

OPINION 6

IT WAS AN ALBATROSS
AROUND PAK'S NECK

WORLD 8

BANGLADESH SENTENCES 20 TO
DEATH FOR STUDENT MURDER

SPORT 12

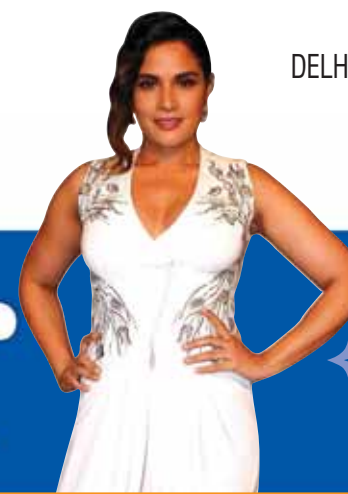
ENGLAND OUT
FOR 147 ON DAY 1

BHUBANESWAR, THURSDAY DECEMBER 9, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹4



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CDS Rawat, his wife, 11 others killed

IAF chopper
crashes in TN,
Gr Capt Singh
lone survivor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country was stunned on Wednesday when first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, his wife, and 11 other military personnel were killed after the helicopter carrying them crashed in Coonoor in Tamil Nadu. Rawat is survived by two daughters.

Group Captain P Chauhan, the commander of the helicopter, was killed along with Brigadier L Lidder and Lt Colonel Harinder Singh (both serving in the CDS staff) and five security personnel. The rescue team retrieved all 14 passengers from the helicopter.

"With deep regret, it has now been ascertained that General Bipin Rawat, Mrs Madhulika Rawat and 11 other persons on board have died in the unfortunate accident," the IAF said in a tweet.

Group Captain Varun Singh is the sole survivor of the crash and is being treated for severe burn injuries at the military hospital in Wellington. Incidentally, Singh won the Shaurya Chakra in August for his courage in handling a Tejas fighter aircraft after it was hit



Rescue officials at the spot where an IAF Mi-17V5 helicopter crashed in Coonoor on Wednesday

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by major technical issues during a sortie last year.

Incidentally, Rawat had survived a helicopter crash on February 3, 2015, in Dimapur, Nagaland when the Cheetah helicopter met a mishap. He was a Lt General at that time.

Bodies of Rawat and his wife will be consigned to flames on Friday at Delhi Cantonment. Their mortal remains are expected to arrive

in the National Capital in a military plane by Thursday evening. Rawat will be cremated with full military and State honours.

IAF chief VR Chaudhari, who rushed to Coonoor where the mishap took place, will accompany the body of the CDS and his wife to the national Capital. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi reviewed the implications of the tragic event. Following the mishap, the mandatory court of inquiry was ordered. Air Marshal will head the probe to ascertain the cause.

In 1963, a helicopter carrying top military echelon crashed in Poonch killing all the occupants, including the pilot. In 1993, a similar accident took place in Bhutan

when an Indian Army commander and his wife were killed after his helicopter went down.

In the 1963 mishap, an Army commander, corps chief, IAF senior commander besides the pilot were killed after their helicopter reportedly got entangled in the overhead high voltage electricity and telephone cables.

Continued on Page 2

Warhorse MI-17 sees 5 crashes in 5 years

Govt likely to
order thorough
tech review of
Russian copters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Russian-made MI-17 V5 which crashed on Wednesday killing CDS Bipin Rawat and 12 others is seen as a sturdy machine that is meant to fly in the combat zone and has a capacity of 20 passengers.

However, at least five crashes involving the MI-17 helicopter have taken place in as many years.

Known as the warhorse among the armed forces, this helicopter can also carry heavy load, including tanks and fly at a height of nearly 5,000 metre. At present, the IAF has nearly 140 such helicopters. The IAF started them inducting into service in 2012. The Government is likely to order a thorough technical review of the entire fleet, sources said.

The frequent crash of Mi17V5 helicopter has baffled

the experts since it is an advanced military transport helicopter. Manufactured by Russian Helicopters' subsidiary Kazan, the helicopter has onboard weather radar and is equipped with the latest generation of night vision devices. It also has the new PKV-8 autopilot system and a KNEI-8 avionics suite. It can carry a maximum take-off weight of 13,000 kg and maximum payload weight of 4,000 kg and fly at a speed of 250 km per hour.

India had in 2008 signed a deal with Russia to induct 80 Mi17V5 medium lift helicopters for strengthening its fleet for humanitarian and disaster relief missions and transport operations.

The contract was later expanded for delivery of 151 Mi17V5 helicopters. The first batch of these helicopters came to India in September 2011. In February 2012, the IAF had formally Mi17V5 helicopters from Russia to

enhance its operational capabilities, including carrying troops and cargo to high altitude areas. The helicopter is fitted with a self-defence system against heat seeker missiles, heavily-armoured cockpit, vital systems and components.

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Page 2

BIPIN RAWAT
16 March 1958 – 8 December 2021

Centre to hurry up to name new CDS to take on mantle

With LAC, LoC on
boil, post can't
be left vacant for
long, sources

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the security establishment is coming to terms with the implications of the air mishap involving Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, the top brass has to now prepare to hand over the CDS baton to a new person.

As the first CDS of the country, Rawat took charge in January last year. The Government selected him on the principle of first among equals as regards the three Services chiefs. He assumed charge as the Army Chief in 2017. He was to retire at the end of in 2019 when the Government appointed him as the CDS.

Present Army chief General MM Naravane is the senior most among the three chiefs as of now and the Government may appoint him



Wreckage of the crashed IAF Mi-17V5 helicopter in Coonoor on Wednesday

PTI

as the CDS, sources said here on Wednesday.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by the Prime Minister will take a call on the impact of this unprecedented event on the strategic and defence architecture, they said.

Elaborating upon the urgency to have a CDS in place, they said the Line of Actual Control (LAC) remains tense in Ladakh for the last two

years and Pakistan might try to take advantage of the situation in Afghanistan by pushing battle-hardened Afghan militants into Jammu & Kashmir from across the LoC.

Moreover, China is making forays into the strategically important Indian Ocean region and flexing its maritime muscle in the Indo-Pacific region, posing a challenge to India's security interests, they said.

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I am deeply anguished by the helicopter crash in Tamil Nadu in which we have lost Gen Bipin Rawat, his wife and other personnel of the Armed Forces. They served India with utmost diligence. My thoughts are with the bereaved families.

— PM
NARENDRA
MODI

I extend my condolences to the family of Gen Bipin Rawat and his wife. This is an unprecedented tragedy and our thoughts are with their family in this difficult time. Heartfelt condolences also to all others who lost their lives. India stands united in this grief.

— RAHUL
GANDHI

Pained by the untimely demise of CDS General Bipin Rawat, his wife and 11 other Armed Forces personnel in the tragic accident in Coonoor today. The entire nation mourns this irreparable loss. We will always remember the courage and devotion with which he served our nation.

— MAMATA
BANERJEE

Cabinet OK's ₹44,065 cr for Ken-Betwa inter-linking

To address water
scarcity in
Bundelkhand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the funding and implementation of the ₹44,605 crore Ken-Betwa inter-linking of rivers project, which will address the water scarcity in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh and poll-bound Uttar Pradesh.

The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister



Narendra Modi also approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Rural) for another three years to provide financial assistance for the construction of the remaining 155.75 lakh houses under the scheme.



Briefing media, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said the Ken-Betwa rivers inter-linking project will get Central support of ₹39,317 crore, covering a grant of ₹36,290 crore and a loan of ₹3,027 crore. This

will pave the way for more such projects for interlinking of rivers in the country, he added.

The Ken-Betwa project involves the transfer of water from the Ken river to the Betwa river through the construction of the Daudhan dam (the Lower Orr project, Kotha Barrage) and a canal linking the two rivers (the Bina Complex Multipurpose project). The project will ensure annual irrigation of over 10.62 lakh hectares of land, drinking water supply to a population of about 62 lakh, and also generate 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar power.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

INDIA TEST-FIRES AIR VERSION OF BRAHMOS

Balasar: India on Wednesday successfully test-fired the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the integrated test range of Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, sources in the DRDO said.

3 ULTRAS KILLED IN SHOPIAN ENCOUNTER

Srinagar: Three unidentified militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Shopian district of Jammu & Kashmir on Wednesday, police said. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Chack-i-Gholan village in Shopian following information about the presence of militants there, a police official said.

AIR QUALITY IN DELHI LIKELY TO IMPROVE

New Delhi: The national Capital's air quality is likely to improve further within the poor category on Wednesday due to a favourable wind speed, authorities said.

RAJ: 5 STUDENTS ALLEGE GANG-RAPE BY TEACHERS

Jaipur: Fifteen teachers, including the principal of a Government school in Rajasthan's Alwar district, were booked after five girl students accused them of gang-rape. Police, suspect it to be a case of "revenge" and "witness harassment" by a former teacher of the school, who was arrested last December on charges of molesting three girl students.

OLAF SCHOLZ VOTED IN TO REPLACE MERKEL

Berlin: Germany's Parliament elected Olaf Scholz as the country's ninth post-World War II chancellor on Wednesday, opening a new era for the EU's most populous nation and largest economy after Angela Merkel's 16-year tenure. **P8**

Maha ready to nip Omicron in bud, no case on Wed

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking serious cognisance of the rapid spread of Omicron across the world, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday directed the State health administration to increase the pace of Covid-19 vaccination so as to build resistance among the people against contracting the new variant of the coronavirus.

On a day when Maharashtra crossed a landmark of 12 crore single dose vaccinations and the total number of the people who have received both the doses touched 4.37 crore, no new case

of Omicron was reported in the State on Wednesday. The total number of Omicron cases stood at 10.

Continued on Page 2

2 airlines issued notices
for not following Covid
norms for int'l arrivals

New Delhi: Authorities here on Wednesday issued show-cause notices to Air India and Vistara for not complying with passenger boarding guidelines issued by the Centre following the emergence of Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

Jab booster offers safety against Omicron: Pfizer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Laboratory experiments have found that Omicron variant of Covid-19 virus seems to dull the power of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, but also hinted that people who have received a booster shot might be better protected, said a study.

Published online on Tuesday, the study found that antibodies produced by vaccinated people were much less successful at keeping the omicron variant from infecting cells than other forms of the coronavirus.

Scientists said the results were somewhat worrisome, but no cause for panic. The data suggests that vaccinated people might be vulnerable to



breakthrough infections with Omicron, which is spreading rapidly in South Africa and has appeared in dozens of countries around the world.

But vaccines stimulate a wide-ranging immune response that involves more than just antibodies. So these experiments offer an incomplete picture of how well the vaccine protects against hospitalisation or death from Omicron.

Continued on Page 2

Farmers to announce end of one-year long protest today

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The agitating farmers are all but ready to wind up their year-long protest within the next 24 hours. The farmers on Wednesday agreed to the Centre's second draft proposal on their pending demands. They will meet on Thursday to take a formal decision to end their protest.

According to farmers, an announcement on ending the protests would be made after getting a formal letter from the Centre. The Government in its revised draft has responded to all points raised by the farmers' groups, except the one related to the Lakhimpur incident.

After a meeting of the core committee of the farmers'



A farmer at the Ghazipur border uses a 'hookah' as he waits for farmers' committee's decision on their future course of action on Wednesday

PTI

groups, Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni said the earlier draft from the Central Government on pending

demands was not acceptable to them and a fresh proposal was received from the Centre on Wednesday.

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4 ‘at-risk’ foreign returnees test Covid+

Samples sent for genome sequencing

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Four persons, who returned to Odisha from eight countries designated ‘at-risk’ from the Omicron variant of Covid-19, have tested Covid-19 positive so far. Public Health Director Niranjan Mishra on Wednesday said total 982 persons have returned to the State from at-

risk countries till December 7. And, four of them have been found positive for Covid-19. Their samples have been sent for genome sequencing.

Refuting earlier media reports of some returnees from ‘at-risk’ countries are untraceable in the State, Mishra said, “There is nothing to panic. We are trying to track them. Few of them are not picking up phone calls. However, health workers have been asked to visit door-to-door to trace the returnees.”

The Director further said the State Government has learnt from the first and second wave of the pandemic. Hence, it is fully prepared to tackle any eventuality if the third wave arrives, he said.

In view of the situation, the Odisha Government has urged the Centre to provide a complete list of foreign travellers visiting the State for carrying out contact tracing to prevent spread of ‘most contagious’ variant of Covid-19.

Niranjan to CM

‘Compensate Jawad-hit farmers for crop loss soon’

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

PCC president Niranjan Patnaik has demanded that the State Government complete the crop loss assessment due to Cyclone Jawad on a war footing and provide compensation to the farmers without delay, so that they can prepare for the Rabi season which has already started in November.

In a letter to CM Naveen Patnaik, he said the Jawad-induced rains have damaged the standing crops extensively.

While the farmers suffered almost 70% crop loss due to drought and untimely rain in last few months, the rest 30% crops have been damaged by the Jawad rain lately. Niranjan reminded that the Fani-hit farmers are yet to get compensation for their crop loss due to official lethargy and apathy of the State Government.

He further flayed faulty agricultural policy of the State Government due to which the sharecroppers could not be identified, depriving the real

farmers of benefits of the schemes.

Niranjan urged the CM for making the payment of crop insurance money simple so that farmers would be interested to cover their crops under insurance schemes. He also wanted special provision for adequate compensation to the farmers for crop loss in Relief Code, selection of beneficiaries above political consideration and supply of seed, fertilizer and insecticide free of cost to the farmers for the Rabi farm-

ing.

Meanwhile, On Wednesday, the Kisan Congress demanded waiver of farm loan, immediate payment of compensation for crop loss, amending the Relief Code, increasing farm input assistance to three times from the SDRF and NDRF and payment of insurance money under PMFBY.

State Kisan Congress president Amiya Kumar Pattnaik and PCC spokespersons Amiya Pandab and Padmakar Guru demanded

that the rule for crop loss by 33% be changed and all farmers be included under the farm input assistance from SDRF and NDRF. Besides, they demanded immediate resumption of Mandis to purchase paddy from the farmers who hurriedly harvested their crops but could not keep them safe place and minimum of Rs 3,000 compensation per Guntha for crop loss. They warned of holding a dharna before the Raj Bhavan on December 15 if the de-

Nanda Sir cremated with guard of honour



PNS ■ JAJPUR

The funeral of Padma Shri Nanda Kishore Prusti, popularly called ‘Nanda Sir’, was held on the bank of the Baitarani river in Jajpur district on Wednesday. He was given guard of honour.

His youngest son Niranjan gave ‘Mukhagni’ by lighting the funeral pyre. The centenarian teacher had shot into limelight recently for being

honoured with Padma award for his relentless efforts in imparting education to children through village ‘Chatasali’.

Sukinda MLA Preeti Ranjan Ghadai, Jajpur District Magistrate Chakravati Singh Rathore, Jajpur SP Rahul PR, ADM Akshya Kumar Mallick, writer Taraprasad Mishra and many other senior officials of the district administration, Health Department and police were present.

Army jawan found missing at Cuttack

GRP begins probe

PNS ■ CUTTACK

An Army jawan travelling from Delhi to Odisha was found missing mysteriously from the Cuttack railway station on Tuesday. The jawan was identified as Tenzin Gaoba.

A missing complaint has been lodged by the Army at the Cuttack GRP station as the

jawan has remained untraceable.

As per reports, a total of 150 jawans had boarded a train at the New Delhi railway station to Cuttack. They were scheduled to undertake a training programme at Charibatia. However, Tenzin was found missing at Cuttack.

Army officials tried their best to trace Tenzin and contact him, but so far his whereabouts are unknown. The in-

formation and photos of the jawan have also been provided to the police.

The Army officials have also contacted the family members of Tenzin, but so far they have no information about him. Police suspect that that either the jawan has fled or he has been abducted. There are also chances that the jawan might have met with an accident somewhere during his travel, said a police official.

MLAs vow to improve kids’ lives

Discuss issues with children, receive charter of demands

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Members of the Odisha Legislative Assembly led by Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro came together to discuss ways to improve lives of children in Odisha. Child representatives also presented the MLAs with their charter of demands.

Around 25 MLAs from different political parties attended the interaction and also discussed ways to support children, especially to deal with challenges caused by the COVID pandemic. Organised by Unicef along with the Global Policy Research Foundation, the interac-



tion marked the beginning of a partnership with MLAs in Odisha to accelerate progress for children, especially at the grassroots level.

Through the partnership MLAs will be updated with technical and thematic knowledge including research and data as well as through inputs for legislative committees on children's issues. The initiative will also convene engagements and dialogues between the elected leaders and youth, adolescents and children to hear their voices.

The MLAs also responded to the charter of demands and

promised to use their resources and MLA funds to address the needs of children. In particular, they promised to ensure schools in their constituencies had proper infrastructure including drinking water and separate toilets for girls and boys.

Children present at the interaction asked questions to MLA regarding their schooling, online classes, gender equality, ending child marriage and preventing child labour. Child participants also shared their concerns such as flooding in their areas as well as being forced to drop out of school.

Kalinga Lit Fest from Dec 10

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Kalinga Literature Festival (KLF) will be held in Bhubaneswar from December 10 to 12.

