diplomatic visits and interactions between the two countries. India sponsored Mongolia's candidacy for

membership in the United Nations in 1961 despite opposition from Taiwan and China. In 1973, Mongolia reciprocated the Indian gesture by becoming the second country after Bhutan to recognise Bangladesh as an independent country following the liberation of Bangladesh by Indian troops.

Indo-Mongolian relations have been growing ever since it was resolved to elevate ties to a "new level of partnership" during the India visit of Mongolian President Enkhbayar. India provides technical and economic cooperation to Mongolia in the fields of higher education, agriculture, information technology and human resource develop-

ment. Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi visited Mongolia on May 16, 2015, where he also addressed the Parliament. He also handed over Bhabhatron equipment to the National Cancer Centre in the

Mongolian capital Ulan Bator. Furthermore, during PM Modi's visit in May 2015, a \$1 billion line of credit was extended to Mongolia, for infrastructure development, amongst many other fields.

COMMEMORATING 67 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND MONGOLIA



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8 IN PARLIAMENT WINTER SESSION

FROM THE GALLERY

FROM THE CHAIR

RAJYA SABHA

“This brief Session was marked with display of wit, sarcasm, humour and intellect. I hope to experience more of it with greater indulgence from experienced members.”

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR
Chairman, on the last day of the Winter Session

LOK SABHA

“As many as 298 matters of public importance were raised under Rule 377. Members also raised 374 matters of urgent public importance during Zero Hour.”

OM BIRLA, Speaker, at his valedictory address

Winter Session concludes early amid fewer disruptions, high productivity

Nine Bills introduced, seven passed; Opp says govt ran away from debates on contentious issues

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THE WINTER Session of Parliament ended prematurely on Friday, after a 13-day run marked by the passage of seven Bills, and protests and walkouts by the Opposition over not being allowed to debate contentious issues, particularly the clash between Indian and Chinese troops at the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh. The session was originally scheduled to end on December 29, after 17 sittings.

Starting December 7, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha registered productivity of about 97 per cent and 103 per cent, respectively, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi said the decision to curtail the session had the consensus of all political parties, keeping the “demand and sentiments of Members of Parliament for Christmas/year-end celebrations”.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Opposition wanted to raise issues concerning the people but the government did not want to debate them. “Along with 18 other Opposition parties, we tried our best to raise issues ranging from Chinese incursion to other issues of public importance. The government should have accepted our demand and held a debate. But they did not follow rules or precedents. We let the House



(From left) Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Congress leader Sonia Gandhi meet at the Speaker's chamber on Friday. ANI

function smoothly and did not cause disruptions... But the government ran away from all debates,” Kharge said while addressing the party's general secretaries, state unit heads, and CLP leaders on Friday.

Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said many Opposition parties had pointed out during the beginning of the session that the “government does not have any Bills or agenda”. “The DMK, BJD, and many regional parties had demanded that the session be curtailed since it has no legislative business. Now they have got an excuse in Covid-19 and have adjourned,” he said.

EXPLAINED
Lack of road map or festive call?

THE OPPOSITION says that the Winter Session winding up six days ahead of schedule is indicative of the fact that the government lacked a definite road map in terms of Bills and agenda. The government, meanwhile, insists that the decision to curtail the session was consensual, keeping the Christmas and New Year celebrations in mind.

In his valedictory address on Friday, Birla said nine Bills were introduced, of which seven were passed, including the supplementary demands for grants, the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) and the Maritime Anti-Piracy Bill. Big-ticket proposals such as the Digital Data Protection Bill, Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill and the Higher Education Commission of India, which were not listed, will now not see the light of day before next year.

By and large, the winter session had a relatively smooth run compared to the previous few sessions when extreme acrimony between the Opposition and the

Treasury benches was observed. This time, the Opposition parties largely stuck to walkouts, responding to the government turning down their demands.

The primary flashpoint was the December 9 border clash at Tawang, reports of which surfaced on December 12. The next day, when the House commenced, the Opposition members started pressing their demands for a debate, leading to adjournments. Eventually, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh read out a statement on the matter, but the Opposition's demand for seeking clarifications was again turned down.

The session also saw the government's push to have a say on appointments to the higher judiciary. In fact, on his very first day in the post, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar flagged the Supreme Court's 2015 decision to strike down the NJAC Bill, which, he said, amounted to “compromise of parliamentary sovereignty”.

The House also saw heated arguments on the state of the economy during the debate on the supplementary demands for grants. One such exchange was witnessed between Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who defended the government's handling of the macroeconomic fundamentals, and TMC MP Mahua Moitra, who derided it as “pappu” to underline its “incompetence”.

Meanwhile, in their addresses on Friday, both Birla and Dhankhar said agreements and disagreements on issues may be reflected in debates and not through disruptions.

5 QUESTIONS

ON THE LAST DAY OF THE WINTER SESSION, RAJYA SABHA MP JOHN BRITTAS OF THE CPI(M) SPEAKS TO ESHA ROY ON WHAT HE EXPECTED FROM THE SESSION AND HOW PRODUCTIVE IT WAS

‘Winter Session of Parliament was not at all productive’

How productive was the Winter Session?

It was not at all productive as far as I was concerned. In terms of parliamentary democracy, the Opposition was not allowed to raise and discuss certain issues, such as the standoff between the Indian and Chinese armies at the border. But the government shied away from discussing the incident, and was very secretive about it...

The number of functional hours seems to have been more in this session...

(Being) productive is not functioning without proper discussion, questions raised or discourse. Simply pushing Bills through and bulldozing the Opposition on various issues does not make a Parliament session productive.

What were your expectations from the session?

The government seems to have been short of business this session. The kind of Bills that had been introduced were not satisfactory or robust. The discussion was inadequate. Moreover, the session had anyway been pushed back because of the Assembly elections in Gujarat — just because some ministers needed to campaign in the state. This is not acceptable and affects the

duration of the session... I am of the view that elections... should not affect the functioning of Parliament...

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh accused the government of curtailing the session in light of the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi has retaliated by saying that



Ramesh and Rahul Gandhi did not even attend the session. What are your thoughts?

The programme of a political party is its internal matter.

What the ruling party and the parliamentary affairs minister should focus on is the continued absence of the Prime Minister in Parliament, and not the absence of individual members in either House...

There were 82 starred questions and over 1,900 unstarred questions which received responses from various ministries. Has this been adequate?

As parliamentarians, we raised many questions, but we did not receive proper answers. The ministries and departments not only were often short of data, but also circumvented giving replies to what is actually asked. Sometimes, we receive different replies on the same issue...

‘No previous govt interfered with judiciary as excessively’: Jairam writes to Dhankhar

Calls RS Chairman's response to Sonia's remarks on the issue 'extraordinary'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THE CONGRESS on Friday wrote to Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, saying he should not “cloak the debate” on the government's handling of the judiciary “in the guise of concern for parliamentary sovereignty”, while terming his response to UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi's remarks on the issue as “extraordinary”.

In a letter to Dhankhar, Congress general secretary in-charge (communications) Jairam Ramesh alleged that no previous government, since the introduction of the Collegium system, has “interfered as excessively and thor-



Congress leader Jairam Ramesh

oughly in the functioning of our judiciary”. “Mr Chairman, you call upon us to avoid taking partisan stances on constitutional offices. We agree. We also point out that this entire debate was initiated entirely, and without provocation, by the Law Minister,” Jairam wrote, adding that the argument that the judiciary cannot do more than interpret the laws was “incorrect”.

“The power of judicial review is part of the basic structure of our Constitution. It vests the courts

with the authority to strike down legislation that is in violation of the Constitution or executive action that is simply mala fide. It is precisely these checks and balances under the Constitution which are not being adhered to by the government that has resulted in the current state of unease,” he said.

Addressing Congress MPs as the head of the party's parliamentary party, Gandhi had on December 21 alleged that a “calculated attempt” was “underway to delegitimise the judiciary”. “Ministers and even a high constitutional authority have been enlisted to make speeches attacking the judiciary on various grounds,” she had said.

Dhankhar responded the

next day, saying: “This office cannot be allowed to be dragged on the partition stance. I cannot be enlisted either by you or them to delegitimise judiciary.”

In his letter, Jairam pointedly asked Dhankhar if it was not a fact that despite the Collegium's recommendations, “The government has delayed important judicial appointments on multiple occasions, knowing fully well that such delays are effectively a denial.”

“...Is it not a fact that this government attempted to amend the qualifications and manner of appointment to various Judicial and Quasi-Judicial Tribunals, such as the NGT, and had those choices struck down by the Supreme Court?” Jairam added.

Dhankhar defends his remarks on Sonia: I will be abdicating my oath if I do not react

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

DEFENDING HIS comments on Congress leader and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi's remarks on “an attempt to delegitimise the judiciary”, Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Friday that his “office cannot be allowed to be dragged on partisan stance”.

“Search your heart, the damning consequence of it. An impression is sought to be imparted that this Chair will become party to a pernicious, sinister design at the instance of the government to delegitimise judiciary. Delegitimising judiciary means death-knell of democracy,” Dhankhar said in Rajya Sabha.



Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar in Rajya Sabha on Friday. PTI

“I have appealed with sobriety across the political spectrum to all the leaders, believing in their sagacity and wisdom, that they must keep high constitutional offices away from their political stances,” he said, adding that he

“expected wisdom of the House to be affirmatively supportive” of him.

“I cannot be enlisted, I assure the Leader of the Opposition. I cannot be enlisted either by them or by you to delegitimise judiciary. I suffered the allegation that I was a part of a system to delegitimise judiciary, which means, sounding a death knell of democracy,” he said.

“I will be abdicating my oath. I will be getting away from my constitutional obligations, if I do not react,” he added.

This came after senior Congress leader Pramod Tiwari raised a point of order on the issue, and his senior colleague and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said, “If a Lok Sabha Member (Sonia) talks outside, it should not be discussed in Rajya

Sabha. If the Chair comments, it is unfortunate. This has never happened.”

On December 20, Sonia Gandhi, while addressing Congress MPs, targeted the government for entering into a confrontation with the Supreme Court and alleged that a “calculated attempt” was “underway to delegitimise the judiciary”.

Adjourning the Upper House sine die, Dhankhar appealed to members that disruption is “antithetical to grace, decorum and sublimity” of Parliament.

“This theatre of democracy is under the gaze of over a billion people in the country as also those beyond. They all cherish and hope and expect that we will work towards realising their aspirations and fructify their dreams,” he said.

Modi spent crores to defame me: Rahul

PANVEET SINGH CHADHA
FARIDABAD, DECEMBER 23

CONGRESS LEADER Rahul Gandhi on Friday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi spent thousands of crores in the past few years to defame him and the Congress party, but within a month he changed their narrative and “burnt” all that expenditure.

Addressing a public meeting in Faridabad on the last day of Bharat Jodo Yatra in Haryana in the first phase, he said, “Modi ji spent thousands of crores to defame me and Congress in the last 6-7 or 8 years. They spread several lies about me, but I kept quiet and did not utter a word in all these years. Aur phir ek mahine mein, inke hazaron crore rupayon ko jala diya meine... because the country saw that this person only has love for the nation, for the flag, for farmers, labourers... in his heart.”

“...This is not Modi's government... Do not have this misunderstanding. This is the government of Adani and Ambani... Just like the media is controlled... Pradhan Mantri ke peeche bhi lagaam hai,” he said.

Reiterating that Congress was opening a shop of love in BJP's market of hate, he said, “During elections in 2014 and 2019, Modi ji gave a slogan ‘Congress Mukht Bharat’. Congress is not a political party... ye ek sochne aur jeene ka



Rahul Gandhi during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Faridabad on Friday. Amit Mehra

tareeka hai. On one side is BJP and RSS and on the other is Congress... Modi ji has understood the hate, fear and violence spread by the BJP and RSS, but he could not understand the thinking of Congress.”

Emphasising the overwhelming support that yatra has received, Rahul said that when the yatra started, the BJP claimed that it would last only three days and would be a “flop” in Karnataka or Telangana and after the yatra was a “hit” in South India, they claimed it would fail in Hindi belt and other states.

“But... in state after state... in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh,

Rajasthan and now Haryana, there was a tsunami,” he said.

He repeated that demonetization and GST were “not policies but weapons to kill small businesses”.

Earlier in the day, addressing a press conference at Pakhal in Faridabad, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, said the “whole Covid drama” over the past two days had been orchestrated to defame and derail the yatra from entering Delhi.

“I don't understand what the controversy is all about. If there is a directive to wear masks or to maintain social distancing, we will do so as per the protocol,”

said Ramesh.

On Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi's swipe at Rahul that he was “breaking yatra to holiday abroad”, Ramesh said, “Whatever he (Joshi) has said, if it turns out to be the truth, I shall publicly apologise and if what he claims is false, he should apologise... the government has all our travel records.”

On the issue of Parliament being adjourned ahead of schedule, Ramesh said the reality was that there was no business or agenda left to discuss and some opposition parties had flagged that government does not have any bills and agenda.

After RJD leader's ‘desh ka mahoul’ remark, BJP lambasts ‘madrasa-like ghetto culture’

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, DECEMBER 23

SENIOR RASHTRIYA Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Bihar minister Abdul Bari Siddiqui courted controversy for saying that he told his children “India mein mahoul nahi rah gaya hai jo tumlog jhel sako (you people may not be able to adapt to the situation in India right now)” and advised them to remain in the US and UK and take the citizenship of those countries.

While the JD(U) supported Siddiqui's concerns, the BJP said the RJD leader “had not yet come out of ghetto madrasa culture”. After his comments kicked up a storm, the 69-year-old on Friday apologised for his comments, saying he did not mean to hurt anyone's sentiments.

In a viral video from a function held at the Bihar Legislative Council on December 17, Siddiqui, who was invited as a speaker, can be heard saying: “Mera ek beta hai, ek beti... Beta abhi Harvard me padh raha hai aur beti LSE (London School of Economics) se pass out kar chuki hai. Jo desh ka mahoul hai, aap kahiyega aap toh khud ho yahan



Abdul Bari Siddiqui had said he told his children they may not be able to 'adapt to the situation in India right now'

... Hamne kaha beta, beti ko, naukri kar lo udhar hi, agar citizenship bhi mile to le lena. India mein mahoul nahi rah gaya hai jo tum jhel sako. Ye baat ho sakta hai aap samajh sakte hai ki kitni taklif se aadmi apne bal bachche ko kahega apna madre-e-watan, apni matribhoomi chhod do. Ye dour aa gaya hai (I have a son and a daughter. My son has been studying at Harvard and my daughter is a London School of Economics graduate. The kind of ambience in the country, you may ask why I am saying so when I am myself living here. I have asked my children to take up jobs there and citizenship, if given. I told them I am not sure if they will be able to adapt and tolerate the kind of

condition that India is in. You can imagine what one goes through when telling their children to leave their motherland. But such is the time now.”

Senior JD(U) leader and energy minister Bijendra Prasad Yadav backed Siddiqui, saying, “He has expressed his concerns at conditions in the country.”

Hitting out at the RJD leader, BJP spokesperson Nikhil Anand said, “People like Siddiqui wear a fake secular liberal mask. These people have still not been able to get out of madrasa-like ghetto culture. Siddiqui's statement reflects the ideology of the RJD and proves how the RJD does politics of religious appeasement.”

Advising Siddiqui to “go to Pakistan”, Anand added, “Siddiqui is living in India and eating on India's plate but singing to the tunes of fundamentalists and trying to play a victim.”

On Friday, apologising for his remarks, Siddiqui told reporters, “I apologise I have hurt the sentiments of my people. What I said had a context but I never intended to hurt anyone's sentiments. But at least there has to be a debate on it. I am only advising the BJP to refrain from communal politics.”

Soren announces SIT to probe transportation of illegally mined minerals by rail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RANCHI, DECEMBER 23

JHARKHAND CHIEF Minister Hemant Soren on Friday announced that a special investigation team (SIT) will probe the alleged transportation of illegally mined minerals by railways from the state.

Speaking in the Assembly, Soren said the SIT was set up to investigate how much mineral was transported from the state by the railways and the extent of the illegal transportation.

“Trucks and tractors are blamed for illegal transportation of stones, sand and coal. But, it is rampant through trains also. And, the state government has no interference in this,” he said.

On December 14, Soren wrote to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw seeking his attention towards the alleged involvement of railway officials in the transportation of illegally mined minerals.

The CM also told him about the state government's decision of ordering a high-level inquiry into it.

Soren also alleged that the BJP was using central agencies to destabilise the state government.

Inter-faith love story in Jharkhand meets gory end, politics takes over

ABHISHEK ANGAD
SAHIBGANJ, DECEMBER 23

IT WAS the nail paint on a flayed limb that led to the identification of the victim. Reveka Paharin, 22, had been missing for about 24 hours and the police had been struggling for clues when, on December 17, they were tipped off about the limb, found behind an anganwadi in Bel Tola village in Jharkhand's Sahibganj district. "We called in her husband Dildaar Ansari, whose family had filed a missing persons complaint on December 16, and he identified the limb as that of his wife. We started searching nearby areas and found more parts stuffed into different polythene bags. Reveka's family identified a ring on one of the fingers as hers," said Borio Police Station-in-charge Jagannath Pan, adding that the suspicion then fell on the Ansaris since the police investigation had revealed tension in the family since Reveka moved in with Dildaar.

On December 16, the day police say Reveka was murdered, Dildaar's mother Mariam Nisha and two of her relatives had walked into the Borio police sta-

tion to say that the woman had gone missing. Police have registered a case under various IPC sections including for murder and under the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act against 11 members, including Dildaar, his mother Nisha and nine other family members, including two of his uncles who are suspected to have hacked Reveka's body into pieces. All the accused, except Moinul Ansari, Nisha's brother, have been arrested, police said.

The shockwaves from the murder of the 22-year-old, who belonged to the Paharia community, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group in Jharkhand, have travelled far beyond Goda Pahad, a tribal hamlet of 30 households of Christian families, including Reveka's, that is 2 km uphill from Dildaar's Bel Tola village.

Since the details of the murder have come to light, the BJP has been attempting to put the administration on the backfoot, holding protests and drawing parallels between Reveka's killing and that of Shradddha Walker, who was killed allegedly by her partner.

Explaining the sequence of events, SHO Pan said, "As per the



Reveka's parents and sister on a charpoy listen to BJP workers in Borio's Goda Pahad area.

confessional statements of all the accused, Dildaar's mother Mariam Nisha wasn't happy with Reveka being part of their family because she was a Christian tribal while they were Muslims, and since Reveka had a child from an earlier relationship. When Dildaar insisted on being with Reveka, his mother Nisha went to her brothers and asked them to get rid of the woman. She also paid Rs 20,000 to her brothers for the job. As far as we know, Dildaar was part of the conspiracy, but not part

of the killing." Police and Reveka's family say she was in a live-in relationship with a fellow tribal — a common practice in these parts — but the couple parted ways in 2017 after the birth of a child and she came home to be with her parents. A few years later, she met Dildaar. Sitting on a charpoy outside his thatched roof home, Reveka's father Surja Pahariya says he tried to persuade his daughter not to be with Dildaar because he was from a different community. Also,

Dildaar was already married. But in October this year, say police, Reveka left with Dildaar when he came to her home in a tempo when no one else was present.

Surja says that he then confronted Dildaar about his daughter. "He told me that he had rented a room for her and had kept her there. I told Dildaar that if he loved my daughter, he should take her home, not keep her in some rented place. Maybe this was a mistake... She soon shifted to his home," said Surja, who has five other children.

Although the FIR states that Reveka and Dildaar were married, her family members deny having any information on the wedding.

On Wednesday, a 21-member Jharkhand BJP delegation of the ST Morcha called on Reveka's family. After a small speech to those gathered around the grieving Surja — on "love jihad" and how "these people should not be allowed in the village without permission", one of the BJP members puts a arm around Surja, and asks if his daughter was taken away forcibly. "No, no. They were in a relationship and were together willingly," says Surja.

Gujarat man dies trying to cross US-Mexico border

State police order inquiry to check if he had documents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GANDHINAGAR, DECEMBER 23

POLICE IN Gujarat have launched a probe into the reported death of a Gandhinagar man during a bid to enter the US from Mexico by crossing the border wall.

Additional Director General of Police (CID Crime), R B Brahmabhatt, said police have taken cognisance of media reports that Brijkumar Yadav fell off the wall while attempting his illegal crossing. Police said Yadav was residing in Gandhinagar's Kalol taluka — the same place the Indian family that froze to death near the US-Canada border hails from.

A local report stated that Yadav was with his wife and three-year-old son during the crossing at Mexico's Tijuana. The woman fell on US soil, while Yadav fell from a height of five meters on the Mexican side along with his son, a Tijuana news website reported on December 15.

"Taking note of the media reports, we have ordered a preliminary inquiry into whether the man had a proper passport and visa. We will also record state-

ments of their (Yadavs') relatives. After getting a preliminary inquiry done, we will get in touch with our counterparts in the US and Mexico through proper channels," said Brahmabhatt.

The Indian family, reports stated, were trying to reach San Diego in the US. Gujarat Police has tried to get in touch with Yadav's family in Kalol, sources said. Yadav is learnt to be a migrant who was working in Kalol.

The Tijuana news website, quoting the National Institute of Migration, stated that "the minor is already with his mother in the US". The incident was reported to Mexican authorities by Border Patrol agents on December 14, the website said. It quoted the head of DMAM (Municipal Directorate of Attention to Migrants), Enrique Lucero, as saying that "the migrant (Yadav) was travelling with a group of between 30 and 40 other people who apparently managed to cross into the US".

The place where Yadav died is vacant land in the vicinity of the Terrazas de Mendoza subdivision, and the area was patrolled by members of the National Guard after the incident, the report said.

In the place where the 40 migrants allegedly crossed, "they found bottles with water, women's shoes, gloves, a cigarette case with cigars, clothes and improvised chairs", the report said.

"We have received no official intimation from any government yet on the death of Brijkumar Yadav, who was allegedly crossing the US-Mexico border a few days ago and died. Whatever information we have got is from the news, social media, and local sources only," said Amit Patel, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Gandhinagar.

Patel said, "We have also contacted the family of Yadav, which lives in Kalol. They have not given any official confirmation, as they are still contacting the authorities abroad for the death of their relative. We will register a complaint as soon as they go official."

In January this year, four members of a family, including a 17-year-old girl and a four-year-old boy, were found to have frozen to death in Manitoba province of Canada while trying to illegally cross over to the US. They belonged to Dingucha village of Kalol taluka, which Yadav was from.

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

FAKE ALERT

FORMER ELECTION Commissioner Ashok Lavasa last week found himself the victim of an impersonator. In a tweet on Friday, Lavasa cautioned followers about a fake Instagram profile pretending to be him. The fake profile was messaging people, asking for money to be sent to a mobile number based in Uttar Pradesh. He asked anyone who received the message in question to report it.

MAKING A POINT

WHILE THE conclusion of the Winter Session of Parliament happened a week early, ending on Friday instead of December 29, CPI(M) Rajya Sabha MP John Brittas took advantage of the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to raise an issue in the House. For his special mention, right before the Winter Session was brought to conclusion, Brittas raised the subject of what he said was imposition of Hindi across the country, saying he was happy to have spoken about it in the presence of the Prime Minister himself.

Birbhum blast: 2 minors injured, grandfather held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, DECEMBER 23

TWO MINOR brothers were injured critically when they were playing in an abandoned house belonging to their maternal grandfather at Ekdala village of Birbhum district's Rampurhat sub-division on Friday morning. The victims' grandfather, identified as Jamirul Islam, was arrested for allegedly keeping explosives in the house, police said.

The teenagers had come to their maternal grandfather's

house for a few days, it is learnt. A case was registered against Jamirul Islam under the Explosive Substance Act and various sections of the IPC.

Tension prevailed in the area following the incident. Police personnel cordoned off Jamirul's house after the explosion.

"A case has been lodged and the house owner has been arrested. We have started an investigation as to what exactly happened and what kind of explosives were involved in the blast," Superintendent of Police (SP) Nagendra Nath Tripathi said.

36 yrs later, man, wife get 10-year jail for teen's rape

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 23

A COURT in Kanpur sentenced a 67-year-old businessman and his wife, 62, to 10-year imprisonment in connection with the alleged rape of a teenaged girl in 1986. The girl was 15 years old when the incident occurred.

The victim's mother had filed a complaint against Ram Bharosey, his wife Heera Devi and two others the same year.

However, the accused were later released on bail and had been out of jail since.

"Additional District and Sessions Judge sentenced two accused to 10 years imprisonment and acquitted the other two owing to lack of evidence. They are close relatives of the accused," said

Government Counsel, Kanpur, Chandra Kant Sharma. After the judgment, the accused were taken into custody and sent to jail.

"The court relied on the statement of the victim and her mother, the complainant in the case. The investigating officer of the case and the FIR writer had died during the trial," the prosecution said.

In all, five prosecution witnesses were examined by the court. According to the prosecution, the incident took place when the victim was staying at a relative's residence in Kanpur. The accused were staying at the house as tenants.

When the victim's relatives raised the matter with the accused, they threatened the family with dire consequences, the prosecution added.

Advisory in the wake of surge in COVID-19 cases globally & upcoming Festive Season and New Year celebrations

Comply with **Operational Guidelines for revised Surveillance Strategy** (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/OperationalGuidelinesforRevised-SurveillanceStrategyincontextofCOVID-19.pdf>)

Report **Influenza-like illness (ILI) & Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI)** cases in Health Facilities

Adequate & timely Testing (maintain the recommended share of RT-PCR and Antigen tests)

Ensure **higher samples for whole genome** to enable timely detection of new variants, if any, in the country

Ensure operational readiness of **hospitals** in terms of bed availability, logistic requirements & healthcare workers trained on clinical management protocol of COVID-19

Increase the **coverage of Precaution dose**

Put measures in place (with relevant stakeholders like event organizers, business owners, market associations etc.) to **avoid overcrowding, ensure adequate ventilation & wearing of masks** in crowded places

Create Awareness in Community to seek their continued support including adherence to **COVID Appropriate Behavior**

Wear mask

Follow hand hygiene

Maintain Physical distance

cdc 17102/13/0044/2223

Color calibration bars and "New Delhi" text.

HIGH COURT SUMMONS SPORT BODIES' OFFICIALS ON JANUARY 12

Kerala seeks probe into cycle polo player death in Nagpur

Official says she collapsed in hospital after being given an injection for 'food poisoning'; father alleges medical negligence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
KOCHI, NAGPUR, DEC 23

KERALA EDUCATION Minister V Sivankutty on Friday said the state government had written to Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde, demanding an inquiry into the death of Nida Fathima, the 10-year-old girl from Kerala who died at a Nagpur hospital on Thursday.

Nida, hailing from Ambalappuzha in Alappuzha district, was part of the Kerala contingent that went to Nagpur to take part in the National Cycle Polo Championship, which began on Thursday. "We have requested the Maharashtra government to probe the allegation that the girl did not receive adequate medical attention and promised all co-operation from the Kerala government," Sivankutty said in a Facebook post.

Meanwhile, the Kerala High Court on Friday admitted a con-

tempt of court petition in connection with Nida's death. The court directed the secretaries of the Cycle Polo Federation of India and Cycle Polo Association of Kerala to appear in person on January 12.

The bench of Justice V G Arun acted upon the contempt of court petition moved by Kerala Cycle Polo Association. The petitioner told the court that its team, including Nida Fathima, was permitted by the HC, in an order on December 15, to participate in the national championship at Nagpur, but the players were not provided food or lodging by the Cycle Polo Federation of India. As a result, they had to be accommodated in a local dormitory and Nida got afflicted with food poisoning and died on Thursday morning, the petitioner association said in its contempt plea filed through advocate Santhan V Nair.

Kerala Cycle Polo Association secretary Riyas, who is in Nagpur, told The Indian Express that Nida's post-mortem was



10-year-old Nida Fathima

conducted at the Nagpur Medical College on Thursday and her body was set to be taken to Kerala on a flight departing from Nagpur at 10 pm. "There will be a layover in Bengaluru and it will reach the Kochi airport by 9 am on Friday. From there, it will be taken to the girl's house at Ambalappuzha," he added.

Two groups of players went to Nagpur to represent Kerala in the national championship by rival associations. One was sent by Kerala Cycle Polo Association, which

claims the Kerala High Court had permitted its teams to participate in the national championship representing the state. The other contingent was sent by the Cycle Polo Association of Kerala, affiliated to the Cycle Polo Federation of India, the national body for the sport.

Nida, a student of SDV Government Upper Primary School at Neerkunnam near Ambalappuzha, was part of the sub-junior girls' team sent by Kerala Cycle Polo Association.

The 29-member contingent, comprising 24 players, coaches and officials, had reached Nagpur on Tuesday evening, said Riyas. "The national federation refused to provide us accommodation or food, saying we were not from the affiliated state association. The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh provided us with accommodation space and we had to eat food from outside," he said.

"Nida vomited around 2.45 am on Thursday and that was the first sign of discomfort she showed.

She got better after that but when she vomited again in the morning, we decided to take her to the hospital and took her to Shrikrishna Hospital, which was around 200m away from the place we were staying at," Riyas said.

According to Riyas, Nida walked to the hospital without any difficulty and doctors said she was vomiting because of food poisoning. "They gave her an injection around 8 am but immediately after that, she started complaining of pain in her hand and vomited once more before collapsing. She was admitted to the intensive care unit but they could not save her. The hospital officially said the death happened at 10.20 am and shifted her body to Nagpur Medical College," he said.

Nida's father, Shihabuddin, a driver, came to know about the death of his daughter at the Kochi airport while he was on his way to Nagpur after being informed that she was admitted to a hospital. Two Kerala Sports Council repre-

sentatives also reached Nagpur.