KLF founder Rashmi Ranjan Parida informed that veteran Odia writer Shrinavas Udgata, eminent poet Arun Kamal, Bollywood actress and writer Divya Dutta would be conferred with the Kalinga Literary Awards of 2021 while young and dynamic writer Taro Sindik would be presented the Kalinga Literary Youth Award.

Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi would inaugurate the event in presence of Ram Prasad Subedhi



from Nepal Embassy, MP Dr Amar Patnaik, Padma Vibhushan Dr Sitakant Mahapatra, Padma Bhusan Ramakanta Rath, Padma Shri Jayanta Mahapatra, Padma Shri Haldhar Nag. Former Governor Prof

Gopalkrishna Gandhi would give the keynote address in central theme of the festival, "India at 75: Commemorating the Republic of Letters".

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri would be chief guest on the concluding day.

In Cuttack

Rs 24L cash seized from Rajdhani passenger

All in Rs 10, Rs 20 denominations

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP), Cuttack seized Rs 24.50 lakh stashed in the baggage of a passenger travelling in the New Delhi-bound Rajdhani Express on Wednesday.

The passenger, identified as Arun Kumar Swain from Jajpur district, was detained for questioning following the recovery of bundles of cash in the denominations of Rs 10 and Rs 20.

Swain had boarded the train from Bhubaneswar. Following a tipoff, police conducted a search of his luggage. As he could not give any satisfactory explanation regarding the source of the cash and reason behind carrying it, he was

detained for further investigation.

“The passenger claims that the cash was handed over to him by a person and he was asked to deliver it to someone in Delhi. We are carrying out further investigation and the CCTV at the Bhubaneswar railway station will be examined,” said an RPF official.

Besides, the Income Tax Department has been informed about the incident, he added.

HITTING THE BULL’S EYE

Assembly boss has to set the House in order



BISWARAJ PATNAIK

‘Majority of the present-day politicians are rogues’. To this humble statement, nearly every thinking human being agrees, particularly those living in developing countries.

It is common knowledge that when it comes to fielding ‘criminals’ in an election, all political parties share a common manifesto. Lawmakers charged with murder, kidnapping, assault and rioting get elected for the next five years to debate laws. In election after election, these lawbreakers morph into lawmakers with only minority backing. Their ability to influence, intimidate and entice a small segment of their constituency is enough to sneak into the legislature

with complete legitimacy. The double-barrel formula of muscle and money never fails.

Unfortunately, the prevailing law says no accused of crimes can be disbarred unless conclusively convicted. And conviction cannot happen unless law-enforcing agencies move with speed and intent, which hardly happens owing to several circumstances which can be controlled provided there is a will to close well and honestly.

To most Indian voters, a candidate’s ancestry accounts for more than his criminal past. At the battle between kinship and probity, kinship invariably wins. Voters often prefer a criminal candidate from their own caste or party to a non-criminal godly candidate who cannot ever organise muscle or money power or convince non-clan voters to trust him or her.

The points made so far are specifically to draw attention to the winter Assembly session in Odisha, which enjoys a huge reputation for having in place an enviably stable and robust administration headed by Naveen Patnaik. Some unfortunate, shameful thing hap-

pened in a Kalahandi college, for which the Opposition holds the Home Minister responsible without an iota of evidence. Peculiarly, the ruling BJD is so overwhelmingly colossal that the opposition parties literally have hardly any existence. In Odisha, the Congress party is like smog in thin air; and the faintly visible BJP has begun gasping for clean air due to lack of solidarity.

A handful of Congress members are staging farcical plays to demonstrate protest against the Government’s decision not to drop the accused Minister. Some of them sprinkled purifying water to cleanse the House allegedly polluted by the presence of the targeted Minister.

The ruling party members too had their defence tricks played rather tactlessly. They rightly chose the legitimate issue of demanding ‘Paika Mutiny’ to be declared the first war of Indian Independence. But lately, they also turned part of the pandemonium.

The strategists of all these outfits have lost sense. As per the Constitution and several Supreme Court rulings, no lawmaker is expected to behave

like this. Their primary job is to consume each minute in framing laws and taking such decisions as to ensure relief and joy for the citizens. Their deliberations are limited to lawmaking, controlling over the Budget, keeping under surveillance the Executive, the Judiciary, the electoral processes apart from amending the Constitution, voicing the public opinion and, above all, coming together to remove corrupt judges in the higher judiciary. Any other activity is taboo.

In case legislators remain unruly after being severely warned, the Speaker with the support of the majority can suspend the ‘miscreants’ as they should be called in the House; and, if need be, expel them by assigning the job to the Committee of Privileges to make a formal inquiry into the breach of privilege case or appoint an ad hoc committee to investigate the conduct of a member of the House with a view to determining whether a particular conduct of the member is derogatory to the dignity of the House and inconsistent with the standards which the House

expects of the members.

The Madhya Pradesh High Court had upheld expulsion of two members of the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly observing that the Assembly had the power and privilege of expelling a member. The Supreme Court upheld the Parliament’s power to expel the errant members (involved in cash for query scam) referring to Clause (3) of Article 105 of the Constitution which grants power of expulsion of the members bringing indignity to the House.

In an extreme case of misconduct, the House may expel a member as its power to regulate its own constitution though it is, for convenience, treated here as one of the methods of punishment at its disposal.

There have been three instances of expulsion of members of the Rajya Sabha. Subramanian Swamy was expelled on November 15, 1976. An enquiry committee had found his conduct derogatory to the dignity of the House. Dr Chhattarpal Singh Lodha was expelled on December 23, 2005 for his conduct be-

ing derogatory to the dignity of the House and inconsistent with the Code of Conduct. Sakshi Ji Maharaj was expelled on March 21, 2006 for his gross misconduct which brought the House and its members into disrepute.

So, the Odisha Assembly Speaker has to grow a spine somehow and rule as boss. The Opposition members, a marked minority by all parameters, be at least suspended for being undignified in the House for long. The sacred House, considered by many as the temple of solving people’s problems, and where huge amounts of public money is spent to ensure lawmakers strive to bring joy and relief to the ordinary masses, be kept pure and functional as per the rulebook. The Speaker, who shed kind of crocodile tears on December 7 expressing helplessness better step down if ruling strongly against unruly members is found to be difficult. The Speaker brought shame to the people by saying aloud he was aghast that both the Opposition and the ruling party members had turned unruly beyond his control.

Direct FCI to procure surplus parboiled rice

BJD MPs urge Union Min Goyal

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A delegation of BJD MPs on Wednesday met Union Minister of Consumer Affairs and Food Distribution Piyush Goyal in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum urging him to ensure that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) continue procuring surplus parboiled rice from Odisha for the next Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2021-22.

The MPs in a memorandum stated that a total of 14 lakh farmers sold 77.33 lakh MT paddy (equivalent to 52.35 MT rice) till October 10 during KMS 2020- 21 and Rs 14.44 crore was transferred to their bank accounts within 48 hours. However, the Centre's letter, dated August 31, 2021, mentioning that no surplus parboiled rice will be accepted from Odisha by FCI for the next KMS (2021-22) has come as a major jolt for lakhs of farmers in the State.

Odisha had estimated to procure 52 lakh MT rice in the upcoming KMS 2021-22. As Odisha's own requirements is about 24 lakh MT rice com-



prising of all the schemes, a surplus of 28 lakh MT rice including 4 lakh MT raw rice and 24 lakh MT parboiled rice would be left with the State, the MPs mentioned.

If FCI does not lift the surplus 24 lakh MT parboiled rice due to restrictions imposed by the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD), it would severely affect Odisha's paddy procurement operation and also cause great distress to 10 lakh farmers amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

They urged the Union Minister for instructing FCI to lift the 24 lakh MT surplus parboiled rice from Odisha for the next KMS 2021-22.

Notably, Odisha, after becoming a Decentralised Procurement State in KMS 2003-04, has been procuring

rice from millers on behalf of the Centre. The surplus rice which is left after consumption under National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare schemes of the State Government is delivered to the FCI.

406 elephants died in last 5 years in State

Minister informs about jumbo conservation measures

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As many as 406 elephants have died in the State during the last five years, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha told the State Assembly on Tuesday.

Replying to a question of Suresh Routray, he said 162 jumbos died in accidents while 11 were killed by poachers and others died due to various other reasons during 2016-17 to 2020-21.

Out of the 162 accidental deaths, 14 died in train accidents, four in road accidents, 54 in electrocution and 90 for other reasons, he said.

Arukha said the Government has formed three elephant conservation projects, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Mahanadi elephant conservation projects, to check elephants' death.

The State Government has dug ponds, developed meadows, undertaken plantation drives and made provi-

sions for salt lick in various animal habitats and traditional elephant corridors, he said.

He said the villagers residing close to forests are being informed about the movement of elephants through elephant monitoring apps and free telephone service is working round the clock in control rooms opened in all the offices of the Regional Chief Conservator, Divisional and Forest Range Offices.

Coordination meetings with the officials of the Department of Energy, Indian Railways, Department of Works and National Highway

Authority of India (NHAI) are held frequently and preventive steps are being taken to prevent accidental death of elephants, he informed.

Arukha further said field officials and anti-poaching staff are deployed in strategic places to prevent poaching of elephants. Drone and watch towers are being used to keep a strict vigil on the elephant habitats, their movements and on the movement of poachers.

The Minister said a crime cell under the CB-CID of Odisha Police has been constituted to investigate and

take action on important cases. The Government has also planned for radio collaring the elephants creating problems to monitor their movement, set up an Elephant Rescue Centre, and chalk out a strategy with the consultation of the people and to strengthen the facilities for the treatment of wild animals.

Replying to another question asked by Soumya Ranjan Patnaik, the Minister said 802 wildlife animals, including elephants and tigers, were killed by poachers between 2016-17 and 2020-21.

‘Ambedkar true architect of modern India’

Mahaparinirvana Diwas held

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 66th Mahaparinirvan Diwas of Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr BR Ambedkar was celebrated by the Ambedkar Chair in NISWASS instituted by the Dr Ambedkar Foundation as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav initiative of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

Speaking at a memorial lecture on the occasion, Chairman of the PG Council of Utkal University Prof Basanta Kumar Mallik said Dr Ambedkar was the true architect of modern India.

He recounted Ambedkar's role in ushering



in labour reforms in the country much before independence as the Law Minister in the Viceroy's Cabinet. Prof Mallik highlighted that Dr Ambedkar to the "Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance" in 1925. The Reserve Bank of India Act 1934 was again on the basis of his findings in his academic work, "The Problem of the Rupee and its Solutions",

a thesis he had submitted it London School of Economics (LSE) in 1924, he told. Ambedkar had also provided a blue print for the development of the power sector essential for the industrialization of India and was responsible in establishing the Central Technical Power Board, The National Power Grid System and The Damodar Valley Project and the Hirakud Dam Project. To improve agricultural production and irrigation the Central Water Irrigation and Navigation Commission was set up under his leadership, he said.

The Buddhist monks from the Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore, paid tributes to Dr Ambedkar and held Dhamma Puja on the occasion.

7,330 cybercrime cases registered in State

4 cybercrime PSs set up

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Since 2015 till September 30, 2021, as many as 7,330 cyber crime cases were registered in the State and most of the cases are related to financial frauds and crimes related to social media.

Replying to a question of BJP MLA Mohan Charan Majhi, Minister of State for Home Dibya Shankar Mishra said in the State Assembly on Monday that in most of cases criminals are strangers and only after through inquiry police would be able to identify the accused.

The State Government

is collecting information related to disposed-of cases, present status of inquiry in several cases, number of criminals involved and total number of persons convicted, etc.

Mishra stated that the State at present has four Cybercrime police stations established at CID-CB Cyber Crime police station (PS) in Bhubaneswar besides the Brahmapur, Sambalpur and Rourkela Cyber Crime PSs.

In these PSs, 9 Inspectors, 3 SIS, 3 ASIs and 11 Constables were engaged and the Government has made arrangements for their training in cyber crime investigations.

ICC to study State's logistics infra



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has decided to undertake a unique study on logistics infrastructures of Odisha which cover all modes of transport like road, rail, inland waterways, slurry transportation, public transport, port and air connectivity.

The ICC has joined hands with the Odisha Government and the RITES Limited to undertake the study and prepare a compressive report.

The study will be carried

out with an assessment of the existing infrastructure and future expansion plans of the industries, the road and rail infrastructure of the State. Evaluation of port infrastructure, the potential capacity of inland waterways in relation to types of cargo and volumes and existing and potential capacity of pipelines for transportation of iron ore mines and oil and petroleum products will also be collected for the study. In this regard, an MoU was signed here on Wednesday.

Rs 18-cr ganja trees destroyed in G'pati

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

Based on the instructions of district Collector Lingaraj Panda and Superintendent of Police Jayaram Satpathy a drive has been launched against illegal ganja plantations in Gajapati district.

In a joint raid by excise, forest, revenue and police officials at Pithakhari village under Arakhapada mouza under the R Udayagiri po-

lice station in the district. More than 1.82 lakh ganja trees grown in an area of 92 acre were felled and burnt by the officials. The estimated value of the destroyed trees would be more than Rs 18 crore.

However, during the raid no one was arrested. Nuagada BDO and Tehsildar Lalatendu Mohanty performed magisterial duties.

BrahMos flight-test successful 80% Idco land grabbed in B'swar GP

PNS ■ BALESWAR

An air version of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully test-fired from the supersonic fighter aircraft Sukhoi 30 MK-I from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur near here on Wednesday.

Official sources said the missile followed the pre-planned trajectory meeting all mission objectives.

Major airframe assemblies which form the integral part of the Ramjet Engine are indigenously developed. During the test, the structural integrity and functional performance have been proven, the sources stated.



The air version of BrahMos had been last tested in July 2021.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh praised the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO),

BrahMos, Indian Air Force and the allied industry on the successful test-firing. BALESWARThe missile has been already inducted into the Armed Forces.

Pleas to evict encroachers fall on deaf ears

PNS ■ BALESWAR

As much as about 80 per cent Government land belonging to Idco is under encroachment in the Srikona gram panchayat in Chandipur.

Information received through RTI sources revealed that 31.487 acres of land out of 39.96 acres of land under Srikona mouza are under encroachment. The land which is meant for

establishment of industries is illegally occupied and the department has done little to evict the encroachers, it is alleged.

The encroached lands have dwelling houses, business, religious and worshiping establishments etc. Reports said only 8.477 acres of land has been allotted to industries and the rest portions are encroached. Chandipur, while close to Bahabulpur, a prominent fishing base of the State, has a huge scope for establishment of fishing related activities.

Although entrepreneurs

are looking for land to carry out trade and commerce activities and they have applied for Idco in this regard, yet there is hardly any land left for them. Therefore, they are not able to proceed with their prospective projects.

From Idco end although attention of the district administration is drawn about the encroachment, yet no tangible result is obtained, said Idco sources.

Reports added further that several acres of Government land under Chandipur, Hidigaon, Gudupahi, Parikhi and Bahabalur are occupied by illegal settlers.

Sick woman lying in B'pur bus-stand rescued

Shifted to shelter home

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

A sick woman, identified as Ch Damayanti (62), lying hopelessly near the OSRTC ticket counter of New bus-stand, Brahmapur, since last four days, was rescued by the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC).

The matter came to the

knowledge of Go Seeva Sangathan member Jeetendra Pahan who along with social worker cum president of the Sangathan, Lalatendu Choudhury rushed to the spot and informed the BeMC Commissioner and Sub-Collector, Brahmapur.

Commissioner Siddeshwar Baliram Bondar and Sub-Collector V Keerthi Vasan directed Assistant Collector Binod Kumar Behera and



BeMC Manager Arun Kumar to take immediate steps to rescue of the woman.

The old woman was shifted

to the Urban Area Old-Age Shelter Home near Payal Talkies, New bus stand.

Notably, the old woman's only son, Srinivas, is working as a reporter in a news agency at Hyderabad with a fat salary. The woman has two daughters, both married and well settled. But unfortunately, neither her son nor the daughters are taking care of her as a result of which she is wondering aimlessly for a morsel of food.

Odisha gets Rs 143 cr for Capital Expenditure

TATHYA ■ NEW DELHI

The Government of India has released Rs 143.12 crore to Odisha under the scheme Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure for the year 2021-22.

Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary informed this to BJD member Ramesh Majhi in a reply in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

Chaudhary said the Centre has allocated Rs 374 crore for Odisha under the scheme; and so far released Rs 143.12 crore as the first installment.

The amount has been sanctioned for development of 12 infrastructure projects that include four water supply projects, two irrigation projects and remaining bridge and road projects.

The total estimated cost of the 12 projects is Rs 2,667.54 crore. However, the Centre has agreed to give only Rs 374 crore. The State Government will have to bear the remaining amount.

As per the scheme guidelines, the amount allocated by the Centre to the State will be spent on eligible expenditure before March 31, 2022, the Union

Minister informed.

On October 12 last year, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the scheme as part of the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat package. An amount of Rs12,000 crore was earmarked for the scheme for the financial year 2020-21; and a sum of Rs11,830.29 crore was released to the States.

For 2021-22, the Ministry of Finance has decided to provide an additional amount of upto Rs 15,000 crore to States as interest free 50 year loan for spending on capital projects.