The Dhantoli police in Nagpur registered an accidental death report in the matter and recorded the statements of all people concerned. The police said the girl had not been passing motions for the last two days and on Thursday, she fell ill and was taken to a private hospital. The doctors gave her an injection but after that she collapsed and was declared dead, the police said.

Inspector Prabhavati Ekurke said the girl's father, in his statement, claimed there was negligence from the hospital. The matter has been referred to the Indian Medical Association, which will ascertain the veracity of the allegation, Ekurke said.

The other contingent from Kerala, sent by the rival faction, Cycle Polo Association of Kerala, was given accommodation and other facilities by the national federation. Curiously, their teams are also playing matches at the championship.

UMESH KOLHE MURDER

Minister: Uddhav call to Amravati CP to be probed

ALOK DESHPANDE
NAGPUR, DECEMBER 23

Uddhav Thackeray

MAHARASHTRA MINISTER Shambhuraj Desai on Friday said the State Intelligence Department (SID) will probe whether former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray had asked the then Amravati police commissioner Arti Singh to probe the murder of Amravati resident Umesh Kolhe "through the angle of robbery".

The issue was raised by Amravati MLA Ravi Rana, who, along with his wife and Lok Sabha MP Navneet Rana, have been at odds with Thackeray for over a year. The couple was arrested by Mumbai Police earlier this year after they forcibly tried to enter Thackeray's residence Matoshree to recite the Hanuman Chalisa during the tenure of the Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

During the discussion on Calling Attention Motion, Rana said in the Assembly that Umesh Kolhe was murdered when Uddhav Thackeray was the chief minister of Maharashtra. "The police probed this murder through the angle of robbery. It was Uddhav Thackeray's phone call to Police Commissioner Arti Singh to probe the murder through robbery angle. We demand that his

phone call be probed through an SIT," he said.

Desai, who was replying on behalf of Home Minister Devendra Fadnis, said the SID will probe this aspect. "It will be probed as to who had called whom and the report will be presented to the state home minister," he said.

Kolhe, 54, was murdered on June 21 by three assailants when he was returning from work, days after he had put up a post on WhatsApp in support of then BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma, who had made controversial comments on Prophet Muhammad. The Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnis government had, after coming to power, handed over the probe into the matter to the National Investigation Agency, which filed the chargesheet in the case earlier this month.

Only when he stands before me, I will believe he got bail: Kappan's wife

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

Raihana Siddique is worried about another hurdle

AS MUCH as she is relieved that the Allahabad High Court has granted bail to her husband Siddique Kappan, Raihana Siddique is worried about another hurdle.

"In the UAPA case (in which the Supreme Court granted bail to Kappan in September this year), the verification of the sureties has not been completed yet. It's been more than three months. There was a problem initially of not finding anybody to stand surety since we needed somebody from Uttar Pradesh and we didn't know the place too well. Two persons later came to us through media friends and agreed to stand surety," Raihana said. One of the two persons who stood surety for Kappan was Koop Rekha Verma, former vice-chancellor of Lucknow University.

"This order (the bail granted on Friday) will be able to tell us if such bail conditions will be imposed. Once the order comes, we will have to find somebody to stand surety. We are hoping there won't be any more difficulties," she said.

This delay in surety verification is the main barrier stalling Kappan's release, said Mohamed Dhanish, his lawyer. "The verifi-

cation process usually does not take more than a week. We got the Supreme Court order on September 9. Within 10 days, we provided the surety, but even three months later, the verification has not been completed. We will now have to see what bail conditions will be imposed in today's order," he said.

The bail condition in the UAPA case was to furnish two sureties of Rs. 1 lakh each, Dhanish said. On Friday, the Allahabad High Court granted bail to Kappan in a Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) case.

On the bail granted by the Allahabad High Court, Raihana said, "I really wasn't expecting bail since the lower court had rejected his (Kappan's) application. It has been more than two years now of our lives, our children's lives like this. It is only when he stands before me that I will be able to believe that he has been released. That is the situation now. But even if late, we will get justice... we have now got bail."

NSE PHONE-TAPPING CASE

CBI files chargesheet against NSE ex-CEOs, former top cop Pandey

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23



Chitra Ramkrishna (left), and Sanjay Pandey

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a chargesheet in a Delhi court on Friday against former National Stock Exchange (NSE) CEOs Chitra Ramkrishna, Ravi Narain, former Mumbai police commissioner and former director of ISEC Services Private Ltd. Sanjay Pandey and other top executives in connection with the NSE phone-tapping case.

"We have a filed a chargesheet against the private company — M/s ISEC Services Pvt Ltd — based in New Delhi/Mumbai, Pandey, the then director of ISEC, Naman Chaturvedi, then senior information security analyst of ISEC, Jagdish Tukaram Dalvi of ISEC, Ravi Varanasi, then executive vice-president of NSE, Mahesh Haldipur, then head (premises of NSE), Ravi Narain, then managing director of NSE, Chitra Ramkrishna, then DMD/managing director of NSE, Anand Subramanian, then group operating officer, S B Thosar, then OSD, Bhupesh Mistry, then manager (premises)," said a CBI spokesperson.

It was found during investigation that Pandey was working as a police officer while allegedly managing the affairs of the company, said the spokesperson. "The NSE ended up paying around Rs 4.54 crore in eight years to the private company for illegally tapping phone calls of NSE employees in the name of cyber vulnerability study. The call records of hundreds of NSE employees were allegedly kept in the custody of the private company and the interception was done without the knowledge or consent of NSE board or its employees. During investiga-

tion, the CBI had arrested Pandey, Narain and Ramakrishna," the spokesperson said.

The CBI had booked the retired IPS officer and others in the phone-tapping case on July 7. Four days later, the Enforcement Directorate registered a case against Pandey and arrested him on July 19; the CBI arrested him on September 24. "The illegal phone-tapping of NSE employees was unearthed during the investigation of another case related to the co-location scam in NSE. It was alleged that unauthorised recording and monitoring of phone calls in NSE started in 1997 when Narain and Ramakrishna connected call lines of employees to a digital voice recorder provided by a private company," the spokesperson said.

Officials said Isec Services Pvt Ltd, a company founded by Pandey, conducted the security audit at NSE during the period when the co-location scam was allegedly committed.

"During 1997-2009, Ramakrishna with the help of some NSE employees allegedly supervised the interception. In 2009, the work of monitoring the calls was given to the accused private company being run by Pandey. To maintain secrecy, the work order was allegedly issued to the private company in the name of conducting periodic study of cyber vulnerabilities," the spokesperson said.



CHRISTMAS CHEER

Bow Barracks area decked up ahead of Christmas in Kolkata on Friday. Partha Paul

VIDEOCON LOAN CASE

Chanda Kochhar, husband held in Rs 1,700-cr bank cheating case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday arrested former ICICI Bank MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar and her husband Deepak Kochhar for allegedly cheating ICICI Bank of Rs 1,730 crore until March 2012.

The bank and Chanda Kochhar have been under regulatory scrutiny after The Indian Express first reported on March 29, 2018 that Venugopal Dhoot of Videocon Group provided crores of rupees to a firm he had set up with Deepak and two relatives six months after his firm got Rs 3,250 crore as loan from ICICI Bank in 2012.

Sources said the couple was summoned for questioning in Delhi. They were arrested after the investigating officer complained that the two were not co-operating with the police team.

In 2019, the CBI lodged an FIR against the Kochhars, Dhoot and firms, including Nupower Renewables and Videocon



Chanda Kochhar (left), and husband Deepak Kochhar

Industries, for allegedly cheating ICICI Bank of Rs 1,730 crore until March 2012. In its FIR, the CBI also named Supreme Energy Pvt Ltd, Videocon International Electronics Ltd (VIEL) and unknown public servants as accused. It alleged that "the accused (Chanda Kochhar) sanctioned certain loans to private companies in a criminal conspiracy with other accused to cheat ICICI Bank". The case was filed under sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The CBI said the amount was part of the Rs 40,000-crore loan that the Videocon Group secured from a consortium of 20 banks led by SBI. Almost 86 per

cent of the Rs 3,250 crore loan (Rs 2,810 crore) remained unpaid. The Videocon account was declared an NPA in 2017.

According to the CBI, on August 26, 2009, the sanctioning committee of ICICI Bank that included Chanda Kochhar approved a loan of Rs 300 crore to VIEL "in contravention of the rules and policy".

Chanda Kochhar, the CBI alleged, "dishonestly" abused her official position to disburse this loan on September 7, 2008 and the very next day, her husband's firm Nupower Renewables received Rs 64 crore from Videocon Industries Ltd (VIL) to acquire its first power plant. "...Chanda Kochhar got illegal gratification/undue benefit through her husband from Dhoot for sanctioning RTL (rupee term loan) of Rs 300 crore to M/s VIEL," the agency said in its FIR.

The CBI said that RTLs sanctioned to five companies of the Videocon Group between June 2009 and October 2011 were "in violation of the credit policy of the bank".

Cow dung touch: Chhattisgarh school, hostel get fresh coat of paint

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU
RAIPUR, DECEMBER 23

IN A first, a government school and a hostel for tribal students in Kodagaon in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh have been painted with natural paint made from cow dung. The initiative has been undertaken by the state's Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel as part of the 'Godhan Nyaya Yojana'.

Kanker collector Priyanka Shukla said S.U.M. school in Kodagaon and a hostel for tribal students in Kottara have got a fresh coat of cow dung paint. "This paint has been prepared by women self-help groups (SHG) in a gouthan (livestock shelter) at Saradhunawagaon in Kanker. The cow dung paint unit has been built under Mahatma Gandhi Rural Industrial Park

(RIPA), an ambitious scheme of the Chhattisgarh government in Charama block of the district," she said.

About 20 women are employed in the unit and its production capacity is a minimum of 500 litres of paint per day. Depending on the production of the paint, all government buildings in the state will be painted in future with the "gobar paint", the collector added.

One member of a women self-help group, Jageshwari Bhaskar (45), told *The Indian Express* that preparing the paint will increase her salary from Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 per month.

Bhaskar, a resident of Kherkheda village who travels 15 km to the unit in Saradhunawagaon every day, said, "We hope to earn more money from this initiative. I used to earn Rs 3,000 a month but I am



S.U.M. school in Kodagaon of Kanker district in Chhattisgarh being painted. Express

hoping to earn Rs 5,000 by preparing and selling this paint. The villagers are also getting money by selling cow dung to us."

"At present, the paint is being prepared in Kanker and Chhattisgarh capital Raipur; efforts are on to prepare it in other districts. The paint is being sold at Rs 125 per litre," said a government official.

The demand for the paint is likely to increase as earlier this week all government departments were ordered by the Chief Minister to compulsorily use cow dung paint for all government buildings.

Baghel also warned of strict action against officials if they would violate the order. The move is aimed at strengthening rural economy and ensure environmental protection, said an official.

Under the Godhan Nyaya

Yojana, vermicompost, super-compost and other products are being manufactured in gauthans using cow dung procured at two rupees per kg.

The CM's initiative was appreciated by BJP leader and Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, who tweeted, "His (Baghel's) decision is commendable and welcome. Under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi I started this as the MSME minister. The use of natural paint will not only protect the environment but also provide a new opportunity to the farmers and benefit them."

Replying to the tweet, Baghel thanked the minister for acknowledging his initiative and called him a "karmayogi". He tweeted, "Respect for cow and labour is a path shown by Gandhi and we are moving forward on that."

‘Mastermind’ among 5 arrested in Bihar hooch case: police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, SARAN, DECEMBER 23

IN A major breakthrough, Bihar Police on Friday arrested five people, including the main accused, in connection with the Saran hooch deaths case, a senior officer said.

A Special Investigation Team, constituted by the state police in the incident, apprehended a homeopathy compounder, allegedly the mastermind of the hooch tragedy that claimed 38 lives, Saran SP Santosh Kumar said. “Police seized a vehicle, used for transporting chemicals from Uttar Pradesh and supplying liquors in and around Masrakh in Saran. Empty bottles of chemicals that were used in manufacturing spurious liquor were also recovered,” the SP said.

The SIT had earlier arrested nine people in connection with the case. “The preliminary investigation revealed that the mastermind with the help of his associates used to manufacture spurious liquor by mixing homeopathy medicine and sugar. They (accused) used to supply illicit liquor in several areas of Saran district through their vendors or associates,” he said.

During questioning, the ar-

rested persons admitted that they supplied spurious liquor made of homeopathy medicines in Saran district, the SP said, adding that one of the accused had also consumed the same liquor, but he survived after the treatment.

“Police have recovered a large number of empty bottles of chemicals that were used in manufacturing the spurious liquor from Doela area of Saran. The investigation is on,” the SP said.

Talking to reporters in Patna, Additional DGP (HQ) Jitendra Singh Gangwar denied allegations that the spirit kept inside one of the police stations in Saran district was responsible for the hooch tragedy. “Based on the initial investigation, it appears that no spirit kept inside one of the police stations in Saran was used for making spurious liquor. It is suspected that some other chemicals might have been used in the manufacturing of liquor. We are waiting for the viscera reports of all the deceased,” he said. “These will reveal the type of chemical used in making the spurious liquor. Let the investigation complete, then only, we will be able to comment on anything specific.”

Strict action will be taken against those who are found guilty, Gangwar said.

Maoist violence, deaths down; Chhattisgarh sees rise in cases

Maharashtra, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar report dip in Left-Wing Extremism

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

WHILE INCIDENTS of violence from Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) in the country have dropped by 77 per cent between 2009 and 2021, state-wise data showed an increase in such incidents in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana this year in comparison to the previous year, and a decrease in incidents in Maharashtra, Odisha, Jharkhand and Bihar among others, according to data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Rajya Sabha. The data also showed a decline in the number of deaths from LWE violence in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand as well as other states.

Data of LWE violence in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Kerala showed that 670 incidents took place in 2019, 665 in 2020, 509 in 2021 and 483 this year (until November 30).

“State-wise breakup of four-year data shows that in

VIOLENCE INCIDENTS FROM 2019 TO 2022

Incidents

Deaths

Andhra Pradesh

201920202021*2022

1812113

5411

Bihar

62262616

17871

Chhattisgarh

263315255279

7711110156

Jharkhand

200199130118

54392612

Madhya Pradesh

201920202021*2022

5161920

2232

Maharashtra

66303118

34867

Odisha

45503219

119310

Telangana

815510

2202

Kerala

3200

0000

*(Till Nov 30)

Chhattisgarh, 279 incidents occurred in 2022, 255 in 2021, 315 in 2020 and 263 in 2019. Data of deaths of security force personnel and civilians due to Maoist violence shows that 56 were reported this year, 101 in 2021, 111 in 2020 and 77 in 2019,” Union

Madhya Pradesh				
2019	2020	2021	*2022	
5	16	19	20	
2	2	3	2	
Maharashtra				
66	30	31	18	
34	8	6	7	
Odisha				
45	50	32	19	
11	9	3	10	
Telangana				
8	15	5	10	
2	2	0	2	
Kerala				
3	2	0	0	
0	0	0	0	

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said in a written reply on Wednesday.

He said deaths of civilians and security forces have reduced by 85 per cent from a high of 1,005 in 2010 to 147 in 2021. While Jharkhand saw 118 inci-

dents and 12 deaths this year, there were 130 incidents and 26 deaths in 2021, 199 incidents and 39 deaths in 2020, and 200 incidents and 54 deaths in 2019.

Rai informed Rajya Sabha that to address LWE holistically, the central government approved a national policy and action plan in 2015.

“This policy envisages a multi-pronged strategy involving security related measures, development interventions, ensuring rights and entitlements of local communities, etc. Steadfast implementation of this policy has resulted in consistent decline in violence in LWE affected areas. Incidents of LWE violence have reduced by 77 per cent from a high of 2,213 in 2010 to 509 in 2021,” he said.

Last Saturday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said at the 25th Eastern Zonal Council meeting in Kolkata that LWE has almost been eliminated from the country’s eastern region. “Efforts should be sustained as extremism should not re-emerge in LWE-free states, and these states should develop at par with other parts of the country,” he had added.

2 Maoists killed in Bijapur encounter

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, DECEMBER 23

TWO MAOISTS, a man and a woman, were killed in an encounter with security forces in a jungle in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh Friday morning. The police said the encounter took place during an anti-Maoist operation undertaken jointly by security forces of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra.

The incident took place around 7 am in a jungle area near Tekameta village in the jurisdiction of Farsegarh police station in Bijapur.

“The location of the encounter is said to be around 10 km from Maharashtra border. One woman and one man were killed. Another Maoist, who was injured in the encounter, was captured alive and we are questioning him. We have recovered three weapons – two SLR and another firearm. No one from our team suffered injury,” Bilaspur SP Anjneya Varshney told *The Indian Express*.

While the man killed in the operation is yet to be identified, the woman was later identified as Kanthi Lingavva alias Anitha, 41, from Telangana’s Laxmi Sagar. She had a bounty of Rs 16 lakh on her arrest from

Maharashtra and another bounty of Rs 5 lakh from Telangana.

According to the police, she is the wife of Mylarapu Adellu alias Bhashkar, a member of the Telangana state committee and secretary of Kumram Bhim divisional committee of the Maoists. Mylarapu, who has a bounty of more than Rs 20 lakh for his arrest, was at the spot and managed to escape, the police said.

The injured Maoist was identified as Lachhmayya Kuchha Weladi, 28, from Tekameta in Bijapur.

The joint team comprised 300 commandos from Special Operations Squad (C-60) from Gadchiroli and 20 commandos of Chhattisgarh’s District Reserve Guards.

As part of the combing operation, the team crossed into Chhattisgarh from Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra. The police said the Maoists fired on them first after which they first appealed them to stop firing. The police fired in retaliation when the Maoist did not stop the firing. The gun battle lasted around 45 minutes.

“Its for the first time the Gadchiroli police has operated so deep outside Maharashtra border in joint coordination with Bijapur police,” said Gadchiroli SP Neelotpal.

Use temple, mosque speakers to wake up kids early: Haryana govt

SUKHBIR SIWACH
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 23

A FEW months ahead of the annual board examination of Class X and XII students, the Haryana education department has asked the principals of government schools to approach the village panchayats to create a conducive study environment at home, especially to motivate the children to wake up early and study in the wee hours (at 4:30 am).

In a directive issued to the school principals on Thursday, the education department mentioned: “The newly elected members of panchayats should be urged to make such efforts that an environment is created in the villages for studies during early morning hours. Temples, mosques, and gurdwaras should be contacted for early morning announcements (through loud-

speakers) so that the students wake up and start studying. With this initiative, the students are expected to get extra 2-3 hours for studies.”

Director (secondary education) Anshaj Singh has sent a letter to the district education officers and principals of all government schools in the state asking them to take appropriate steps for preparations of Class X and XII examinations.

A copy of the letter has also been sent to state additional chief secretary (school education), Mahavir Singh.

According to Anshaj Singh’s letter, a joint planning should be formulated by the parents and teachers so that the students get additional hours for self-study.

“For this, the morning hours are best when the mind is fresh and the environment is serene and there is no noise of vehicles. And for this the teachers should

ask the parents to wake up their children at 4:30 am. The parents should ensure that their wards are glued to books by 5.15 am. Through WhatsApp, the teachers should enquire whether the students have woken up and are studying or not. If the parents are not cooperating, then it should be brought to the notice of the school management committee,” the letter stated.

The school principals were reminded in the letter that just 70 days were left for the board examinations in March 2023. Keeping this in mind, the schools should make plans to improve the results of their institutions, the letter stated. An official of the education department told the Indian Express that the initiative has been taken to keep the students from different types of distractions like social media and television, and to help students focus more on studies.

Student dies by suicide in Kota

Kota: In yet another case of suicide in Kota city, a 16-year-old coaching student ended his life by hanging himself from a ceiling fan in his hostel room, taking the total number of such cases to 15 this year.

The incident was reported in

the Indira Vihar area under the Jawahar Nagar police station on Friday. Police identified the deceased as Aniket Kumar (18), a resident of Bareilly in UP. Kumar had been preparing for NEET-UG for the last three years. PTI

NORTHERN RAILWAY		
1 st CORRIGENDUM		
Name of Work: Electrical work in connection with improvement of air Conditioning System with replacement of overaged units and other allied works at RRI's having less than 100 routes over Delhi Division. The amendments in above said tender are as under:		
Tender No. :- 30-Elect-61-T-2022-23-E3		
Earlier published		Amended
Name of work	Electrical work in connection with improvement of air Conditioning System with replacement of overaged units and other allied works at RRI's having less than 100 routes over Delhi Division.	Cancelled due to administrative reason
Approx cost of the works in	Rs. 36.70 lacs	
Address of the office	Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.	
Bid Security	Rs. 73400.00	
Date & time of submission of tender	03.01.2023, 12:00 Hrs.	
Opening of tender	03.01.2023, 12:00 Hrs.	
The tender document of above mentioned tender has been modified kindly go through the amended documents available on www.ireps.gov.in and submit your offer accordingly. Tender No. 30-Elect-61-T-2022-23-E3		
7 th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav		
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE		

SCHOOL JOBS SCAM

Sack 53 teachers who got jobs illegally: HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, DECEMBER 23

THE CALCUTTA High Court on Friday ordered termination of service of 53 teachers in the primary section of different state-run schools on charges of securing their jobs by unfair means. A single bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay issued the order today.

Earlier in the year, Justice Gangopadhyay ordered termination of services of 269 primary section teachers on the same charges. However, the teachers approached the Supreme Court contesting that the termination order was issued without hearing their arguments.


The apex court then directed the same single-judge bench to hear the arguments of the 269 primary teachers and further asked the teachers to file affidavits in this regard.

During a hearing on Friday, 54 of such teachers were supposed to be present before Justice Gangopadhyay with their respective affidavits. However, 53 turned up.

Justice Gangopadhyay, after review of the affidavits, ordered termination of their services. Meanwhile, he also slapped a fine of Rs 10,000 on the one teacher who did not turn up. Once the fine is paid, the teacher will have the chance to file his affidavit in the matter.

Welcoming the court order, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Suwendu Adhikari said, “This is just the beginning. In the days to come, the court will terminate services of others who got jobs illegally. We have full faith in the judiciary, which is trying to weed out corruption from the education sector.”

The Trinamool Congress did not immediately react to the development.



Govt. of Bihar

Rural Works Department

Engineer-in-Chief, R.W.D Bihar, Patna-800015

SHORT NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

(NIT No- RWD/BKBDP/WORLD BANK/HQ/01/22-23)

The Government of India has received a loan/credit from the World Bank for Construction and Maintenance for construction of works as detailed in the Table below. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the bidding document.

Engineer-in-Chief, Rural Works Department, on behalf of Governor of Bihar invites **Item rate** tenders in electronic tendering system under **Bihar Kosi Basin Development Project (BKBDP)** funded by World Bank for each of the following packages works including their maintenance after construction for five years from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with RWD/RCD/CPWD/MES/Railways/Other State/Central Govt. department.*

Sl. No.	Division	Name of Package	Name of Bridge	Length in mtr.	Amount of 5 yr AMC	TA Amount (In Lakh)	Bid Security (In Lakh)***	Time of Completion (Month)
1	Triveniganj	BKBDP/R D/SU-XIII	Construction of HL RCC Bridge at Mela Ground to Chilauni Dhar	60.91	3.022	543.815	10.90	18
2	Birpur	BKBDP/R D/SU-XIV	Construction of HL RCC Bridge at Bhenga Dhar in Tintoliya to Bhalukup Road	139.78	7.414	956.014	19.20	
Grand Total				200.69	10.436	1499.829	30.10	

Date and Time for Downloading of Bidding Documents : From 10.01.2023 (09:00) to 09.02.2023 (15:00)

Last date and Time of Online Bid Submission : 09.02.2023 up to 15:00 Hours.

(including Scanned copy of Affidavits)

Online Bid Opening Date and Time : 09.02.2023 at 15:30 Hours.

Place, date and time of Pre-Bid Meeting : 02.02.2023 from 11:00 Hours.

(Office of Superintending Engg. Works Circle, Madhepura)

The Cost of Package and Earnest Money is indicative and the actual amount of Earnest Money will be as per uploaded BOQ. Cost of non-refundable Bid Document is Rs.10,000.00. The bidders are required to submit the following document is original at the time of signing of contract Bond in the office of the Concerned Executive Engineer.

(a) Affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions.

(b) Self-attested bid id sheet generated (Acknowledgement Slip) when the bid is successfully submitted by the bidder. Original documents must match the scanned copies submitted along with the bids submitted on line.

In case, of any discrepancy in this respect, it will be treated as misrepresentation by the Bidder. Such Bidder shall be liable to be debarred for participating in bids for five years.

Details of tender related information can be viewed/ downloaded from the website <http://pmgsytendersbih.gov.in>. Interested Bidders will have to register with their DSC (Digital Signature Certificate) in the web site <http://pmgsytendersbih.gov.in>.

For further details please visit website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

PR. No. 12385 (RWD) 2022-23

Engineer-in-Chief
Rural Works Department

बिहार में शराब का व्यापार, बिस्की एवं सेवन अवेध है। इससे संबंधित शिकायत इस नंबर पर दर्ज करायें, आपकी जानकारी गुप्त रखी जाएगी।

टॉल फ्री नं- 15545 या 1800 345 6268

Rallis India Limited	
REGISTERED OFFICE : 23rd Floor, Vios Tower, New Cuffe Parade, Off. Eastern Freeway, Wadala, Mumbai - 400 037, CIN: L36992MH1948PLC014083	
In Pursuance to the order No. S.O.2900(E) dated 24th October, 2015, its amendment dated 30th December, 2017 and S.O. 2001 (E), dated 22nd June 2020, issued by Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India, RALLIS INDIA LIMITED hereby notifies that it intends to sell/marketing new 100 % Water Soluble Mixture of Fertilizer grades, as per the specifications given: (1) N.P.K.S: 5:11:35.5, Total Nitrogen: 5%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 11%, Total Potassium as K2O: 35%, Total Sulphur as S: 5%, (2) N.P.K.S: 12:19:17.6, Total Nitrogen: 12%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 19%, Total Potassium as K2O: 17%, Total Sulphur as S: 6%, (3) N.P.K.S: 5:39:19.5, Total Nitrogen: 5%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 39%, Total Potassium as K2O: 19%, Total Sulphur as S: 5%, (4) N.P.K.S: 5:9:32.5, Total Nitrogen: 5%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 9%, Total Potassium as K2O: 32%, Total Sulphur as S: 5%, (5) N.P.K.S: 10:29:14.2, Total Nitrogen: 10%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 29%, Total Potassium as K2O: 14%, Total Sulphur as S: 2%, (6) N.P.K.S: 11:21:21.3, Total Nitrogen: 11%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 21%, Total Potassium as K2O: 21%, Total Sulphur as S: 3%, (7) N.P.K.S: 5:15:34.6, Total Nitrogen: 5%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 15%, Total Potassium as K2O: 34%, Total Sulphur as S: 6%, (8) N.P.K.S: 5:54:1.8, Total Nitrogen: 5%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 5%, Total Potassium as K2O: 41%, Total Sulphur as S: 8%, (9) N.P.K.S: 6:0:21.7, Total Nitrogen: 6%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 0%, Total Potassium as K2O: 31%, Total Sulphur as S: 7%, (10) N.P.K.S: 5:9:29.2, Total Nitrogen: 5%, Total Phosphorous as P2O5: 9%, Total Potassium as K2O: 29%, Total Sulphur as S: 2%, In above all grades, (a) Moisture per cent by weight, maximum: 0.5 % (b) Total Chloride per cent by weight, maximum: 1.5 % (c) Sodium as NaCl, per cent by weight, maximum: 0.5 % (d) Matter insoluble in water % by wt., maximum: 0.5% (e) Lead (as Pb) % by weight, maximum: 0.003% (f) Cadmium (as Cd) % by weight, maximum: 0.0025 % (g) Arsenic (as As) % by weight, maximum: 0.01 %	
Email : cmc@rallis.com , Web : http://rallis.co.in , Tel : 022-6665 2700, Fax : 022-6776 1634	

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND				
Short Term e-Procurement Notice				Date : 23/12/2022
Sl. No	Tender Reference No.	Work Name	Cost of Bidding Document (Rs)	Completion Time
1	BCD/RFP/04/ 2022-23	Request for Proposal for appointing Project Management Consultant (PMC) for the work "Construction of New Jharkhand Bhawan at Gurudwara Bangla Sahib Lane New Delhi"	10,000/-	18 Months
2	Date of Publication of Bidding Document on Website		06-01-2023 at 11:00 AM	
3	Start Date of Submission of Bids		06-01-2023 at 11:00 AM	
4	Last Date/Time of Submission of Bids		28-01-2023 at 05:00 PM	
5	Last Date/Time of Submission of Bidding Document Fee in hard copy at e-Procurement Cell, Building Construction Department, 3rd Floor, Project Bhawan, Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand		31-01-2023 upto 11:30 AM	
6	Date/Time of opening of Bid		31-01-2023 at 12:00 PM	
7	Name & Address of office Inviting Bid		e-Procurement Cell, Building Construction Department, Project Building, 3rd Floor, Room No- 326, Jharkhand,Ranchi.	
8	Helpline Number of e-procurement Cell		0651-2446166	
9	e-mail ID		eprocurementbcd@gmail.com	
Any change can be seen on Website http:// Jharkhandtenders.gov.in .				
Any other information can be seen on http:// Jharkhandtenders.gov.in .				
Nodal Officer, e-Procurement Cell Building Construction Department, 3rd Floor, Project Bhawan, Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand				
PR 285785 Building(22-23)#D				



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

TACKLING BEIJING

Delhi should make a push for talks at the diplomatic level even as it ramps up military preparedness

THE CONVENING OF the 17th round of India-China corps commander-level talks at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point in eastern Ladakh on December 20, 12 days after the clash in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern sector, is a positive development. But unfortunately, it does not inspire confidence about Chinese intentions vis a vis the Line of Actual Control. The last round of talks was held in July, and in September, the government announced that the two sides had finished disengaging at Gogra Hot Springs, as had been agreed in the 16th round. After that, Beijing appeared reluctant to accede to Delhi's push for another round, signalling that there was nothing more to discuss about the situation in eastern Ladakh, and certainly not a return to the status quo that existed before its incursions in April-May 2020. A joint statement that the two sides agreed to keep talking through military and diplomatic channels toward a "mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest" suggests that there was no outcome from this round. It is also not clear if the "remaining" issues have been agreed upon by both sides. Apart from the fact that India now faces an altered status quo and that the PLA is rapidly building war-like infrastructure on its side, for India, the "remaining" issues are the presence of Chinese troops in the Depsang plains, and intrusions in the Demchok area.

Just as it did with the clash at Tawang, the Chinese side chose the timing for this round of talks in Ladakh, seeking to project the impression that it holds the cards. The sector-wise compartmentalisation makes the tensions seem manageable, but the reality appears to be that there is no predicting which part of the 3,500 km of the line will flare up suddenly, as it did on the morning of December 9. Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar flagged the seriousness of the situation when he told Parliament that the Indian deployment at the LAC is at its "highest level".

Delhi should make a push for talks at the diplomatic level even as it ramps up military preparedness. From the short statement by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, it is unclear how prepared the Army was for the transgression at Tawang, despite the advanced Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance devices that have reportedly been installed in that area. Whatever the facts on the ground and regardless of how the tensions will unfold, the government would be well advised to take the Opposition parties into confidence at the earliest. A wide political consensus is what the country needs when confronted with tensions at the borders and it is the government's task and responsibility to build it.

TARGETING THE SONG

Controversy over Iqbal song in UP frames deepening prejudice and wilful cultural ignorance that impoverishes everyone

A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL and a shiksha mitra in Uttar Pradesh are the latest victims of an ongoing culture war in the state. These two staff members of a government school in Bareilly were suspended by the state education department on Wednesday and an FIR filed against them for "hurting religious sentiments" after a Vishwa Hindu Parishad activist filed a complaint against them. According to the FIR, a prayer song written by Allama Iqbal and recited by students in the school assembly "hurt the sentiments of the Hindus" and the teachers involved in the recital were "preparing the students for conversion". The 1902 song, "Lab pe aati hai dua", is recited in morning assemblies in hundreds of schools that follow secular curricula. The complainant, according to the FIR, was upset with the last two lines of the song — "Mere allah burai se bachana mujhko/ Nek jo rah ho, ussi rah pe chalana mujhko" (O Lord, protect me from evil/ Guide me to the path that leads to the good). The complaint and the administrative action taken on it — by the police and education departments respectively — is deeply disturbing. It reveals a wilful cultural ignorance and deepening social polarisation that, going ahead, could have an increasingly chilling effect in the teaching and learning of poetry and literature.

Iqbal, the author of Sare jahan se achha Hindustan hamara, is a leading light in the shared heritage of the Subcontinent. Like many poets, his poetic idiom has been shaped also by his faith and related cultural traditions. In fact, religious texts and epics are the fount of much of the literatures in India; any learning of Indian language and literature involves engagement with writers such as Tulsidas, Kambhar, Basava, Thunchathu Ezhuthachan, Jnaneswar, Tukaram. In the case of a modern poet like Iqbal and the song in question, the words have to be read within the larger context of the text rather than in isolation and ascribed a broader meaning instead of confining it within a religious idiom.

Karnataka, which is acquiring a reputation for being the laboratory of Hindutva politics in the South, is also being roiled by a debilitating and polarising politics and policy which gathers around personal choices such as dress and food — the attempts to ban hijab in educational institutions, for instance, or the sale of halal meat. The government machinery seems to take a cue from the power corridors and acts with alacrity in favour of the majoritarian sentiment when such controversies erupt. In the process, in Karnataka as in UP, the cultural life of the common people is getting restricted and impoverished.

WATCH AND VIRTUE

A politician justifies a Rs 4.5 lakh purchase as patriotic duty. He's not alone in trying to find an excuse for extravagance

FOR MUCH OF this week, Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai was under fire for sporting a watch so expensive that it is often referred to as a "timepiece". It all began when a DMK minister asked on Twitter how the BJP leader who claimed to own only "four goats and two cows" could afford an item that costs around Rs 4.5 lakh. The timepiece, made by French watchmakers Bell & Ross in collaboration with Dassault Aviation, is manufactured using the same materials as the Rafale jet. And it is this collaboration that gave Annamalai the excuse he needed to justify the extravagance: "I wear this because I'm a patriot, and this watch is very important to me. Since I can't fly a Rafale jet, I'll wear this watch until the day I die."

The desire to spotlight the purchase of a watch worth nearly Rs 5 lakh in a country where the per capita monthly income is around Rs 12,500 could be seen as understandable. Less so is the tendency of so many at the top of the pyramid to justify their luxury purchases as useful. Some insist that a car that costs seven figures is not an expensive indulgence but only a way to save the environment and use the travel time more productively. Or that the high-end cellphone is better value for money than its counterparts, as though a higher-quality selfie means a better life. And who doesn't have a colleague or friend who is a shopaholic? It is indeed tiresome to hear someone try to justify his 14th pair of shoes.

Annamalai, like so many people who have made their fortune in post-liberalisation India, is caught in the trap of publicly venerating austerity while privately indulging a weakness for the more expensive things money can buy. That kind of hypocrisy is forgivable, even inevitable, in a country as unequal as India. But equating consumerist excess with patriotic duty is perhaps going a touch too far.



RAJIB DASGUPTA

IN THE BACKDROP of the surge in Covid-19 cases in Brazil, Japan, the US and the Republic of Korea and, in particular, the situation unfolding in China, India is on full alert and not taking chances. The Union government has reaffirmed that "Covid is not over yet". The Prime Minister reviewed the preparedness of health infrastructure and logistics, status of the vaccination campaign in the country and the public health implications of the current surge. He emphasised enhanced surveillance, including random testing of incoming international passengers, and ramping up testing and genomic sequencing. Covid appropriate behaviour was emphasised in the light of the ensuing festive season. The elderly and vulnerable were urged to get the booster dose of the vaccine. Most importantly, the state governments were urged to ensure operational readiness of clinical service, including oxygen and ventilators and human resources. The states, in turn, are reviewing the situation and initiating specific steps.

During the week of 5-11 December, the number of new weekly cases increased by two per cent (as compared to the previous week) while weekly deaths increased by over 10 per cent. Cases declined in the South East Asia region (that includes India) by a third (33 per cent). The Western Pacific region (that includes China) marked a three per cent increase and the region of the Americas recorded a 27 per cent rise. At the country level, the US registered a 50 per cent weekly increase and Japan and the Republic of Korea 13 per cent each.

The WHO cautions that the current numbers are to be interpreted with the caveat that many countries have changed testing strategies which meant lower numbers being tested. Consequently, Covid-19 prevalence surveys have often confirmed that the notified Covid-19 cases are under-estimates.

The BA.5 Omicron subvariant continues to be the dominant strain with the WHO re-

As G20 chair, India must take the lead in the battle against a resurgent virus, galvanise member states

Despite immense challenges, India has responded reasonably well through the last three years including in building up capacities of medical countermeasures — through diagnostics, pharmaceuticals and vaccines — as well as digital innovations. Several G20 members are witnessing this surge. This could be the India moment to demonstrate both effective responses as well as establish greater collaboration among member states through a coordinated and shared response framework.

porting a prevalence of 73.7 per cent in the week of 14 to 20 November 2022. It accounts for much of the cases in the US. This subvariant spreads rapidly on account of its immune evasive property, causing infections despite previous Covid infections and vaccination. The BA.2 descendent lineages follow with a global weekly prevalence of 10.4 per cent. At present, BA.2.75 and XBB subvariants have emerged and demonstrated increased prevalence in some countries in South East Asia and Western Pacific regions.

The BF.7 subvariant seems to be responsible for the recent surge in Beijing and possibly other cities in China too. BF.7, or more correctly BA.5.2.1.7, is a sub-lineage of the Omicron variant BA.5. BF.7 and is remarkable in that it seems to have an exceptional capacity to infect those who have had a previous Covid infection, or been vaccinated or both. Omicron has an average R0 of 5.08, meaning that one infected person will transmit the virus to about five more persons. In contrast, BF.7 is reported to have an R0 value of 10 to 18.6.

What could be a source of worry is the result of a study in the US that found that BF.7 was resistant to neutralisation in samples from triple-vaccinated healthcare workers, as well as patients infected during the Omicron BA.1 and BA.5 waves. This resistance is explained by the R346T mutation. The combination of higher transmissibility and a higher proportion of asymptomatic carriers explains the difficulties that Chinese cities are facing in controlling the current wave. This is against the backdrop of a relatively low natural infection in China.

BF.7 has been detected in the US, UK and in several countries in Europe, including Belgium, Germany, France and Denmark. BF.7 was first detected in India by the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC), Gandhinagar. So far two cases have been detected in Gujarat and one in Odisha.

The WHO states that the extent to which the enhanced immune escape properties of the newly emergent Omicron descendent variants can lead to new waves is likely to depend on the "regional immune landscape, the size and timing of previous Omicron waves, and the Covid-19 vaccination coverage". For India, these conditions seem to be favourable at this point in time. The lack of widespread uptake of booster doses remains a matter of concern for those individuals who may be vulnerable on account of age or other comorbidities. While some have called for travel-related restrictions, these are of little practical and epidemiological relevance.

As the Union government continues to lead the Covid-19 response at the national level, district and municipal level surveillance shall be crucial in picking up the red flags. This makes preparedness and operational readiness at the local levels critical in the next few weeks.

The current phase of the pandemic has come at a time when India has taken up the G20 presidency. As we know, health systems are going through the processes of recovery, reformation, and rejuvenation and all countries are recalibrating to build resilience into their health services to be able to respond effectively and efficiently to health emergencies. Despite immense challenges, India has responded reasonably well through the last three years including in building up capacities of medical countermeasures — through diagnostics, pharmaceuticals and vaccines — as well as digital innovations. Several G20 members are witnessing this surge. This could be the India moment to demonstrate both effective responses as well as establish greater collaboration among member states through a coordinated and shared response framework.

The writer is Professor at the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, JNU



RAHUL BAJAJ

RECENTLY, CONGRESS MP Shashi Tharoor found himself confronting the accessibility barriers that are a routine feature of the lives of those of us who are disabled. Tharoor slipped a step when walking in Parliament, thus spraining his ankle. He had to go to Parliament in a wheelchair early this week, as a result. Taking to Twitter to share his experience, he wrote: "When you need to enter Parliament in a wheelchair, there's only one entrance with a ramp, at door 9, a good four-minute trip (with the assistance of helpers) to the Lok Sabha. This temporary disability has taught me how poorly equipped we are to support people with disabilities."

In December 2021, I submitted a series of recommendations to the Parliamentary Research Institute for Democracies [PRIDE] to make the physical and digital interface of Parliament more disabled-friendly. My suggestions included having an Accessibility Committee in Parliament to attend to the access needs of the disabled, providing sign language interpretation for Parliamentary proceedings and ordering an accessibility audit of Parliament's websites. Unfortunately, there has been no movement on these recommendations.

In December 2015, the Government of India launched the Accessible India Campaign (AIC) to make the built environment, ICT ecosystem and transport facilities more disabled-friendly. What is unfortunately absent in the AIC is a strong enforcement mechanism, led by people with disabilities and accessibility professionals, to ensure that ambitious milestones are set and pursued.

An example of this implementation gap

A MORE ACCESSIBLE HOUSE

Much needs to be done to make public buildings disabled-friendly

is the following. S. 45 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 [RpwDA] states that, as a general rule, all existing public buildings shall be made accessible within five years of the date of promulgation of such rules. The relevant Rules, namely the Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier Free Built Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons, issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, were notified in June 2017. This five-year time period, therefore, expired in June 2022. However, it is widely reported that this deadline has been breached — a fact borne out adequately by the lived experiences of the disabled living in India. Deadlines in the AIC have also been repeatedly breached.

What, then, is the way forward? First, as a report by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, titled "Beyond Reasonable Accommodation" points out, the requirement to make every new building accessible before it is granted an Occupancy Certificate and the relevant provisions of the Harmonised Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India, 2021 must be integrated into local bye-laws and state planning laws. Municipal authorities must have the know-how and sensitivity to gauge compliance with the norms to make the built environment accessible and access to competent accessibility professionals who can provide appropriate inputs at every stage. The list of empanelled professionals maintained by municipal authorities must also consist of accessibility professionals, and this requirement must be codified in model building bye-laws and the National Building Code.

Second, Parliament must set up an accessibility committee that is tasked with deliv-

ering recommendations in a time-bound fashion on making every aspect of the Parliamentary process more disabled-friendly. The constitution of an Accessibility Committee by the Supreme Court recently may be a good reference point for Parliament.

Third, as Vidhi's report again recommends, central and state level procurement laws and policies must incorporate accessibility criteria in public procurement of physical, digital and transport infrastructure. These must be replicated in agreements between procurement agencies and bidders/contractors. In addition, tender documents must set out applicable accessibility standards.

Fourth, the Department of Empowerment for Persons with Disabilities (Department) has released the Suganya Bharat app to enable persons with disabilities to report any building that is inaccessible. When I tried to register on the app as a blind person with my screen reader on the iPhone: (a) I was unable to enter the date in my date of birth; (b) the button to select one's gender was unlabelled; (c) the app got stuck after I pressed the submit button on entering my details. These deficiencies in the app should be rectified so as to enable a well-meaning intervention to realise its full potential.

Fifth, the Department must take the lead in ensuring that accessibility targets are met. It has the funds and the mandate to do the same. It must not shirk from discharging this responsibility and the faith placed in it by India's disabled population.

The writer is an attorney at Ira Law, co-founder of Mission Accessibility and a Senior Associate Fellow on Disability Rights at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy

DECEMBER 24, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

INDO-PAK COMMISSION

AN AGREEMENT ON the setting up of a joint Indo-Pakistan commission marked the first day's talks between the foreign secretaries of the two countries. The foreign ministers will meet in New Delhi next year to sign the agreement formally setting up the commission. The joint commission will tackle Indo-Pakistan problems relating to economic co-operation, trade, industries, education, health, cultural co-operation, tourism, visas etc.

JAYEWARDENE'S WIN

WITH 31.4 LAKH Sri Lankan voters out of a

total of 57.4 lakh voting their approval for the extension of the present parliament's life in a referendum. President Junius Richard Jayewardene has emerged triumphant for the second time in two months over his opponents. The life of the 168-member parliament, due to expire in August next year, now gets extended till August 1989. The ruling United National Party will be able to hold on to its majority in the parliament till then.

CONGRESS EXPULSIONS

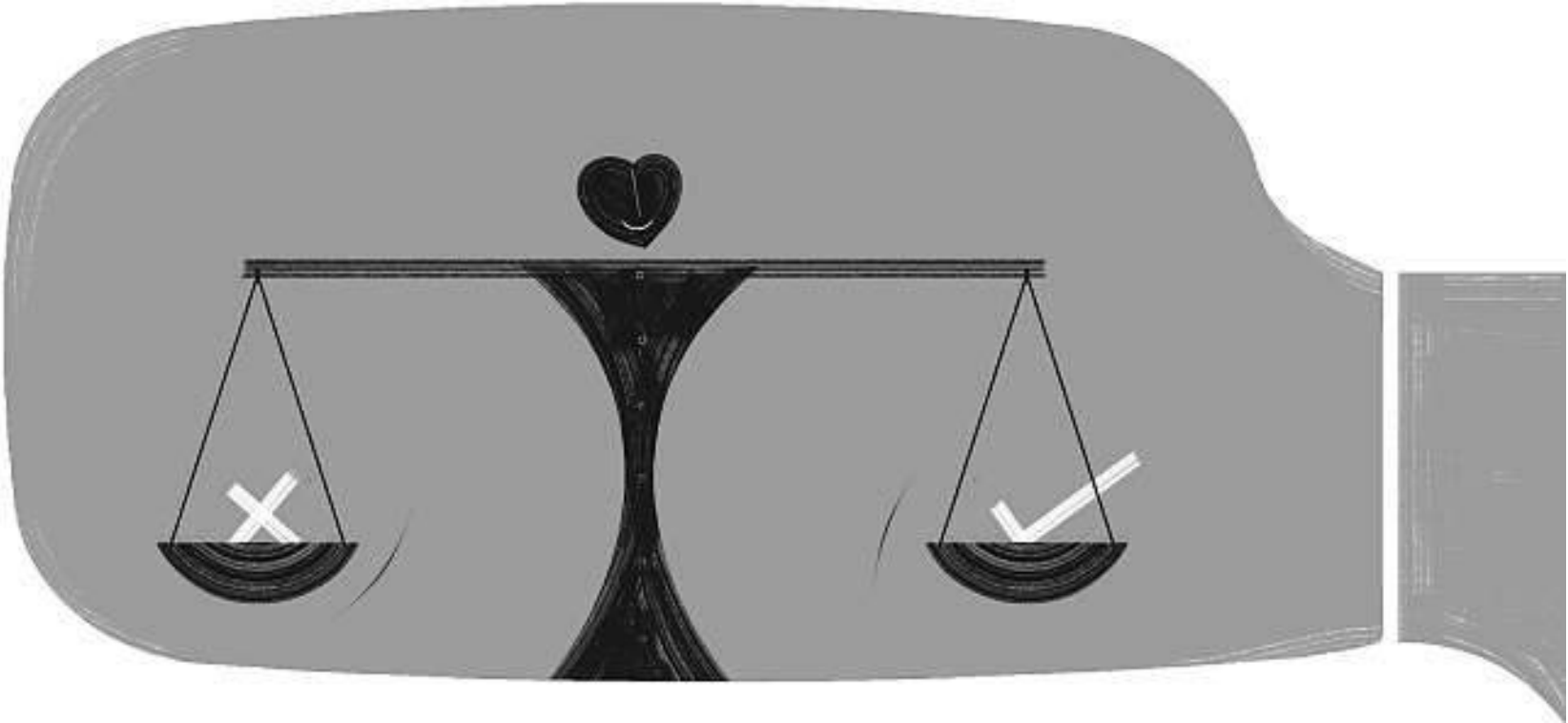
THE ANDHRA PRADESH Congress-I committee has expelled from the party 85 of its

prominent members, including 15 sitting legislators, for defying its directive to withdraw candidature against the official party nominees. December 21 was the deadline set by the APCC-I for retirement of the rebel candidates from contest against the Congress-I nominees.

COMMITTEE FOR GANGA

THE INDO-BANGLADESH JOINT rivers commission (JRC), which has been deliberating on the vexed problem of augmenting the flow of the Ganga during the lean season, is now likely to constitute a sub-committee to handle this question at the technical level.

13 THE IDEAS PAGE



C R Sasikumar

Notes on life, love and law

In the year ahead, let the institution of the Supreme Court become stronger. The government should expeditiously sign off on the names sent to them by the collegium



OPENING ARGUMENT

BY MENAKA GURUSWAMY

AS THE YEAR draws to a close, I look back, like many, at the year that was. The memories of the last few weeks, in fact, seem to set the tone for the year that has passed and the year ahead. Last weekend, I was in Mumbai for the first Ashok H Desai Memorial Lecture. Ashokbhai was my senior, my teacher and my very dear friend. He passed away in the spring of 2020 as we were under the first Covid lockdown. In India, the chambers system means that litigators like myself join the law chambers of a senior practitioner and learn from him or her. Desai was a lawyers' lawyer, a senior advocate, and had served as Solicitor General and Attorney General of India.

The Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, delivered the lecture and spoke on law and morality. The judge spoke eloquently on changing morality, reforming laws and constitutional morality in India, from the court's decision in *Navtej Singh Johar* on gay rights to honour killings, as young couples crossed caste fault lines and found love in each other. It was fitting that this was the theme for the inaugural memorial lecture since Desai himself had litigated some of our country's defining social values and morality cases, on censorship and obscenity (*Saktharam Binder*) and gay rights (*Navtej Singh Johar*), apart from right to life

cases like *Nandini Sundar*.

The lecture was an opportunity for Ashokbhai's family, friends, judges and the legions of lawyers that he inspired to come together to remember him. A closure for so many of us over the passing away of a lawyer and human being who taught us so much. In attendance were his wife Suverna Desai or Suverna Aunty for us, and his children Ami, Harsh and Jai, past and present judges, and the many members of his law chambers from Mumbai and Delhi. His legacy includes a wealth of case law that protects freedoms in India, and his former juniors — judges, senior advocates and established lawyers.

We had all gathered to remember and honour a man that we admired and loved dearly. Many of us wear the gowns that he gave us, and attempt to honour him by practising law with the integrity, joy and craft which he showed us. The event was for us a chance to say goodbye to a teacher who taught us equally about how to live life elegantly, and the craft to bring to the law.

After I finally bid goodbye to my teacher, I got on a flight to see my parents and spend the rest of the weekend with them. Humans experience life in cycles, that begin and end and start afresh as if closing the loop of all our experiences. At a shop in Hyderabad, as my parents wandered about, I bought some chocolates for them and for my children. Life at its beginning and towards the sunset years seems similar for the flavours that we humans crave. Sugar, spice and saltiness.

My parents wanted India's much loved and familiar milk chocolate flavour, popularised in all our childhoods by Cadbury. One of the most enduring memories of my childhood continues to be going to a store with my father, him lifting me up so I could ask the shop keeper for a bar of Cadbury. You only had one flavour in those days — "milk chocolate" served with a dose of fatherly love. Our children being raised in post-liberalisation India, have more choices; they prefer chilli chocolate or salted caramel chocolate or, as our son told us most recently, could he have dark chocolate please? Our daughter simply says "wow" to any chocolate. I hope for our children, the many flavours of chocolate will always bring back memories of parental love.

As a lawyer, I use the end of the year to reflect on the cases that were litigated and heard by the court and those that we plan and prepare for. In the next year, the Supreme Court will likely hear challenges to the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, petitions for marriage equality, reforms to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, limited review of its decision in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 and reconsidering its own decision on the entry of women to the Sabarimala temple.

As we use the few days that the court does not formally function to prepare for the new cases to be heard, judges will use this time to write judgments on the cases that they heard, and more senior judges will also spend time on administration issues. While we dwell on the year ahead, we must dwell on the institution of the Supreme Court the judicial vacancies that exist, the names of prospective judges to be elevated that have been sent to the Executive. At present there are 27 judges working at the Supreme Court against a sanctioned strength of 34. At the high courts there are only 777 judges working against a sanctioned strength of 1,108 or around a 30 per cent vacancy. The government should expeditiously sign off on the names sent to them by the collegium of the Supreme Court, as is envisaged by the law.

On that note, wishing you dear readers a joyous end of the year, and a wonderful year ahead.

The writer is a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India



TILAK RAJ SHARMA

THE RECENT APPROVAL for the environmental release of Genetically Modified (GM) hybrid mustard DMH 11 and its parental lines has attracted the attention of the public. There has been some criticism of the move, including in this newspaper ('Stay with Science, go slow on GM', December 22).

All the national agencies concerned with the areas of agricultural research, health, biodiversity and ecology were involved in the risk assessment of the product before it was considered safe. Questioning the credentials of scientists at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Department of Biotechnology and other regulatory bodies is a cynical, if not dangerous, approach.

GM is a disruptive technology because it can bring about targeted changes in crop varieties that cannot be achieved through normal breeding of plant lines. The crops bred through this technique have to, of course, be safe for humans, animals and the environment. In the case of DMH-11, the objective of genetic modification was to make the mustard crop amenable to hybridisation.

Why hybrids? Hybrid plants that result from the crossing of genetically diverse parents generally demonstrate higher yields and wider adaptation. This is a phenomenon known as heterosis or hybrid vigour, which has been widely exploited in crops such as maize, pearl millet, rice, sunflower and many vegetables. Hybrids typically show 20-25 per cent yield increases over conventional-bred varieties across crops.

Hybrid technology can play an important role in boosting yields of rapeseed-mustard,

which is India's major oilseed crop. Our current mustard yield, at 1.2-1.3 tonnes per hectare, is roughly half of the global average. We need to raise this not just for mustard, but all oilseed crops. In 2021-22, India spent Rs 1,56,800 crore on the import of 14.1 mt of edible oils, equivalent to nearly a third of our total domestic consumption. Those who question the necessity of GM mustard cultivation should answer a simple question: Isn't the current forex drain on imports of edible oil a "compelling" reason? The doubters would have probably said the same thing in the Sixties when India was leading a ship-to-mouth existence in foodgrains. We trusted the wisdom of our scientists and that brought us the Green Revolution.

This leads to the next question: Why GM hybrids? Hybrid seed production requires an efficient male-sterility and fertility-restoration system — so that one of the parent lines can be crossed with the pollen from only the other parent, even as the resultant plant is fertile. The existing mustard hybrids have limitations of sterility breakdown under certain environmental conditions, resulting in lower seed purity. So much so that in 2014 the agriculture ministry relaxed the usual purity standard of hybrid seeds in rapeseed-mustard to 85 per cent, from 95 per cent under the Seeds Act 1966.

The GM "Barnase-Barstar" system provides an alternative route for hybridisation in mustard that is robust and addresses the sterility breakdown problems. This technology has been successfully deployed in other countries.

DMH-11 has been developed by scientists

at Delhi University's Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants. They have used the "barnase-barstar" system with some improvements to breed the hybrid. This has undergone all the required regulatory testing processes. DMH-11 was tested in confined field trials at multiple locations. It showed around 28 per cent higher yield over the national best "check" mustard variety Varuna, besides being subjected to all the biosafety tests required under the officially stipulated guidelines and rules. It was based on all these scientifically-conducted assessments that the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) recommended the environmental release of DMH-11 and its parental lines.

It is nobody's case that DMH-11 per se will solve India's edible oil imports problem. The environmental release of its parental lines will help mustard breeders to deploy the robust and versatile "Barnase-Barstar" system to develop newer-generation mustard hybrids with greater yield and other superior trait advantages. This will be a significant step forward in addressing the problem of low productivity in mustard, helping bring down imports of edible oil in the future.

The doubters have questioned the safety of the three genes — Barnase, Barstar and Bar — used to develop GM mustard. Extensive studies on toxicity, allergenicity, compositional analysis, field trials, and environmental safety studies of GM mustard lines vis-à-vis their non-transgenic comparators have established their safety.

The final allegation levelled against DMH-11 is that it will promote use of herbicides. The Bar gene does confer resistance to the

herbicide glufosinate. But the gene has been used, firstly, as a selectable marker in tissue culture during the breeding process. Secondly, the herbicide-tolerance trait in both the Barnase female and Barstar male lines is to be exploited only for production of hybrid seed and not in the commercial cultivation of hybrids. The GEAC has also approved herbicide use only for hybrid seed production. It must be noted here that approximately 15,000 tonnes of herbicide (technical material) worth Rs 7,000 crore is already being applied annually by Indian farmers in rice, wheat, soyabean and other crops even without any genetic modification. So, what is new in the use of a herbicide for seed production?

GM crops are today grown in over 30 countries. Adoption rates of GM traits have been more than 95 per cent in some cases with no evidence of adverse effects. If India is at present importing GM canola oil, why can't its farmers cultivate mustard by deploying the same technology?

The ICAR and other publicly-funded institutions have been working on breeding GM crops for different traits such as higher yields, biotic and abiotic stress tolerance. It is in the welfare interests of farmers and consumers that a positive environment is created in the minds of our agricultural scientists to conduct research in biotech crop development. The landmark decision of the government to approve GM mustard should be taken to its logical conclusion.

The writer is Deputy Director General (Crop Science), ICAR

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The US domestic political question is whether bipartisan support [for Ukraine] continues in January. Mr Zelenskyy's visit was in large part directed towards ensuring that it does. But the real issues this week will have been military and strategic."

— THE GUARDIAN

Major questions about minors

Tendency to criminalise adolescents under POCSO Act shows an overbearing state unaware of social change



UPMA GAUTAM, DEEKSHA B TEWARI AND PRIYA DAS

THE CHIEF JUSTICE of India's message to Parliament to address concerns about the age of consent under the POCSO Act is the culmination of a series of events. The Madras, Delhi and Meghalaya High Courts have flagged matters concerning criminalisation of romantic relationships between or with an adolescent under POCSO. On November 12, the Delhi High Court in *AK v. State Govt of NCT of Delhi* (order by Justice Jasmeet Singh) stated that the intention of POCSO was to protect children below the age of 18 years from sexual exploitation and not to criminalise romantic relationships between consenting young adults. This week, the government told Parliament that it does not have any plan to revise the age of consent.

The root cause of the problem at hand is that POCSO conflates exploitative sexual practice and general sexual expression by an adolescent, and criminalises both. As a result, criminal law has become an instrument to silence or regulate a non-exploitative consensual sexual relationship involving a minor girl, which is voluntary. The Tamil Nadu police guidelines directing police personnel to not act hastily when arresting youngsters for romantic cases under POCSO is one intervention to address the Act's tendency to overcriminalise. However, the cumulative victimisation of the "consenting" girl also deserves the law-makers' attention. POCSO, MTP and the Child Marriage Act create a complex socio-legal web that deprives the minor girl of the rights to dignity, liberty, sexual and reproductive health, and undermines her privacy. This also feeds into a milieu of poor sexual awareness among young girls.