Flyover near GM Varsity to be ready by Mar

DM visits delayed projects, wants fast execution

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

Expressing concern over inordinate delay in completion of important projects inside Sambalpur town, district Collector Subham Saxena made an on-the-spot visit of the ongoing works and gave strict direction to the executing agencies for timely

completion of the projects.

The much discussed flyover between GM University and court is always in the news for delay in completion and creating inconveniences to the public. The project is going on in the heart of the town. More than 60 per cent of the residents of the city use the road since it connects all the important offices of the district and the northern division including the courts.

But five years after its beginning, it is yet to be com-

pleted. Collector Saxena strictly instructed the department engineers and the executing agency to complete it by March 2022 by any means.

He further warned that if anyone gets reluctant to leave land for the service roads below the bridge, the district administration will go for land acquisition. In the meantime, few people have sold their land to the administration and received payment against it at higher

prices. But those who create problems for the public work will have to face strict action as per the law and the land will be acquired as per the provision of LA Act, the Collector said.

Saxena was accompanied by senior officials of the district including SMC Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Sahu and officials of the Works department. They also visited Khetrajpur ROB (road over bridge), Dhubijor bridge, another bridge near

big bazaar, half built watch tower on Budharaja hill and passed strict instruction for timely completion as per the agreement.

At the same time, the Collector also visited the proposed town hall in the unused bus stand for which work had already begun but was stopped midway after spending nearly Rs 1 crore. After the visit of the Collector, a new hope has arisen for speedy completion of the projects inside the city, said

Separate isolation area for Omicron +ve patients: Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Treading cautiously in the backdrop of two dozen Omicron cases detected from various places across the country, the Centre on Wednesday told the States that such patients would be treated only in designated Covid facilities with separate isolation areas.

"It has to be ensured that no cross infection takes place and adequate precautions are taken by healthcare workers in these facilities to prevent transmission among other patients and healthcare workers," Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said in a letter to States and union territories (UTs). Bhushan advised them

to regularly review and ensure that samples of positive cases of international travellers and their contacts as well as from emerging hot spots are promptly submitted to INSACOG labs for genome sequencing according to protocol.

Further to contain spread, it is imperative that states and UTs follow a mission mode and focused approach of quickly tracking primary and secondary contacts of positive cases and facilitate testing for them, he said.

In the latest weekly Covid-19 epidemiological update, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that given the predominant circulation of the Delta variant in many countries, it is too early to draw a

conclusion on the impact of the new Omicron variant on the global epidemiology of Covid-19.

The global health body further highlighted that while several crucial questions about Omicron remain unanswered, more data will continue to emerge in the coming weeks.

At the same time, WHO has also presented an update on the current situation on four key issues on Omicron — transmissibility, clinical severity, risk of reinfection and the potential impact of the vaccines.

The WHO said that in South Africa, where the new variant of concern (VOC) was first reported, fresh Covid-19 cases have continued to surge.

As many as 62,021 new cases were reported between November 29 and December 5, a 111 per cent increase compared to the previous week. More significantly, the country has reported an increase in the test positivity rate from 1.2 per cent the week beginning November 7 to 22.4 % in the week beginning December 2.

Meanwhile, India reported 8,439 Covid-19 positive cases on Tuesday, taking its toll to 3,46,56,822. The count of active cases declined to 93,733, the lowest in 555 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data. The death toll due to the disease rose to 4,73,952, with 195 daily deaths being recorded.



Support small shopkeepers in neighbourhood: Varun Gandhi

New Delhi: Continuing to criticise his own Government, BJP MP Varun Gandhi on Wednesday said "economic policy mismanagement" along with "corruption and price rise" has forced a large number of "small producers and shop keepers" to shut their business and shops.

The three-time BJP MP from Pilibhit, UP, said it is time people "back small shopkeepers and businesses" rather than the multinationals.

The MP appealed to people to support small shopkeepers in the neighbourhood by "purchasing from them instead of Amazon and Walmart."

In a tweet, he shared a news report item that spoke about government's policies leaving small businessmen on the street with a washout business.

The BJP MP who has been attacking the center and the UP Government on a range of issues said "at the time of global recession they (small producers and shopkeepers) were the ones who took care of the country's economy."

"Due to corruption, inflation and economic policy mismanagement, a large number of small producers and shopkeepers are forced to close their businesses. Support them by doing shopping from small shopkeepers in your neighbourhood instead of Amazon, Walmart. At the time of global recession they were the ones who took care of the country's economy," said Varun who is leaving no chance to rip out government's political and economic policies.

PNS

ED raids PFI locations in Kerala as part of money laundering probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday conducted searches at multiple locations in Kerala against the Popular Front of India (PFI) as part of a money laundering probe.

The searches were carried out in Ernakulam and a few other locations. Central paramilitary personnel escorted the ED teams during the raids.

"Incriminating documents" were recovered during the searches by the agency as part of its probe that is related to various instances of funding of the Islamist outfit. Some people also gathered outside the premises that were being raided and raised slogans like "police go back," sources said.

The agency had on earlier

occasions also carried out similar searches against the PFI, including its chief OM Abdul Salam and Kerala unit chief Nasarudheen Elamarom.

The outfit was formed in 2006 in Kerala and later shifted its headquarters to Delhi in 2008-09.

The Central probe agency has been investigating the PFI's alleged "financial links" on charges of fuelling the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests in the country, the Delhi riots that took place in February last year and a few other instances.

The PFI is also under the scanner of the ED for alleged money laundering during the riots. The PFI is also facing another PMLA case for allegedly routing about Rs 120 crore to fuel anti-CAA riots in the country. The PFI claims to be working for the marginalised minorities and Dalits but has been allegedly indulging various inimical activities and is facing criminal probes from multiple agencies including the NIA.

ED raids ex-IFoS officer in Odisha, seizes ₹15L SUV

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has carried out searches at the residential premises of former additional principal chief conservator of forests of Odisha, Abhay Kant Pathak under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Pathak is a former Indian Forest Service (IFoS) officer who is facing disproportionate assets case by the state Vigilance Unit and was subsequently compulsorily retired by the Centre. During the searches, incriminating documents and a Tata Harrier car worth Rs 15 lakh has been seized, the agency said in a statement.

The ED initiated a money laundering probe on the basis of an FIR registered by the State Vigilance Cell of Odisha.

Sonia slams Modi Govt over price rise, border tensions, farmers' row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress President Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday hit out at the Modi Government over issue of price rise, farmers' demands and tension at the borders, and said her party will insist on a discussion in Parliament on challenges facing the agriculture sector and the border situation.

Addressing party MPs at the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP), Sonia also expressed deep anguish over the killing of 14 civilians in Nagaland, and said justice for families should be ensured at the earliest. She also raised the issue of suspension of 12 Rajya Sabha MPs, terming the move as "outrageous", and said it is unprecedented that they have been suspended for the remaining period of the Winter session.

"It violates both the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States, as Mallikarjun Kharge ji has explained in his letter to the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha," she said, adding that they all stand in solidarity with them.

Congress MPs of both houses of Parliament including former Congress president Rahul Gandhi were present during the meeting in the central hall of Parliament. Sonia said it was extraordinary that Parliament has not been given an opportunity so far to have a discussion on the challenges the country continues to face on its borders.

The Congress chief said the Government has finally repealed the three farm laws, even it was done "undemocratically just as their passage last year was pushed through without discussion". She said it is the solidarity and tenacity of the farmers, their discipline and

dedication that has forced an "arrogant Government to climbdown".

Saluting the farmers for their achievement, Sonia remembered the sacrifice of over 700 farmers in the past 12 months and called for honouring their sacrifice. "We are firm in our commitment to stand by the farmers in their demands for a legally guaranteed MSP, remunerative prices that meet the costs of cultivation, and compensation to the bereaved families," she said.

Raising the issue of price rise, she said, "I cannot understand how and why the Modi Government is so insensitive and continues to deny the seriousness of the problem. It seems impervious to the suffering of the people."

She also termed the steps taken to reduce petrol, diesel, and cooking gas prices as totally insufficient and inadequate and said government has passed on the responsibility for duty cuts to financially strapped state governments instead. "And all this while, the Centre persists with huge public expenditure on vain glorious projects," she said, while making a veiled reference to the central vista project.

reaching the level of double-dose vaccination announced by the Government for the end of the year.

On the Nagaland incident, she said, "The Government expressing regret is not enough! Justice for the families of the victims has to be ensured at the earliest. Credible steps must be taken to prevent the recurrence of such ghastly tragedies".

Opp leaders extend support to suspended RS members, hold dharna



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing with their protest in and out of Parliament, top Opposition leaders on Wednesday sat on a dharna in Parliament complex and extended their support to the 12 suspended MPs of the Rajya Sabha. While the entire Opposition benches boycotted the proceedings of the House, the Trinamool Congress which has expressed a strained relationship with the Congress in recent days, some of its MPs made it to the upper house post lunch session when a Bill was also passed.

Naidu said the leader of the opposition and the leader of the House have been suggested to sit together and resolve the matter so that the House is allowed to function smoothly.

When Congress Rajya Sabha member Anand Sharma objected to the suspension of MPs in the current (255th) session for their conduct in the previous session that concluded on August 11, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Hariyansh said due procedure was followed in obtaining the prorogation order of the President of India for the last session of the House.

Among the leaders who participated in the protest along with the 12 suspended members were Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, Jairam Ramesh, K C Venugopal besides SP leader Akhilesh Yadav and AAP leader Sanjay Singh. The MPs have been sitting in protest in front of Mahatma Gandhi's statue against their suspension, which they term as undemocratic and against the rules of procedure of the Upper House.

Twelve Rajya Sabha MPs, including six of Congress, were suspended on the first day of the Winter Session on November 29 for the remainder of the session for their unruly behaviour during the last day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament in August. The other members suspended are from the TMC, Left parties and Shiv Sena.

The proceedings were adjourned till 12 noon as Opposition members kept protesting for the revocation of suspension of 12 MPs, even as Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge offered to cooperate. Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu rejected a notice submitted by two members, including Congress leader Deepender Singh Hooda, for suspension of business so that a discussion on farmers' issue can take place in the House.

Hariyansh noted that under Article 83 of the Constitution, Rajya Sabha is not subject to dissolution, unlike the Lok Sabha which may be dissolved or which may continue for five years from the date appointed, whichever is earlier. The last monsoon session was adjourned sine die on August 11 and prorogued on August 31.

Post lunch when there was no Opposition except the presence of TMC, the House passed The Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021, which was passed by Lok Sabha on December 1. The Upper House also passed The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020 with amendments. The proposed bill was earlier passed by Lok Sabha, but Rajya Sabha had referred it to a Select Committee. It will now go back to Lok Sabha for approval.

Replying to a discussion on both the bills taken up together, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said that most of the recommendations of the Select Committee have been incorporated in the surrogacy bill. Both the bills seek to curb unethical practices related to issues like sex selection and exploitation of surrogate mothers. The provisions include both monetary penalty as well as jail terms for violations.

President Kovind, Modi, Naidu condole CDS Rawat's death

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leaders across the political spectrum condoled the demise of Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and hailed his contribution to the armed forces as well as the country.

Kovind said it was deeply painful for him to learn of the loss of lives in the helicopter crash in Tamil Nadu. "I join fellow citizens in paying tributes to each of those who died while performing their duty. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," he tweeted.

While Vice President Naidu said he was deeply shocked by the tragic death of Rawat, his wife, senior officials of the armed forces and others in the helicopter crash in Coonoor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he is deeply anguished by the helicopter crash in which "we have lost General Bipin Rawat, his wife and other personnel of the armed forces". "They served India with utmost diligence. My thoughts are with the bereaved families," the PM said.

Hailing Rawat as an "outstanding soldier", Modi said he was a "true patriot" who greatly contributed to modernising

the armed forces and security apparatus. "His insights and perspectives on strategic matters were exceptional. His passing away has saddened me deeply. Om Shanti," he said in a series of tweets.

"As India's first CDS, General Rawat worked on diverse aspects relating to our armed forces including defence reforms. He brought with him a rich experience of serving in the Army. India will never forget his exceptional service," Modi said.

Congress President Sonia Gandhi and former Congress president Rahul Gandhi too condoled the death of General Rawat, his wife and others in the crash in Tamil Nadu and said it is an unprecedented tragedy. Sonia announced not to celebrate her birthday on Thursday and asked party workers to restrain for any kind of celebrations in the wake of demise of CDS, his wife and members of defence.

Expressing deep anguish over General Rawat's death, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said his untimely demise is an irreparable loss to the armed forces and the country. "His untimely death is an irreparable loss to our armed forces and the country," the defence minister said.

Singh said General Rawat had served the country with



exceptional courage and diligence. "As the first Chief of Defence Staff he had prepared plans for jointness of our armed forces," he said.

Home Minister Amit Shah said it was "very sad day" for the nation as "we have lost our CDS, General Bipin Rawat Ji" in a very tragic accident. "He was one of the bravest soldiers, who has served the motherland with utmost devotion. His exemplary contributions & commitment cannot be put into words. I am deeply pained," Shah said.

Several politicians, including senior ministers, also condoled the loss of lives in the chopper crash.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said India will always remain grateful to General Rawat for his impeccable ser-

vice to the nation at the most crucial moments.

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief ministers -- veteran Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah -- also condoled the death of Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat.

Omar Abdullah said, "Condolences to the families of General Rawat & the others killed in the helicopter crash earlier today. May their souls rest in peace." Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha expressed shock over the tragic death of General Rawat.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh

Channi, his Haryana counterpart Manohar Lal Khattar, Chhatisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren and other CMs, SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal, former chief minister Amarinder Singh and former Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal too expressed deep anguish over the death of General Bipin Rawat, his wife and 11 others in the helicopter crash.

Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra, former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, former Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis, Chhattisgarh Governor Anusuiya Uike too expressed grief about the death of General Rawat, his wife and 11 others.

Researchers favour high-tech forest rescue service to monitor fire outbreaks

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Underlining that the key to combating wildfires is early detection, a team of researchers has favoured high-tech Forest Rescue Service of Rhineland, Germany-type system to monitor fire outbreaks in the Odisha's Similipal Biosphere Reserve, where such mishaps are becoming a regular feature.

The Rhineland Germany fire alert system uses satellite technology and aerial photography to ensure forest maps at a scale of 1 : 25,000 giving minute details of all significant components such as water reservoirs, fire breaks and fire lines. "This helps the authorities to minimize the losses," said the researchers whose study is published in the Current Science.

Outbreaks of fire are not a new thing in this reserve in Mayurbhanj district, which is one of the largest in Asia and home to a plethora of rich flora and fauna. However, in early those years, the Reserve experienced a prolonged dry spell, exacerbated by a below-average monsoon in the previous year, accompanied by widespread fires within the reserve. The specific cause of the fires that occurred in early 2021 has not been yet established.

Keeping in mind this particular 2021 case, the researchers



said, "An important measure is to build fire-fighting reservoirs like underground cisterns or natural water reservoirs within or near the forested areas, since water is the primary means to fight forest fires."

The authors of the study included Arghya Chakrabarty, Debaditya Mukhopadhyay, Krishna Giri and Gaurav Mishra from Jorhat based Rain Forest Research Institute.

Presently, pointed out the researchers, "The Forest Department uses fire-fighting maps at a scale of 1 : 50,000 using the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) geographic coordinate system. However, with advancements in satellite technology and aerial photography, more detailed district maps at a scale of 1 : 25,000 or 1 : 10,000 may be used."

Also, detailed emergency and deployment plans can be effective to control fire outbreaks. In general, reduction in wildfire induced losses is only possible through considera-

tion of the overall climatic scenario of the country.

Spread over 5569 Km², the reserve is home to 94 species of orchids, 42 species of mammals, including the melanistic tiger (Panthera tigris), 29 species of reptiles, 231 species of avian fauna, 12 species of amphibians and more than 3000 floral species.

However, the only source of ecological vulnerability is forest fire as evidenced by the recent wildfire which lasted for over two weeks and affected over one-third of the total area under the reserve.

Also, edaphic factors, geological conditions and climatic parameters maintain the thin line between a controlled fire and a wildfire.

Climatological shifts as characterized by changes in temperature, humidity, rainfall and wind velocity combined with fuel accumulation magnify an annual controlled fire into a destructive wildfire, noted the researchers.

NAGALAND FIRING

‘Attempt made to pass dead off as militants’

Allege Oting villagers

Kohima: Breaking their silence after four days of a shoot-out in which 13 of their village youth died in firing by Para commandos, the Oting Citizens' Office, representing Oting village in Nagaland's remote Mon district on Wednesday rubbished official claims and asserted security forces had tried to hide the dead bodies and dress them in fatigues in a bid to pass them off as militants after a botched up ambush.

The citizen's body also claimed the killings were in "cold blood" with the driver being among the first to be shot dead with a bullet which pierced the windshield.

Attempts to contact the Army spokesperson in Kohima to cross-check the allegations have as yet remained unanswered. An official statement made by the Government on Monday had said that based on inputs received by the Indian Army about movement of the insurgents near Tiru village in Mon district, a team of para-commandos laid an ambush on Saturday, during which, "a

vehicle approached the location and it was signaled to stop.