The legal aspects of teenage sexuality have undergone several changes since colonial times. The age of consent has increased from 10 to 12 to 14 to 16 and finally to 18 years by the 2013 amendment, in order to bring it in conformity with the then newly legislated POCSO Act. The law disregards the likelihood of a minor girl engaging in sexual activity voluntarily — it thus desexualises her. The law that criminalises adolescent sexuality either ignores social reality or pretends to do so. According to the NFHS-5, for instance, 39 per cent women had their first sexual experience before turning 18. The same survey provides additional evidence of sexual engagement among unmarried adolescent girls by reporting contraception use by 45 per cent of unmarried girls in the age group of 15-19 years.

The recent criminal law amendment in UP that imposed a blanket ban on grant-

ing anticipatory bail to a rape accused rubs salt on the already wounded. The state seems to be acting as *parens patriae* to protect children from sexual offences and paradoxically prosecuting the youth at the same time. The number of juveniles (especially those between the ages of 16 and 18) apprehended under the POCSO Act in the country has seen a staggering jump of 180 per cent between 2017-2021 according to the National Crime Records Bureau's report, 'Crime in India 2021'. Criminalising underage sexuality (25 per cent of total POCSO cases) burdens the already-overburdened courts thereby clogging up the criminal justice machinery even more.

What has been set wrong by the legislature has been attempted to be remedied by the judiciary. *The Madras High Court in Vijayalakshmi v State* (2021) made it imperative to draw a line demarcating the nature of acts that should not be made to fall within the scope of this stringent law. The obiter of the court that POCSO has become a tool in the hands of certain sections of society to abuse the process of law is corroborated by other courts too. *Prima facie* the judiciary seems to have a sympathetic approach in cases — it has readily granted bail — where the outcome of the love affair is marriage. However, courts are reluctant to grant bail in matters of a love affair with a minor girl gone bad — *X (minor) v State of Jharkhand & anr*, (2022) is a case in point.

In *Dharmendra Singh v State Govt of NCT* (2020), the Delhi High Court has attempted to increase the chances of bail of an accused in an "innocent yet unholy physical alliance" or where there is "tacit approval-in-fact" by the girl and the "age difference between the victim and the offender is less". These guidelines issued by the court pertain to close-in-age exemptions, available in statutory rape cases in most US states. Also known as the Romeo-Juliet law, it provides a degree of protection to the offender where the age difference between him and the victim is within the stipulated limit.

In a recent speech at the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights, former Supreme Court judge, Justice Madan Lokur talked about the need to evolve a separate procedure for children while dealing with POCSO cases. The relief accorded by a few high courts to "not so" criminal male adolescent/youth is disproportionate to the harm and harassment caused for the fault of falling in love with a girl who purportedly is "not so" immature. It would be not an overstatement to describe these "romantic" lovers in a mutually consensual relationship as victims of the abuse of the criminal justice system processes. The quest for more meaningful solutions should now come to a logical end before it creates greater havoc in society.

Gautam is Associate Professor of Law (USLS), Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University; Tewari is Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Dyal Singh College; Das is Ph.D Scholar (USLS), Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

YATRA AND 2024

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Yatra, without arrival' (IE, December 23). The Bharat Jodo Yatra coming at the heels of conflict within the Congress seems to be energising its workers. Its reach has been felt by the Centre as well. But, it cannot afford to solely be an exercise in building goodwill. A strong political message needs to be projected if the yatra is to have mass appeal. The Congress needs to get its act together before the 2024 elections.

Raja Bandopadhyaya, Vadodara

DIALOGUE'S THE WAY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Sliding back' (IE, December 21). The Taliban's assault on women's freedoms has continued despite hopes that the new regime would be more tolerant. The religious argument made by the Taliban holds no water. Other states governed by Islamic law have no qualms educating women and girls. The UN has criticised the university ban, as have Muslim states such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Pakistan with India also expressing its concerns. Though Western states are considering sanctions to punish the Taliban, these may prove counterproductive, making the group harder its position.

Khokan Das, Kolkata

REGULATE VDAS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A law for digital assets' (IE, December 23). Virtual digital assets, owing to their nature, are

highly transferable and can be misused for money laundering. They need to be classified as an asset under PMLA. Lessons can be learnt from Singapore, Japan and EU in this regard.

Abhishek Mishra, Allahabad

CULINARY ICON

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The story of CTM' (IE, December 23). The demise of Ali Ahmed Aslam, often credited with the invention of Chicken Tikka Masala, is saddening. Many cooks claimed that they were the ones who served it first while others insisted it wasn't a British invention at all but a Punjabi dish. None of those stories seemed to stick. What many seemed to remember wasn't the famous dish, but rather the man who had made them feel at home.

SS Paul, Nadia

EQUALITY MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Listen please, Imam saheb' (IE, December 22). The control over Muslim women in the name of religion is inexcusable. The Indian Constitution guarantees equality, including of opportunity, to all citizens. The Imam's comments are in poor taste. If more Muslim women step into the political space, as leaders and voters, they will advance the rights of both women and Muslims in the country. This should be encouraged across the board. In this sense, as so many others, his comments were regressive.

H Upadhyay, via email

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Neelam Jain w/o Rajesh Gupta, R/o B-21, First Floor, Moti Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Neelu Gupta, permanently 0040646509-1

I, Maqsood Rahat R/o 2487 Main Bazar Chitli Qabar, Delhi G.P.O, North Delhi- 110006, have changed my minor son's name from Mohammad Tahoor to Mohd Tahoor. 0040646520-1

I, Jitender Ram, S/o Shri Shobhnath, E85/407, J J Camp, Anand Vihar, Near Vivekanand School, East Delhi, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Jitendra Ram. 0070819028-1

I, Guraman Singh Panesar, S/o Balvinder Singh, R/o HL-23, L-Block, Anand Vihar, Hari Nagar, ND-64, have changed my name to Guraman Singh. 0070819021-1

I, Ganesh Nautiyal, F/o Gaurav Nautiyal, R/o Chirp No-04, H.No-412, Khichipur, Delhi-110091, have changed my name to Ganesh Prasad Nautiyal for all future purposes. 0070819029-1

I, Chander Prakash s/o Late Chaman Lal, R/o 3/45-A, 2nd Floor, Moti Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Chander Parkash. 0040646550-1

I, Ashish Mittal S/O Vipin Kumar Mittal R/o 2701, Serangom Cghs, Plot Gh06, Sector 45, Gurgaon, Haryana-122003 have changed my name to Ashish Kumar Mittal for all purposes. 0040646532-11

I, Amita Chopra, D/o Brij Lal Chopra, W/o Sandeep Karwal, R/o Flat No-503-B, Hamilton Court DLF Phase IV, Gurgaon, Haryana-122009, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Amita Karwal. 0070818975-1

I, Amit Kumar / Amit Wadhwa s/o Charanjeet Wadhwa r/o Flat-52, Plot-16, Sector-12, Dwarka, Delhi-110078 have changed my name to Amit Kumar Wadhwa. 0040646515-1

I, Aakash Sharma S/O Tilak Raj Sharma R/O 4571, Arya Park, Subzi Mandi, Delhi-110007, have changed my minor Son name from Ridoy Sharma to Samarth Sharma. 0040646524-1

I, Vikas Aggarwal S/o-Sh.Puran Mal Bansal,R/o-H.No.02, Upper Ground Floor,Pkt.11A, Sector-22, Rohini, Delhi-86,Have Changed my Name to Vikas Bansal for all purpose.That Vikas Aggarwal & Vikas Bansal is the one and same person. 0040646513-1

I,Surender Singh S/o Dilip Singh R/o 1221, Ward 14,Garaulpur Gurgaon 122001 do hereby declare that my name and my father name mentioned in LIC policy 116255809 as Surendra Singh S/o Gopal Singh. I affirm that both names of Surender Singh S/o Dilip Singh and Surendra Singh S/o Gopal Singh belongs toone and same person 0040646583-2

I,Shobhana Solanki W/O, Ramesh P Singh R/O 87-f, Pocket A-3, Lig Flats, Mayur Vihar Phase-3, Delhi-110075 have changed my name to Shobha Solanki for all purposes. 0040646569-1

I,Saroj Bala W/o Roop Chand R/O B-24 Gali 13, Shiv Durga Vihar Lakkarpur Faridabad -121009 do hereby declare that my name mentioned in LIC policy 116258299 as Saroj Devi. I affirm that both names of Saroj Bala and Saroj Devibelong to one and same person. 0040646583-1

I,Sanchita D/o Sh. Sudesh Pal R/O D-403, Plot No.3, Chitrakot Apartments, Sector-22, Dwarka, Amberhaji, South West Delhi, Delhi-110075 have changed my name to Sanchita Pal for all purposes. 0040646507-2

I, Manish S/o Nar Singh R/o 1181, Transit Camp, Anand Parbat, Delhi-110005, have changed my name to Manish Bhatt. 0040646585-8

I,Rita Varma W/o Shri Satya Prakash Varma R/o C-316,Princess Park,Near DPS Indirapuram,Indirapuram Shripur Sun City, Ghaziabad, holding the Aadhar No. 27770720820,have changed my name from Rita to Rita Varma for all future purposes. 0040646578-1

I,Manoj Aggarwal S/o-Sh.Meeta Nand R/o-H.No.251, Block-C-7,Sultanpuri, Delhi-83 declare-that name of my-Father has been wrongly-written as Mitta Nanda Aggarwal in my PAN CARD.The actual-name of my father is Meeta Nand. 0040646512-1

I,Deepanshu S/o Sh. Ved Prakash R/o R-91/A, Ramesh Park, Laxmi Nagar, East Delhi, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Kabir Thakur for all purposes. 0040646507-3

I,ZOAD S/O,RAHI MUDDIN, ADD-FLAT,NO-75B,DDA-FLATS,MATA SUNDARI ROAD DARYAGANJ,CENTRAL DELHI-110002,changed my name to MOHAMMAD ZOAD,for all,future Purposes. 0040646532-9

I, Ved Prakash, S/o Satbir Singh Sehrawat, R/o 3-4 Shivpuri, Near Harish Bakery, Gurgaon-122001, have changed my name to Ved Parkash Sehrawat for all future purposes. 0070819019-1

I,VIJAY LAXMI, W/O, DHARMENDER BATRA, ADD-F-77,IST FLOOR, MANGAL BAZAR VISHNU GARDEN, WEST DELHI 110018,changed my name to VIJAY LAXMI BATRA,for all future Purposes. 0040646532-6

I,RUCHI KANOJIA, D/O,PUNEET KANOJIA,ADD-B-56 2ND-FLOOR, DDA FLATS KALKAJI, SOUTH-EAST DELHI 110019,changed my name to RUCHI,for all future Purposes. 0040646532-10

I,Mahesh Chand Goyal S/o-Suraj Mal R/o Flat.No-101,MIG Ashok Vihar Phase-2,Delhi-110052,have changed my name Mahesh Chand Goyal to Sri Niwas Aggarwal. 0040646571-2

I,MOMEEN AHMAD,S/O JAMEEL AHMAD,ADD-5634,BASTI HARPHOOL SINGH,SADAR-BAZAR NORTH-DELHI 110006, changed my name to MOHD MOMINEEN QURESHI,for all,future Purposes. 0040646580-2

I,Jasvinder Singh,S/o Balbir Singh Kohli,R/o- House No.2596, second floor,Hudson lane, Kingsway Camp,G T B Nagar, Delhi-110009,have changed my name to Jasvinder Singh Kohli. 0040646588-2

We, Raghvesh Agarwal and Mrs. Sonia Agarwal both R/o Flat No. 03182, AITS Advantage, Ahinsa Khand -1, Near Swarn Jayanti Park, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201014 have changed the name of our minor daughter Ria Agarwal and she shall hereafter be known as Riya Agarwal. 0040646517-1

We Sonia Tandon,W/o-Deepak Tandon, S/o-Suresh Kumar Tandon,R/o-A-161,Ashok Vihar Phase -1,Delhi-110052,have changed name of our minor son Bhavya Tandon to Bhavay Riya Agarwal. 0040646588-3

It is for general information that I,Mustakeem S/o-Mohd Muslim,R/o 12A/126,Gali.No-9,Vijay Mohalla, Majupur, North East,Delhi-110053,declare that name of mine and my-father has been wrongly-written as Mustikim and Surya Begum in my Driving Licence No. DL-0520090034257(P).The actual name of mine and my father are Mustakeem and Mohd Muslim respectively which may be amended accordingly. 0040646580-9

I,Vimal Sharma S/o Rakesh Kumar Sharma R/o-BC-10, 2nd-Floor,Mianwali Nagar Paschim,Vihar Delhi-110087, changed my name to Vimal Prakash Sharma. 0040646574-2

I,USHA RANI W/O RAJESH KUMAR R/O 129, VIVEKANAND PURI,SARAI ROHILLA,DELHI-110007.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO USHA GUPTA. 0040646571-7

I,Tanuj S/o-Chandi Prasad R/O 626-C, Nyay Khand-2, Indrapuram,Ghaziabad-201014,Uttar Pradesh, have changed my name to Tanuj Khankriyal permanently. 0040646540-5

I,Syed Sarim Hussain,S/O Syed Ejaz Hussain,R/O-327-96,lane-10,Gaffar Manzil,Jamia- Nagar,Delhi,110025,Have changed my name to Syed Sarim Ejaz Hussain. 0040646532-5

I,Sujit Kavesary Parakat,S/O H(16) Shampa Mirznagar Maheshdala(M) South-24,Parganas,West Bengal-700143,have changed my name Sujit Nair,for all purposes. 0040646571-6

I,Sorabh Kumar,S/o Krishan Lal,R/O H.No.991,Top Floor,Sector-40,Gurgaon (Haryana)-122001,have changed my Son's name,from Aarav to Aarav Arora,for all Purposes. 0040646540-8

I,Sonia W/O Jyot Prashad,R/O H.No-398 Sector-17,Faridabad Haryana-121002,have changed my name Sonia Somastamb,for all purpose. 0040646571-5

I,Savita Kumari,W/o Ram Gopal Singh,R/O-F-403, Mangol Puri, Delhi-110083,have changed my minor son's name,from Rishabh Singh to Rishabh Bajaj. 0040646585-4

I,Satyanjal S/o Prithviraj Yadav,R/O,H.No.293,Sector-40, Gurgaon (Haryana) -122001, have changed my name to Satyanjal Yadav,for all Purposes. 0040646540-7

I,SUSHMA,W/O PRAMOD SINGH SHOKEEN,R/O H.No.341 WARD.NO.24 ARYA NAGAR SONIPAT PIN CODE-131001, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUSHMA SHOKEEN. 0040646571-1

I,SUNIL S/O BRIJ BHUSHAN R/O,HOUSE NO.518, GALI.NO.4, AMBEDKAR-NAGAR, HAIDERPUR,DELHI-110088,have changed my name to SUNIL KUMAR. 0040646574-10

I,SHARON SETIA W/O SATNAM SINGH SETIA R/O C-574,3rd-FLOOR, GALINO.8,MAJILS-PARK,ADARSH NAGAR, DELHI-110033.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHARAN SETIA. 0040646571-8

I,SEEHRA KEWAL SINGH S/O DALIP CHAND R/O A-49,SHYAM NAGAR,TILAK NAGAR,DELHI-110018.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KEWAL SINGH. 0040646532-2

I, Santosh Kumar, S/o Rajvanshi Sah, R/o Village- Prasiidh Nagar, P.S- Vaishali, Amritpur, Vaishali, Bihar-844113, that name of my father has been wrongly written as BANSI SAH in my 10th Class Certificate cum Marksheet, as BANSHI SAH in my 12th Class Certificate cum Marksheet and as Vanshi Sah in my B.A College Leaving Certificate cum Marksheet. The actual name of my father is Rajvanshi Sah. 0070819032-1

I,Rina Singh W/o Manoj Kumar Singh R/O N-12,9,2nd-Floor,DLF City Phase-2 Nathupur, Gurgaon,Haryana-122002, have changed my name to Reena Singh. 0040646540-2

I,Ramadhhar Prasad,S/o Late Munsri Ram R/O,B-16,Nangli Vihar,Extension,Barpola Vihar,New Delhi-110043,have changed my name,from Ramadhhar Ram to Ramadhhar Prasad,for all future purposes. 0040646593-4

I,Rajeev Kumar,S/O Shiv Kumar Tyagi,R/O,Flat.No-103,Floor-10,Block H,GT Road ,Apex Green,Sector-8,Sonipat ,Kamaspur,Haryana,Have changed My Name To Rajeev Tyagi,Permanently. 0040646540-3

I,Rahul Khanna,S/O-Late Shri Parveen Khanna,R/O-H-3/86,1st Floor,Sector-18, Rohini,Delhi-110089,have Changed my minor daughter name from Kanishka/Kanishka Khanna to Shiviangani Khanna. 0040646588-1

I,Prakash Singh,S/o Phool Singh,R/O 15/158,Kalyan Puri,Delhi-91,declare that my name has been wrongly-written in my daughter Tannu's 10th pass-certificate as Prakh Singh Tanwar which may be amended as per my actual-name i.e. Prakash Singh 0040646593-11

I,Poonam Kumar w/o-Parveen Kumar R/o-20/52 West-Punjabi Bagh,new-delhi 110026,have changed my name to Poonam Arora,for all purposes 0040646593-8

I,Pawan Aggarwal,S/o Bhagwan Das Aggarwal,R/o-F-102, Ashok Vihar,Phase-1, Delhi,have changed my name to Pawan Kumar Agarwal, for all purposes. 0040646585-2

I,Parvati Goyal,W/o Sri Niwas Aggarwal R/O,Flat.No-101,MIG Ashok-Vihar Phase-2,Delhi-110052,have changed my name Parvati Goyal to Uma Aggarwal,for all purposes. 0040646571-3

I,Parshant Saini S/O Sumarchand Saini R/O-12-15, Ward No-10,Mamchand Colony Sonipat,Haryana Have Changed My Name To Prashant Saini,Permanently. 0040646540-4

I,Nishita D/o Gopal Sharma R/o RZ-98D, Gali No.8A, Sadh Nagar Palam Colony Delhi-110045 changed my name to Nishita Sharma. 0040646574-6

I,NAVEEN S/O SUBHASH R/O VPO BHAWAR (20), SONIPAT, HARYANA-131302,have changed my name to NAVEEN KALIRAMNA. 0040646532-3

I,NARINDER KUMAR S/O RAM NATH KAPOOR, R/O 219, WHITE HOUSE APARTMENT, PLOT.No. 34,SECTOR-13, ROHINI,DELHI-85,have changed my name to NARINDER KAPOOR. 0040646593-1

I,Mudassir Husain,S/o-raissuddin, Address. B-6,gali no-1 karawal nagar Chand bagh,Delhi-110094,changed my name to Mudassir Hussain. 0040646585-5

I,Manoj Kumar S/o Mahesh Prasad,R/O A 4/7,2nd-Floor,Flat.No.03,DLF Ankur-Vihar,Loni Ghaziabad-201102,inform that in daughter's Xth Marksheet & Certificate father mother-name is not correct-Mother correct-name is Sangita Kumari & her Father correct-name is Manoj Kumar. 0040646593-9

I,MAHDRIK MISHRA S/O CHANDRIKA MISHRA R/O-Flat.No.5-C/89,Udaygiri-2, Sector-34,Noida, Gautam, Buddha,Nagar, UP-201301,have changed my minor Daughter RIDDHIMA MISHRA aged-9 years to SHREYANSHI MISHRA. 0040646574-5

I,Kishore Kunal S/O Late Ram Babu Gupta R/O-108,Third-Floor,Pocket-15 Sector-24,Rohini Delhi-110085, changed my minor son name Vats to Vats Kunal. 0040646574-4

I,Kishore Kunal S/O Late Ram Babu Gupta R/O-108 Third-Floor,Pocket-15 Sector-24, Rohini Delhi-110085, changed my minor son name Varnan to Varnan Kunal. 0040646574-3

I,Karishma,W/o-Mayank Daswal, Address- House-no-953,sector-23 faridabad Haryana-121005,Changed my name to Karishma Arora. 0040646574-8

I,Kamal S/o.Sheesh Pal R/O,H.No-34 Block-B5 Nand Nagri, Delhi-110093, have changed my name Kamal Kumar,for all purposes. 0040646571-4

I,KASHISH,D/O MOHD SAMI R/O H.NO 1/189 BLOCK-H NEAR SEELAMPUR GURUDWARA NORTH-EAST DELHI-110053, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KASHISH SAMI KHAN. 0040646532-4

I,KASHISH D/O MOHD SAMI R/O,H.NO.1/189,BLOCK-H NEAR-SEELAMPUR GURUDWARA NORTH-EAST DELHI-110053,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KASHISH SAMI KHAN. 0040646532-4

I, Ram Suresh S/o Surender Prasad R/o H. No.-28A, Khasra No.-42/5, Mange Ram Park, Near Kamal Vatika, Pooth Kalan, Delhi 110086 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Ram Pal in insurance policy no. 113235312, 113235318, 113235319, 113235321, 113234184 issued by LIC. Ram Pal and Ram Suresh is one and same person. In future I'm known by Ram Suresh permanently. 0040646522-1

I,ISHRAT JANHA,W/O HAJI SHAKEEL AHMAD,R/O-112, NEAR-CHAMUNDA GALINO-1, BARWALAN,MORADABAD,UTTA R PRADESH,have changed my name to ISHRAT JAHAN. 0040646593-2

I,Gurial S/o Akhtiar Singh R/o. H.No.949/29,Krishna Colony, Gurgaon,Haryana-122001, have changed my name to Gurial Singh,for all Purposes. 0040646540-6

I,PRIYA,D/O CHETRAM SAWARIYA R/O-1-13/1220 SANGAM VIHAR SOUTH DELHI-110080,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PRIYA SAWARIYA. 0040646585-1

I,DHEERAJ SHARMA S/O TILOK NATH SHARMA R/O HNO.46, FIRST-FLOOR,PKT-4A,SECTOR-23,ROHINI, DELHI-110085.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DHIRAJ KUMAR SHARMA. 0040646571-9

I,DHARMENDER/DHARMINDER BATRA, S/O.RAM BATRA,ADD-F-77, IST-FLOOR, MANGAL-BAZAAR VISHNU GARDEN, WEST DELHI-110018,changed my name to DHARMENDER BATRA, for all,future Purposes. 0040646532-7

I,Ashish Pandey S/o Raghunath Pandey R/o B-47,B-Block, Sharda Vats Enclave,Prem Nagar-III,Kirari- Suleman Nagar,Delhi-110086,have changed my name from Ashish to Ashish Pandey for all-purposes. 0040646540-1

I,Anshul Gupta S/o Rajender Prasad Gupta,R/o H.no.35,Road No.7.East Punjabi Bagh,New Delhi-110026,have changed my name to Madhav Gupta. 0040646585-6

I,Amarjeet alias Amarjeet Ammy Panghal S/O,Karamveer Singh R/O,H.No.8635, Block-67, Gali-Firoz, New Rohtak-Road, Karol-Bagh, Delhi-110005,have changed my name to Amarjeet Ammy Panghal. 0040646585-10

I,Aditi Nanda,D/o Arun Mudgal,R/O B-1/68,Phase-2, Ashok Vihar Delhi-110052,have changed my name Aditi Mudgal for all purposes. 0040646574-1

I,Abhishek Bhatnagar S/o Sudhir Kumar Bhatnagar R/o B-8/19, Second-Floor, Krishna-Nagar, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to Abhishek Bhatnagar. 0040646585-7

I,ANU SAXENA,W/O,AMIT KUMAR, ADD-661/1B,GHATI ROAD ANAND PARBAT, CENTRAL,DELHI 110005, changed my name toANU SHARMA, for all,future Purposes. 0040646532-8

I,ANIL S/O BALWAN R/O 454/31,GOHANA ROAD,MALIK COLONY,SONIPAT-131001.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ANIL KUMAR FOR ALL PURPOSES. 0040646571-10

I,AKASH,S/O RAJ PAL SAINI,R/O-909, KAYASTHWARA-9, SIKANDRABAD, BULANDSHAHR ,UTTAR-PRADESH 203205, changed my name to AKASH SAINI. 0040646593-3

I, have changed my name from V Jancy to P J Jancy (Punnakkattu Joseph Jancy), for all future purposes. P J Jancy (Punnakkattu Joseph Jancy), D/o P B Joseph (Punnakkattu Babu Joseph) R/O-G-383, Alpha-2, Greater Noida U.P. 0070819043-1

I, WAJIHA-AQIL,W/o YASIR HASAN,R/O 555,GALI HAKIM JI WALI BAZAR CHURI WALAN JAMA MASJID DELHI-6,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO WAJIHA YASIR. 0040646580-1

I, TANU DEVI W/O RAHUL GOEL R/O I-4/124,2nd-FLOOR, SECTOR-16, ROHINI, DELHI-110085,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO TANU GOEL. 0040646574-7

I, Sumit Kumar, S/o Anil Kumar Agrawal, R/o H.No-90, Mohalla Jai, Jai Ram Gali Samar Wali, Post & Tehsil Kasganj, Uttar Pradesh-207123, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sumit Kumar Agrawal. 0070818976-1

I, Shashi Kiran Mehta, D/o Durga Das Bhalla and W/o Umesh Kumar Mehta, R/o H.No-468, Faridabad Sector-22, Faridabad, Haryana-121005, have changed my name to Shashi Mehta. 0070819022-1

I, Sudhir Kumar Rawat, S/o Shri Prem Singh Rawat, R/o D-226, Nehru Colony, Dharampur, Behradun, Uttarakhand-248001, have changed my minor Daughter's name from Jirya Rawat aged 16 years to Sharanya Rawat forever. 0070819033-1

I, Satvir Singh Sehrawat, S/o Ram Saran, R/o 3-4 Shivpuri, Near Harish Bakery, Gurgaon-122001, have changed my name to Satbir Singh Sehrawat for all future purposes. 0070819020-1

I, S Mahesh Kumar, S/o S Seshan, R/o-28-D,MIG Flats, Sheikh-Sarai Phase-I,Malviya Nagar,New Delhi,father of my daughter Shraddha,and have changed,her name to Shradha Mahesh,for all,purpose forever. 0040646585-3

I, Reeta Rani w/o Chander Parkash, R/o 3/45 A, 2nd Floor, Moti Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Rita Rani. 0040646550-2

I, Ratnakar Mishra,S/o-Tara Chand Mishra,H.No-A2690 ground-floor near-gate.no.6 green field colony nhpc colony Faridabad Haryana-12010,changed my name to Ratnakar Kumar Mishra. 0040646574-9

I, PRITI W/O SACHIN GUPTA R/O HOUSE NO-E-83/5, STREET NO.41, NEAR SOLANKI CHOWK SADH NAGAR-2, PALAM COLONY PALAM VILLAGE, NEW DELHI-110045, have changed my name to PRITI SHARMA. 0040646516-1

LOST & FOUND

I, Gaurav Jindal S/o Satya Prakash Gupta R/O A-213, RV Panchajanya, CMC Enclave, Kondapur, KV Rangareddy, Telangana-500084 have lost Original Page No.23 of Registry of my Flat No.2104, 21st Floor, Block-3, Panchsheel Wellington, Sector-1, GH-06, Crossing Republik, Ghaziabad, UP-201016 registered vide Book No.1, Volume No.12784, Pages-23 to 326 Sr.1840 on 26-03-2015 at Office of Sub-Registrar First, Ghaziabad. If found contact at 8800803297. 0040646521-1

I,Saud Arshad,R/o House.No.2, Muradabadi Pahari,Near Shahi Masjid, Vasant Vihar,New Delhi,have lost the original Detention Receipt.No.06439 dated-9.12.2014 Issued by the office of the Additional-Commissioner of Customs, IGI Airport, New Delhi If anyone finds it,please send it to me at my address or contact me at my phone number-9718773786. 0040646593-10

Lost (1)GPA by SM Johari to Sunil Jain Dated-07-April-1998.Registered 13-April-1998 (2)will by SM Johari to Ruchi Jain (3)DDA lease mutation,from late Ram Chander Shandila to Smt.Shanti Devi founder may inform Naman Jain,S/o Pramesh Kumar Jain,D-341,First Floor,Anand Vihar,Delhi-110092 0040646580-10

Lost & Found
I, Kamal Kishore Sharma S/o Lt. Shri Chand Sharma R/O RPS-51 Sheikh Sarai Phase-I New Delhi-110017 duly informs the public at large that I am the Lawful owner of the property bearing no. RPS 51, Sheikh Sarai Phase-I, New Delhi-110017. I have lost part of the chain of my above said property documents, i.e., Original Agreement to Sell, GPA dt 27/06/1997 in favour of Mr. Arun Kumar Dawar. However, all other original previous and current chain documents of the above said property are available with me. I have lodged Police complaint vide LR No. 11/0166/2022 dated 22.12.2022. Finder may inform. Sd/- Kamal Kishore Sharma

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
IT IS HEREBY INFORMED THAT MY CLIENT R/O-50/1015, AGNESAPURM 62 SQ. MTRES. OUT OF KHARSA NO. 4716, SITUATED IN THE REVENUE ESTATE OF VILLAGE PALAM, RAJ NAGAR(H, GALI NO. 4, NEW DELHI & IN THIS PROPERTY SMT. KAMLA DEVI DEPARTED ON 22.11.2010 & AFTER HER DEATH, HER LEGAL HEIRS SMT. KALASH, S/O LATE NARAIN SHRI YUJY KUMAR RELINQUISHED RELEASED THEIR RIGHTS IN FAVOUR OF SHRI RAM SWAROOP WHO FURTHER SOLD THE SAID PROPERTY TO SMT. NEETA SHARMA. IF ANY OTHER CLAIMANT HAS ANY RIGHT IN THE AFORESAID PROPERTY, HE/SHOULD INFORM & GIVE INTIMATION TO THE UNDERSIGNED WITHIN 07 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF ISSUE OF THIS NOTICE. Sd/- SHUBHASH GUPTA 125, FIRST FLOOR, ANAND NAGAR, INDERLOK, DELHI-110035

PUBLIC NOTICE
BE IT KNOWN TO all that my client Sh. Jawahar Lal S/o Sh. Jaipal Singh and his wife Smt. Geeta Devi both R/o H. 4, Kharsa No. 627, Village & P.O. Siraspur, Delhi-42 have severed all their relations with their son Sh. Navcen Kumar Rul and his wife Smt. Anju D/o Sh. Rajender and have severed and disinherited them from all their movable and immovable properties due to their unsocial and anti-family activities. Whosoever deals with said Sh. Navcen Kumar Rul and his wife Anju in any manner whatsoever shall do so at his/her own risk and consequences and my clients shall not be held liable for that. Sd/- R.S. MAHENDRA Advocate Ch. No. K-54, Ti's Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the public at large that my client namely, Smt. Yashoda Rani, W/o Late Sh. Hari Chand Sachdeva, R/o H.No. 1539, Oortan Lane, Gora Teg, Bahadur Nagar, Delhi-110019, has severed all her relationship and ties with her son namely (1). Sh. Praveen Kumar Sachdeva, (2). Her daughter-in-law Smt. Poonam Sachdeva, W/o Sh. Praveen Kumar Sachdeva, (3). Her granddaughter Ms. Gargi Sachdeva D/o Sh. Praveen Kumar Sachdeva and (4). Her grand-son Sh. Eshan Sachdeva, S/o Sh. Praveen Kumar Sachdeva and debars them from all his movable and immovable properties/notes wherever and whosoever absolutely and forever as they are not in control of my client. Any person dealing with them shall be doing so at his own risk, costs and consequences and my client shall not be held responsible for any of their acts and dealings. Sd/- Ashutosh Gupta Advocate Ch. No. 10, Western Wing, Ti's Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client IDBI Bank Ltd., Sector-63, Noida, U.P. is in the process of advancing a loan to Mrs. Anubha Sharma & Mr. Rahul Sharma, for purchase of Apartment No. 151, 14th Floor, Block-E, adm 2476 Sq. Ft., Elegant, Plot No. 5, Vaibhav Khand, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, U.P. from Mrs. Meena Sharma, Mr. Ambuj Sharma & Mr. Ishan Sharma, who have represented that they are the absolute owners of the said property on the basis of Sale Deed dated 29.06.2009 (Reg. no. 15162) and inheritance after the death of one of the co-owners Mr. Devendra Kumar Sharma. If anybody, person, body corporate has any right, lien or claim whatsoever on the said Property, or has any objection to its Sale & mortgage, then he/she/it may contact the undersigned with documentary proof of claim within 10 days of publication of this notice, otherwise it shall be deemed that either there are no claims or the same have been waived off. No claim shall be entertained thereafter and my client shall proceed to advance the loan by mortgaging the said property.

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2022

E. EXPLAINED



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#ExpressExplained

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

THIS WORD MEANS

BENIN BRONZES

A group of over 3,000 artworks from the ancient Kingdom of Benin that were looted by the British



One of the Benin Bronzes returned by Germany this week, in Abuja. AP

EARLIER THIS week, Germany returned 20 Benin Bronzes that were looted in the 19th century to Nigeria at a ceremony in Abuja. Germany had signed an agreement with Nigeria in July, pledging to transfer the ownership of around 1,100 Benin Bronzes.

Of late, there have been calls worldwide for western museums and nations to return artefacts plundered during the colonial period to their countries of origin. In October, the Smithsonian Museum returned 29 Benin Bronzes to Nigeria after launching an institution-wide review of its practices and ethical code.

Precious artworks

From intricately decorated cast plaques to animal and human figurines, the Benin Bronzes are a group of over 3,000 sculptures and artworks from the ancient Kingdom of Benin in present-day Nigeria, that date back to at least the 16th century.

These historical pieces were looted by British colonial forces during their infamous raid on Benin City in 1897, which resulted in the city being captured and the Benin Royal Palace being partially destroyed and ransacked.

Several of these pieces had been specially commissioned for the kings or Obas, and Queen Mothers of the kingdom. The artefacts provide insight into the culture of

the Benin Kingdom as well as its relationships with neighbouring states. Some of these pieces also point to the kingdom's relationship with Europeans.

Momentum for return

The items looted by the British forces were subsequently scattered around the world, and Nigerian historians and activists have been trying to get them back for long.

The call for returning the Benin Bronzes got momentum after French President Emmanuel Macron in a speech in Burkina Faso in 2017 promised to return stolen or looted artefacts to their countries of origin.

This was followed by another crucial moment when the Humboldt Forum — considered to be the Berlin equivalent of the Louvre or British Museum — came under intense criticism for its ownership of looted art and other artefacts, including about 500 Benin Bronzes.

According to a report in *The New York Times*, in February 2019, then German Chancellor Angela Merkel invited a small number of historians and experts to dinner to discuss restitution. This culminated in the setting of certain guidelines for repatriating colonial-era artefacts that specified that all the wrongfully acquired objects should be returned to their rightful owners.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE



NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN

THE BLANKET ban on education for girls and women and other decisions effectively banishing women from public life in Afghanistan, and the return of public executions and floggings as punishments in keeping with Sharia law, has belied hopes that this Taliban regime would be somehow different from the one of 1996-2001.

The ban makes Afghanistan the only country in the world where girls and women are denied access to education.

The Taliban first slapped a ban on girls attending secondary schools — they said it was a “temporary suspension” — on September 18, 2021, a month after they took power, and two weeks after the last American and NATO troops left the country.

In August this year, foreign ministry spokesman Abdul Qahar Balki told *The Indian Express* that despite the “cultural constraints, budgetary constraints, lack of resources, lack of infrastructure, lack of teachers, books”, the government was “working extremely hard to try to address this problem”. “Our policy”, Balki said, “is education for all Afghan citizens irrespective of gender”.

He accused the international community of “weaponising” women’s education against the regime in order not to return Afghanistan’s financial assets banked in the US. He also said girls had access to secondary education in more than a dozen out of the country’s 34 provinces.

Until December 20, women could attend colleges and universities, which the Taliban had gender-segregated with gendered changes to the time table as well. After last year’s ban on secondary schooling, younger girls whose families could afford it, attended “courses” in fee-charging private schools. *Madrasahs* also held “Islamic” classes for girls. A network of underground “secret” schools sprang up so that girls would at least not forget what they had learnt in school until then.

Even though primary and elementary schools remained open, the ban on secondary education had a chilling effect on them — and the ban was effectively total. Hopes went up temporarily earlier this month when the Taliban allowed girl students to write high school exams (though their schools had been closed for a year).

POOJA PILLAI
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

AFTER QUENTIN Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction* (1994) forever changed the gangster genre (or created a “sub-genre” as Tarantino once said), cinemas were cluttered with imitators featuring stylised violence and smart-talking gangsters, and narrated in vignettes or episodes. With a handful of exceptions — including *Get Shorty* (starring *Pulp Fiction*’s comeback star John Travolta) and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (which marked Guy Ritchie as a would-be Tarantino) — all these were duds, critically and commercially.

Among their many problems was the fact that none of their writers and/or directors was Tarantino. *Pulp Fiction* became the phenomenon it is because Tarantino brought to it not only his unique referential film nerdi-



A classroom that was previously used for girl students sits empty in Kabul on Thursday. The Taliban banned all girls’ and women’s education this week. AP

Since Wednesday though, the denial of education to women is complete. Women teachers have been banned from working. Along with the medical profession and police, teaching was one of the few remaining avenues for working women. In most government offices, women employees had already been asked to take a pay cut and show up once a week to mark attendance. The invisibilisation of women by the Taliban is now gathering pace. On November 9 this year, women were banned from visiting most public parks, hamams, and gymnasiums.

The Taliban have also resumed the practice of public punishment, their calling card in the late 1990s. The first public execution took place on December 7 in the southwestern province of Farah — an alleged murderer was shot dead by the father of his victim. There have been several public floggings since then.

The world is outraged...

The world has responded as one to the Taliban ban on girls’ education. Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Pakistan, the three countries that recognised the 1996-2001 Taliban regime (they have not done so this time) have condemned the ban. Turkey, Qatar, and Indonesia have also questioned the ban. Some countries have said it is against Islam to deny women education.

In her capacity as chair of the G7 foreign ministers that issued a joint statement against the Taliban decision, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock warned the Taliban’s “gender persecution may amount to a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute, to which Afghanistan is a State Party”.

India has said it is “concerned” and reiterated its commitment to an “inclusive and representative government that respects the

rights of all Afghans and ensures the equal rights of women and girls to participate in all aspects of Afghan society, including access to higher education”.

But the Taliban appear unfazed, indicating the limits to the leverage the international community has with them, and what it can do to make them respect the human right of women to education.

Some 15 countries, including India, China, Russia, Pakistan, the US (through Qatar), and Afghanistan’s Central Asian neighbours have been engaging with the Taliban through differing levels of diplomatic presence in Kabul. But no country has granted recognition to the Taliban, making that conditional on the Kabul regime meeting preconditions that include giving girls and women equal access to education, and forming an inclusive and representative government.

...Taliban are brazen

The Taliban are desperate for international recognition, but they have shown that they won’t fulfill the conditions for it, and instead hope to benefit from geopolitical rivalries and the race among regional powers for influence in Afghanistan.

In the Security Council exactly a year ago, Russia and China successfully pushed for an exemption in the UN sanctions regime to allow humanitarian aid to flow into Afghanistan. At a Security Council briefing on Wednesday, hours before the Taliban announced their blanket ban on girls’ education, the UN Special Representative in Afghanistan Roza Otunbayeva said: “We do not see eye to eye with the Taliban on a number of issues, but the focus is, and should be, on maintaining dialogue in the hope of a better future for Afghanistan, where everyone

— women, men, girls and boys — can live a life with dignity and equality”. Otunbayeva later described the ban as “devastating”.

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths said 20 million Afghans faced acute hunger, and millions more were directly and critically dependent on international aid. Cutting aid to Afghanistan was not an option, he said.

Given the nature of the choice — between starving Afghans and punishing the Taliban — the limitations to what the international community can do to ensure that Afghan women do not sink into a black hole are painfully evident.

India’s shackles on itself

New Delhi reopened its Kabul mission in June with a “technical team”. Concerns over security are the main driver of India’s engagement with the Taliban. Other than ISIS and al-Qaeda, Pakistani-origin terror groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed are reportedly present in Afghanistan.

At the December 20 Security Council briefing on Afghanistan, India’s Permanent Representative to the UN Ruchira Kamboj pointed to the presence of 60 UN-sanctioned individuals in the Taliban “cabinet” and senior positions in the regime. India is the chair of the Taliban sanctions committee, and Kamboj also pointed to continuing close links between the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

New Delhi seems to hope that its presence in Kabul will somehow ensure that Afghan soil is not used against India. With relations between the regime and its benefactors in Rawalpindi not so warm at the moment, New Delhi believes it has an opportunity to retrieve some lost influence in Afghanistan.

Somewhat contradictorily though, India has stopped playing to its biggest strength and the wellspring of its influence in Afghanistan: the friendship of the Afghan people.

While the stated objective of the reopening of the diplomatic mission in Kabul was “the continuation of our engagement with the Afghan people”, the mission does no public outreach. In the past, education and refuge from the conflict were solid connectors — but over the last year, New Delhi has not responded to desperate pleas from Afghans for visas. Some 3,000 Afghans who were studying in India in 2021 and had gone home in the months before the Taliban takeover found their visas cancelled.

Among the visa seekers are hundreds of women with no education or career prospects in their own country, more so after the latest anti-women move. New Delhi’s only engagement so far with the Afghan people has been the evacuation of the Afghan Sikh community, who were being repeatedly targeted by the ISIS.

EXPLAINED BOOKS SATURDAY SUMMARY

Critical perspectives from a master of the movies



CINEMA
SPECULATION
BY QUENTIN
TARANTINO
Hachette India
391 pages;
₹899

ness — honed over years of watching movies of every kind — but also his disciplined, analytical mind, with no room for loose, flabby plotlines or undercooked characters.

Both these qualities are on display in the filmmaker’s first non-fiction book *Cinema Speculation*, comprising essays that are a mix of memoir and film criticism. From early boy-

hood, Tarantino writes, he accompanied his mother and stepfather to the movies, most of them age-inappropriate (including John Boorman’s highly controversial, graphically violent *Deliverance* and Don Siegel’s *Dirty Harry*, which Tarantino describes as the first serial killer movie).

“I was encouraged to act mature and well behaved. Because if I acted like a childish pain in the ass, I’ll be left at home with a babysitter, while they went out and had a good time,” he writes. Young Tarantino decidedly wanted to be included in “adult time”, so he paid for the privilege with silence even as he kept his eyes and ears wide open, only letting his curiosity get the better of him on the ride home when the movie would be minutely dissected and most of his questions answered.

His early exposure not only to the mainstream cinema of 1970s Hollywood but also to kung fu imports from Hong Kong, as well as

the exploitation films screened in the bountiful grindhouse cinemas (which showed only low-budget horror, exploitation, and adult films), shaped Tarantino’s cinematic sensibilities. This is evident in his films, from *Kill Bill Vol 1 & 2*, a homage to the cult Swedish revenge exploitation film *Thriller: A Cruel Picture* as well as kung fu films, to the blaxploitation-inspired *Django Unchained*.

Tarantino’s analysis of Ali MacGraw’s widely-panned performance in *The Getaway* is a lot more charitable because he sees in her not “one-half of a the greatest bank robbing couple in crime film literature”, rather as “one-half of one of the greatest love stories in crime film cinema”. Without doubt, Tarantino’s critical perspective is wider and more generous in its scope than most, taking in performances and movies that were considered oddities or failures, but in which he finds gems to mine.

Recalling Iqbal, national poet of Pakistan, spotlighted in UP school row

ASADREHMAN
LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 23

RECITATION OF Muhammad Iqbal’s prayer *Lab pe aati hai dua* in a school has once again triggered a controversy — this time in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh. After a video of students reciting the prayer during the morning assembly went viral, a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) official in the district complained to police, and the principal of the government school and a *shiksha mitra* were booked for “hurting religious sentiments”.

The Uttar Pradesh Education Department has suspended the principal of the school Nahid Siddiqui, and ordered a probe against the *shiksha mitra*, Wazeeruddin.

Second time in four years

This is not the first instance of a school head being suspended for the recitation of Iqbal’s *Lab pe aati hai dua*. Three years ago, in October 2019, the headmaster of a government primary school in Bisalpur area of Pilibhit was suspended following a complaint by local VHP workers who alleged that students were made to recite a religious prayer that is usually said in *madrasahs*.

The headmaster was subsequently reinstated, but he was transferred to another school.

Poet and his poems

The poem that the VHP considers to be a “religious prayer” is often called “*bachchon ki dua*”, and seeks guidance from God to walk on the righteous path without doing any wrong or evil. It was written by Iqbal in

1902, and has been sung at several educational institutions in India and Pakistan, including some prestigious schools in their morning assemblies.

Among Iqbal’s many poems, the most celebrated is the immortal *Saare jahaan se achchha Hindostan hamaara*, his beautiful ode to India written in 1904, which he recited for the first time in a college in Lahore the following year. The song inspired India’s freedom fighters, including Mahatma Gandhi, and has remained popular over the decades — sung in schools and institutions and used as a marching tune by forces in uniform, and its opening words are commonly employed as an expression of na-



Iqbal in 1933.
Wikimedia Commons

tional pride and patriotism.

When he wrote *Saare jahaan se achchha*, Iqbal was 27 years old, and envisioned a pluralistic future for India where Hindus and Muslims would live in harmony. However, his views changed with time, and he became a proponent of a separate nation for Muslims, which took shape in the form of Pakistan.

Life and career

Iqbal (1877-1938) was born to a family with Kashmiri Pandit ancestry that had embraced Islam in the seventeenth century. He was born in Sialkot, Punjab (now in Pakistan) and died in Lahore when he was 60 years old. His tomb is in Lahore’s Hazuri

Bagh.

In his works, the poet-philosopher promoted self-hood and the intellectual and cultural reconstruction of the Islamic world. He is commonly referred to as Allama, which is a title given to Islamic scholars.

Iqbal’s first published collection of poems came out in 1923, and was titled *Bang-e-Dara* (Call of the Marching Bell). He wrote mostly in Urdu and Persian. Iqbal was also a lawyer and appeared at the Lahore High Court in several cases.

After completing his BA and MA at Government College, Lahore, he went to study in Europe in 1905. At Trinity College, Cambridge, he completed a second Bachelor’s degree, and got a PhD at the University of Munich. In 1923, he was knighted by King George V.

The idea of Pakistan

In his later life, Iqbal came to favour the idea of a separate nation for Muslims, and is thought to have been the chief influence behind Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s Pakistan project. It was Iqbal who influenced Jinnah to return to India and take charge of the Muslim League. His confidence in Jinnah is believed to have come from the fact that the latter was the only Muslim leader with unchallenged national status, and without provincial or regional ties.

Iqbal is regarded as the ideological founder of the nation in Pakistan — the man who envisioned the state that Jinnah gave physical shape to — and revered as its national poet. The Government of Pakistan’s Iqbal Academy Pakistan offers courses in ‘Iqbal studies’ for students to understand his works and ideas.

TOPOF THE
WORLD

President-elect, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

BRAZIL
President-elect appoints 16 ministers, taps 2

Rio de Janeiro: President-elect, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, appointed 16 ministers on Friday, tapping two members of his party who oversaw states in Brazil's northeast to run the country's education and welfare systems. Lula is set to take office in a little over a week and still has roughly a dozen nominations to make. Lula's nominations on Thursday of six women to lead ministries — including the culture, racial equality, and science and technology posts — appeared aimed at addressing criticism that his prior Cabinet picks hadn't included any women. He also named his first three Black ministers. Lula now has now named a total of twenty-one ministers. **AP**

PAKISTAN

One officer, two militants killed in suicide attack

Islamabad: One police officer and two suspected militants, including a woman of the dreaded Pakistani Taliban outfit, were killed in a suicide attack here on Friday, prompting authorities in Pakistan to issue a "red alert" across the federal capital. The incident took place in Sector I-10/4 in Islamabad's upscale residential area, located barely 15km away from the garrison city of Rawalpindi, where Pakistan's powerful military establishment is located. **PTI**

KOREA

N Korea fires missiles after US-S Korea drill

Seoul: North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters on Friday, its latest weapons demonstration that came days after US and South Korean warplanes conducted joint drills that North Korea views as an invasion rehearsal. Recently, the North also claimed to have performed major South Korea's military detected the two missile launches from North Korea's capital region at around 4:32 pm on Friday. Japan said it also confirmed at least one missile launch by North Korea. **AP**

A DAY AFTER ZELENSKY'S U.S. VISIT

Putin says Russia wants end to war in Ukraine, calls for diplomatic solution

REUTERS

MOSCOW, DECEMBER 23

PRESIDENT VLADIMIR Putin said on Thursday that Russia wants an end to the war in Ukraine and that this would inevitably involve a diplomatic solution.

Putin made the comments a day after U.S. President Joe Biden hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the White House and promised him continued and unwavering U.S. support. "Our goal is not to spin the flywheel of military conflict, but, on the contrary, to end this war," Putin said. "We will strive for an end to this, and the sooner the better, of course."

White House spokesman John Kirby said Putin has "shown absolutely zero indication that he's willing to negotiate" an end to the war, which began when Moscow sent troops into Ukraine on February 24.

"Quite the contrary," Kirby told reporters during an online briefing. "Everything he (Putin) is doing on the ground and in the air bespeaks a man who wants to continue to visit violence upon the Ukrainian people" and "escalate the war."

Kirby reiterated that Biden



Putin at a press conference in Moscow. PTI

was open to talks with Putin, but only after the Russian leader "showed a seriousness about negotiations" and after consultations with Ukraine and US allies.

Russia has persistently said it is open to negotiations, but Ukraine and its allies suspect a ploy to buy time after a series of Russian defeats-retreats that have swung the momentum of the 10-month war in favour of Kyiv.

Meanwhile, Head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's North America department said that talks on security guarantees for Russia cannot take place while NATO instructors and "mercenaries" remain in Ukraine, and while Western arms supplies to the country continue.

RICHARD COWAN

& MOIRA WARBURTON

WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 23

On Friday, The US House of Representatives is due to vote on a \$1.66 trillion bill that provides the US military with robust funding, dispatches emergency aid to Ukraine and keeps all federal agencies operating through September, 30, 2023.

Passage of the Senate-approved measure in the Democratic-controlled House would send it to President Joe Biden to sign into law before a midnight Friday (0500 GMT Saturday) deadline when temporary funds would expire.

After weeks of haggling and threats of government shutdowns, Congress aims to complete one of its most basic duties: appropriating money to keep the bureaucracy humming, three months after a new fiscal year began on October 1.

Around \$800 billion would be designated for the array of

non-military programs, \$68 billion over fiscal 2022.

Ukraine would get \$44.9 billion in new emergency US aid. The debate in Congress over the bill was punctuated by a visit on Wednesday by Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who thanked Americans for bolstering his country's war effort against Russia and argued the U.S. funds were a good "investment."

"Your money is not charity. It is an investment in the global security and democracy that we handle in the most responsible way," Zelenskyy, told a joint meeting of Congress.

Other major spending items in the bill include over \$27 billion for the victims of natural disasters, a major increase in funding for those struggling with drug addiction and funding to help carry major infrastructure projects made possible by a bill enacted in 2021.

The 4,155-page bill was passed on Thursday in the Senate on a bipartisan vote of 68-29. **REUTERS**

LONDON MULLS OPTIONS TO BLOCK LAW

SCOTLAND LOWERS AGE TO CHANGE GENDER

The devolved Scottish government has voted 86 votes to 39 to pass the Gender Recognition Reform Bill, lowering the age when people can apply for gender change from 18 to 16. The move has prompted a clash with the Westminster government in London, which is weighing up its options to block the law.

3 dead, 3 wounded, in Paris shooting, suspect arrested



Protesters clash with police during a demonstration near the Rue d'Enghien after the incident. Reuters

AGENCIES

PARIS, DECEMBER 23

A SHOOTING targeting a Kurdish cultural center in a bustling Paris neighborhood Friday left three people dead and three others wounded, authorities said. A 69-year-old suspect was wounded and arrested.

The Paris prosecutor's office opened an investigation for murder and attempted murder. The Paris prosecutor said the suspect had a prior police record, including an arrest for attacking migrants living in tents, and that investigators are considering a possible racist motive.

The shooting occurred at midday at a Kurdish cultural center and a restaurant and hairdresser nearby, according to the mayor for the 10th arrondissement, Alexandra Corbeard.

Speaking to reporters at the scene, she said the "real moti-

vation" for the shooting remains unclear.

The shootings were a "terrible drama", district mayor Corbeard told reporters, adding that one of those wounded had suffered life-threatening injuries.

French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said the suspected assailant had clearly wanted to target foreigners, but there was no evidence yet that he had picked out Kurds specifically.

Police cordoned off the area in Paris' 10th arrondissement on a busy street near the Gare de l'Est train station.

An investigation has been opened into murder, manslaughter and aggravated violence.

As evening fell, scores of protesters took to nearby streets. Riot police fired teargas to push back an angry crowd a short distance from the scene of the shootings.

Several hours after the killing, armed police were still guarding the carillon. **REUTERS/AP**

U.S. CAPITOL RIOTS

Trump should be charged for inciting riot: Probe panel

KANISHKA SINGH

WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 23

THE CONGRESSIONAL panel probing the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol released its final report late on Thursday, outlining its case that former U.S. President Donald Trump should face criminal charges of inciting the riot.

The House of Representatives Select Committee also made public the transcripts of a number of its interviews and witness testimonies earlier on Friday and on Thursday.

The report, which runs to more than 800 pages, is based on nearly 1,200 interviews over 18 months and lakhs of documents, as well as the rulings of more than 60 federal and state courts.

The report lists 17 specific findings, discusses the legal implications of actions by Trump and some of his associates and includes criminal referrals to the Justice Department of Trump and other individuals, according to an executive summary released earlier this week. It report also lists legislative recommendations to help avert another such attack.

On Monday, the committee asked federal prosecutors to charge the Republican former president with four crimes, includ-



Ex-US President Donald Trump gave a fiery speech on the morning of January 6

ing obstruction and insurrection, for what they said were efforts to overturn results of the November 2020 election and sparking the attack on the seat of government.

"Rather than honor his constitutional obligation to 'take care that the laws be faithfully executed,' President Trump instead plotted to overturn the election outcome," the House panel had said earlier in a 160-page summary of its report.

Trump gave a fiery speech to his supporters near the White House the morning of Jan. 6, and publicly chastised his vice president, Mike Pence, for not going along with his plan to reject ballots cast for Democrat Joe Biden. **REUTERS**



DEEP FREEZE GRIPS US AMID 'WINTER BOMB'

In downtown in Denver on Friday, during a period of cold weather. A deep freeze enveloping most of the United States combined with winter storm brewing in the Midwest leaves two-thirds of the nation under extreme weather alerts. Reuters

COUNTRY'S STRECHED HEALTHCARE SYSTEM BRACES ITSELF

China's Covid cases likely to peak this week

BERNARD ORR & CASEY HALL

SHANGHAI, DECEMBER 23

CHINA IS EXPECTING a peak in COVID-19 infections within a week, a health official said, with authorities predicting extra strain on the country's health system even as they downplay the disease's severity and continue to report no new deaths.

Chinese state media *Qingdao Daily* late on Friday cited a health official in eastern city of Qingdao as saying coronavirus was in



Medical staff work amid outbreak in Shanghai. Reuters

rapid transmission stage in the city with 490,000-530,000 new daily infections, which was set to increase at a rate of 10% in the next couple of days.

In the face of a surging spread and widespread protests against its "zero-COVID" regime of lockdowns and testing, China began dismantling it this month, becoming the last major country to move towards living with the virus.

As Chinese workers increasingly fall ill, more disruption is expected in the short term before the economy bounces back later next year.

China reported less than 4,000 new symptomatic local COVID cases nationwide for Dec. 22, and no new COVID deaths for a third consecutive day.

Authorities have narrowed the criteria for COVID deaths, prompting criticism from many disease experts.

Zhang Wenhong, director of the National Centre for Infectious Diseases, was quoted in Shanghai government-backed news outlet *The Paper* on Thursday as saying China "is expected to reach the peak of infections within a week." **REUTERS**

AS GAS PRICES SOAR, FAIRS ACROSS EUROPE STRUGGLE TO BALANCE MAGIC AND RESPONSIBILITY

At France's oldest Christmas market, energy crisis lowers festive spirit

CONSTANT MÉHEUT

STRASBOURG, DECEMBER 23

THE NOON CHURCH bell had just chimed on Strasbourg's vast Christmas market, briefly drowning out the sound of carols from speakers, and Franck Bodein was enveloped in fumes from a giant skillet of frying mushrooms. Steaming pots of mulled wine and pans overflowing with a gooey casserole known as *tartiflette* lined his stall, just as they have for the two decades he has been working at the market.

One key feature, however, was conspicuously absent this year: the Christmas lights.

"They're gone," Mr. Bodein said, pointing a wooden spoon at nearby plane trees whose branches used to be festooned with garlands of lights. "It's too bad. They brought the fairy tale atmosphere."

Strasbourg's Christmas market — the *Christkindelsmärik*, or "Christ child market" in the local dialect — is France's oldest and largest. It has grown from a few stalls of herbalists and gingerbread vendors near the cathedral in the 16th century into a citywide extravaganza, offering everything from roasted chestnuts to jewelry. The city has proclaimed itself the "Capital of Christmas."

But as Europe has embarked on an enormous energy saving effort to get through a winter without Russian gas, the continent's energy-hungry Christmas markets, a seasonal feature across Europe, have been a prime target and forced difficult debates about just how much seasonal glow cities can afford or should indulge in.

Illuminations have been rescaled back, ice rinks canceled and outdoor heaters banned.

Across France, many cities have struggled to keep the year-end festive spirit while addressing rising energy prices. Fears of blackouts have forced local authorities to look for cuts at the risk



A central square in Strasbourg, where lighting displays were more muted this year but still adorned many areas. NYT

of spoiling a Christmas season that is often intended to cheer people up, especially after months of eco-

nomics crisis marked by strikes and soaring costs of living. "The question is, how do you

balance magic and responsibility?" said Guillaume Libsig, a Strasbourg deputy mayor in charge of city events.

Every December, a dozen squares in the center of Strasbourg, a city of nearly 300,000 residents bordering Germany, are taken over by more than 300 stalls, in a vibrant atmosphere where the pungent smell of sauerkraut meets the vanilla-scented aroma of baking waffles.

And even this year, the market is not without a seasonal gleam. Some 30 miles of lighting displays are still deployed around Strasbourg, with garlands and chandeliers bathing streets in a pink, blue and golden glow.

Installations include glittering gingerbread men with candy canes and twinkling angels hanging over a street leading to the city's cathedral. From the top of the religious edifice, for at least a few hours at night, Strasbourg shimmers like the sun on the sea.

Several years ago, Strasbourg's Christmas market switched to LED lights, using up to 90 percent less electricity than traditional incandescent bulbs. But the lighting budget still adds up to hundreds of thousands of euros, and Libsig acknowledged that the event represented an energy burden that had long been overlooked.