However, the vehicle tried to flee, following which the vehicle, suspected of carrying insurgents, was fired upon resulting in killing of 6 out of 8 persons travelling in the vehicle. However, it turned out to be a case of mistaken identity."

The Oting villagers through a statement related that "on the fateful evening of 4th December 2021, around 3:30 PM, one pick-up truck loaded with 8 Coal miners were returning from (a) mining site as next day was Sunday, which we the Christians consider a day of rest... Around 4:30 pm, the security forces ambushed that very pick-up truck without ascertaining anything about the passengers."

The security forces then "blocked the road for all traffic and diverted all vehicles to the less frequented old Pioneer road. Meanwhile, villagers were anxiously waiting for the pick-up truck to reach the village, for they learnt that there was a shootout" on that stretch, according to the Oting Citizens' body.

The Oting Citizens Office claimed that around 8:00 PM, the villagers went searching and found the empty pick-up truck, "with the bullet mark piercing

through the windshield exactly at the driver's position, blood

stains covered with dust and mud, and the boys missing

Cong alleges party delegation not allowed to visit Mon dist

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday alleged that a delegation of its leaders was not allowed to visit Nagaland's Mon district where 14 civilians were killed by the Army.

The delegation comprising Congress general secretary Jitendra Singh, the party's Nagaland in-charge Ajoy Kumar and MP Gaurav Gogoi protested at Jorhat in Assam claiming that they were not being allowed to visit Mon district and meet the families of the victims.

According to the party, the delegation was supposed to meet the victims' families and submit a report on the incident that occurred earlier this week.

"Congress delegation is not allowed to meet the bereaved families in Nagaland. The Government of India is scared of us sharing people's grief. But nothing will stop us," Rahul Gandhi said in a Facebook post using the hashtag 'No Fear'.

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "The illegal detention of

Congress delegation comprising Jitendra Singh, Gaurav Gogoi and Ajoy Kumar from visiting Nagaland reflects the fascist mindset of the (Narendra) Modi government." "Civil liberties and life of the people of Northeast is imperilled and we are being prevented from exposing them," he said. Congress President Sonia Gandhi had constituted a committee to visit families of the victims of violence in the Mon district of Nagaland and submit a report within a week.

Security forces opened fire on civilians killing 14 and injuring 11 more in Nagaland's Mon district in three consecutive episodes, the first of which was a case of mistaken identity, police said on Sunday. One soldier also died in rioting which followed. In his statement in Parliament on Monday, Shah expressed regret over the Nagaland firing incident and said a probe by a Special Investigation Team will be completed within a month. **PTI**

from the vehicle."

"The pierced windshield in the front by bullets clearly indicates that they first shot the driver of the pick-up truck to (bring it to a) halt and ambushed the remaining point blank," the statement alleged. The villagers claimed they chased three fleeing vehicles used by the security forces on motorcycles and intercepted them.

Though securitymen denied any knowledge of the missing boys, a search found six of the missing miners under a tarpaulin. These boys were half dressed and lying dead.

The Oting Citizens accused the security forces of attempting "to brand the boys as militants by planting weapons and dressing them in camouflage uniforms and boots." Soon after heated argument between security forces and villagers broke out and turned into physical scuffles.

Armymen according to the villagers "started firing indiscriminately, abruptly killing and injuring few others on the spot."

"We may be small and tiny in area and population, yet we are ready to compromise with situation to lose our heads and take the enemy's heads. For we are warriors by blood and origin, and no force can intimidate

us," the statement asserted.

The situation in the border state of Nagaland, where protests and rioting broke out after firing by security forces claimed 14 civilian lives, has been tense but calm.

There have been demands by the state government and various citizens groups that the Centre repeal the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), which gives powers of arrest and detention to the army.

Besides the 13 killed on Saturday, one more person was killed on Sunday, as security forces fired back at rioting attackers in the headquarters of the district.

The Nagaland Police filed a suo moto FIR against the 21st Para Special Force of the Army which had conducted the botched operation based on intelligence inputs of a movement by militants belonging to a faction of the NSCN.

The Indian Army has ordered a court of inquiry headed by an officer of major general rank into the Nagaland incident.

Expressing regret over the Nagaland firing incident, Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said a probe by an SIT will be completed within a month. **PTI**

3 LeT ultras neutralised in J&K's Shopian

PNS ■ JAMMU

Three terrorists belonging to the pro Pakistan Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) outfit were gunned down by the joint team of security forces in village Check Cholan of Shopian on Wednesday.

The terrorists have been identified by the local police as Amir Hussain Ganie son of Manzoor Ahmad resident of Check Cholan Shopian, Rayees Ahmed Mir son of Nazir Ahmad resident of Kapran Shopian and Haseeb Ahmad Dar son of Mohd Yousuf Dar resident of Khudwani Kulgam.

According to the police records, all the three killed terrorists were categorized terrorists and linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT (TRF) were part of groups involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on security forces and civilian atrocities. According to a police spokesman the killed terrorist Aamir Hussain was active since Sept-2020 and involved in several terror crime cases includ-

Police said, security forces also recovered arms & ammunition including 1 AK 74 rifle and 2 pistols from the encounter site

ing Case FIR No. 264/2021 of PS Shopian regarding attack on Police/SF at Village Rakhma on 01/10/2021. He was also involved in luring gullible youth to join terror folds. While as terrorist Rayees Ahmad was active since June-2021 and involved in several terror crime cases including attack on Police/SE. He was also involved in an attack on security forces at Village Rakhma. Besides, terrorist Haseeb Yousuf was also involved in several terror crime cases in the areas of Kulgam.

Police said, security forces also recovered arms & ammunition including 01 AK 74 rifle and 02 pistols from the encounter site.

Sikkim Assembly passes Bill to create 2 more dists

Gangtok: The Sikkim Assembly on Wednesday passed a bill for the creation of two more districts in the North-eastern state. Sikkim will have six districts once Governor Ganga Prasad gives his assent to the bill.

Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha introduced the Sikkim (Re-Organisation of Districts) Bill, 2021 in the House on Tuesday, saying creation of the two new districts will improve administrative efficiency.

The new districts - Pakyang and Soreng - are now sub-divisions that will be carved out of East Sikkim and West Sikkim districts respec-

tively. The assembly passed the bill by voice vote following a brief discussion.

The House also passed an amendment bill seeking to rename Sikkim State University after Mt Kanchenjunga, considered the guardian deity of the Sikkimese people.

Lepcha, who also holds the education portfolio, tabled the Sikkim State University (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the assembly on Tuesday.

Later, Speaker L B Das adjourned the House sine die after valedictory address of Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang to mark the end of the three-day sitting of the assembly. **PTI**

CIABC seeks excise duty cut withdrawal on imported alcoholic beverage products

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Liquor manufacturers under the Laegis of the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) have written to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Ajit Pawar seeking immediate withdrawal of the excise duty reduction on imported products or its extension to all the Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) sector.

"Excise Duty reduction of such scale on imported products is disastrous for the Indian industry. It so distorts the playing field against the Indian industry, that consequences may be far reaching leading to dis-investment, job losses and farmer discomfort... the (Maharashtra) Government should encourage products made in India which historically has been the main contributor to state's revenues and economic

prosperity," said the letter of the apex body of the Indian alcoholic beverage industry.

The CIABC letter to Pawar also highlighted that the reduction in excise duty for imported products will make Indian malt whiskies such as Amrut and Paul John and other premium products unsaleable in Mumbai.

"You may be aware that in the last decade a number of Indian malt whiskies and premium products have started making a mark on the world space. Products like Amrut, Paul John, Rampur, Solan Gold etc are now considered among the best in the world and are exported to over 60 countries. However, as a result of this excise duty reduction the prices of such Indian super premium products will become so high compared to similar BIO products that selling them in Maharashtra, the most important market for such products,

will become nearly impossible," the letter added.

According to CIABC Director General Vinod Giri: "The prices of these Indian made super premium products used to be 80-90% of comparable imported products earlier thus allowing them some competitive space. After this change, the prices of Indian made products will become 30-40% higher than similar imported products. It is evident that with that kind of price difference, Indian super premium products will find it difficult to sell. Its ironic that the Government is supporting imports at the cost of Indian products."

The letter further states that the reason for Excise duty reduction cannot be prevention of smuggling from neighbouring states as the prices in neighbouring Karnataka for imported products were higher than in Maharashtra.

75 years of Udupi taste at Paravoor Madras Cafe in Kochi

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The sayings 'way to a man's heart is through his stomach' and 'small is beautiful' have been proved beyond any doubt by the four-member Pai Brothers who own the 75 year old Madras Café at Paravoor near Kochi. This is the ideal destination to relish Udupi masala dosas, crispy vada, fluffy idly and scintillating pooris and that too in typical homely ambience. More than an eatery, the Café has brought Udupi from Karnataka to this sleepy town of Kerala. What adds to the power of the Udupi food served here is the homely touch which is unusual in typical hotels in Kerala.

It is not just an eatery or restaurant but a joint family. The groceries and vegetables along with the masala powders are carefully handpicked by the family members led by 70 year old Sarvothama Kamat, the reigning patriarch. His brothers Gopinatha



Pai, Sadananada Pai, Purushothama Pai and their sons Jayan, Raju, Deepesh and Roopesh constitute the 'crew' which take customers for a flight of fantasy through the world of delicacy.

"We open at 6 am and wind up the sales by 11 am. The evening hours start at 4 pm and we shut down by 8 pm. That way we manage to sell whatever delicacies we prepare in the mornings and evenings," said Jayan who act as manager, bearer as well as part time



cook. His brothers Raju, Deepesh and Roopesh work from 5 in the morning till 8 in the evening to ensure the Madras Café flag is flown without interruption.

All items are prepared and cooked by ladies in the house led by the octogenarian mother of Jayan. "What is unique is that the family members too eat the food prepared by our mothers for our customers. There are no workers in this eatery who are not from the family. We have hired the services



of three Tamils for cleansing the vessels, plates and other equipment," said Raju.

Though the Café could accommodate only 20 customers at a time, the queue outside the eatery for buying packed foods is quite long and necessitates the services of local cops for ensuring smooth flow of traffic in Paravoor to Cherai beach road. "The café has been build on land given to our forefathers by the Maharaja of Kochi. We consider this as an

honor and an auspicious sign," said Deepesh.

According to Roopesh, the management of the small eatery offers them happiness and peace of mind during these troubles times of Covid-19 and economic slowdown. "We are quite content with whatever we make out of this hotel because our needs are limited. If someone wants to open a big hotel, they are welcome but we will be here with this small venture," said Roopesh while helping his mother in chopping and peeling onions for utthappam. "For us, this kitchen is a temple and cooking is our pooja," said Jayan's octogenarian mother.

Ernakulam had a mighty Madras Café that served the famous Madras Mani Iyer's Masala Dosas way back in the 1960s and early '70s. That is gone long back but now all foodies make their way to Paravoor in search of the Madras Café here. Small is paying off.

More Muslims ready to embrace Hinduism: Jitendra Tyagi erstwhile Wasim Rizvi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Wasem Rizvi aka Jitendra Narayan Singh Tyagi, after converting to Hinduism said that a large number of Muslims were ready to embrace the Sanatan Dharma but were scared of retribution by the Islamic radical elements.

Demanding protection to life and property of Muslims desiring to embrace Hinduism, Jitendra Narayan Singh Tyagi said, "I am getting messages and phone calls from thousands of people from the entire country and they all are Muslims who want to convert to the Sanatan Dharma."

He said these Muslims would embrace Sanatan Dharma as soon as they were assured of safety of their life and property by the government.

"I am happy where I am and there is no question of returning back to Islam. All those who are opposed to my conversion to Sanatan Dharma should explain why they remained silent when

announcement was made by Shia clerics about my expulsion from Islam," said the former chairman of UP Shia Central Waqf Board.

Tyagi is facing constant threat to his life from Islamic radical elements. He is resident of a Muslim-dominated old city area of Kashmiri Mohalla and is under round the clock protection of police.

"Conversion to Sanatan Dharma is my personal decision and I will welcome all the members of my family who want to convert to Sanatan Dharma. I will not talk to my mother on this issue but I will seek her blessings and tell her that I have embraced Sanatan Dharma and it is my last wish that after death my body be cremated as per the Sanatan rituals," Tyagi said.

Defending his decision to embrace Sanatan Dharma, Tyagi said, "My objective is to attack Islamic radical organisations like ISIS and the jihadi mindset."

BJP to make KV Dham corridor inauguration a big event; plans events

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party plans to inaugurate the newly-constructed Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor on December 13. It also has plans to organise a big spectacle by organising Deepotsava across the state for three days starting from December 12 to be followed by a month-long function. BJP state president Swatantra Dev Singh said that the live telecast of the inaugural ceremony would be made in every village, mutt-temple of the state and Deepotsav would also be organised across the state on December 12, 13 and 14.

He further said that religious leaders, saints and intellectuals from all over the country would attend the inauguration of the Vishwanath Dham Corridor.

"This programme will be a symbol of social harmony, unity and integrity of Indian culture. The resolution taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to build a new Kashi is about to take shape. To make this programme historic, BJP national president JP Nadda has proposed several programmes at the party level and these events will run for a month across

the state. These programmes will start from December 13 and will continue till Makar Sankranti on January 14. Public representatives of the party will participate in these programmes," Singh said while addressing media persons in Lucknow on Wednesday.

The BJP leader said that party workers would also honour religious leaders in all these programmes. "Before this, a cleanliness drive will also be launched from December 8 to 12. It has already started in Kashi and the campaign is being run in every ward there," he said.

Singh said after the inauguration of the corridor on December 13 a meeting of the chief ministers of BJP-ruled states, and deputy chief ministers will be organised on December 14. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president JP Nadda will attend the event, he added.

"Mayor's conference will be organised on December 17 and after this a conference will also be organised to promote natural farming. On January 12, 2022, on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, a youth conference will be organised in Kashi," he said.

40% quota for women in Govt jobs if voted to power in UP: Cong

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary and UP in-charge of the party, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, released her party's women's manifesto in Lucknow on Wednesday, promising 40 per cent reservation to women in State Government jobs if voted to power in the 2022 assembly polls.

Earlier, she had declared to field 40 per cent women candidates in the upcoming state elections. Priyanka said that for the first time in India's political history, a manifesto 'Shakti Vidhan' focusing on women was being released.

The Congress manifesto is divided into six parts – self-respect, self-reliance, education, respect, security and health.

Addressing media persons at the UP Congress Committee headquarters in Lucknow on Wednesday, Priyanka said, "Today's women want to fight and thus the party has prepared this manifesto keeping in mind the same spirit. If the Congress forms the next government in Uttar Pradesh, then women will get 40 per cent reservation in government jobs. Besides, 25 per cent women will be recruited in the police department."

The Congress leader further said these steps would put pressure on other political parties to take women's participation seriously.

Woman killed over land dispute in Sultanpur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A land dispute between five brothers took a violent turn when four brothers ganged up and brutally hacked the elder brother's wife with spade at Lambhua Kotwali police station area of Sultanpur on Wednesday.

The elder brother and his daughter tried to rescue the victim but they were also injured and had to be hospitalised for treatment.

On being informed, the local police along with senior officers rushed to the spot and sent the body for autopsy. Later one of the assailants was nabbed while the rest managed to flee the scene.

As per reports, Atibal of Bhadaiya locality of Nathu village in Lambhua Kotwali jurisdiction was having a land related dispute with his brothers Prem, Achhelal, Jialal and PM.

Sick cows from shelter home buried alive alleges MLA, writes letter to CM for action

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Janata Party legislator Ram Karan Kabir has alleged that cows from a state-run shelter home in Naraini block of Banda were buried alive by officials and left to die after they exhausted funds to feed them.

In a letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the legislator said that he had himself rescued cows who were buried in a pit, dug with the help of JCBs (backhoe).

"The involvement of local officials cannot be ruled out," Kabir said in his letter written on December 7 and demanded a high-level probe into the incident and asked why the bovines were left to die.

Kabir said that around 250 cows from a temporary cowshed operated by the nagar panchayat in Nairaini block of Banda were transported by nine trucks

and taken to neighbouring Panna Tiger Reserve in Panna (Madhya Pradesh).

"The officials dug pits with the help of JCBs and buried around 50 sick and weak cows there. There is anger among villagers over this incident. I went to the spot and rescued the cows. This barbaric act has maligned the image of the government. A probe should be immediately initiated into the incident and strict action should be taken against the guilty," the BJP lawmaker wrote in his letter.

The incident has come at a time when the Yogi Adityanath government has been claiming that it has protected the lives of gauvansh (cow). Recently, Yogi had issued orders asking district officials to protect cows from the cold wave. Even in UP's budget for 2020-2021, the government had allocated no less than Rs 700 crore for building and main-

taining cow shelters, apart from imposing a 2 per cent cess on the purchase of beer and Indian Made Foreign Liquor to create a corpus for cow protection.

Stray cattle have been a big issue in villages and the opposition parties have made it a political issue. Recently on November 24, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav had tweeted pictures of stray cattle roaming around in city roads while in another post on December 5, he tweeted pictures of stray cattle creating ruckus in Shikarpur tehsil of Bulandshahr.