Faced with soaring gas and electric costs as a result of

Russia's invasion, France launched a sweeping plan of "energy sobriety" to cut energy consumption by 10 percent in two years, including lowering heating in buildings and scaling back lighting. Private companies and public administrations have been required to join the effort.

In Strasbourg that meant targeting the *Christkindelsmärik*, long considered untouchable. In the fall, the authorities announced reducing city-run illuminations by 1/5th; turn off lights an hour earlier; and wrap up the light show a week earlier. "We used to push buttons, there was light, and nobody wondered where it came from," Libsig said. **NYT**

18 REVIEWS

CINEMA & MUSIC

A Cycle of Cliché and Chic

EMILY IN PARIS SEASON 3

Director: Darren Star
Cast: Lily Collins, Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, Ashley Park, Lucas Bravo, Lucien Laviscount, Camille Razat
Creator: Darren Star

ALAKASAHANI

AFTER TWO seasons of making mistakes and moving on to making new ones, while miraculously fixing every problem around her in a jiffy, Emily Cooper (Collins), the perky, hyper-energetic marketing executive from Chicago, seems to be more adept at the Parisian ways. Her French is better even though she mixes up champagne with *champignon* (mushroom). So is her understanding of the people and culture of Paris. But the drama that her love life and career choices are supposed to roll out is tepid compared to what's promised in the trailer.

The second season ended in a cliffhanger finale, leaving Emily at a professional and personal crossroad. Her colleagues at *Savoir* staged a walkout, calling it a "French revolution", leaving Emily's heavily pregnant American boss and mentor, Madeline (Kate Walsh), livid. While Emily can't think of disappointing Madeline, she is tempted to join Sylvie (Leroy-Beaulieu) and her other French colleagues as they open a new agency and try to rebuild their business. Then, there is the perennial romantic dilemma in her life — should she go for her British boyfriend Alfie (Laviscount) or the hot but unavailable French chef Gabriel (Bravo). These problems, however, sort themselves out, at least for the time being, in the show's typical fashion. And, Emily strides through the streets of Paris in her very high heels, taking selfies and posting on Instagram incessantly.

While the storyline remains shallow, the wardrobe of its main characters continues to be spectacular. Other than couture, what makes this season work is the attention it pays to its supporting cast. Emily still saves the day by invariably being in the right place at the right time. But we get to know the other characters better. In the last season, Mindy (Park), daughter of a rich Chinese businessman trying to make it as a singer in Paris, had emerged as one of the popular characters. In this season, she not only finds her toehold as a jazz singer but gets entangled in a love triangle. In fact, in this season, the writers rely heavily on love triangles to create drama.

We always knew that Sylvie, behind her sophistication and sass, was a real badass. She gets to bare her claws and reveal her vulnerabilities. Sly and intelligent, she knows how to reclaim her space, literally, and dislodge Madeline. She makes her own rules — be it how to handle her agency or live her life. Gabriel has so far been somewhat enigmatic, an unattainable charming chef that Emily has been pining since she set her foot in Paris. There is more to him than being a trope in a romantic comedy. Gabriel has ambitions of getting a Michelin star. He lets his guard down on a drunken night and dreams of leading a normal family life. But the show needed more from Emily than snipping off her front hair and getting "truma bangs".

Emily in Paris, in spite of being low on drama and surprises, serves as a gorgeous escapist fare, perfect as a year-end watch. Once you stop wondering about the plot and start paying attention to Emily's tulle dress, knee-high boots or Mindy in a red latex outfit inspired by dominatrix attire, or Sylvie wearing her attitude and plunging necklines with her trademark aplomb, the show won't seem so monotonous. Soak up its insouciant vibe.

MUSIC THIS WEEK

SUKOON ★★

Composer: Sanjay Leela Bhansali **Lyrics:** Ghalib, Momin Khan, AM Turaz, Siddharth-Garima **Artists:** Shreya Ghoshal, Pratibha Singh Baghel, Ustad Rashid Khan, Armaan Malik, Papon, Madhuvanti Bagchi, Shail Hada

Lull Without the Storm

SUANSHUKHURANA

MORE THAN half a century ago, when vocalist Rita Ganguly, then in her 20s, walked up to *mallika-e-ghazal* Begum Akhtar, and asked her to teach her the art of ghazal singing. Akhtar looked at her and while chewing on her paan asked her, "*Pyar kiya hai bitiya kabhi? Dil toota hai kabhi?*" (Have you ever fallen in love? Gone through a heartbreak?) Ganguly didn't expect the interrogation, considered a tad undignified for girls from respectable families' back in the day, so she merely lowered her gaze. To Akhtar, love and heartbreak were essential for

singing ghazal — the love poetry. The story of heartbreak and its pain was to be felt as much as the sensuality of a poem.

In the last few years, as the ghazal, which made it to the auditoriums after being in *kothas* and courts, vanished from the soundscape at the turn of the century, especially in cinema, filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali attempted a sort of revival with some of his '*ghazalnuma* (ghazal-like) compositions. Be it the passionate *Laal ishq* (*Goliyon ki Raasleela*), the twinge of the wound in *Muskurahat* (*Gangubai Kathiawadi*), the impishness of *Jab saiyaaan* (*Gangubai Kathiawadi*), the devotion of *Aayat* (*Bajirao Mastani*), and the fervour in *Ek dil ek*



jaan (*Padmaavat*), Bhansali hit these and more out of the park. At a time when Indian cinema delivered repetitive and remixed music from the crop of current composers, Bhansali held his own to deliver much musical grandeur. So the idea of a debut ghazal album from Bhansali is a thrilling prospect. *Sukoon*, the first non-film album by Bhansali, however, is unable to hold you the way his music has in the past. He has used some immaculate singers — Shreya Ghoshal, Ustad Rashid Khan, Pratibha

CIRKUS ★★

Director: Rohit Shetty **Cast:** Ranveer Singh, Varun Sharma, Jacqueline Fernandez, Pooja Hegde, Muri Sharma, Sanjay Mishra, Johnny Lever, Mukesh Tiwari, Vrajesh Hirjee, Sidhartha Jadhav, Ashwini Kalsekar, Tiku Talsania, Brijendra Kala, Sulabha Arya



The Slap Trap

SHUBHRA GUPTA

CIRKUS IS fashioned as a comedy of errors, where we are able to spot each familiar element Rohit Shetty keeps inserting in his comedies, from his multiple editions of *Golmaal* onwards.

Two sets of orphaned identical twins, a doctor (Muri Sharma) who plays god and switches one for another, in his determination to prove that *parvarish* (upbringing) is more impactful than *parivaar* (bloodlines); it is just the kind of outlandish premise that Shetty runs with, throwing out characters who speak loudly, background music which blares, and situations that are as slapstick as can be.

So you gear yourself up for the usual gar-

ish, all-colours-of-the-rainbow Shetty *tamasha*, especially because you think Ranveer Singh is at hand to rescue it from its slushy parts. But for a film which gives us two Ranveers for the price of one, especially when one has been granted the superpower of controlling electricity, *Cirkus* is surprisingly blah. Revving up the livewire Ranveer up with *bijli ke jhatke* is so extra that it should have induced non-stop, over-the-top hilarity, Shetty *ishlye*. But the gags don't land; neither does, for the most part, the lead star.

Roy and Joy (Singh and Varun Sharma in double roles), one set each, are raised in Bengaluru and Ooty respectively. One Roy

For a film which gives us two Ranveers for the price of one, *Cirkus* is surprisingly blah

and Joy take over the running of a circus after their father dies; the other pair floats around, waiting for their cue to join the gang. The Roy who is the star attraction at his circus has a wife (Hegde); the other has a girl-friend (Fernandez); the latter has a loudmouth father (Mishra), who keeps setting himself up

to be slapped.

But he's not the only one. In a Rohit Shetty movie, everybody gets slapped. So this bunch, which includes a trio of thieves, moustachioed hoteliers, elderly aunts, jewellery shop owners, and sundry other folk trade slaps whenever they get a chance. Which happens a lot. I did hear a ripple of laughter in the the-

atre when a slap rings out, because for some strange reason, being slapped is deemed to be funny. In the second half, Johnny Lever shows up in primary coloured velvet suits. Vrajesh Hirjee is a monkey-capped taxi-driver with slitted-eyes. An item number in which Ranveer rocks it with Deepika Padukone makes you wish for more from whence that came. But no, it's back to slap-slap-slap. Then, of course, it's time for that finale with everyone crowded in the same frame, where the *bichhade huey bhai* are face-to-face, of course, and the ladies, who literally have nothing to do, swoon in shock. And the film gets a chance to deliver a line about we-are-all-one, regardless of *dharma-and-jaati*, making up for a snide Mughal emperor crack right in the beginning.

But it isn't enough.



KNIVES OUT: THE GLASS ONION ★★

Director: Rian Johnson
Cast: Daniel Craig, Edward Norton, Kate Hudson, Janelle Monae, Kathryn Hahn, Leslie Odom Jr, Jessica Henwick, Dave Bautista

Bron gets. Anyone thinking of a real-life tech billionaire with similar characteristics? This one has a supersonic car which he keeps stashed on the top of a dome (the glass onion of the title), because, he tells Blanc, there's nowhere to drive it on the island. Well, ha ha.

The unexpected presence of Andi (Monae), Bron's erstwhile, embittered partner, turns the latter even more unctuous. Clearly, no one loves Bron, and everyone looks daggers at him when he is not looking. At a dinner laid out in a room which wouldn't have been out of place in a museum, there's no eating involved, because truth bombs are enemies of gustation. And then someone in the

gussied-up gathering falls dead. At this point, Johnson cleverly flips a switch, letting us in on a secret, and just like that, we are primed for a flash-point. It comes, and things go crash, bang, crash. And then, of course, there's the big reveal.

So, is it as much fun as the first? Having given you this long-ish build up, you'd think I was totally into it, like I was

in the first. But no: despite its good looks, *Knives Out* is less knowing, less smart, and all-round less interesting. Even though Hudson is terrific as the bird-brained model, appropriately called Birdy Jay, she is not someone you want to spend any time with. The rest of the 'disruptors' are even less

inviting: this is a movie trying very hard to skewer the rich and the famous, but Ruben Ostlund got there first. Imagine getting in a delicious line like this: 'everyone is so woke these days, it is out of control', and not being able to build on it.

Norton, who makes up such nonsensical words as 'inbreathiate' and 'predefinite' as he goes along, is very good as the guy who preys upon others, fattening himself to the point of bursting. Monae is excellent, as the girl who is taken advantage of, and who then tries to right things by doing the right thing. And Craig is as dapper as ever, his drawl even more stretched, but is made to lurk at the edges, waiting for his moment: he needed to have more to do. Blanc is bland, and despite all its bells and whistles, so is the movie.

SG

STREAMING WATCH LIST

BY ALAKA SAHANI



NOPE

PRIME VIDEO

This neo-Western science fiction horror film, directed and written by Jordan Peele, features Daniel Kaluuya and Keke Palmer as horse-wrangling siblings, trying to capture evidence of an unidentified flying object after they discover something sinister in the skies above their California horse ranch. Named one of the best films of 2022 by several critics, Peele's third directorial outing features actors Steven Yeun, Michael Wincott, Brandon Perea and Keith David.



TARA VS BIBAL

NETFLIX

Directed by Samar Iqbal and written by Sanyuktha Chawla Shaikh, this slice-of-life film features Harshvardhan Rane and Sonia Rahtee in the title roles. Sparks fly when vivacious yet sensitive Tara collides with reclusive charmer Bilal in this story set in a vibrant and diverse London.



JACK RYAN 3

PRIME VIDEO

In the new season of Tom Clancy's *Jack Ryan*, Jack (John Krasinski) races against time to stop a rogue faction within the Russian government from restoring the Soviet Empire and starting World War III. His attempts to alert the CIA about his discovery go wrong when the agency issues a Red Notice calling for his extradition back to the US.



DANGEROUS LIAISONS

LIONSGATE PLAY

The series *Dangerous Liaisons* is a modern take on Pierre Choderlos de Laclos' classic 18th-century novel. The period drama features Alice Englert and Nicholas Denton as notorious lovers. It takes viewers back to 1700s Paris as the two infamous characters, Marquise de Merteuil and Vicomte de Valmont, navigate a world of seduction and deception in the love story that oscillates between love and war.



PRINCE OF DARKNESS

MUBI

Directed and written by John Carpenter, *Prince of Darkness* (1987) is a supernatural horror film that follows a group of quantum physics students in Los Angeles, who are asked to assist a Catholic priest in investigating an ancient cylinder of liquid discovered in a monastery.

GOVERNMENT PLANNING TO CREATE 3 COMMITTEES

Social media appellate panels may deal with deplatforming, data issues

SOMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

APPELLATE COMMITTEES that are to be appointed by the Centre to handle users' appeals against online intermediaries' grievance redressal could deal with a number of issues including content moderation, deplatforming and data protection, *The Indian Express* has learnt. The government is planning to create three such committees.

In October, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) had notified amendments to the Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021 where it said that the government will appoint one or more grievance appellate com-

mittees (GACs). The committees are being formed to offer users an avenue to appeal decisions taken by the grievance officer of online intermediaries.

So far, the common understanding was that the government-appointed grievance appellate committees will only look after user complaints raised around issues of content moderation and deplatforming. However, the remit of these committees could go far beyond that understanding. "There will be no restriction on the type of grievance appeals that the GAC can take up. It can be about a number of disputes between a consumer and an internet intermediary including issues like content moderation, deplatforming, and even data

TO OFFER USERS
AVENUE TO APPEAL

■ The committees are being formed to offer users an avenue to appeal decisions taken by grievance officer of online intermediaries

protection," a senior government official said.

"The government is working on the design of these committees currently in order to empower them to be able to deal with a varied range of user appeals. So far, the consensus is that there will be three such committees."

Under the amended IT Rules,

each GAC is slated to have a chairperson and two whole time members appointed by the Centre, one of which will be a government official and two "independent members". GACs can seek assistance from people who may have adequate expertise and experience in a subject matter while dealing with users' appeals.

The GACs will adopt an "online dispute resolution mechanism" where the entire appeal process, from its filing to the final decision, will be done online. Intermediaries such as social media companies and e-commerce platforms will also have to compile every order passed by the GAC and report them on their respective websites.

Any person aggrieved by a decision of the grievance officer of a

social media intermediary will be allowed to file an appeal to the GAC within thirty days. The GAC is expected to deal with the appeal and resolve it within a month.

The appointment of such committees by the Centre has drawn the ire of civil society activists. Delhi-based digital rights group Internet Freedom Foundation, in a submission to MeitY in July, had said that the provision could "make the Central Government (rather than an independent judicial or a regulatory body) the arbiter of permissible speech on the internet. It would incentivise social media platforms to suppress any speech that may not be palatable to the government, public officials or those who can exert political pressure".

Retail industry sees 19% rise in sales during Apr-Nov

India's retail industry saw a 19% rise in sales over pre-pandemic levels during the April-November 2022 period, Retailers Association of India said



Source: RAI/PTI

21% Eastern region clocked the highest growth as compared to the same period in 2019

19% North India followed, while both western and southern parts witnessed an 18% rise each

30% growth compared to 2019: The industries that did particularly well during this period were the QSR (quick service restaurant) and the footwear industries

FINANCE MINISTRY'S MONTHLY ECONOMIC REVIEW

‘Global developments likely to complicate economic outlook’

New Delhi: Global economic developments are expected to complicate the outlook further for the Indian economy next year and there is a need to maintain vigilance on the external front, a Finance Ministry report said.

According to the ministry's Monthly Economic Review for November, the external sector continues to face the headwinds emanating from the global slowdown. However, it said, the downside to a widening current account deficit is expected to be limited by a robust services export

performance through the rest of the year and by inward remittances, which are expected to touch \$100 billion this fiscal, as per the World Bank.

"As we head into 2023, global economic developments are expected to complicate the outlook further, and therefore continued vigilance is a critical aspect in maintaining India's external resilience," it said. It said continued commitment to macroeconomic stability will underpin both economic performance and investor interest in India. **PTI**

IMF projects
6.8 % growth

Washington: Projecting a growth rate of 6.8 per cent and 6.1 per cent in the current and the next fiscal respectively, the International Monetary Fund on Friday said that India is navigating a "very difficult" external environment. **PTI**

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

ENFORCEABILITY OF Indian citizens' right to privacy, law enforcement access to their data in certain situations, and "reciprocity" in digital trade — these factors will play a key role in deciding the geographies where the government will allow transfer of Indians' data under the draft Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said Friday. The Ministry of Home Affairs will be in charge of notifying such geographies.

"As far as cross-border data flows are concerned, the government will consider factors like enforceability of Indian citizens' rights, reciprocity as we look to the future of digital trade and India builds corridors of trust with other like minded countries, and law enforcement agencies' access to such data in emergency situations," Chandrasekhar said during a public consultation on the draft Bill. More than 200 stakeholders including law firms, industry bodies, civil society organisations, and consumer rights advocacy groups attended the public consultation.



Rajeev Chandrasekhar, MoS for Electronics & IT. File

The Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022, released in November, offers significant concessions on cross-border data flows, in a departure from its predecessor's contentious requirement of local storage of data within India's geography. According to the new draft, the Centre will notify regions to which data of Indians can be transferred.

Under the previous Bill, businesses were supposed to store a copy of "sensitive personal data" of citizens like health and financial data within India, and the export of undefined "critical" personal data from the country was prohibited. It was among the biggest issues flagged by technology companies, with firms like Meta having said that it could have an impact on its services in India. **Full report on www.indianexpress.com**

BRIEFLY

Google, CCI

New Delhi: Google has challenged a CCI order on the tech giant abusing its dominant position in multiple markets in the Android mobile device ecosystem, saying the verdict is a setback for Indian users and will make such devices more expensive. **PTI**

Sebi study

Mumbai: Securities and Exchange Board of India has initiated a detailed study of fees and expenses charged by mutual funds. The study would endeavour to provide data as input for policy formulations, Sebi said. **ENS**

Forex reserves

Mumbai: After rising for five consecutive weeks, forex reserves dropped \$571 million to \$563.499 billion for the week ended December 16, according to RBI data. **PTI**

ESIC scheme

New Delhi: Around 11.82 lakh new members joined the ESIC-run social security scheme in October 2022, according to official data. **PTI**

Meta to settle

Boston: Meta Platforms Inc has agreed to pay \$725 million to resolve a class-action lawsuit accusing the social media giant of allowing third parties, including Cambridge Analytica, to access users' personal information. **REUTERS**

Drone insurance: What does it cover?

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 23

THE NASCENT drone insurance market in India is seeing a flurry of activity. After HDFC Ergo, ICICI Lombard, Bajaj Allianz and Tata AIG, New India Assurance has launched its unmanned aircraft system insurance.

What's on offer?

Insurance players are now offering drone coverage within the framework set by insurance regulator IRDAI.

According to the firm, the 'New India Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS/ UAV/ RPAS/ Drone)

Insurance' will cover large aircraft to solo flying gliders. Coverage will be offered to drone owners, operators and manufacturers. "The product provides a

diverse option of over 15 different add-on covers for customers to pick and choose from. These add-on covers are designed as per the drone industry's requirement. The policy covers physical damage to the aircraft and its theft. It also provides cover for accidental physical injury to the third party and/or damage to their property due to the aircraft's operations," New India said.

What is covered?

The policy is designed to cover fixed wing, rotor wing and hybrid UAS that can be controlled remotely (with pilot intervention) or autonomous drones (without pilot intervention). These aircraft are generally deployed for military and non-military applications, including surveillance, geography and infrastructure inspections and aerial photography. New India said.

The insurance protection offered for the damage to the drone and payload it carries will provide coverage for the replacement or repair, accidental loss of or dam-

age to the UAS arising from the risks covered, including disappearance if the UAS is unreported after the commencement of Flight. Third-party liability coverage will cover legal liabilities like bodily damage or property damage claims to third parties arising out of usage and operation of drones, Bajaj Allianz said.

How big is the Drone market?

A recent EY - FICCI report, 'Making India the drone hub of the world', indicated that drones and its allied component industries can boost India's manufacturing potential by approximately \$23 billion by 2030. **Full report on www.indianexpress.com**

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383. Website: www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-34/16254/2022-23 Date: 22.12.2022

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)

Tender under two cover bid system is invited for the works mentioned below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors holding valid Class-I (Civil) issued from KPWD, Government of Karnataka who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following works of

(1) Formation of Sub layout including formation of 18M & 24M Wide Asphalt Roads, Including Construction of RCC Side Drains, Culverts, Providing & Laying of HDPE Water Supply Pipe Lines of Adakanahalli Sub Layout-2 Industrial Area, Nanjangud Taluk, Mysuru District. (2) Formation of Industrial Layout including Formation of 30M & 18M Wide Roads, Including Asphalt, RCC drain, ducts, Culverts, internal Water Supply Lines etc., at AMIL Block at Harginadoni Industrial Area, Kuduthini Taluk, Ballari District.

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **13.01.2023 upto 04:00 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/-
Chief Engineer - 2

DIPR/CJ/PA/3698/2022-23

Air passengers may get to fly free in case of involuntary downgrade: DGCA

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 23

AIR PASSENGERS may get to soon fly free in case of a class downgrade by the airline with the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) working on a policy to protect passengers from arbitrary downgrade by airlines.

As airlines across the world, including Indian, witness a record surge in passengers travelling for holidays, there have been several reports of passengers being downgraded by the airlines due to reasons like change of aircraft, over booking and unserviceable seats etc. "The amendment will allow the passenger, who is downgraded involuntarily from his booked class of ticket, to receive the full value of ticket including taxes as refund from the airline and the airline will carry the passenger free of cost in the next available class," the DGCA said in a statement.

The statement added that the proposal, however, will go through stakeholder consultation and the



Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi. File

final regulation shall be published and made applicable afterwards.

These new rules will be applicable when a passenger, who has booked his ticket on first class, business class or premium economy, is downgraded to a lower class by the airline at the time of check-in due to various reasons like unserviceable seats, change of aircraft, overbooking, etc.

These rules will, however, not regulate voluntary downgrades, where the airline offers the passenger some kind of an incentive - in terms of free coupons for future travels etc. **Full report on www.indianexpress.com**

NDTV: Roys sell 27.26% stake to Adani

Stake of Adani group in Co now at 64.68%

Mumbai: Television channel NDTV has come under the fold of the Adani group. Prannoy Roy and Radhika Roy, the original promoters of NDTV, have decided to sell their 27.26 per cent equity stake in the company to the Adani group. With this, the stake of the Adanis in the company has gone up to 64.68 per cent.

The Roys will sell the stake to RRPR Holding Pvt Ltd, another promoter of NDTV which is now controlled by Adani group. While the Roys held a 32.26 per cent stake in NDTV, they will retain 5 per cent after the sale. The NDTV board also appointed Sanjay Pugalia and Senthil Siniha Chengalvarayan as additional directors in the capacity of non-executive non-independent directors.

While Roys and the Adani group did not announce the cost of acquisition of 27.26 per cent stake, the sale could be worth around Rs 600 crore as per the closing price of NDTV at Rs 340.60 on the exchanges on Friday.

The AMG Media Network, after the recent open offer, is now the single-largest shareholder in NDTV. **ENS Full report on www.indianexpress.com**

EXIT OFFER PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE ATTENTION OF PUBLIC SHAREHOLDERS OF

INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS LIMITED

Corporate Identification Number: L45309KA1983PLC038816, Registered Office: Golden Enclave, Corporate Block, Tower C, 3rd Floor, Hal Old Airport Road Bengaluru Bangalore KA 560017 IN, Contact Details: Tel. No.: +91-80-49891637, Email ID: info@addgroup.co.in, Website: www.intld.co.in, Company Secretary and Compliance Officer: Nitesh Kumar Jain

This Exit Offer Public Announcement dated December 23, 2022 ("Exit Offer Public Announcement" or "Post Offer PA") is being issued by SKI Capital Services Limited ("Manager" or "Manager to the Delisting Offer") for and on behalf of one of the promoters of International Constructions Limited viz., Mrs. Priti Devi Sethi ("Acquirer") along with Anil Kumar Sethi HUF ("PAC 1"), Deepak Sethi ("PAC 2") and Zoom Industrial Services Limited ("PAC 3"), person acting in concert with the Acquirer (collectively "PACs"), to the remaining public shareholders, ("Residual Public Shareholders") of International Constructions Limited ("Company") expressing their intention to acquire all the Equity Shares ("Equity Shares") held by the Residual Public Shareholders either individually or collectively in accordance with Regulation 27 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Delisting of Equity Shares) Regulations, 2021, as amended ("Delisting Regulations") and in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in (a) Detailed Public Announcement ("DPA"), which was published on October 21, 2022; and (b) the Letter of Offer dated October 25, 2022 ("LOF"), ("Delisting Offer" or "Offer"). This Exit Offer PA is in continuation of and should be read in conjunction with the DPA, LOF and Post Offer PA. Capitalized terms used in this Exit Offer PA shall have the same meaning as ascribed to it in the DPA, LOF and Post Offer PA.

1. INTIMATION OF DATE OF DELISTING

- Following the completion of payment of Exit Price to the Public Shareholders in accordance with the Delisting Regulations, the Acquirer and PACs had applied to NSE on November 23, 2022 seeking final approval for delisting of Equity Shares from NSE.
- NSE vide its notice ref. number **NSE/LIST/119987** or Circular Ref. No: 1552/2022 dated December 22, 2022 has communicated that trading in the Equity Shares of the Company (Scrip Code: **SUBCAPCITY**) will be suspended from trading with effect from Thursday, January 05, 2023 (i.e. w.e.f. closing hours of trading on Wednesday, January 04, 2023) and Further the admission to dealings shall be withdrawn (delisted) from NSE w.e.f. Thursday, January 12, 2023.
- The Company scrip will be delisted from NSE with effect from Thursday, January 12, 2023 ("Delisting Date").

2. OUTSTANDING EQUITY SHARES AFTER DELISTING

- In accordance with Regulation 26 of the Delisting Regulations and as stated in the Post Offer PA, Residual Public Shareholders who did not or were not able to participate in the Reverse Book Building Process or who unsuccessfully tendered their Equity Shares in the Reverse Book Building Process and are currently holding Equity Shares of the Company will be able to tender the Equity Shares to the Acquirer and/or PACs at Rs.16.50/- (Rupees Sixteen and Fifty Paise Only) from the Delisting Date i.e. Thursday, January 12, 2023 to Friday, January 12, 2024 ("Exit Window").
- A separate Exit Letter of Offer along with exit application form ("Exit LOF") containing the terms and conditions for participation by the Residual Shareholders during the Exit Window, shall be sent through post or courier by the Acquirer and PACs to the Residual Shareholders whose names appear in the register of members of the Company as on Tuesday, December 27, 2022 and whose email id's are not registered with the records of Company or Company's registrar and share transfer agent. The Residual Shareholders whose email id's are registered with the records of Company or Company's registrar and share transfer agent shall also receive the Exit LOF through email. The Residual Shareholders may tender their Equity Shares by submitting the required documents to M/s. Skyline Financial Services Private Limited, Registrar to the Delisting Offer during the Exit Window as set out in Exit Letter of Offer.
- In the event of the Residual Public Shareholders not receiving or misplacing the Exit Letter of Offer, they may obtain a copy of the Exit Letter of Offer by writing to the Registrar to the Delisting Offer. If the Residual Shareholders do not receive the Exit Letter of Offer, they may obtain the same by writing to the Registrar to the Delisting Offer. Skyline Financial Services Private Limited D-153 A, 1st Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110020, Email ID: ipo@skylinerta.com clearly mentioning the envelope **"International Constructions Limited - Delisting - Exit Offer"** or may also download the Exit Letter of Offer from the website of Company at www.intld.co.in or from the website of the Manager to the Delisting Offer, at www.skiacapital.net

3. PAYMENT OF CONSIDERATION TO THE RESIDUAL SHAREHOLDERS

- Subject to the fulfilment of the terms and conditions mentioned in the Exit Letter of Offer, the Acquirers to make payment on a monthly basis, within 10 working days of the end of the relevant calendar month ("Monthly Payment Cycle"). The first Monthly Payment Cycle shall commence in 10 working days from December 31, 2022. Payments will be made only to those Residual Public Shareholders who have validly tendered their Equity Shares by following the instructions as set out in the Exit Letter of Offer. All queries may be directed to the Registrar to the Delisting Offer; Skyline Financial Services Private Limited and Manager to the Offer; SKI CAPITAL SERVICES LIMITED. The Acquirers reserves the right to make the payment earlier.
- The Acquirers will inform the Residual Public Shareholders by way of a public announcement of any changes to the information set out in the Exit Offer Public Announcement or the Exit Letter of Offer. If the shareholders have any query with regard to the Delisting Offer, they should consult the Manager to the Offer or the Registrar to the Offer; (details appearing below). All other terms and conditions of the Delisting Offer as set forth in the Detailed Public Announcement, the Letter of Offer, and the Post Offer Public Announcement shall remain unchanged.

If any Residual Shareholder has any queries regarding the Delisting Offer or the Exit Offer he/she should consult the Manager to the Delisting Offer or the Registrar to the Delisting Offer.

All terms and conditions of the Delisting Offer as set forth in the DPA, LOF and Post Offer PA remain unchanged. The Exit Offer PA is also expected to be available on the website of the Stock Exchange www.nseindia.com and website of the Company at www.intld.co.in.

The Acquirer/PACs accept full responsibility for the information contained in this Exit Offer PA and confirm that such information is true, fair and adequate in all material aspects.