As per government dossiers, there are 5,000 temporary cow shelters having roughly 3,00,000 cattle. Besides, there are 92 Kanha Gaushalas run by state municipal bodies housing nearly 21,000 cattle while 434 'kanji houses' (stray cattle houses) are operational and have more than 3,600 cattle.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Self-service?

Biden's two-day 'Summit for Democracy' is mainly aimed at countering China's rise

US President Joe Biden's global initiative, the Summit for Democracy, is a two-day affair beginning December 9. He wants the summit of 100-odd countries to commit to opposing authoritarianism and corruption, besides respecting human rights. Aware of its inconsistent democratic record, the United States also proposes to scuttle criticism of the summit by focusing on free media, free and fair elections and strengthening democratic reformers. However, stitched into the summit's agenda is President Biden's larger geopolitical objective. The rallying together of over 100 "democracies" is for him to send a message to China on two counts. One, register the summit as a symbolic global opposition to China's "authoritarianism". Two, bind the summit behind the United States in a maze of common, "democratic" interests to counter China's rise. China has already sought to politicise the summit by declaring itself a democracy by saying there is "no fixed model of democracy; it manifests itself in many forms". It even organised an "International Forum on Democracy" to upstage the American exercise. The fact that China, a one-party country with a rubber stamp Congress, controlled media and devalued human rights, can stolidly claim allegiance to democracy reflects two things. One, that China is bristling because, like Russia, it is excluded from the summit while *bete noire* Taiwan has received the invite. Two, China is well aware of Biden's geopolitical narrative behind the summit. Even before the summit begins, a debate is raging on the politics behind the US exclusion/inclusion process while finalising the invitee list.

The US was careful not to publicise any criteria for selecting countries, but the inclusions and exclusions expose the politics. Taiwan's case, for example, drives the point home. It is a democracy no doubt, but the US does not recognise Taiwan and it is there because China is not. Pakistan, whose human rights record is frequently questioned and its army's interference in the functioning of the elected Government is well noted, is in. It is being explained that the US considered Pakistan's inclusion a must because India was invited. In the case of Africa, Latin America and Europe, too, the politics of exclusion prevailed. Having said that, the US got one thing right. Democracy is on the defensive and authoritarianism is on the rise. The summit proposes to rectify the pattern, but its approach is debatable. Focusing on fighting corruption or simply opposing authoritarian traits is not the way; strengthening and defending democracy is. Democracy needs to be defended on its own merits, and not by countering authoritarianism. This is a matter internal to democracy. Democracy is primarily under threat from its own regimes, with civil liberties being devalued, freedoms and rights trampled upon, and dissent quelled. These practices need to be reversed first. The summit would do well to focus more on extracting a commitment from the "democratic" invitees — or help those who are faltering — to re-learn to uphold liberty, open governance, dissent and participation.

PICTALK



A boy gives water to a bulbul sitting on his hand at a city street in Kolkata

PTI

Ah Taj!

The brackish Yamuna's toxic gases are impairing the white marble, a study says

Back in the day, Rabindranath Tagore wrote: "Only let this one teardrop, this Taj Mahal, glisten spotlessly bright on the cheek of time, forever and ever." Unfortunately, however, nothing remains forever and one day Taj, too, would be wiped off the face of time. And if the modern-day Governments don't wake up, it could be sooner rather than later. Yes, it is sad but true that the Taj is dying a slow death; not a natural death but due to the pollutants and toxins present in our environment. Generally, industrial and vehicular pollution are seen as the culprits for the white marble turning yellow and the corrosion but a new study suggests that it is not just industrial units that harm the iconic structure but also the Yamuna on the banks of which the Taj Mahal stands. Major damage to the marble is being caused by the toxic gases emanating from the Yamuna. It may still look good in pictures but an almost black river flows behind the monument and its stink can't be missed even from a distance. Published recently in the *International Journal of Environmental Science and Technology* by four conservation experts, the study suggests that hydrogen sulphide released from the polluted waters has a more corrosive impact on the monument than the sulphur dioxide emitted by Agra's factories.

The Taj Mahal is a must-visit for tourists. It is a money-spinner for the Government, yet no one ever cared about the river that flows near it and its foul smell has for years been corrupting the breathtaking experience. The majestic Mughal architecture is among the 'New Seven Wonders of the World' and a signature monument of India. Its claim to fame is the white marble which lends it a magical look. The gas from the Yamuna is slowly but surely discolouring it. The finding assumes significance as the initiatives to protect the Taj from being affected by pollution have largely been concerned with tackling industrial and vehicular pollution, while the Yamuna's pollution didn't get as much attention until five years ago. Crores of rupees have gone down the drain with no result. It is high time to clean the river, which will not only mitigate the damage to the monument, but also give a new lease of life to its fauna. The pollution can be controlled by treating the sewage water entering the river but, before that, political will is needed to weed out corruption for checking pollution.

It was an albatross around Pak's neck

Helping to separate the eastern wing from the rest of Pakistan was a blunder for us as Bangladesh can prove to be a launch pad for terror



PRAFULL GORADIA

A number of Indians have written articles celebrating the country's joint victory with Bangladesh in 1971. I have no quarrel in principle with commemorating any triumph, including one on the cricket or hockey field. Although a victory over Pakistan is an intra-sub-continental affair and therefore rather like a para-civil war and not an international triumph. We have not enjoyed such an achievement since Chandragupta Maurya defeated Seleucus, the appointee of Alexander the Great over Bactria in 317 BC.

That is a quibble contrasted with the blunder of helping to separate the eastern wing of Pakistan from the rest of the country. International realpolitik would have suggested that the eastern wing with a majority of the country's population was a millstone around Pakistan's neck. First and foremost, the population of the eastern wing was larger than the western's. Two, the Bengalis appeared prouder of their language than their religion, whether Islam or Hinduism. In fact, Bengal was a reluctant applicant to Pakistan. Fazlur Rahman and Sir Abdul Rahim were negotiating with Sarat Bose to keep the province united to be a third separate dominion over and above Hindustan and Pakistan. Jinnah was encouraging them because a Muslim-majority dominion would mostly side with Pakistan, especially with a Muslim Premier, forever. The Communist Party was also backing this third opinion.

What East Bengal — now Bangladesh — meant to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah is reflected in the fact that he had never visited it before March 19, 1948. When he did, he addressed the Dhaka University only to tell its students that Urdu would be the sole national language of Pakistan, angering his audience. On March 21, he warned a large crowd at the Dhaka Race Course against what he called the forces of subversive conspiracy bent on destroying Pakistan's unity. Feeble protests were heard from the crowd. Far louder voices of protest were to be heard only days later. The Qaid had through his Dhaka speech set



East Bengal on a course that was to lead, over the next 24 years, to the breakup of Pakistan and the rise of East Bengal as the independent republic of Bangladesh.

Moreover, Ayesha Jalal, the Cambridge scholar who has authored a volume titled *The Sole Spokesman*, called East Pakistan a rural slum, meaning worthless except for growing rice, which the locals ate, and raw jute with no mills to weave it until later. And, of course, in the Sylhet district there were some tea plantations. But it must be said that the jute and tea earned some hard currency in foreign exchange, more than what the western wing earned in 1947-48. Nevertheless, the tall, fair west Pakistanis looked down upon the easterners as dark, short and inferior. The least one did was to look upon the New Medinawalas (Aligarh University students) where the sub-continental 'brotherhood of Islam' were to gather. In that potential fortress of Islam, could one *momin* look at another *momin* of the east with such contempt? Yet he did until he was rid of the dark, short brother/sister in 1971, in his heart of hearts

THERE HAVE BEEN HIGHS IN INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS IN BANGABANDHU'S TIME AND SIX BSF MEN'S HEADS ON BAMBOOS WERE THE LOWEST. WHEN MORARJI DESAI CAME TO POWER IN 1977, HE SAID, 'WE HAD ONE PAKISTAN BUT INDIRA GANDHI HAS GIVEN US TWO'

good riddance.

West Pakistanis were smug besides being contemptuous. One example was Field Marshal Ayub Khan, at the peak of his power, amalgamating all of west Pakistan into one province with Khan Saheb, the brother of Frontier Gandhi, as the Chief Minister. He called it west Pakistan. Instead, he should have subdivided east Pakistan into, say, four provinces. So that the eastern wing would have united to vote for the Awami League in 1971 and won all the seats except two and be in a position to vote out the whole of the western wing. The crisis had thus begun with Mujibur Rahman claiming to be the Prime Minister-in-waiting. How could short, black people rule over the tall, fair people? The western wing considered this an abdominal thought and therefore sent Lt General Tika Khan to devastate the Bengalis.

In the late 1990s and during the regime of Begum Khaleda Rahman, Bangladesh awarded India with six chopped heads of its Border Security Force personnel on bamboos like *shikared* animals across the border.

Indians were so dreaded that they took the beheaded heads of their soldiers with equanimity! There have been highs in Indo-Bangladesh relations in the years of Bangabandhu and these six heads on bamboos were the low. When Morarji Desai came to power in 1977, he said that "we had one Pakistan but Indira Gandhi has given us two".

Our relation with Dhaka appears to be warm since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power but recently Bangladesh rewarded India by desecrating 92 temples there and killing a few local Hindus. It is possible that the mischief was resorted to by one or more terrorist groups and had nothing to do with the majority party, the Awami League. Nevertheless, the rioting proved, once again, that Bangladesh can prove to be, from time to time, a haven and launch pad for terrorism. What did India gain by freeing Bangladesh from the yoke of Islamabad? If not infiltrators, terrorists?

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the *Rajya Sabha*. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TIES WITH AN OLD ALLY COULD HELP

Sir — Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent visit to India to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi will bolster up the economic ties and improve the defence infrastructure, giving stimulus to the 'Make in India' initiative. The two countries have remained distant from each other in the last two years which created a jinx in the bilateral relations between them. India was partly left alone to deal with emerging threats from China and increased dependence on the US as a compulsion. The differences remain obvious between US President Joe Biden and PM Modi despite much hyped diplomacy.

The formation of the Quad to counter Chinese expansion in the Indo-Pacific region and US alienation from Afghanistan had enabled China to foster a close bond with fledgling Taliban and Pakistan to display its hegemony towards India and Taiwan and other Quad nations. Russia, an old ally of India, has always stood the test of time which it has proved time and again. India, on the other hand, is one of the largest importers of Russian weapons. One hopes that bilateral relations between the two vibrant leaders PM Modi and President Putin will grow and benefit the interests of both the nations.

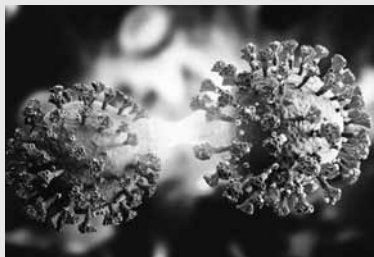
Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagrakote

BRIBERY NEEDS TO BE ERADICATED

Sir — Corruption is a worldwide bane that affects different stratas of the nation. Almost five per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of developing countries is drowned by the menace of corruption. The developed nations are reeling under the onslaught of corrupt practices of their administration. Education, health, economy and law are but a few spheres of a nation that have crumbled due to excessive corruption. It is common knowledge that corruption in a Government structure is a hurdle on the path of development and progress.

American author John Steinbeck has rightly said, "it is not just power that

Vaccination is the best bet yet



In the wake of surging cases of the Omicron variant in India, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) warned of another wave of infections and urged the Government to announce additional doses of the vaccine for those who urgently need it. The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) has not made any recommendations so far. The emergence of the Omicron variant reminds us that the pandemic is not over and that the vaccination programme cannot continue without reviewing the situation. Many countries have scaled

up administration of booster shots. Many countries are using vaccines different from the ones used for earlier doses of vaccination as booster shots. However, India needs to analyse the data before taking a decision on this. If mixing up vaccines gives better results, the Government will have to acquire additional vaccines.

A decision on whether children should be included in the vaccination programme is yet to be taken. The Serum Institute of India that manufacturers Covishield, has not released the trial data of vaccine for children. The Government needs to ensure that adults are vaccinated with two doses before rolling out vaccines for children. Booster shots must be incorporated into the current vaccine programme. Steps must be taken to speed up the second dose of vaccination. Booster shots need to be given to those who need it without further delay. We must learn lessons from the havoc the pandemic created and take preventive measures in time.

Venu GS | Kollam

corrupts, but the fear of losing the power that corrodes the corrupt". It can be said that power doesn't corrupt people, but people corrupt power. Bribe is a chronic problem and deeply rooted in our system. It won't go away easily, but if we wish to see a corruption-free India, the issue of bribes has to be settled. The youth has an important role in acting as a catalyst of change because it is an age where the mind is generally free of corrupt ideas. One also cannot undermine the role of parents and teachers in inculcating the right values in young minds.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

OCEANS ARE NOT DUMPING GROUNDS

Sir — It is distressing to note that sewage water flowed into the beautiful Marina beach during the recent incessant rains in Chennai and turned the blue waters to a brownish hue. Not only the Marina, oceans worldwide are con-

stantly under the threat of adulterations and, in fact, have been reduced to 'rub-bish dumps' with millions of tons of litter ending up in the sea. According to the United Nations Environmental Program, up to 12.7 metric tons of plastic make their way into the oceans in a year.

We need to serve as educators and ambassadors of a lifestyle in the water. Needless to say that waterways are crucial for the existence of human beings. Together we must develop a passion for the ocean and have the moral obligation to keep it clean and safe. Said the renowned Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh, "The heart of a man is very much like the sea, it has its storms, it has its tides and in its depth, it has its pearls too."

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

All the anti-BJP parties should be brought together to bring about a wider alternative front. People want a change.

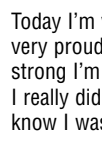


NCP spokesperson —Nawab Malik



The West would impose strong economic and other measures on Russia if it invades Ukraine.

US President —Joe Biden



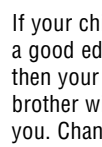
Today I'm very very proud of how strong I'm because I really didn't know I was.

Actor —Samantha Ruth Prabhu



The Paralympic athletes are provided all requisite facilities on a par with other sportspersons, besides their special needs.

Union Sports Minister —Anurag Thakur



If your child wants a good education then your elder brother will help you. Channi *sahib* will not help.

Delhi Chief Minister —Arvind Kejriwal

FIRST COLUMN

HYBRID IMMUNITY
COULD BE THE KEY

Omicron has about 30 mutations and is many times more transmissible than the Delta variant



VIKAS BHATIA

The human body can ward off many infections on its own with its innate immunity. Besides, it develops immunity against contagions after exposure to them. Some pathogens have the potential to cause severe disease, disability, and even death. Vaccines help the body develop robust immunity against such contagions. During the last two years, SARS-Cov-2 has claimed millions of lives. India too suffered a devastating second wave that affected millions of people across the country. Post this wave, India now has a huge proportion of the population that has developed what we call 'hybrid immunity', a combination of immunity developed after exposure to the viral infection and vaccination. Studies show this form of immunity can provide greater protection against COVID-19. In fact, it has also been observed that people who were exposed to the infection and then took one dose of the vaccine also



have developed a fairly good level of immunity against the virus. Recent national serosurvey shows that more than 80 per cent population of the country, including children, have antibodies against COVID-19. The vaccination statistics show that more than 85 per cent of adults have received the first dose of vaccine and more than half the country's adult population is now fully vaccinated. This hybrid immunity in the population can protect it against severe disease caused by the virus, including new mutants such as Omicron. The Omicron variant, which was first reported in South Africa, is now present in more than 40 countries.

The variant has about 30 mutations and is said to be many times more transmissible than the Delta variant, which caused the severe second wave in India and other countries. The Omicron variant has become a cause of great concern across the world, with many countries imposing restrictions and taking severe measures to contain its spread. India too needs to be cautious. The initial evidence suggests though the virus is highly transmissible, it is not causing severe disease or death. It is so far causing a milder form of the disease with symptoms such as cold, cough, and mild fever. But we cannot let our guard down. Countries have been finding innovative ways to protect themselves. For example, in Germany, one cannot enter a restaurant until fully vaccinated. People across the world have also realized the importance of following personal protective measures such as wearing masks, maintaining a safe distance, avoiding overcrowded locations, and sanitising their hands regularly. If the past viral outbreaks are anything to go by, we find that a virus dies its natural death provided we keep ourselves safe and be patient till it does. I strongly feel that we can win this battle against this deadly virus if we fight it collectively. So, while the government is doing its job by providing vaccines free of cost to the population, preparing the healthcare infrastructure to deal with a sudden surge in the number of patients, and screening those who can be possibly infected, it is the duty of people to take both the doses of vaccine and follow COVID-appropriate behaviour to avoid rapid spread of the disease.

(The writer is a doctor and Director, AIIMS, Bibinagar. The views expressed are personal.)

Mayawati and her
committed votebank

Mayawati is working to stitch a social umbrella that will include Brahmins, Dalits and Muslims. It would be a mistake to dismiss her in this election



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

Campaign activities have now gained momentum in Uttar Pradesh where elections are slated for early next year. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is visiting the districts and making direct communication with the public. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is inaugurating projects and Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with BJP national president JP Nadda is making forays into different areas. Leaders of different opposition parties have also started working on their strategy to counter the ruling BJP government.

After Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the focus is on Akhilesh Yadav who is also drawing massive crowds wherever he is going. People wait for hours, even till midnight, to get a glimpse of Akhilesh. Even Congress national general secretary Priyanka Gandhi is drawing good crowds enthusing hopes among the party mandarins that Congress may spring a surprise in this election.

In all election surveys, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is being given the number three position after Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Samajwadi Party (SP). Congress is being projected as the number four party in every election survey. Despite, BSP being projected as a third position no one can rule out the importance of Mayawati in UP politics. The political pundits believe that rejecting Mayawati in these elections would be a great mistake as she and her party can still prove to be a dark horse in this election.

Recently, many senior leaders deserted BSP, and the majority of them joined Akhilesh's party and the rest, BJP. This has not affected Mayawati as she claimed that those who left BSP had gone alone, thus signifying that the cadre is still with her. Bahujan Samaj Party has a committed a vote bank of over 20 per cent. Mayawati wants Muslim votes in UP. The party has successfully carried out Brahmin Sammelans across the state. She is insisting on maintaining the old base of Dalit and Brahmin votes in BSP. In such a situation, BSP can surprise everyone at the Hustings.

In various election surveys conducted in the state, BJP has been projected to get 41 to 44 percent of the votes, while SP, as per surveys, is likely to get 32 percent votes, followed by BSP (15 percent), Congress (6 percent) and others also six percent. In terms of seats, pollsters have projected that BJP would get 241 to 249 seats and SP's share would be between 130 and 138 seats. The surveys say that the BSP may end up getting between 15 and 19 seats and the Congress between 3 and 7 seats. All the election surveys have given more or less the same projections which show that there would be a direct contest between SP and BJP. The surveys have ignored BSP.

These surveys have not amused Mayawati as she contends that such sur-



WHAT HAS MADE THE BSP LEADERS CONFIDENT IS THE GROUND SUPPORT THAT THE PARTY ENJOYS. THEY HAVE A POINT BECAUSE THE BSP'S VOTE SHARE HAS REMAINED ALMOST THE SAME DESPITE THE BJP WAVE. IN THE 2017 ELECTIONS, THE BSP GOT THE HIGHEST 22.7 PER CENT VOTES AFTER THE BJP, WHEREAS THE SP GOT 21.8 PER CENT VOTES IN THAT ELECTION

(The writer is Political Editor, The Pioneer, Lucknow edition. The views expressed are personal.)



veys do not affect her party. She has also demanded that Election Commission should ban such surveys because she believes that they are being carried out to influence some parties' fortunes. She alleged that a large amount of money exchanged hands during these surveys. According to leaders close to Mayawati, the voters of BSP do not participate in the election surveys and they keep silent and are supposed to throw surprises in the elections. The think tank in BSP believes that UP elections would witness a direct contest between BJP and BSP, not SP as projected by many surveys. The belief in Mayawati's camp is that BSP will give a tough fight to BJP on every seat.

What has made BSP leaders confident is the ground support that the party enjoys. They have a point because BSP's vote share has remained almost the same despite the BJP wave. In the 2017 elections, the BSP got the highest 22.7 per cent votes after BJP, whereas SP got 21.8 percent votes in that election. Similarly, in the Lok Sabha elections held in 2019, BSP had won ten Lok Sabha seats with 19.26 percent votes. Samajwadi Party that on the other hand contested election as an ally of the BSP got 17.96 percent votes and could win only five seats. Even evaluation of the previous results shows that the vote share of BSP in the 2012 assembly elections was slightly above 25 percent. This was 5 percent less than the party's

30 percent votes polled in the 2007 elections when Mayawati had formed the government in UP. This 5 percent shift in vote share in 2012 led SP to get 224 seats and Akhilesh Yadav was sworn in as Chief Minister while BSP's seats came down to 80. In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the party got 27 percent votes and 20 seats. So, in terms of vote share, the BSP has been consistent.

In the case of Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh Yadav has stitched caste alliances with small parties. Rumours are that many senior leaders from BJP, including some Cabinet rank ministers, are likely to leave the party and join SP. Akhilesh's alliance with Om Prakash Rajbhar Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), Mahan Dal of Keshav Prasad Maurya, and Apna Dal (K) of Krishna Patel in eastern UP and Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) of Jayant Chaudhry in western Uttar Pradesh would pay a rich dividend. There is a belief among SP leaders that despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi withdrawing the contentious farm bills, the Jats will support the RLD which in turn will help the Samajwadi Party.

But, what could prove detrimental for Akhilesh is his relations with his uncle Shival Singh Yadav. Despite extending an olive branch and waiting for his 'bhatija' to announce seat-sharing with him, Shivalpal was cold-shouldered by Akhilesh. It is no secret that

Akhilesh does not have political acumen that his father Mulayam Singh Yadav has. Akhilesh is not suave as his father and does not have the appeal all over the political spectrum, again like his father. The alliances he had made are not natural alliances and are made more for electoral gain. Take the example of Mahan Dal or Apna Dal, which are basically Kurmi caste-dominated parties. The Kurmis and Yadavs, both intermediary castes, are at loggerheads at the ground level. Similarly in western UP, Jats and Muslims generally are not on the same page. Muslims are SP's vote bank while Jats had voted for BJP and RLD in previous elections. In this election, will the Jats and Muslims vote jointly?

The BJP leaders are seeking votes on the basis of work being done by both the Yogi and Modi governments. They are emphasizing the virtue of 'double engine' government. The Congress is trying to find a toe hold in UP. The focus is on Priyanka Gandhi. The enormous task before her is to build a party structure at the ground level. In this scenario, it is not prudent to ignore BSP. Mayawati is working to stitch a potent social engineering umbrella that will include Brahmins, Dalits and Muslims. She has the confidence that she will be able to bring all dominant caste together. In this scenario, it would be a mistake to dismiss Mayawati in this election.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THE CONGRESS IS NOT IN THE COMPETITION. IT IS HERE ONLY FOR ADVERTISEMENT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IT GETS ZERO SEATS.
—SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF
AKHILESH YADAV



AKHILESH YADAV MIGHT BE AN ASTROLOGER THAT HE FEELS THE CONGRESS WILL WIN ZERO SEATS; WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS.
—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY
PRIYANKA GANDHI

Menstrual leave: Pathologising gender rights

Is menstrual leave a symbol of care for women or a concealed propaganda to make them look inefficient to be employed in demanding jobs?

Gendering human rights has become passé in India. However, female teachers' demand for of menstrual leave every month in Uttar Pradesh has raised eyebrows. The teachers say poor public transport and those filthy toilets in schools add to their woes during the periods. Last year, food delivery company Zomato announced up to 10 days' paid 'period leave' per year for women and transgenders, kicking off debates about gender equality and ghettoising women.

Suffice to say, umpteen dimensions have been discussed about menstrual or period leave recently. Even a Menstruation Benefits Bill, 2017 is in the pipeline. A menstrual period leave enables the working women the option

KG SOFI UTTAM
DINESH CHAKRABORTY

(Sofi Dinesh and Chakraborty are assistant professors at Amrita University, Kochi, and Jaipuria Institute of Management, Lucknow, respectively. The views expressed are personal.)

to take paid or unpaid leave from their workplace if they are unable to attend to their work because of this biological norm. The need for this kind of a policy emanated from the fact that some women undergo a condition called dysmenorrhea or extreme pain during first few days of their menstrual cycle, which also debilitates their productive efficiency.

Such leave is not new in India. Kerala had granted menstrual leave to its female students as early as 1912. A leave policy to help women during their menstrual cycle first came up in Russia in the 19th century but it was later withdrawn in 1927 because it brought with it issues of gender discrimination. In 1947, Japan's labor force brought a



law that provided menstrual leave to its women workforce, but the necessity for such a law is still highly debated in Japan. It is still debated whether menstrual leave is a symbol of care and concern for women at workplace or a concealed propaganda to make women look inefficient to be employed in high demanding jobs.

In India where talking about menstruation is still considered a taboo, will a menstrual leave policy benefit its intended stakeholders, that

is women? Will working women from non-metropolitan areas be able to shed their inhibition and talk to their male bosses menstrual leave? In a country where even the media shies away from advertising napkins, how can policy makers expect women to talk openly about availing menstrual leave at their workplaces? These are pertinent questions that call for paving the way for social and attitudinal change.

It is good to see people, especially employers, opening up to the idea of talking about a taboo topic like periods and extending empathy to women employees in the menstrual age. Showing empathy to women employees who genuinely undergo physical discomfort during first two days

of their menstrual cycle can be considered as an act of humanitarian concern and definitely, it has nothing to do with feminism. It is also highly subjective since women differ in their physical discomfort during their menstrual cycle with few of them undergoing extreme mental and physical agony, and a lucky few do not have any obvious physical discomfort at all. At the same time, providing period leaves only widens the gender gap and also deepens the level of discrimination against the fairer gender at workplace.

Women in Indian culture have always been portrayed as a symbol of endless patience and courage. Homemakers are a poignant testimony to the above statement. They in particular have

never let their menstrual cycle come in the way of their duties towards their families. Empathy from family members during their menstrual phase is the only support they seek at such times. However, the idea of offering period leaves to women is not a solution to the myriad problems that women encounter at their workplaces. In that respect, men too have their share of psychological and physiological worries that need similar empathetic considerations.

If corporates really want to show that they care for their women employees, they should stop bringing policies that promote gender discrimination and gender bias. Alternatively, corporates can make their employees more

empathetic towards women issues by making them aware of the mental and physical stress that haunt women during their menstrual cycle and motivate them to be more compassionate towards women during their difficult times. This calls for bringing up a culture where subjects like periods are not treated as a taboo and women feel uninhibited to speak about it in their workplace. This is a highly subjective issue, each woman needs a different treatment during this time, and period leave is not an umbrella solution and not mandated too. It should be dealt in an organised and organic manner so that the real sense of women empowerment can be translated into reality in Indian society.

Tense N-talks with Iran to resume today in Vienna



AP ■ BERLIN

The European diplomat chairing nuclear talks between Iran and world powers says negotiations in Vienna will resume Thursday.

Enrique Mora said Wednesday on Twitter that the parties to the 2015 Vienna accord will meet in the Austrian capital after consulting with their governments in recent days.

European diplomats had urged Tehran to come back with “realistic proposals” after

Iran’s delegation last week made numerous demands that were deemed unacceptable by the other parties to the accord — Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

The United States withdrew from the agreement in 2018 under former U.S. President Donald Trump. His successor Joe Biden has indicated that the U.S. is willing to return, and American diplomats in Vienna are being briefed by other powers.

The Vienna accord, formally known as the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action, was meant to rein in Tehran’s nuclear program in return for loosening economic sanctions against Iran. Following the U.S. decision to withdraw and reimpose sanctions, Iran has ramped up its nuclear program again by enriching uranium beyond the thresholds allowed in the agreement.

Tehran has also restricted monitors from the U.N. atomic watchdog from accessing its nuclear facilities, raising concerns about what the country is doing behind closed doors.

But Russia’s top representative expressed hope that an agreement could eventually be reached at the talks.

Mikhail Ulyanov tweeted that contacts with the United States and Iran “prove that both sides are very serious” about reviving the deal, though he added that “their visions of relevant ways and means differ.”

“The task of the negotiators is to overcome these differences. It’s feasible in the light of unity of purpose,” he said.

Australia joins US in diplomatic boycott of Beijing Olympics

AP ■ WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

Australia will join the United States in a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics over human rights concerns, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Wednesday.

As it did following the U.S. announcement on Tuesday, China responded furiously, saying no Australian officials had been invited to the Olympics and “no one would care about whether they come or not.”

Morrison said it should come as no surprise that Australian officials would boycott the event after the nation’s relationship with China had broken down in recent years.

“I’m doing it because it’s in Australia’s national interest,” Morrison said. “It’s the right thing to do.” He said Australian athletes would still be able to compete. As well as citing human rights abuses, Morrison said China had been very critical of Australia’s efforts to have a strong defense force in the region, “particularly in relation, most recently, to our

decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines.” He said his government was very happy to talk to China about their differences. “There’s been no obstacle to that occurring on our side, but the Chinese government has consistently not accepted those opportunities for us to meet,” Morrison said.

Rights groups have pushed for a full boycott of the games, accusing China of rights abuses against ethnic minorities. The U.S. and Australian decisions fall short of those calls but come at an exceptionally turbulent time for international relations and have been met with a barrage of criticism from China.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin denounced Morrison’s announcement as “political posturing,” but did not directly threaten the “resolute countermeasures” it vowed to exact on the U.S. “China has not invited any Australian government officials to attend the Winter Olympics, and no one would care about whether they come or not,” Wang said at a daily briefing.

Suspect in killing of Saudi journalist arrested in France

BY SYLVIE CORBET/ NICOLAS VAUX-MONTAGNY PARIS ■ AP

A suspect in the 2018 killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was arrested Tuesday in France, according to a French judicial official. The official said the suspect was being held on the basis of a Turkish arrest warrant.

He requested not being named in accordance with the French justice system’s customary practices. French radio RTL said the Saudi national, Khalid Aedh al-Otaibi, was arrested at the Roissy airport near Paris as he was trying to board a flight to Riyadh.

Al-Otaibi was one of over a dozen Saudi officials sanctioned by the US Treasury in 2018 over Khashoggi’s killing and dismemberment at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in 2018. He was also mentioned in the declassified US intelligence report that said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had “approved” the operation that killed Khashoggi. The report used an alternate English transliteration of his last name.

Biden-Putin talks yield no breakthrough in Ukraine tensions

BY AAMER MADHANI/VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV WASHINGTON ■ AP

President Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin were still far apart after two hours of talks on the escalating crisis caused by Russia’s massing of tens of thousands of troops near its border with Ukraine.

Biden delivered a simple message during Tuesday’s video call with Putin: invade Ukraine again and face painful sanctions that will do resounding harm to your economy. Putin had his own blunt take, according to his foreign adviser Yuri Ushakov, telling the U.S. president that “the Russian troops are on their own territory, and they don’t threaten anyone.”

With no immediate breakthrough to ease tensions on the Ukraine question, the U.S. emphasized a need for diplomacy and de-escalation, while issuing stern threats to Russia about the high costs of a military incursion. Biden “told President Putin directly that if Russia further invades Ukraine, the United States and our

European allies would respond with strong economic measures,” U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said. He added that Biden said the U.S. would also “provide additional defensive material to the Ukrainians ... and we would fortify our NATO allies on the eastern flank with additional capabilities in response to such an escalation.”

White House officials made clear that Biden is not interested in putting U.S. troops in harm’s way defending Ukraine. But Sullivan added that potential efforts to bolster regional allies could lead to additional deployments of U.S. troops to eastern European NATO allies.

A top US envoy, Victoria Nuland, said a Russian invasion of Ukraine would also jeopardize a controversial pipeline between Russia and Germany known as Nord Stream 2. She told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday that if Russia invaded, “our expectation is that the pipeline will be suspended.”

| WESTERN RAILWAY | | | |
|---|--|----------------|-----------|
| E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE NO.S/40/2021 Dt. 06.12.2021 | | | |
| S.N. | Short Description of Item | Quantity | T.O.D. |
| 969 | Hanger For Bogle Bolster Spring Suspension | 5500.00 Nos. | 15-Dec-21 |
| 970 | UIC Type Rubber Vestibule Arrangement | 150.00 Nos. | 16-Dec-21 |
| 971 | Rubber Pad For Primary Suspension | 2787.00 Nos. | 16-Dec-21 |
| 972 | Wide Jaw Adapter | 3000.00 Nos. | 16-Dec-21 |
| 973 | Mixture of Insulin Analogue 25 to 30 percent and Insulin Analogue Protamine 70 to 75 percent 100iu/ml -3ml cartridge | 9874.00 Nos. | 16-Dec-21 |
| 974 | Linagliptin 5mg Tab | 158400.00 Nos. | 17-Dec-21 |
| 975 | Slip Free Finish Stainless Steel Cheque | 15951.00 Kg. | 20-Dec-21 |
| 976 | Journal Bearing Assembly | 97.00 Nos. | 20-Dec-21 |
| 977 | Ball Joint Roll Link | 3299.00 Nos. | 22-Dec-21 |
| 978 | Low Maintenance Lead Acid Batteries 75AH | 455.00 Nos. | 23-Dec-21 |
| 979 | Crash Worthy Fan Guard Assembly | 3000.00 Nos. | 24-Dec-21 |
| 980 | Power Cable Aluminium Conductor 2 Core x 70 SQ. MM. | 13.00 KM | 24-Dec-21 |
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| 983 | Double Acting Hydraulic Shock Absorber | 400.00 Nos. | 27-Dec-21 |
| 984 | Low Maintenance Lead Acid Secondary Cells 2V/80AH | 1086.00 Nos. | 29-Dec-21 |
| 985 | 3 Phase Measuring And Monitoring Relay | 456.00 Nos. | 01-Jan-22 |
| 986 | Set of Hurth Coupling Star For WAP5 | 6.00 set | 01-Jan-22 |
| 987 | Foldable Stainless Steel Bottle Holder | 50934.00 Nos. | 03-Jan-22 |
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Scholz replaces Merkel as German chancellor

AP ■ BERLIN

Center-left leader Olaf Scholz became Germany’s ninth post-World War II chancellor on Wednesday, opening a new era for the European Union’s most populous nation and largest economy after Angela Merkel’s 16-year tenure. Scholz’s government takes office with high hopes of modernizing Germany and combating climate change but faces immediate challenge of

handling country’s toughest phase yet of coronavirus pandemic. Lawmakers voted by 395-303 with six abstentions to elect Scholz — a comfortable majority, though short of the 416 seats his three-party coalition holds in 736-seat lower house of parliament. That’s not unusual when chancellors are elected, and some lawmakers were out sick or in quarantine.

Merkel, who is no longer a member of parliament, looked on from spectators’ gallery as parliament voted. Lawmakers gave her a standing ovation. Scholz, 63, Germany’s vice chancellor and finance minister since 2018, brings a wealth of experience and discipline to an untried coalition of his center-left Social Democrats, the environmentalist Greens and pro-business Free

Opening new era

Democrats. The three parties are portraying combination of former rivals as a progressive alliance that will bring new energy to country after Merkel’s near-record time in office.

“We are venturing a new departure, one that takes up major challenges of this decade and well beyond that,” Scholz said Tuesday. If parties succeed, he added, “that is a mandate to be reelected together at next election.” Scholz, an unflappable and supremely self-confident figure who in past has displayed an ability to put aside setbacks quickly, cracked a smile as he was elected and as he was formally appointed by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

20 Bangladesh students sentenced to death for brutal 2019 murder

WORLDAGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh sentenced 20 university students to death on Wednesday for the brutal 2019 murder of a young man who criticised the government on social media.


The battered body of Abrar Fahad, 21, was found in his university dormitory hours after he wrote a Facebook post slamming Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for signing a water-sharing deal with India.

He was beaten with a cricket bat and other blunt objects for six hours by 25 fellow students who were members of the ruling Awami League’s student wing, the

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL). “I am happy with the verdict,” Fahad’s father Barkat Ullah told reporters outside court after the verdict. “I hope the punishments will be served soon.”

Prosecutor Abdullah Abu told AFP that the remaining five perpetrators were sentenced to life imprisonment. All those handed death sentences were between 20 and 22 years old and attended the elite Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology alongside Fahad.

Three of the defendants are still at large while the rest were in courtroom. A lawyer for the defendants said the sentence would be appealed.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005


The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address | Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced | Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice | NPA Date |
|---------|---|--|---|------------|
| 1. | M/s. Bengal Shoe Machinery Pvt Ltd, Shyamoli Sikdar, Gauri Sikdar, Manoj Sikdar, 64/10/3 and 64/11/1, Mundka, Nr Prashant Dharam Kanta Delhi. A/c No:- 015551000013 | Residential Property House No.42, Karuna Kunj Sector-3, Dwarka South West Delhi South West Delhi-110075 | 07/10/2021 Rs. 3,80,01,267.64/- | 07/06/2021 |
| 2. | Dolor Remedies Pvt Ltd, Jhuma Choudhary, B 153, Raheja Vedanta, 15, Sec 108, Dwarka Expressway Daulatabad, Dharampur Gurgaon Haryana. A/c No:- 084305000298 | Fiat No.654 Pocket 13 Lig Dda Flats Mangla Puri Bus Stand Dwarka New Delhi 110075 & Plot No A Block H 198/18 C.S. Dag No.332 1st Floor Roy Purba Para Hatiara North 24 Parganas Kolkata 700157 | 26/10/2021 Rs. 73,18,045/- | 03/04/2021 |
| 3. | Nidhi Arora, Flat No-902, Tower D5, Pranayam Apartments, Sector 82-85, Faridabad Haryana. A/c:- 008305502570 | House No.840 Sector 15a Escorts Nagar Faridabad 121007 | 26/10/2021 Rs. 1,92,11,832.59/- | 03/04/2021 |
| 4. | M/s. S K Nanda F & B Food Centre, Narinder Prakash Nanda, Surinder Prakash Nanda, Pratik Nanda, Veena Nanda, Rama Nanda, B-57 Mayapuri Phase I, Industrial area New Delhi. A/c No:- 022505004583 | Residential Property- Plot No. C-2 Vishal Enclave Rajouri Garden West Delhi | 09/10/2021 Rs. 36,16,276/- | 01/05/2021 |
| 5. | Ajit Automotive Services Pvt Ltd- Through Liquidator Rohit Sehgal, Sanjay Mehra, Anju Khurana, Bhavinder Singh Khurana, Plot No. 223A, Block B, Phase- 2, Noida Uttar Pradesh. A/c No:- 010251005555 & 342451000001 | Plot No. 223A, Block B, Phase-2, Noida, Uttar Pradesh | 03/11/2021 Rs. 3,87,17,886.75/- & Rs.2,86,09,695.56/- | 30/08/2019 |

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : December 09, 2021
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited



ECL FINANCE LIMITED

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DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitization And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.


The undersigned is the Authorized Officer of ECL Finance Limited (ECL) under Securitization And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorized Officer has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the “said Borrower(s)”), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below, the account of the Borrower(s) (the “said Borrower(s)”) was rendered NPA on 30-04-2021. In connection with above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to ECL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the Loan Agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the Loan, the following Assets have been mortgaged to ECL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

| Sr. No. | Name of Borrower(s)/ Co Borrower(s) | Demand notice date and amount | Description of secured asset (immovable property) |
|---------|---|--|--|
| 1. | (loan Account No: LDELSLE000083195) M/s. Frisco Fab Dyeing And Printing Pvt Ltd (Borrower) Mr. Sanjay Arora (Co - Borrower) Ms. Sonia Arora (Co - Borrower) Mr. Sunil Singhal (Co - Borrower) | 22.11.2021 of Rs. 99,04,754.54/- (Rupees Ninety Nine Lakhs Four Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Four and Fifty Four Paisa Only) due as on 22nd November 2021. | SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY All the rights, title and interest of Apartment No-1 on First Floor having Super Area Of 4837 Sq. Ft. (449 Sq. Mtrs Approx.) in the 12 Storeyed Building Known As ROYALE RETREAT-II at Charmwood Village, Village Lakkarpur, District Faridabad, Constructed on Plot of Land Earmarked for Group Housing Measuring 30.35 Acres in the Residential Colony known as Charmwood Village Complex at Tehsil and District Faridabad having Super Area of 449 Sq. Mtrs. Bounded As Under:- North : Open and Flat No-102 South : Open and Flat No-103 East : Lobby West : Open NOTE: THE SAID SCHEDULE IS MORE PRECISELY MENTIONED IN THE ORIGINAL CONVEYANCE DEED DATED 04.04.2011. |

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to ERFL as previously mentioned, ERFL shall proceed against the above-secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the previously mentioned assets, whether by way of Sale, Lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of ERFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date : December 09, 2021
Place: Delhi

Sd/-
(Authorized Officer)
For ECL Finance Limited



Government of India

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

5th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110003

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES 2021-22

(PRE-MATRIC, POST-MATRIC AND TOP CLASS EDUCATION)

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities provides an opportunity to Students with Disabilities (Divyangjan) for availing scholarship under three schemes viz. Pre-matric, Post-matric and Top Class Education for the year 2021-22. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities invites applications for the above scholarship schemes, The brief details of umbrella scheme are given below:

| Timeline | Eligibility | Instructions |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Last date for submission of online applications for Fresh scholarship (first time applicants) and renewal scholarship (applicants who have got scholarship in the year 2020-21) | i. Pre-Matric Scholarship ii. Post Matric Scholarship iii. Top Class Scholarship | 15th December, 2021 |

(a) Scholarships are open for Nationals of India.

(b) A person with disability having not less than 40% disability and having a disability certificate issued by the competent medical authority.

(c) Parental income ceiling per annum for Pre-matric, Post-matric Scholarships is Rs. 2.50 lakh and for Top Class Education is Rs. 6.00 lakh.

(d) Not more than two disabled children of the same parents will be entitled to receive benefits of the scheme. In case, if the second child is a twin, the scholarship under these schemes will be admissible to both twins.

(e) Scholarship for studying in any class will be available for only one year. If a student has to repeat a class, he/she would not get scholarship for a second (or subsequent) year.

(f) A scholarship holder under these schemes will not hold any other scholarship/stipend. If awarded any other scholarship/stipend, the student can exercise his/her option for either of the two scholarships/stipends, which is more beneficial to him/her and should inform the awarding authority through the Head of the Institution about the option exercised.

For Applicants

- Applicants are advised to apply/ohiine for Pre-Matric, Post Matric and Top Class Schemes on the website of National Scholarship Portal at www.scholarships.gov.in (a link to the site is also available at www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in) or Mobile App of National Scholarship Portal.
- Detailed instructions for filling up application under any of the scheme are available in the "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)" available on the home page of NSP.
- Applicants are advised to provide active/correct bank account details while applying for scholarships to avoid payment failure.

davp 38117/11/0021/21-22

RBI keeps interest rates unchanged at record low

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday kept borrowing costs at a record-low for the ninth consecutive time as it decided to continue supporting economic growth amid uncertainty over the impact of the Omicron strain of the coronavirus on the economy.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which has paused rate changes since August last year, unanimously decided to keep the benchmark repurchase rate at 4 per cent and voted 5-1 to retain its accommodative policy stance as long as is necessary, reflecting a continued bias to support economic growth given that inflation was not a big worry.

The reverse repo rate -- the level at which it absorbs excess cash from lenders -- was kept unchanged at 3.35 per cent.

It kept the GDP growth projections unchanged at 9.5 per cent for the current fiscal and retained the inflation forecast of 5.3 per cent for the full year. While the Indian economy has literally hauled itself out of one of the deepest contractions in April-June, it is not yet strong enough to be self-sustaining and durable.

"Given the slack in the economy and the ongoing catching-up of activity, especially of private consumption, which is still below its pre-pandemic levels, continued policy support is warranted for a durable and broad-based recovery," Governor

Shaktikanta Das said. "Our motto is to ensure soft landing that is well-timed."

There, however, has been no guidance on the rate trajectory.

RBI had slashed the repo rate by a total of 115 basis points (bps) since March 2020 to soften the blow from the coronavirus pandemic and tough containment measures. This is on top of rate cuts to the tune of 135 bps since the beginning of 2019.

The central bank struck to its principle of 'gradualism' since the downside risks to a durable growth trajectory have clearly increased due to the spread of the new COVID variant Omicron.

On inflation, the central bank took comfort from the excise tax cuts in petrol and diesel and the steps taken by the government to moderate prices in food categories such as edible oil and pulses.

Das said the central bank will continue rebalancing liquidity conditions and will use VRRR (Variable Rate Reverse Repo) auction as the primary tool for liquidity management, shifting away from the fixed reserve repo rate.

The RBI will raise the amount of cash it absorbs through the 14-day VRRR to Rs 6.5 lakh crore on December 17 and subsequently to Rs 7.5 lakh crore on December 31.

At the same time, the auctions will have a higher proportion of 28 days vis-a-vis the primary tenor of 14 days.

Excess cash in the banking system hovered at around Rs 9.2 lakh crore, close to a record high.

Retains growth forecast for current fiscal at 9.5%

Mumbai:The Reserve Bank on Wednesday retained the GDP growth forecast at 9.5 per cent for the current fiscal but cautioned that the economic recovery is not yet strong enough to be self-sustaining and durable.

In an address after the three-day meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said managing a durable, strong and inclusive recovery is the central bank's mission.

"We need to be persevering, patient and persistent in our efforts. We also need to be aware, alert and agile to the new realities confronting us. Our efforts over the past one year and nine months have given us the confidence and a head start to face the challenges that lie ahead," he said.

Das, whose tenure as the Governor was extended by three years recently, further said the Indian economy is relatively well-positioned on the path of recovery but it cannot be immune to global spillovers or to possible surges of infections from new mutations, including the Omicron variant.

According to him, incoming information indicates that consumption demand has been improving, with pent-up demand getting reinforced by the festive season. **PTI**

Fitch cuts India GDP forecast for FY22 to 8.4%

New Delhi:Fitch Ratings on Wednesday cut India's economic growth forecast to 8.4 per cent for the current fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, saying the rebound after the second wave of Covid infections has been subdued than expected.

Fitch, which had previously forecast a GDP growth of 8.7 per cent in 2021-22 (April 2021 to March 2022), however, raised the economic growth projection for the next financial year (FY23) to 10.3 per cent from previously forecast 10 per cent.

The economy had contracted by 7.3 per cent in the 2020-21 fiscal as restrictions imposed to curb spread of coronavirus pummelled business activity.

"India's economy staged a strong rebound in 3Q21 (July-September 2021) from the Delta variant-induced sharp contraction," Fitch said in its Global Economic Outlook (GEO).

The GDP rose a sharp 11.4 per cent when compared to the preceding April-June quarter when it had slumped 12.4 per cent.

"However, the bounce was more subdued than we expected in our September GEO. The rebound in the services sector was weaker than hoped for," it said.

Nevertheless, business surveys and mobility data point to activity growing robustly in 4Q21 (October-December 2021).

Growth in the manufacturing sector is constrained by ongoing supply shortages, but the supply bottlenecks are expected to ease in the coming months. **PTI**

Overarching policy priority now is supporting growth, says RBI Governor

Mumbai: Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday defended the central bank's more-than-anticipated dovish stance wherein the MPC unanimously voted to continue with an accommodative policy, saying "our overarching policy focus and priority now is supporting growth" amid the threat of a third wave of Covid-19 and the legroom a cooling inflation print offers.

The comments came after the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) left the key policy rates unchanged for the ninth time in a row.

The repo rate was left at 4 per cent, which was on expected lines, while the reverse repo, which has been the effective policy rate since the pandemic hit in March 2020, was surprisingly kept unchanged at 3.35 per cent despite the central bank preparing the market for a much-needed and delayed rebalancing of the liquidity overdose for quite sometime now.

The policy move was predicated on the belief that if the Omicron variant of the coronavirus triggers a third wave of the pandemic in India, it can easily upend the fledgling recovery.

Retail inflation is likely to ease to around 5 per cent next fiscal on the back of government measures to ease supplies, reduction in fuel prices and prospects of good crops, Das said.

For FY22, retail inflation is pegged at 5.3 per cent and should inch down to 4 - 4.3 per cent by end-FY23. **PTI**

Cyber security, frauds main concerns with digital currency: RBI

Mumbai: As the RBI moves ahead for the launch of the central bank digital currency (CBDC), Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday marked out cyber security and digital frauds as the main challenges in the new system.

Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar said there are two types of CBDCs - wholesale and retail - and a lot of work has happened in the former while the latter was termed as a "complicated" aspect which will take time.

The RBI had earlier this year announced that it has started work on the CBDC, in line with other major central banks of the world which are looking at a fiat digital currency. According to a report, the RBI is looking to start with pilot exercises on the same front by early next year.

"Main concern comes from the angle of cybersecurity and possibility of digital frauds. We have to be very careful about that," Das told reporters in the post-policy interaction. **PTI**

Retail inflation expected to ease to 5% next fiscal on Govt measures: RBI

Mumbai: Retail inflation is likely to ease to around 5 per cent next fiscal on the back of government measures to ease supplies, reduction in fuel prices and prospects of good crops, the Reserve Bank of India said on Wednesday.

For the current fiscal year to be ending on March 31, 2022, retail inflation is expected to be around 5.3 per cent, the RBI said.

The reduction of excise duty and VAT on petrol and diesel will bring about a durable reduction in inflation by way of direct effects as well as indirect effects operating through fuel and transportation costs, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said while announcing the bi-monthly policy decision.

"The inflation trajectory is likely to be in line with our earlier projections, and price pressures may persist in the immediate term. Vegetable prices are expected to see a seasonal correction with winter arrivals in view of bright prospects for the rabi crop. Cost-push pressures continue to impinge on core inflation, though their pass-through may remain muted due to the slack in the economy," Das said. **PTI**

RBI to soon float paper on reasonableness of charges on transactions via digital payments

Mumbai:With a view to make digital transactions more affordable, the Reserve Bank of India will soon come out with a discussion paper on the reasonableness of charges on transactions through digital mode.

Observing that concerted efforts by all stakeholders have led to a significant increase in digital payments in recent years, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said there have, however, been some concerns on the reasonableness of various charges incurred by customers for digital payments through credit cards, debit cards, prepaid payment instruments (cards and wallets), Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the like.

Entities involved in providing digital payment services incur costs, which are generally recovered from the merchant or customer or is borne by one or more of the participants, he said while unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy.

While there are advantages and disadvantages of customers bearing these charges, they should be reasonable, he added. **PTI**

North Eastern Railway

E-Tendering Tender Notice No. 60/2021
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), N.E. Railways, Izatnagar for and behalf of President of India invites "OPEN" e-tender through online (E-Tendering) for the following work:

S. No. : 1, Description of Works : Maintenance of Level Crossing Road, Gate Lodge etc. under LC Zone Work (2021-22) in jurisdiction of ADEN/PBE Section in IZN Division. **Approx. Value :** Rs. 54,08,738.91, **E.M.D. :** Rs. Nil, **Cost of Tender Forms :** Rs. Nil, **Completion time/period from the date of issue of acceptance letter :** 12 Months.
S. No. : 2, Description of Works : Maintenance of Level Crossing Road, Gate Lodge etc. under LC Zone Work (2021-22) in jurisdiction of ADEN/KVP Section in IZN Division. **Approx. Value :** Rs. 52,02,410.14, **E.M.D. :** Rs. Nil, **Cost of Tender Forms :** Rs. Nil, **Completion time/period from the date of issue of acceptance letter :** 12 Months.