CONTACT DETAILS OF REGISTRAR TO THE DELISTING OFFER ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Skyline Financial Services Private Limited
D-153 A, 1st Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110020
Contact person: Rati Gupta ; Ph. No.: 011-26812682 ; Email ID: ipo@skylinerta.com ; Website: www.skylinerta.com
SEBI Registration No.: INR000003241

ISSUED BY MANAGER TO THE DELISTING OFFER

Priti Devi Sethi (Acquirer) Sd/-	Anil Kumar Sethi HUF (PAC 1) Sd/-	Deepak Sethi (PAC 2) Sd/-
For and on behalf of Zoom Industrial Services Limited (PAC 3)		
Dwijendra Prosad Mukherjee (DIN: 07792869) Sd/-	Shalin Jain (DIN:08389442) Sd/-	
Place: New Delhi	Date: 23-12-2022	

New Delhi

पुलिस अधीक्षक का कार्यालय, किशनगंज

आवश्यक सूचना

“एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि निम्नांकित निबंधित वाहन, जो किशनगंज जिलान्तर्गत पोडिया थाना में छः माह से अधिक अवधि से जप्त / Unclaimed (बिना किसी दावेदार के) पड़े हुए हैं, के मालिक वाहन संबंधित मूल दस्तावेज / अभिलेख, कोर्ट से प्राप्त वाहन मुक्त करने से संबंधित प्रति, पहचान पत्र के रूप में आधार कार्ड, मतदाता पहचान पत्र, पैन कार्ड आदि एवं वाहन चोरी अथवा गुम होने की स्थिति में किसी भी थाना में दर्ज प्राथमिकी / स्टेशन डायरी की प्रति के साथ सूचना प्रकाशन की तिथि से 21 (इक्कीस) दिनों के अन्दर संबंधित थाना में उपस्थित होकर वाहन की मुक्ति हेतु अपना दावा करेंगे, ताकि दावा वैध / सही पाये जाने पर थाना स्तर से वाहन विधिवत् तरीके से मुक्त किया जा सके। निर्धारित समय-सीमा के अन्दर दावा नहीं किये जाने अथवा वैध / सही नहीं पाये जाने पर बिहार पुलिस एक्ट-2007 की कड़िका-74 में निहित प्रावधान एवं दण्ड प्रक्रिया संहिता की धारा-458 के अन्तर्गत वाहनों की निलामी की दिशा में अग्रतर कार्रवाई की जायेगी। इस संबंध में जप्त / Unclaimed वाहनों के मालिक को उनके पते पर निबंधित डाक से अलग से पत्र प्रेषित किया जा रहा है तथा संबंधित बीमा कम्पनी एवं फाइनैन्सर के मुख्य कार्यालय को ई-मेल के माध्यम से अपेक्षित कार्रवाई हेतु सूचना दी जा रही है।

पुलिस अधीक्षक, किशनगंज

PR. No. 12488 (Police) 2022-23

नशामुक्त हो जाए बिहार, सुरक्षित रहे घर परिवार।

बिहार राज्य पुल निर्माण निगम लिमिटेड
(बिहार सरकार का एक प्रतिष्ठान)
CIN-U45201BR1975SGC001208
कार्य प्रमंडल, पटना-1
कार्यालय : 7, सरदार पटेल मार्ग, पटना-800015
मोबाईल Mobile : +91-8544402463 वेबसाईट http://brpnnl.bihar.gov.in
ई-मेल e-mail: spe-patna-1@brpnnl.co.in

Doc. No.-BRPNNL/PT1/C001/ 1823

(SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER)
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
(Only through e-tendering system on website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Ltd (BRPNNL), a Government of Bihar undertaking, invites Proposals in Two Bid System (Technical and Financial) from Authorised eligible Firms/Contractors/Agencies or Companies registered in appropriate category with RCD/ BCD/ BRPNNL/ MES/ CPWD/ Railways or Central Government/ any State Government or any PSU for the following work **On Item Rate Basis**. Those not registered with abovebodies, will have to get registered with BRPNNL after issue of LOA and before executing the agreement.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. In Lakh)	Cost of Bid Document (Rs.) (Non Refundable)	Earnest Money (Rs. In Lakh)	Bid Processing Fee (Online Payment) (Non Refundable)	Time of Completion of work
1	Construction and Interior of Hon. Ministers office & OPRMC cell (Control and command center) for RCD Officials with installation of IT/AV & Conferencing Equipment at hon. Ministers office at 7 th floor, Vivesvaraya Bhawan, Patna.	818.76	10,000.00	16.38	17700.00	01 Month

Schedule:-		
1	Downloading of RFP Documents	From 29/12/2022 (10:00 Hrs.) to 03/01/2023 (15:00 Hrs.) (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
2	Last Date/ Time for Submission/Uploading of offer/ Bid	04/01/2023 upto 15:00 Hrs. (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3	Last Date of Submission of Bank Drat, Bid Security and Hard Copies of document in original	06/01/2023 upto 15:00 Hrs.
4	Date & Time for opening of Technical Bid	06/01/2023 upto 16:00 Hrs. (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
5	Date, Time and Place of opening of Financial Bid	To be informed later to technically qualified bidder. (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
6	Validity of Bid	120 days
7	The Eligibility Criteria, detailed Scope of work etc can be download from website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in & www.brpnnl.bihar.gov.in may kindly be referred. For further details please visit website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar	

Senior Project Engineer,
Works Division, Patna-1

PR. No. 12349 (Ni.Ni) 2022-23

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

बिहार शहरी आधारभूत संरचना विकास निगम लि०
परियोजना निदेशक का कार्यालय
बुडको, वैशाली, हाजीपुर
ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना (ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>)
संख्या E-Tender- बुडको-01 / 2022-23

- विज्ञापन दाता का नाम एवं पता : परियोजना निदेशक, बिहार शहरी आधारभूत, संरचना विकास निगम लि०, (बुडको), वैशाली, हाजीपुर।
- निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत की तिथि : दिनांक-19.12.2022
- निविदा कागजात डाउनलोड करने की अवधि : दिनांक 02.01.2023 से 08.01.2023 के 15:00 बजे तक (on website <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>)
- प्री बीड मीटिंग का समय स्थान / तिथि : समय 11:00 बजे स्थान- परियोजना निदेशक, बिहार शहरी आधारभूत, संरचना विकास निगम लि० (बुडको), वैशाली, हाजीपुर का कार्यालय दिनांक- 02.01.2023
- संवेदक द्वारा निविदा अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि / समय : दिनांक- 09.01.2023 के 15:00 बजे तक (on website <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>)
- तकनीकी बीड खोलने की तिथि / समय : दिनांक- 11.01.2023 के 15:30 बजे के बाद (on website <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>)
- वित्तीय बीड खोलने की तिथि / समय : तकनीकी बीड के निष्पादन के पश्चात्। (on website <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>)
- निविदा हेतु अग्रपत्र (कैवल बैंक गारंटी), सभी शायम्-पत्र (मूल में), एवं Existing Commitment (मूल में), जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि / समय एवं स्थान : दिनांक-11.01.2023 के 15:00 बजे तक

क्र.सं.	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (रुपये में)	अग्रपत्र की राशि (रु० में)	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य (अप्रत्यर्पणीय) (रु० में)	Bid Processing Fee (Through online payment) (अप्रत्यर्पणीय) (रु० में)	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि (इन्क्लूजिड मोनसून् अवधि माह में)
1	नागर परिवह हाजीपुर क्षेत्र के अन्तर्गत कोनहावा रोड में एक विद्युत शवदाह गृह का निर्माण कार्य।	1,74,80,268.00	3,49,700.00	10,000.00	17,700.00	18 माह

- नोट:- 1. Bidders should submit Bid Processing fee through on line payment as per amount generated on website <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>
- निविदा की वैधता अवधि : 120 दिन
 - निविदा कागजात अपलोड करने से पूर्व संवेदक को “Bid Processing Fee” निम्न विधि से जमा करना होगा:-
 - "Bid Processing Fee" is mandatory to be paid through online mode i.e. Internet payment gateway (Credit/debit Card), Net banking, NEFT/RTGS.
 - "Bids along with necessary online payments must be submitted through e-Procurement portal <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in> before the date and time specified in the NIT. The department doesn't take any responsibility for the delay/Non Submission of Tender/Non Reconciliation of online Payment caused due to Non-availability of Internet Connection, Network Traffic/Holidays or any other reason."
 - कोई भी संवेदक जो केन्द्रीय / राज्य सरकार / लोक उपक्रम में निबंधित हो अथवा अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय / राष्ट्रीय स्तर के हैं, निविदा में भाग ले सकते हैं परन्तु उक्त कार्य का लेटर ऑफ एक्सेप्टेंस प्राप्त होने के बाद एवं एकराशनामा के पूर्व पथ निर्माण विभाग / ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग में निबन्धन कराना अनिवार्य होगा। यदि भवन का निर्माण कार्य होगा, तो भवन निर्माण कार्य का निबन्धन भी मान्य होगा। इस निविदा में वर्णित कार्य हेतु विद्युत अनुज्ञापि (Electric Licence) जमा करना अनिवार्य है।
 - दो करोड़ से उपर की राशि की निविदा SBD (Standard Bid Documents) के माध्यम से की जायेगी।
 - विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना विभागीय वेबसाईट <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in> अथवा www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर देखी जा सकती है।

परियोजना निदेशक, (बुडको), वैशाली, हाजीपुर

PR. No. 12342 (Ni.Ni) 2022-23

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग
15, नेहरू पथ (बेली रोड), पटना - 800001

67वीं संयुक्त मुख्य (लिखित) प्रतियोगिता परीक्षा का संशोधित कार्यक्रम

67वीं संयुक्त मुख्य (लिखित) प्रतियोगिता परीक्षा दिनांक 30.12.2022 को दो पालियों एवं 31.12.2022 एवं 07.01.2023 को एकल पाली में पटना स्थित परीक्षा केन्द्रों में निम्नांकित संशोधित कार्यक्रमानुसार आयोजित की जायेगी :-

तिथि/दिन	परीक्षा की अवधि	विषय
30.12.2022 (शुक्रवार)	09:30 बजे पूर्वाह्न से 12:30 बजे अपराह्न तक	सामान्य अध्ययन-प्रथम पत्र
	2:00 बजे अपराह्न से 5:00 बजे अपराह्न तक	सामान्य अध्ययन-द्वितीय पत्र
31.12.2022 (शनिवार)	12:00 बजे अपराह्न से 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक	सामान्य हिन्दी
07.01.2023 (शनिवार)	12:00 बजे अपराह्न से 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक	ऐच्छिक (वैकल्पिक) विषय (जो उम्मीदवार द्वारा मुख्य परीक्षा के ऑनलाईन आवेदन के समय भरा गया है)

उपर्युक्त परीक्षा के लिए औपबन्धिक रूप से अर्हित उम्मीदवारों के प्रवेश पत्र दिनांक 24.12.2022 से आयोग के वेबसाईट www.bpsc.bih.nic.in अथवा www.onlinebpsc.bihar.gov.in पर उपलब्ध रहेंगे। उम्मीदवारों को डाक से (By Post) प्रवेश पत्र नहीं भेजे जाएंगे।

हस्ता./- परीक्षा नियंत्रक, बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग, पटना

Govt. of Bihar

Bihar State Power Transmission Company Limited, Patna
(Regd. office: Vidyt Bhawan, Bailey Road, Patna)
GST No.: 10AAFCB2393H121, CIN- U74110BR201256C018889
email- civil.dept@bsptcl.bihar.gov.in
Contact No : 7763817981, 9264427334
(Department of Civil of BSPTCL)
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NIT No:- 52/PR/BSPTCL/2022
(Through e - procurement mode only- www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

Online e-Tenders are invited by Chief Engineer (Civil) from eligible and experienced Agency/ Firm/ Company/ State or Central Govt. Undertaking for the works noted below:-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	E.M.D	Cost of BOQ (Non-refundable)	Completion time
1.	Construction of I8 Guest House at132/33 KV GSS, Phulparas.	Rs.45,04,900/-	Rs. 90,100/-	Rs. 5,900/-	06(Six) months

Bid submission start date and time:- From 15:00 Hrs of 06.01.2023 through website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in

Bid submission end date and time:- On 15:00 Hrs of 27.01.2023 through website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in

Date of opening of Technical Part: After 15:30 Hrs of 27.01.2023 through website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in

Date of opening of price part: To be notified after Technical Bid Evaluation through website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in

- DD/BG will be deposited as cost of EMD in favour of Senior Manager (Finance & Accounts), BSPTCL payable at Patna or through online mode i.e. Internet payment gateway (Credit/debit), Net banking, NEFT/RTGS to BSPTCL, Patna.
- Bid processing fee is to be paid through online mode i.e. Internet payment gateway (Credit/debit), Net banking, NEFT/RTGS to BSEIDL, Patna.
- Cost of BOQ is to be paid through online mode i.e. Internet payment gateway (Credit/debit), Net banking, NEFT/RTGS to BSPTCL, Patna.
- The estimated cost in BOQ, EMD & Cost of BOQ of the above mentioned works may vary in case of change in the estimated cost.
- All original Demand Draft/BG/ Acknowledgement receipt of e-payment of EMD & BOQ, may be submitted in the office of Chief Engineer (Civil), BSPTCL, 4th floor, Vidyt Bhawan, Patna up to **15:00 Hrs of 27.01.2023**.
- The authority reserves the right to cancel the bid at any stage without assigning any reasons thereof.
- The department doesn't take any responsibility for the delay/non-submission of tender/non-reconciliation of online payment caused due to non-availability of internet connection, network traffic/holidays or any other reasons.
- Bidder should have valid GST and all other applicable tax registration certificate and copies of the same duly attested shall be furnished.
- The tender documents along with General/special condition, bids and any corrigendum/ addendum of the tender are available only at website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in.

Chief Engineer (Civil) BSPTCL

For complains regarding corruption Vigilance Help Line toll free No.- 1064, and telephone -0612-2232630. Consumer can deposit electricity bills via Sahaz Vasudha Centre or via www.northbiharbill.org & bills.bsptcl.in

E-tendering introduced in BSPTCL for tenders above Rs. 10 lacs. For registration login to www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in and e-Procurement Help Desk Toll free No. 1800 572 6571, Email id: eproc2support@bihar.gov.in

For further details please visit website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

PR. No. 12416 (Ni.Ni) 2022-23

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
लोक स्वास्थ्य प्रमण्डल, मोतीपुर
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या- 06/PHD MOTIPUR/2022-23
(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

1. विज्ञापनदाता का पदनाम एवं पता : कार्यपालक अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य प्रमण्डल, मोतीपुर।	दिनांक-22.12.2022
2. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत की तिथि : दिनांक 03.01.2023 को 14:00 बजे से 15:00 बजे अपराह्न तक	दिनांक-09.01.2023 से 12.01.2023 को 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक
3. प्री-बीड मीटिंग का समय तिथि एवं स्थान : दिनांक 16.01.2023 को 4.00 बजे अपराह्न में।	(सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)
4. निविदा (तकनीकी बीड) खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : दिनांक 14.01.2023 को 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक।	(सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)
5. निविदा (तकनीकी बीड) खोलने की तिथि : दिनांक 14.01.2023 को 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक।	(सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)
6. मूल शायम्-पत्र एवं अन्य निविदा कागजात जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि समय एवं स्थान : दिनांक 14.01.2023 को 3.00 बजे अपराह्न तक।	(सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

गुप्त सं०	कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (लाख में)	अग्रपत्र की राशि (लाख में)	वेबसाईट का प्रोसेसिंग फीस एवं अन्य (नेट द्वारा)	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य (नेट द्वारा)	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED OFFICE OF E.E. BUILDING UNDER P. H. DIVISION, MOTIPUR IN THE DISTRICT OF MUZAFFARPUR	111.45780	2.23000	According to online generated	10000.00	9 माह

- नियम एवं शर्तें**
- वित्तीय बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय : तकनीकी बीड निष्पादन के बाद समय एवं तिथि वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर सूचित की जायेगी।
 - निविदा की वैधता की तिथि : निविदा खोलने की तिथि से 120 दिनों तक
 - विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना Tender Free View में उपलब्ध है जिसे सिर्फ वेबसाईट से ही प्राप्त (डाउनलोड) वेबसाईट पर देखा जा सकता है।
 - ई-टेंडरिंग प्रक्रिया में भाग लेने हेतु संवेदकों को www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर पंजीकृत होना होगा, जिससे कि उन्हें उपयोगकर्ता का नाम (User ID), पासवर्ड (Password), अंक्रीय हस्ताक्षर (Digital Signature) निर्गत की जायेगी। यह उन्हें वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in से निविदा प्रपत्र डाउन लोड करने / ई-टेंडर की प्रक्रिया में भाग लेने की योग्यता प्रदान करेगा।
 - संवेदक परिमाण विपत्र सिर्फ वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in से प्राप्त करने के उपरान्त वेबसाईट पर ही इलेक्ट्रॉनिक निविदा पत्र को भरकर जमा (अपलोड) किया जा सकेगा। निविदा खुलने की जानकारी वेबसाईट से ही प्राप्त होगी।
 - यह निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना एकराशनामा का हिस्सा होगा।
 - विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाईट state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता, लोक स्वास्थ्य प्रमण्डल, मोतीपुर

PR. No. 12394 (PHED) 2022-23

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

ENGINEERING WORKS
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 32 of 2022;
Date: 22-12-2022. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:
Tender No.: M.G-24-2022. Name of work & Location: At Malgaon : Provision of 400 Mtr 6 Lane Synthetic Athletic Track Full PUR. Tender Value: ₹2,83,800/- Earnest Money: ₹2,83,800/- Tender No.: M.G-25-2022. Name of work & Location: At NMB: Provision of 25 bedded ladies barrack at RPF Barrack Complex. Tender Value: ₹50,47,675.07/- Earnest Money: ₹1,81,000.00/- E-tender will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 15-01-2023 and will be opened at 13:00 hrs. on 15-01-2023. For details please visit www.inspg.gov.in
Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ord., Malgaon

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers with a smile

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
Corrigendum No. 6422/Misc Date 22.12.2022
First Corrigendum
On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Material Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj is issued a corrigendum against Tender no. 64225045, 64225046 & 64225047 Published against EP8 Tender Notice no. 22/80 dated 25.11.2022.
Tender No.: 64225045, Particulars: Opening Date: From 23.12.2022 To 05.01.2023, EMD: From Existing To Updated, Tender No.: 64225046, Particulars: Opening Date: From 23.12.2022 To 05.01.2023, EMD: From Existing To Updated, Tender No.: 64225047, Particulars: Opening Date: From 23.12.2022 To 08.01.2023, EMD: From Existing To Updated. Other Terms & conditions of Tender remain unchanged. www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
Email: dycmmgkpd@gmail.com
Website: www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in & www.tenders.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No. 49 DT. 15/12/22
Invitation of tenders through E-procurements system
Dy Chief Material Manager/ North Eastern Railway/ Gorkhpur and on behalf of the President of India, invites tenders through e-procurement system for the supply of the following items. Complete description of the item and other condition are available on www.ner.indianrailways.gov.in & www.tenders.gov.in. Sr. No. 1. Tender No. & due date: 10228224A Open on 05/01/2023, Brief Description of Stores : RAMP Assembly for entry door for automobile carrier coach with side etc., Qty. Required : 240 Nos. Earnest Money(Rs.) : 60430/- Sr. No. 2. Tender No. & due date: 10228260A Open on 09/01/2023, Brief Description of Stores : Middle Boxing etc., Qty. Required : 120 Nos. Earnest Money(Rs.) : 116230/- Sr. No. 3. Tender No. & due date: 10228925 Open on 10/01/2023, Brief Description of Stores : Supply of traction motor fielded magnet etc., Qty. Required : 02 Nos. Earnest Money(Rs.) : 93280/- Sr. No. 4. Tender No. & due date: 10228276A Open on 09/01/2023, Brief Description of Stores : Channel Assembly on side wall etc., Qty. Required : 120 Nos. Earnest Money(Rs.) : 101200/- Sr. No. 5. Tender No. & due date: 10228280A Open on 11/01/2023, Brief Description of Stores : Perforated Plate Assembly etc., Qty. Required : 420 Nos. Earnest Money(Rs.) : 286790/- 01-Above tenders are available on IREPS site i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in> the firm desirous in participating against e-tender are advised to electronically regd. themselves on the above website for which they would be required to obtain class-III digital certificate (if already not obtain) from certifying agencies authorized under Govt. of India IT Act,2000. Manual offers will not be accepted. 2- Advertised tender and bulletin tenders of Dy.CMM/Depot office/ NER are being opened through EPS (E-Procurement system) only. Firms desirous to participate in Dy.CMM/Depot Tenders should obtain necessary digital certificate and get themselves registered with CRIS/NE Delhi. Necessary details in this regard can be obtained from the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> 3- In case of difference between English and Hindi version of the tender notice the English version shall prevail. 4- Head of allocation towards, s,d money in 00844517 and Earnest money is 00084506. 5- The Tender Cost & EMD will be accepted through On-line payment on IREPS Portal only for the tender published on or after 01.09.2016 against all the Dy. CMM/Depot/ NER/ GKP tenders except Global Tender. Dy. Chief Material Manager/Depot CPROS-67 N.E. Railway, Gorakhpur About any passenger amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 0979484955 "Never travel on roof and foot boards"

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. 34/MYS/2022 of 19-12-2022
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:
Sl. Item of work Approx. Value
1 Hassan -Mangalore section:- Oiling & Grassing for the bearing of steel girder bridges under SSE/Bridges/Sakleshpur Jurisdiction. (Including Sakleshpur - Subrahmanya Road ghat section). Rs. 6,98,388/-
2 Senior Divisional Engineer/Central/Mysuru Section: Removal of defective AT welds (DFWR) 242 Nos (Assistant Divisional Engineer/Arskere 56, Assistant Divisional Engineer / Shivamogga Town - 79, Assistant Divisional Engineer/Mysuru- 11-107). Rs. 35,07,846/-
3 Sub Work II:- Provision of Thermoplastic paint and CAT's EYE at approach roads and speed breakers at all L.C. gates in Senior Divisional Engineer /Cent. Jurisdiction. Rs. 1,06,52,486/-
4 Mysuru Division: Procurement of data card for TMS users including officers & various P.way staff in connection with implementation of TMS for a period of two years. Rs. 6,52,546/-
Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 12-01-2023
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Engineer / Co-Ordination Mysuru
PUB562/AADPRBS/SWR/2022-23
S.W.Railways SWRRLY SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

We M/s. Vika Travels (P) Ltd., Holding Registration Certificate No. : B-0729/DEL/COM/300/5/2581/88, under the Emigration Act, 1983 for export of manpower, am/are intending to close our business with effect from 20/12/2022. In the event, if there is any complaint/claim against me/us, the same may be referred within 30 days of publication of this notice. Copies of the complaint can also be sent to Protector General of Emigrants, Ministry of External Affairs, Akbar Bhawan, Chanakypuri, New Delhi-110021
Sd/-
Karamji Kumar (Managing Director)
Place - New Delhi 202/204, 2nd Floor, 99 Empire Plaza Subangar, Date - 28 Dec 2022 Mehrauli Gurgaon Road, New Delhi-110030

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
सं. ईसीएच/सीएच/ऑन/डब्ल्यूटी/ईनिविदा/ उत्तर/57-22-23 दि. 21.12.2022
E-TENDER IS INVITED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR THE UNDER MENTIONED WORK.
S.N. : 1. Name of work with it's location : Construction of Major Bridge No. 21C (1x61.0m, OWG) at Km. 12.008 in MHRL- CDNA section and Major Bridge No. 36A (1x45.7M, OWG) at Km. 31.749 in VPH-KHTN Section alongwith construction of permanent diversion, linking of track and supply, fabrication, erection, launching of OWG in connection with gauge conversion of Jhanyarpur-Laukaha Bazar section of Samastipur Division. 2. Approx cost of the work of : Rs. 36,97,06,310.45, 3. Bid Security Amount : Rs. 19,98,500.00, 4. Date and time for closing of tender : 12.01.2023 at 14.30 hrs. 5. Website particular, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and addressed of the office from where the tender form be purchased etc. : The above E-tender, E-tendering document alongwith full information is available on website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. Note: In case of any discrepancies found in tender notice, English version will be final. Tenderers are requested to visit the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> atleast 15 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum/correction etc. in response to this E-tender.
CAO/Con/North EC Rly. MHX, Patna
PR/01746/CONN/ENGGT/22-23/44

UDAIPUR SMART CITY LIMITED
NIT No. : USCL/2022-23/05 Date : 20/12/2022
Short Term Notice Inviting Bid
Bid for 01 Work Rs. 727.67 Lac of Procurement, invited from interested bidders up to 21.12.2022 at 12.00PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state.
UBN No. UNP2223WLOB00142 Chief Executive Officer
Raj.Samwad/C/22/12176 Udaipur Smart City Limited Udaipur

SINGER
SINGER INDIA LIMITED
CIN: L52109DL1977PLC235405
Registered & Corporate Office Address: A-26/4, 2nd Floor, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Estate New Delhi - 110044
Email ID: secretarial@singerindia.com, mail@singerindia.com
Phone No. : +91-11-40617777, Website: www.singerindia.com
CORRIGENDUM TO THE POSTAL BALLOT NOTICE
The Postal Ballot Notice dated December 17, 2022 ("Postal Ballot Notice") as dispatched to the Shareholders of Singer India Limited ("the Company") on December 17, 2022 in due compliance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, and rules made thereunder, read with circulars issued by Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Securities Exchange Board of India. Capitalized words and expressions used but not defined herein shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Postal Ballot Notice.
This Corrigendum is being issued to give notice to amend the details as mentioned herein.
In the explanatory statement to Item No. 3 of the Postal Ballot Notice which pertains to seeking approval of the Shareholders "To approve the issue of equity shares on preferential basis to select group of persons" in Sr No. 7 of point 13 the column with the heading 'Pre-issue Equity Holding' of Gauri Tandon shall be read as 7,00,000 Equity Shares instead of 24,50,000 Equity Shares.
This Corrigendum shall form an integral part of the Postal Ballot Notice, which has already been circulated to the Shareholders of the Company and from the date hereof, the Postal Ballot Notice shall always be read in conjunction with this Corrigendum. This Corrigendum is also being published in 'Indian Express' (English language) and 'Jansatta' (Hindi language) and will also be made available on the website of BSE Limited and on the website of the Company at www.singerindia.com. All other contents of the Postal Ballot Notice, save and except as modified or supplemented by this Corrigendum, shall remain unchanged.
By the order of Board of Directors
Singer India Limited
Sd/-
Priyanka Gandhi
Company Secretary
ACS No.: 38319

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, JEYPORE (R&B) CIRCLE, JEYPORE
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

Bid Identification No. C.C.E.J.C (R&B)-14/2022-23

Pant sparkles, Iyer scores again, rest dawdle but advantage India

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
DECEMBER 23

RISHABH PANT produced yet another game-turning knock in Test cricket, but also fell for the sixth time in the 90s, before he could reach a sixth Test century. Arriving at 72 for 3, which soon became 94 for 4 with Virat Kohli's exit, Pant attacked the Bangladesh spinners, who'd successfully tied down the Indian top order earlier. Along with Shreyas Iyer, who overcame another short-ball barrage to make 87, Pant revived the Indian innings with a 159-run fifth-wicket partnership that came in just 30 overs.

Bangladesh recovered some ground by taking the last six Indian wickets for only 61, but an 87-run first-innings lead meant the visitors were still ahead going into the third day on a pitch that has kept playing the odd trick, even if it seemed to have slowed down a bit after the first day.

But some in the top order batted as if strokeless survival was the only way to go on this surface; only Shubman Gill departed playing a shot, choosing a pretty full delivery from Tajjul Islam to sweep, and missing it.

KL Rahul was in that extreme hesitant mode where he just does not look to score at all, and even his defence appears full of doubts. His dismissal summed up his innings of 10 off 45 deliveries. He looked to reluctantly step out to defend against the immaculately accurate Tajjul, then stopped after a couple of short steps, and his half-hearted bat was behind the pad when the ball struck him plumb in front.

At least Cheteshwar Pujara was his usual self, stepping out regularly to push the spinners around. He went to an excellent reflex catch at forward short leg by Mominul Haque; Tajjul's delivery had been pushed off the inside half of the bat, not off the edge, and was travelling fast towards the turf.

Virat Kohli took 73 balls for his 24, determined to keep defending. He then dashed for a non-existent single off the last ball before lunch, and glared at Pant, who'd rightly sent him scrambling back to safety just in time. He went soon after the break, nicking behind off Taskin Ahmed with one his need-less defensive pushes well outside off, where he seems to be wanting to just feel some bat on ball.

India were 133 behind at this stage. The morning's batting effort had taken India nowhere, but there was also no way Pant and Iyer, both with first-class strike-rates around 80, were going to bat like that.

In the first Test, Pant had been bowled while backing away to cut Mehidy Hasan Miraz's off-spin and missing a straighter one. Now he made sure he didn't do that; instead, when Mehidy pitched short, Pant stood his ground and whipped him off-position past



This was the sixth time when Rishabh Pant fell in the 90s in Tests.

AP

midwicket for four.

The left-arm spinners Tajjul and Shakib Al Hasan were easier to smash through that region, and the presence of a wide long-on and deep midwicket made no difference to Pant. He'd charge out and deposit five sixes in that area in typical fashion, one hand coming off the bat handle, but still imparting sufficient distance on the ball.

Bangladesh had acknowledged his threat as soon as he walked in. They'd bring the field in for Kohli, but for Pant, it would spread out, even when he was in single digits. They weren't ready to risk too much damage on what is certainly not a high-scoring surface. But Pant would still find his ways to inflict punishment.

Given how he plays, he did offer a couple of half-chances, but became very watchful in his 90s, understandably so, having already missed five Test centuries by a whisker. But it didn't help as he fell to Mehidy again in similar fashion, trying to make room, and edging behind for 93 off 105.

Iyer, meanwhile, produced his sixth score of 50 or more in only 11 Test innings. He can be scrappy initially, look uncomfortable against the bouncer, but then he counter-attacks and goes on to score decent runs.

There was a phase on Friday where he could have gone multiple times in a few deliveries, but he survived and prospered. Surprised by the bounce Taskin was generating, Iyer jabbed one just past gully on 15, and was dropped next ball by Mehidy at the

same position on 19. A few overs later, on 21, he charged out at Shakib and failed to connect, but Nurul Hasan missed the stumping.

Iyer has this ability to put behind such developments and hit back at the bowler. Two balls after the stumping reprieve, he cut Shakib for four and in the same over, stepped out to loft him for another down the ground. That lofted hit, straight or over mid-off, kept bringing him runs, as did the swipe over midwicket.

Bangladesh used the bouncer tactic against Iyer for quite some time; seamer Khaled Ahmed banged it into the body from round the wicket with backward square leg, square leg and a squarish midwicket in place. Iyer combated the play safely, hooking often through the gaps between those three fielders, along the turf to the man at deep square leg.

He will continue to get caught on the crease to pitched-up deliveries while expecting the short ball, but on these slow surfaces, he will mostly get away.

An attempted sweep against Shakib did not come off and found Iyer lbw for 87 off 105. The tail took India past 300, and the Bangladesh openers batted out the six overs possible until stumps, with some delaying tactics leading to sharp reactions from Rahul, Ashwin and Kohli in particular.

Brief Scores: Bangladesh 227 & 7 for no loss in 6 overs (Najmul Hossain Shanto 5 batting, Zakir Hasan 2 batting) vs India 314 all out in 86.3 overs (Rishabh Pant 93, Shreyas Iyer 87; Tajjul Islam 4/74, Shakib Al Hasan 4/79).

DAY 4 ROUND-UP

Uttarakhand thrash Odisha

Abhay Negi's five-wicket haul helped Uttarakhand record an innings victory over Odisha. The medium pacer dismissed highest scorer Anurag Sarangi and ran through the tail.

Brief scores: Odisha 213 & 165 (Anurag Sarangi 93; Abhay Negi 5/33) lost to Uttarakhand 477 by an innings and 99 runs

Vidarbha no match for Tripura

Ganesh Sathish's big hundred and an all-round bowling performance resulted in Vidarbha's victory over Tripura.

Brief scores: 264 & 379/8 declared (Sathish 151 not out, Akshay Wadkar 88; Parvez Sultan 3/96) beat Tripura 299 & 124 (Akshay Wakhare 4/50, Aditya Sarwate 3/45) by 220 runs

Chhattisgarh beat Services

Left-arm spinner Ajay Mandal's five-wicket haul set up a comfortable win.

Brief scores: Services 213 & 221 (Rahul Singh 71, Rajat Paliwal 58; Ajay Mandal 5/38, Pankaj Kumar Rao 3/48) lost to Chhattisgarh 389 & 46 for no loss by 10 wickets

Tail saves Haryana

A stubborn Haryana lower order prevented an outright defeat at the hands of Baroda. The last five wickets added 154 runs and faced more than 52 overs in the second innings.

Brief scores: Baroda 615 drew with Haryana 278 & 404/9 (Yuvraj Singh 94, Jayant Yadav 61, Shivam Chauhan 60, Ankit Kumar 55; Jyotsnil Singh 3/50)

Kerala survive

Sachin Baby and the tail saved Kerala's blushes against Rajasthan.

Set a fourth-innings target of 395, the visitors were reeling at 191/6 with almost 38 overs left before Baby, Sijomon Joseph and MD Nidheesh saved the day.

Brief scores: Rajasthan 337 & 363/8 declared (Depak Hooda 155 not out, Kunal Singh Rathore 75, Abhijeet Tomar 68) drew with Kerala 306 & 299/8 (Sachin Baby 81 not out, Sanju Samson 69, Ponnann Rahul 64; Manav Suthar 3/103)



Shoaib helps Andhra win a thriller against Tamil Nadu

VENKATA KRISHNA B
COIMBATORE, DECEMBER 23

WHEN DAY 4 between Tamil Nadu and Andhra began at the Ramakrishna College Grounds on Friday, all things pointed to an outright winner by the end of the day. And the favourites going into the final day's play were hosts Tamil Nadu. Andhra, with a 114 run-lead had six wickets in hand and one of their pacers had a fractured finger. The pitch just about had everything – there was bounce, turn and it was showing signs of wear and tear with a few cracks in the middle.

Andhra would set them a target of 203.

For Tamil Nadu, such opportunities come rare. For all the resources they have in white-ball, in Ranji Trophy they are a side with plenty of work to do, especially with the ball as taking 20 opposition wickets has been a challenge.

Here, over the course of the two innings, their bowlers did a splendid job. They ensured Andhra didn't run away with the game as the visitors starting the day at 162/5 ended up being dismissed for 250 with left-arm spinner Ravisrinivasan Sai Kishore returning figures of 5/88 in the second innings. And as TN went back to the dressing room, they were suitably boisterous.

Little did anyone know by the time the clock struck 4:52 PM, there would be nothing but silence and stunned faces. Definitely not at 3 PM, even when Baba Indrajith was adjudged LBW to offie Shoaib Mohammad Khan with Tamil Nadu placed at 155/4.

Nail-biting end

They needed only 48 more runs with six wickets in hand. And until Indrajith was dismissed – a debatable decision – the hosts were cruising. The only bowler, who was giving them trouble was off-spinner Shoaib, a familiar face for the Tamil Nadu players.

The 31-year-old plies his trade in TNCA First Division for Swaraj CC. Son of former India hockey player late Usman Khan, who died earlier this year, Shoaib was raised in Chennai.

"(Hanuma) Vihari had told us to set a target of at least one run above 200 because psychologically it creates an impact. He said don't even settle for 199 and rest I will take care. But when TN were coasting at 150/3, our shoulders were beginning to drop and luckily I removed Indrajith just before tea," Shoaib said.

"So when we had a chat in the dressing room, I was telling the guys that it is still possible to win. There was turn and we needed only three wickets – Vijay, Washington and Pradosh Ranjan Paul – because we knew their tail is weak. Kishore could bat, but with pressure on it is a different game, plus I was going to bowl at him (laughs)" Shoaib added. So even when play began in the final ses-



Off-spinner Shoaib Mohammad Khan ended with figures of 6/69.

Express

sion, TN remained favourites. But as Vijay and Pradosh perished in successive overs, the tide began to turn. And by the time Sai Kishore perished to leave TN at 163/7, it was left to Washington to bail them out.

"Vihari had told us not to panic and just pick those three wickets. We were confident that even if only 10 runs were there and their tail was in, we could still win the game," Shoaib added.

Vihari too was equally smart with his field placements. He made pacer Sasikanth bowl short and had four fielders manning the boundary on the leg-side and a short mid-wicket in play. As the boundary remained elusive for TN, and Shoaib operating a tight line, Andhra surged ahead with every over.

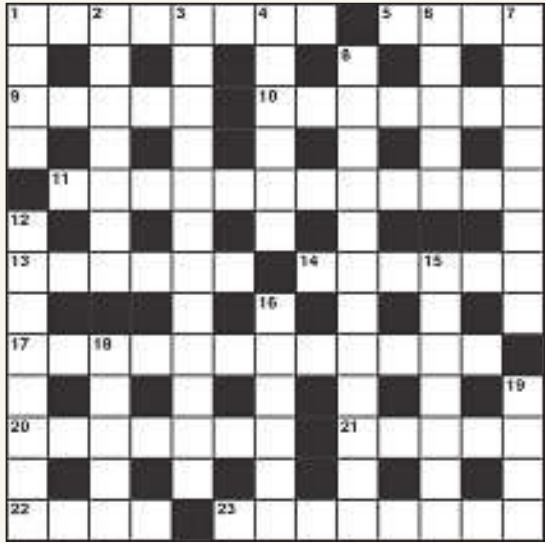
While the off-spinner bowled unchanged from one end and picked up six wickets, TN just wilted under pressure. "We were not able to put pressure on them till the ball got old. Once we did, we didn't take pedal off the foot," Shoaib added.

And then there was a bit of luck too. When Washington and No 10 Ajith Ram were picking singles effortlessly and taking them closer to the target – just eight short – the former was given out caught behind off Shoaib. The batter objected and took an eternity to leave. "I don't know if I'm allowed to say, but there was no nick. But earlier, Sai Sudharsan had edged one and that wasn't given. So I got it back the moment it mattered," Shoaib said.

And by the time Washington pulled Sasikanth to the hands of the fine-leg fielder, TN ended up eight runs short as they suffered a defeat against all prior pointers.

Brief Scores: Andhra 297 & 250 (Ricky Bhui 76; R sai Kishore 5/88) beat Tamil Nadu 345 & 194 (Washington 87/49, Shoaib MD Khan 6/69, KV Sasikanth 4/47) by 8 runs

CROSSWORD 4933



ACROSS

- Held firmly and beaten (8)
- Cut down on church work (4)
- We accept Henry as a member of the school (5)
- Bring back old Portuguese coins by petition (7)
- Their impressions of countries may be valuable (12)
- Neglect Dad's drink (4,2)
- Possibly ride round to see the journalist's boss (6)
- Give no indication (5,3,4)
- Real setback for Ophelia's brother (7)
- Film electrician's outright blunder (5)
- Put your foot in the paste pot (4)
- Count as an old gasbag (8)

DOWN

- Scatters the pigs (4)
- Stretches between bends (7)
- Court linesman (4,8)
- Mistakes in Latin translation (6)
- They entertain vast crowds (5)
- Meadows in unspoilt surroundings delight (8)
- Acted as stand-in and did a dentist's job (6,3,3)
- Pauline may describe these letters (8)
- Having eye drops? (7)
- Virtuous but cheats badly (6)
- Put oil on some crane levers (5)
- Have in mind to be nasty (4)

Solutions Crossword 4932: Across: 1 Steadfast, 8 Aroma, 9 Inkwell, 10 Spider, 11 Bellow, 12 Encroach, 15 Whistler, 18 Trance, 20 Noting, 21 Divorce, 22 Obese, 23 Midstream. Down: 2 Tense, 3 At will, 4 Full well, 5 Tamper, 6 Roadway, 7 Fair share, 11 Bay window, 13 Curtains, 14 Vintner, 16 Tandem, 17 Labour, 19 Cocoa.

JUMBLED WORDS

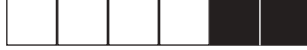
Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Everything actual must also first have been ____, before having actual existence. – Albert Pike (7)

HLWEO



EEHWLS



ADITS



EEERBP



SOLUTION: 'WHOLE, WHEELS, BEEPER' Answer: Everything actual must also first have been possible, before having actual existence. – Albert Pike

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 5058

Difficulty Level 3s

Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 5057



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

There's no point in making choices unless you do something about them. Decisions concerning home or family affairs must be translated instantly into action. Otherwise you will probably forget, or just lose interest. Unexpected news may prompt a change of course.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

The heat has definitely been on lately, and only the most obstinate and stubborn Taureans have turned down certain dramatic blandishments. The best planetary influences relate to money, but your judgment will have to be nothing less than perfect. Now, there's a tall order.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You are going to enjoy yourself more and more with every day that passes. But first there are certain hurdles to overcome, and these are probably more to do with self-knowledge than with actual events. In other words, if you know what you need, then you'll get what you want.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

There's no reason to push yourself too hard for no purpose. Time is on your side, mainly because you're only a part of the way through an enlightened ten-year cycle. Therefore, when other people have done their worst and given their best, you will still have more to offer.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

As the weeks go by, you will come to realise that a good friend was perhaps not all they seemed. Hidden depths should be the order of the day, so you may sit back and let your imagination be your guide. If you do a favour for someone now, I am sure it will be repaid ten-fold.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

There are extraordinarily powerful pressures to change, even when you don't want to. While aggravation at home may be a very powerful factor; those of you who have been experiencing professional pressures could suddenly realise that you can't go on as before.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

The way forward is not always as clear as you'd like. Although it may sound slightly impractical, your best course of action may be to go for whichever option seems to be the most adventurous. Keep a weather-eye on delicate legal issues though, as you don't want disagreements at this stage.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Of all the signs of the zodiac, yours is about to come closer to discovering the truth than any other. My best advice now is to stay cool and not be easily offended or dismayed. A last-minute financial rush may be good for you, just for once, an instant decision might be the best.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

You've done well. Nobody can deny that. Having stuck to your guns and made others realise just how tough you can be, you must now sit back and listen to them. Now is the worst time to imagine you can wind anybody up, or otherwise belittle their interests.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

What takes place now could be the climax of months of effort. Work seems to be the key to a successful day, but that doesn't necessarily mean paid employment. Just make sure that, by the end of the day, there are as few outstanding unfinished chores as possible.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

The past few months seem to have coincided with better personal relationships. Other people have been giving you fewer problems, and you seem to have become more confident. Today you may find time to relax and enjoy the fruits of your many emotional labours.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

There are so many demands on your energy, that it scarcely seems possible that you'll have any space to rest or put your feet up, or otherwise wallow in your time off. For once, Pisces, you seem to have a purpose of your own! People who think you're their unpaid servant will have to back away.

BRIEFLY

3-time Oly champion
Xiaojun suspended
provisionally

New York: China's three-times Olympic champion Lyu Xiaojun has been provisionally suspended after testing positive for a banned substance, the International Testing Agency (ITA) said on Thursday. Lyu returned the positive sample during an out-of-competition test on Oct. 30, said the ITA, which oversees the bulk of the International Weightlifting Federation's (IWF) anti-doping programme. Lyu, who became the oldest man to win Olympic gold in weightlifting when he claimed the 81kg title in Tokyo last year, tested positive for erythropoietin, a prohibited peptide hormone. **AP**

Sarita wins gold at
wrestling nationals

Visakhapatnam: World championships bronze medalist Sarita Mor (59kg) and Sangeeta Phogat (62kg) retained their titles at the senior wrestling championships as they cruised through depleted fields, here on Friday. Sarita, an RSPB athlete, got the better of Delhi's Simran in the 59kg final while Sangeeta, defeated Sumitra in her gold medal match. Bhagwan Shri of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh's Pooja Yadav bagged the bronze medals in the 59kg weight category. Himachal Pradesh's Sanika and Vaishnavi of Maharashtra clinched the 62kg bronze medals. **PTI**

Lovlina cruises into
quarter-finals

Bhopal: Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain put up a dominating display to enter the quarter-finals of the Women's National Boxing Championships, here on Friday. Living up to the expectations, the Assam pugilist made light work of Puja Nayak from Odisha in the 75kg last-16 match. The reigning Asian champion was declared the winner by Referee Stops the Contest (RSC) verdict after just a few minutes into the first round of the bout. **PTI**

India name squad for
Hockey World Cup

New Delhi: Defender Harmanpreet Singh was named the captain of the 18-member Indian squad which will compete at the FIH men's Hockey World Cup, commencing on January 13 in Odisha. Defender Amit Rohidas will serve as Harmanpreet's deputy. Harmanpreet had also captained the side in the recent series against Australia, where the side fought before losing the five-match rubber 1-4. PR Sreejesh, who will be playing his fourth World Cup - his third on home soil, has been chosen as goalkeeper. **PTI**

England WC winner
Cohen passes away

London: George Cohen, a defender who played on England's World Cup-winning team in 1966, has died, the English Football Association said Friday. He was 83. Cohen played every minute of England's victorious campaign on home soil. He made 37 appearances for his national team as a right back. A cause of death was not announced. Cohen played his entire club career for Fulham, where he made 459 appearances between 1956 and 1969. He retired from playing at 29. **AP**

Teams go all out for all-rounders

Curran, Green, Stokes, Pooran hit jackpot; Chennai seek Bravo replacement, Mumbai aim for Bumrah, Archer cover

VENKATA KRISHNA B
DECEMBER 23

In a tournament that has 10 teams, when it comes to the big boys of the IPL, there are just two: Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings.

Between them, they have 9 Indian Premier League titles from 15 editions. They have each had an all-rounder from the Caribbean, arguably the best in the format, and ones who have been the life and face of the team.

And after a botched-up IPL season, where their picks at the previous auction didn't deliver the standards that they have set for themselves, they didn't panic. Mumbai with Rs 20.55 crore and Chennai with Rs 20.45 crore - began on their course correction.

For the first time since 2011, Mumbai will be without Kieron Pollard and Chennai without Dwayne Bravo. Before the auction began, it was a given that all-rounders Ben Stokes, Sam Curran and Cameron Green would fetch not only plenty of interest but could well be the most expensive players to be sold. And Sunrisers Hyderabad with Rs 42.25 crores, Punjab Kings with Rs 32.20 crores and Lucknow Super Giants with 23.35 crores were the ones expected to land them.

Opening act left to others

In the first set that involved batsmen, Mumbai and Chennai sat back and watched Hyderabad spend INR 13.25 crore on Harry Brook and INR 8.25 crore on Mayank Agarwal. With only INR 20.75 crore in the bank now, they knew the franchise that entered the auction with the biggest purse is out of the way.

And when Ajinkya Rahane was offered at a base price of Rs 50 lakh, Chennai happily took him, as he will reconnect with MS Dhoni and Stephen Fleming again after spending two seasons with them at the now defunct Rising Pune Supergiants.

As the all-rounders set arrived, Mumbai and Chennai were sitting with their boxing gloves on. When Curran's name - player of the tournament at the T20 World Cup - cropped up, Mumbai raised the paddle before Bangalore, Rajasthan Royals, Chennai joined the race. The buzz before the auction was Chennai would go big for Curran, one of their standout performers in the 2020 season and one who had become a fan favourite.

Yet, little did anyone know how they



Sam Curran became the most expensive player in IPL history.

AP

were bluffing their way as Punjab joined the race for Curran at INR 11.75 crore. Lucknow threw their hat in when the bid touched INR 15.75 crore before Mumbai returned again and increased it to INR 18 crore. At some point, these battles tend to prick the ego and Punjab fully aware that Mumbai can't go beyond a level, raised paddle once more and landed him for INR 18.50 crore - making Curran the most expensive signing ever.

His pay is higher than that of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant. Now with INR 13.7 crore, even Punjab were out of the race for Green and Stokes.

And Rajasthan, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad were not in a position to go big. Mumbai and Chennai only had Lucknow to worry about.

But when Green's name came up, Delhi showed interest, before Bangalore joined the race and stopped as Mumbai dropped in. From the outset it was clear they came in with a target and having let go off Curran, they had to take their chance with Green, a power-hitter who could tear apart oppositions and would be handy bowler at Wankhede.

Green is at a stage where Pollard was when Mumbai bought him in 2010 after he

How the cash was spent

Every franchise had in mind a few players as targets for whom they were willing to go big in the auction. In contrast, some quality players came into their kitty for much less than they would have expected.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

BARGAIN BUY: A tall left-arm paceman is often worth his height in gold. He could provide a much-needed edge to the RCB.

BIG BUY: Will Jacks (Rs 3.2 crore)

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

BARGAIN BUY: Narayan Jagadeesan (90 lakh): His recent purple patch in domestic cricket makes him one to watch.

BIG BUY: Shakib Al Hasan (Rs 1.5 crore)

PUNJAB KINGS

BARGAIN BUY: Sikandar Raza (Rs 50 lakh): He has been a rock for Zimbabwe with bat and ball, and is a valuable player.

BIG BUY: Sam Curran (Rs 18.5 crore)

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

BARGAIN BUY: Kyle Jamieson (Rs 1 crore): If fit and firing, his height and all-round ability could be invaluable.

BIG BUY: Ben Stokes (Rs 16.25 crore)

DELHI CAPITALS

BARGAIN BUY: Ishant Sharma (Rs 50 lakh): The veteran could teach the youngsters in the team a thing or two.

BIG BUY: Mukesh Kumar (Rs 5.5 crore)

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

BARGAIN BUY: Joe Root (Rs 1 crore): Class never came this cheap.

BIG BUY: Jason Holder (Rs 5.75 crore)

MUMBAI INDIANS

BARGAIN BUY: Shams Mulani (Rs 20 lakh): The Mumbai all-rounder is an unsung domestic stalwart.

BIG BUY: Cameron Green (Rs 17.5 crore)

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

BARGAIN BUY: Adil Rashid (Rs 2 crore): A World Cup winner in two formats, he has been quality operator for a long time.

BIG BUY: Harry Brook (Rs 13.25 crore)

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

BARGAIN BUY: Prerak Mankad (Rs 20 lakh): A Ranji winner with Saurashtra, he can contribute with both bat and ball.

BIG BUY: Nicholas Pooran (Rs 16 crore)

GUJARAT TITANS

BARGAIN BUY: Kane Williamson (Rs 2 crore): He has been blighted by injury of late, but is capable of rising to the occasion.

BIG BUY: Shivam Mavi (Rs 6 crore)

set the Champions League T20 on fire. End result: Green became a part of Paltan at INR 17.50 crore.

Now, Chennai had only Lucknow to worry about as Stokes' was auctioned. Chennai are in search of a captain, who could take over from Thala.

To replace Dhoni isn't an easy job by any means and only players with a certain aura are capable of doing that. There is talk of Ruturaj Gaikwad being groomed for the future, but for the time being they need an alternative.

And who better than Stokes, a World Cup winner in 50 overs and T20, an all-rounder who is as inspiring as Dhoni, and one who is redefining Test cricket and making it look as enterprising as T20s. But

when Stokes' name came, Chennai didn't even join the race initially until the bid touched Rs 15.25 crores. Until then it was between Rajasthan and Bangalore before it became Lucknow vs Hyderabad.

Once Chennai entered the fray, they kept the paddle up to match each bid and bagged Stokes at Rs 16.25 crore as Hyderabad and Lucknow had other slots to fill. Like in 2011, when Chennai bought Bravo, Stokes is at a similar stage of his career and brings a wealth of experience - an ingredient that the Super Kings consider non-negotiable.

And when Sundar Raman, CSK's consultant tweeted "Ok va" around 7:52 pm after bagging Kyle Jamieson as well, you knew Chennai had arrived.

‘Iss saal darwaja tootega jaroor’: Mukesh Kumar on his IPL trials

PRATYUSH RAJ
DECEMBER 23

Mukesh Kumar was one of those rare cricketers who got selected for India without having an IPL contract. The 29-year-old was picked for India's home series against South Africa.

Although, he didn't get a game, it put Mukesh in the limelight. On Friday, he was picked by Delhi Capitals for Rs 5.50 crores, 27 times more than his base price of Rs 20 lakhs.

"Bhaiyya udhar bhi trials chal raha mera kaafi saalon se, darwaja tootega jaroor (I have been giving IPL trials for years now; hopefully, I will be able to break that door)," he had told the Indian Express after his maiden India call up.

Kumar, who hails from Gopalganj in Bihar, moved to Kolkata in 2012 to help his father's taxi business, which was suffering losses.

But he went against the wish of his father (Late Kashinath Singh), and started playing local matches in the second league

for Rs 400-500.

In 2014, he appeared in a trial, which changed his life. Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) was organising a 'Vision 2020 programme,' where he was spotted by Ranadeb Bose, former Bengal pacer and bowling coach.

The trials were conducted with VVS Laxman, Waqar Younis and Muttiah Muralitharan at the helm.

Within a year, he was picked for Bengal, and his consistent performance over the years, helped him to get an India A call-up against New Zealand A, where he bagged a five-wicket haul.

Now a month later, he has received his maiden India call for the ODI series against South Africa.

"It is all about the trials in my life. First one in Gopalganj, where I became the district's best bowler and then in Kolkata, which changed my life," Mukesh Kumar had said.

"There has been a struggle in my life, but it is common. Har kisi ke saath hota hai (Everyone goes through that phase). My aim was to play cricket at the highest level

and I am living my dream. Agar zindagi mey mushkiley na aati toh shayad mai ya-haan nahi pahunch paata (If I had not gone through those hard times in my life, I would have never reached here)," he added.

Mukesh feels he got lucky at every step of his life.

Be it his father, who forced him to move to Bengal, Ranadeb Bose, who was in awe after watching him bowl in nets, Manoj Tiwari, who gave him his own kit, or Arun Lal, who said 'You have the potential to play for India.'

"I was very lucky. At every step, I got help. My father gave me one year to make a career out of cricket. And thereafter, I was fortunate enough to learn from Rano Sir (Ranadeb), Manoj bhaiya (Tiwary), Arun Lal sir. If not for these people, I would have never made it this far," he said.

Kumar recalls when he was selected for Bengal for the Buchi Babu tournament, he didn't have a cricket kit.

"Manoj bhaiya meroko bat, pad aur gloves diya tha (Manoj Tiwary gave me a bat, leg guards and gloves)," Kumar recalls.

Before 2019-20 season, when he was in

Mukesh Kumar moved to Kolkata in 2012 and started playing local matches for Rs 400-500. *File*

the Bengal camp, Kumar got a call from his elder brother Dhanset, who informed him about the demise of his father.

"My father had a brain haemorrhage in

2019. He never liked me playing cricket. He wated me to join army, I even gave CRPF exam twice. Today I just wish my father was alive. He would have been thrilled," recalled Kumar.

I thought of packing bags and going home from CSK camp: Jagadeesan

VENKATA KRISHNA B
DECEMBER 23

AS CHENNAI Super Kings released him into the auction pool in November, N Jagadeesan had made peace with himself that he won't be part of the Indian Premier League 2023 season. A T20 strike-rate of 118.61 is not seen as good enough for an opener in IPL. And Jagadeesan believed he won't fetch any interest from the teams. So his plans for next April and May was to head to the UK and play league cricket. Instead, as Kolkata Knight Riders bought him at the auction for INR 90 lakh, he would once again enter an environment that has pushed him to the extremes. Only this time he has a genuine chance of opening and keeping the gloves for the two-time champions.

When CSK released him back into the pool, Jagadeesan was going through a low run of scores. He has been part of the franchise since 2018, has played only 7 matches and in 2020 when CSK had a season to forget, Jagadeesan got an opportunity to bat only twice in the five matches he played. As questions were raised about Chennai's reluctance to play youngsters more, MS Dhoni's quip that "youngsters lack the spark" seemed to include Jagadeesan in that list. No names were taken, but the public

perception turned.

"It is definitely very hard," Jagadeesan tells *The Indian Express* when asked about his time on the bench. "There were times I felt really low. To be honest, I have even thought of packing the bags and going home. The only thing that kept me motivated was to keep working so that you get a game. When I was not playing, I thought this is the time you can mentally push yourself, you can't let your mind drift. When you are down, work harder. Last IPL season and the previous one in Dubai, I told myself that 'it is ok not to play any matches, but make sure you work the most at the gym, at a net session...give full effort in the nets' and leave the rest to others," Jagadeesan says.

"As a cricketer you don't like getting dropped and in the IPL, it is like them literally throwing you away. You don't want that to happen and it was hard to take for a day. But later, I realised that I have to accept that fact and make peace with it," Jagadeesan tells this newspaper.

With IPL teams preferring to look at his strike-rate more than the runs, it resulted in him trying too hard. While the last domestic season was a forgetful one for Jagadeesan, he started the current domestic season also on a low note before the tide began to change at the Vijay Hazare Trophy.



N Jagadeesan was bought by KKR for Rs 90 lakh in the IPL auction.

File

"Right from under-13 days I've always been a player who used to set targets for myself and aggregate a lot of runs and be the top run-getter. When I was growing up, I used to enjoy the

game so much and as I got older and the game became a lot more competitive I'd a feeling that I succumbed to the pressure where I wanted to be the highest run-getter. This (poor run of

The only thing that kept me motivated was to keep working so that you get a game. When I was not playing, I thought this is the time you can mentally push yourself, you can't let your mind drift."

N JAGADEESAN

-ON HIS TIME AT CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

scores) was the breaking point for me, where I realised it is not about scoring a lot of runs, but how you enjoy and more importantly do it without any expectations. Of course, you can dream, but you shouldn't be playing to get picked or prove anything," Jagadeesan says.

While he went about rewriting records in the Vijay Hazare Trophy - scoring five consecutive centuries including a world record List A score of 277, and his name was included in the final list for the IPL auction, Jagadeesan was still apprehensive.

"After the SMAT20, I was convinced that I wouldn't be picked for IPL. Last year I went unsold and CSK only picked me later on. I was there one year, played two matches and got released once again. So I really didn't think of my-

self as a player who could be part be part of the IPL this season because a) I didn't have scores to back me. B) This year my strike-rate improved a lot, but the score didn't improve a lot," Jagadeesan says.

"Strike rates are over-rated"

"I genuinely feel that strike-rates are over-rated in the sense, let us say we play a 20-over game and there are matches where we (Tamil Nadu) have actually won and my strike-rate would have been 120 or something.

"When we talk about established players the strike-rate doesn't come in, but when you talk about people like me who are coming into the circuit, they tend to look at it more than the runs," Jagadeesan said.

With strike-rate being the norm, Jagadeesan like Mayank Agarwal and Dinesh Karthik sought the help of the coach RX Murali in Bengaluru to improve the power-hitting aspect of the game. "What the fixation towards strike-rate did was, it made me work on it, add different shots and power-hitting. The flat-bat thing was new to me -- horizontal shots that give a lot more power. I'd to learn the technique for that and Murali played a role in that. I told my dad this is how we are supposed to do and before Mushtaq Ali, he used to chuck around 300 balls and practised that."