1. Online e-tender can be submitted upto 15.00 hrs. of dated 30.12.2021.
2. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.)
CPRO/W-299 Izatnagar

About any Passenger Amenity complaint
SMS on Mob. No. 09794845955

Do not travel with inflammable article in train

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No.SSA/MDMS/Plates & Glass/331/2021/7771 Date: 08.12.2021

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan Mission cum State Nodal Officer-MDM, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from manufacturer/Supplier of Steel Utensil for supply of Stainless Steel Plates and Stainless Steel Glass for Mid Day Meal.

To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/-Mission Director,
SSA, Assam cum State Nodal Officer-MDM
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19



Janasanyog/CF/2278/21



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh. Delhi-110005

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

| Sr. No. | Name of Borrower(s)/Co Borrowers/ Guarantors | Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any | Amount Outstanding | Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit | Date and Time of Property Inspection | Date & Time of Auction |
|---------|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | (E) | (F) | (G) |
| 1. | Mudit Agarwal (Borrower), Varsha Agarwal, Bharti Agarwal (Co-Borrower) LBLUC00002367082 | Flat No.1704, Floor- 17 Tower T1, Sunworld Arista Sector- 168, Noida, Noida 201301. Area 2100 Sq Ft. | Rs.1,49,41,703.13/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |
| 2. | Amit Kumar Agarwal (Borrower), Bharti Agarwal (Co- Borrower) LBLUC00002367083 | 1703 17th Floor, Tower-1 Sunworld Arista, Sector- 168, Noida, Noida 201301 Area- 2100 Sq. Ft. | Rs.1,49,30,519/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |
| 3. | Esha Laxman (Borrower), Divay Mehta (Guarantor) LBDEL00002430981 | Flat No.504, 5th Floor Tower 1 Plot No.GH 01/C, Sunworld Arista Sec 168, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar 201301. Area 2100 Sq Ft | Rs.1,42,74,029/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |
| 4. | Amit Munshi (Borrower), Bharti Munshi (Co-Borrower) LBFDB00002392846, LBDEL00002401887 | Flat No.12A 06, 12th Floor Tower 6 Sunworld Arista, Plot No GH 01/C Sector 168, Noida, Noida 201301. Area 2100 Sq Ft | Rs.1,45,70,240/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |
| 5. | Manul Agarwal (Borrower), Samta Gupta (Co- Borrower) LBDEL00002391703 | Flat No.304, 3rd Floor Tower 1 Sunworlds Arista, Plot Num GH 01/C Sector- 168, Noida, Noida 201301. Area- 2100 Sq Ft. | Rs.1,42,58,854/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |
| 6. | Anupam Kumar Nigam (Borrower), Preeti Anupam Nigam (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002420735 | Flat 1605, 16th Floor Tower 1, Sunworld Arista, Plot No GH 01/C, Sector 168, Noida 201303. Area- 2100 Sq Ft | Rs.1,49,42,001/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |
| 7. | Nabajyoti Borah (Borrower), Jonali Nabajyoti Borah (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002437971 | Flat No.706, 7th Floor Tower 1, Plot No GH 01/C Sunworld Arista, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar 201301. Area 2100 Sq Ft. | Rs.1,37,80,273/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |
| 8. | Amit Verma (Borrower), Neetu Verma (Co-Borrower), DEEPAK Arora (Guarantor) LBGH200002423457 | Flat No.1606, 16th Floor Tower 1 Sunworld Arista, Plot No GH 01/C Sector 168, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar 201301 Area- 2100 Sq Ft. | Rs.1,47,63,122/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |
| 9. | Nishant Dalmia (Borrower), Nayan Dalmia (Co borrower) Vasudha Dalmia (Guarantor) LBGH200002422226 | Flat No.1606, 16th Floor Tower T6 Plot No GH 01/C, Sunworld Arista Sector 168, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar 201301 Area 2100 Sq ft. | Rs.1,48,47,725/- as on November 29, 2021 | Rs. 84,00,000/- | December 15, 2021 From 11AM to 1:00 PM | December 31, 2021 From 11:00 AM Onwards |

The online auction will be conducted on website [\[URL Link- https://disposallhub.com\]](https://disposallhub.com) of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited**. The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **December 30, 2021** before **05:00 P.M** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **December 30, 2021** before **05:00 P.M** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005** on or before **December 30, 2021** before **05:00 P.M**. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank in favour of **"ICICI Bank Limited"** payable at Delhi.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 9599281817/9372730494** or **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/9810029926/01244233933**

Please note that Marketing agencies 1. **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augoe Asset Management Pvt Ltd** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property. The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: December 09, 2021
Place: Delhi NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client, Tilak Raj Madan S/o Sham Singh R/o Flat No.201, Second Floor, Block X-2, Vasant Kunj-110070 Allottee/Mutatee of DDA Flat No. 201, Second Floor, Block Yamuna-2, Sector/Pocket D-6, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070 vide DDA File No. 2/365(968)2012/DDA10/VK. The original documents i.e. DDA Demand Letter, Possession Letter, NOC for Water And Electric Connection, And Site Possession Slip of the above said flat has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LR No. 1029567/2021 dated 08/12/2021 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9416033345 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing)-M/G or Director (H), DDA Vikas Sadan, New Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to all concerned that Sh. Budh Prakash S/o Late Sh. Khemchand R/o H. No-186 Kailash Nagar Gaushtala Phatak Ghaziabad U.P. is the owner of farming land of Khata No. 154, Kharsa No. 18. Sh. Budh Prakash has executed a Registered Will of said above property in favour of Smt. Maya W/o Sh. Vijendra R/o H. No-186 Kailash Nagar Gaushtala Phatak Ghaziabad U.P. dated 04/12/2009 in Book No. 3 Volume No. 35 on page No.359 to 362, Document No.244 at Sub. Registrar (V), Ghaziabad. As per 5% aabadi Rule on said above Khata and Kharsa Noida Authority allotted a plot No. BH-188 Sector 71, Noida Dated 13/08/2021 in which Sh. Budh Prakash is co-allottee. Sh. Budh Prakash was Expired on 10/03/2019. Now the share of Sh. Budh Prakash in said above plot is applied to transfer in Noida Authority through registered WILL in favour of Smt. Maya w/o Sh. Vijendra R/o H. No-186 Kailash Nagar Gaushtala Phatak Ghaziabad U.P. If any Person has any objection, he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority, Sector-6, Noida within the 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. **MAYA**

WESTERN RAILWAY

PROVISION OF WELL LIGHTED ALL WEATHER COVERED-SHED

Deputy Chief Engineer (Constl), Western Railway, 8th Floor, Station Building, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400 020 invites offer through e-tender portal www.ireps.gov.in under Single Packet System for the following tender:-
Tender No: Dy CE(C)-780. Name of Work: **Balance Work of Mumbai Central - CFO Yard: Mumbai Central: Provision of Well Lighted All Weather Covered Shed on Pit Line No. 5 & 6 at Coach Care Centre, Mumbai Central, Western Railway. NIT Cost: ₹ 9,54,37,736/-.** EMD: ₹ 6,27,200/-.
Bid Submission Closing on: **30/12/2021 15.00 Hrs.** The date of tender, terms & conditions and scope of work are uploaded and are available only in electronic format in our website www.ireps.gov.in 0576
Like us on: facebook.com/WesternRly

UNDER ORDER 5 RULE 20 C.P.C

BEFORE SH. J.L. Gupta, DISTT. & SESSION JUDGE (RETD.)
ARBITRATOR AT SHIMLA
Reference No. 78/2019

In the matter of:

M/s THAKUR JI PAPERS
Versus
M/s SHAKTI BHOG FOODS LTD

Next Date of Hearing : 20.12.2021

Repondent/ Buyer :

M/s SHAKTI BHOG FOODS LTD 1201-1202, PEARLS BUSINESS PARK, NETAJI SUBHASH PLACE DISTT. AND STATE DELHI-110034.

In the above titled matter the respondent/ buyer could not be served through proper manner despite best efforts. Now he is summoned through publication to appear before me on 20.12.2021 at my Residence Anjali Niwas Tuttkikandi, Shimla- 04 at 11:30 A.M.

Sd/- J. L. Gupta
3rd December 2021 Sole Arbitrator

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that a person namely **Diwaker**, S/o Lt. Jainarain, R/o C-355 Ramesh Enclave Kirari Suleman Nagar, Delhi. **Age :** 25 years, **Height :** 6 Feet, **Complexion-Fair, Built-Thin, Face-Long, Wearing-Red T-shirt & Grey Colour Half Pent and Hawai Sleeper** in his feet has been missing from her house since dated **11.08.2021** in this regard **DD NO. 39-A dated 09.10.2021.** has been registered at **P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi**

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this person please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph : 011-24368638, 24368641 **SHO**
P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi
Fax : 011-23011334
DP/1200/RD/2021 **Ph. : 011-27581812, 8750870321**

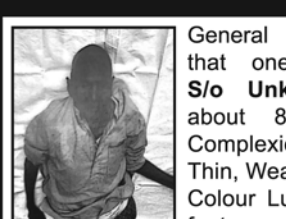
APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one male namely **Unknown S/o Unknown** R/o Unknown Age about 38 years, Height 5'6", Complexion Shallow, Face Round, Built Medium, Wearing Without cloth was found road accident in Delhi Cantt. in between IOC Red Light to Mor Line T-Point on 06.12.2021 During the treatment was declared dead at DDU Hospital vide MLC No. 10310/21. In this regard a FIR No. 366/21 dated 06.12.2021 U/S 279/304A IPC has been registered at PS Delhi Cantt., Delhi. The dead body has been preserved in DDU Hospital Mortuary for identification.

Any person having any information or clue about this deceased person may kindly inform to the undersigned at the address or telephone nos. given below.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one male namely **Unknown S/o Unknown** R/o Unknown Age about 80-85 years, Height 5'6", Complexion Shallow, Face Long, Built Thin, Wearing Cream Colour Kurta, Sky Colour Lungi & Black colour shoes in feet was found dead at Pul Paharganj Under Flyover footpath on 06.12.2021.

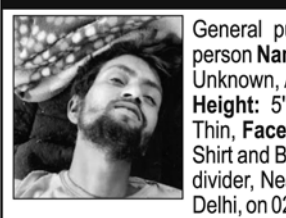
In this regard a DD No. 19-A dated 06.12.2021 U/S 174 Cr.PC has been lodged at PS Nabi Karim, Delhi. The Dead Body has been preserved at RML hospital Mortuary for 72 hours.

Any person having any information or clue about this deceased male may kindly inform to the undersigned at the address or telephone nos. given below.

SHO
PS Nabi Karim, Delhi
Ph. 011-23521081, 23531734

DP/1126/CD/2021

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that this person **Named: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 28-30 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'10", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Thin, Face: Long, Wearing: Light Pink Colour Shirt and Blue Jeans** was found dead at Middle divider, Near HC Sen Marg, Chandani Chowk, Delhi, on 02.12.2021.

In this regard a DD No. 74A, dated 02.12.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi.

The Dead Body has been preserved in Subzi Mandi Mortuary for 72 hours for identification.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform the following.

SHO
P.S. Kotwali, Delhi
DP/1783/N/2021(UIDB) **Ph..**

A BUTTERFLY WILL STILL BE BEAUTIFUL

‘I think I used to be a romantic at heart, now I am a realist’, ruminates legendary writer RUSKIN BOND, in a tête-à-tête with KHUSHBU KIRTI

There are those days, when you're a nerdy kid reading *Delhi Is Not Far* and you're laughing at the little anecdotes when you suddenly start imagining that you're talking to the author of the book that you're perusing. You start, in your little head, framing what you'd want to know about the world of reading and writing by the maestros. No? Just me?

Well. That happened. Might I add, not that it wasn't clear already, that it was a huge deal, an honour for me to converse with one of my biggest idols. I don't have to specify how we've all grown up reading short stories by Bond (now that sounds even cooler on him). I wanted to ask him so many questions but time was limited, of course. However, one always wonders... A writer, as legendary as Ruskin Bond, who carries a plethora of experience in his store, who has lived the most important movements of the Indian literary world and has seen from Progressive writers to the Chayavadi poets — what would go in his mind?

"I've been writing for 70 years and, you know, writers come and go," Bond chuckled.

In his soothingly gruff voice, he continued, "There was not a particular era, per se. Some of the writers reflected the times they live in, in their writings. Some reflect the society in their works — between the two world wars, Independence struggle, partition, and so on. R K Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand, for instance, in the colonial period, have spoken of those times."

"Now, of course, we have a lot of new writers who've grown up in independent India," he added.

On asking him what changes he had noticed in the contemporary writers, he cogitated, "Now, many writers publish works in English and regional languages. I've seen more people want to write. When I went to school in the 1920s, there was no great interest in becoming a writer by profession. We didn't have publishers then, either. Only in the 1980s did we start having genuine publishing industries, so now we have more and more writers wanting to make a living out of writing."

Young people want to write, now people want to become celebrities through writing. That could partly be the attraction. In my time, we didn't have visual media so writers were only known by their names. Nowadays, anyone can be a celebrity."

This reminded me that in one of his novels, Bond had mentioned 'this world is for publishers, and not writers'.

He paused before answering, "Yes, and I wrote that in 1960s. I was young (laughs). Now, publishers are dominant, have gone multinational, and have become commercial. In the past, small publishers often looked at good quality."

Now everybody works on a big scale. Publishers also take up big names. So, it is not so great for an author who is good but writing on a small scale. Although there are more publishers today, writers still face same problems."

On the same lines, the declaration of death of the author by the post-structuralists is old news. On asking for the veteran writer's opinion on who occupies the center of totality in today's literary world, he responded, "Today's



literary world is hampered by political conflicts that affect the entire world. Writings have become transient in nature. A lot of things are happening in the world. A lot of works, thus, get outdated quickly because current events are very transient."

Bond, who has been recog-

nised by the Indian Council of Child Education for his contribution to the growth of children's literature in India, does believe, however, that children occupy a large readership and could be considered the center. Also the reason why he takes pleasure in writing children's books.

The Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awardee tittered when I asked him if he considered himself a romantic at heart. "Yes, I believe you're right. But more so in my 20s and 30s, now I have edged towards realism more. I have become a bit like Hardy (Thomas Hardy)."

Bond had once written the most beautiful of quotes — *And when all the wars are done, a butterfly will still be beautiful.*

There have been so many interpretations of the same. I feel he wants to say that after all the negativity, one would come back home to positivity. And so, I asked him if that was the reason why stories are important to him. Since, no matter what, fairy tales and fables remain evergreen and beautiful because they remind one of a great childhood and past.

In response, the Sahitya Akademi Award winner explained, "Yes, that is 100 per cent true. Stories are extremely special. And I am not only talk-

ing about writing... I have been an avid reader and have spent my life reading more. More than a writer, I am a reader. Just last week, I stumbled upon some stories by O Henry, the American writer. And those stories are so fresh, you know. He talks about all walks of life... You can't live without stories."

While writing poetry, I reach what William Wordsworth called the 'moment of transcendence'. Since Bond has been writing regularly throughout, I wanted to know if writing had become like meditation for him.

"Oh, yes, definitely," he chimed in. "It's something I try to do every day early in the morning. Writing is a passion for me. If I stop for even two or three days, I would start wondering if something is wrong with me. I hope I continue this."

Bond was one of the speakers at the Tata Literature Festival Live this year. As Bond sweetly adds, "*Jai Tata Lit Fest ki!*"

Grooving to the beats this wedding season

ZAREEN KHAN discloses that her new Punjabi track with JORDAN SANDHU, *Chann Chann*, is playing on her phone on loop.

By TEAM VIVA

Actress Zareen Khan is featuring in a peppy Punjabi track with Jordan Sandhu, titled *Chann Chann* and it surely will make you groove to it's bhangra beats. *Chann Chann* is a romantic Punjabi track which showcases a cute love story between two lovers.

Talking about the song, Khan expresses, "I'm so happy to collaborate with Jordan again, he is a very talented artist. I have worked in movies, OTT and music platforms space but I personally love doing Punjabi music videos and I would love to take more such projects in the future."

"This song is very beautiful and I'm very sure the audience will love it. It's playing on my phone on loop and it surely is going to be on everyone's playlist this wedding season. Every bit of this song is very special to me and I have enjoyed and loved shooting for it to the T," she added.

Chann Chann's music video is out now on YouTube.



On foreign shores

Actor URVASHI RAUTELA heads to Israel to judge Miss Universe 2021. By TEAM VIVA

It's always a proud moment for Indians to see our tricolour being raised in other countries. Bollywood actor Urvashi Rautela has headed to Israel for Miss Universe 2021. The actress, who was crowned Miss Diva Universe 2015 and represented India at the Miss Universe 2015 pageant, was spotted recently at Mumbai Airport as she flew off to Eilat, Israel. Rautela is going to be the youngest judge panelist in the history of Miss Universe Pageant 2021. She was wearing an orange outfit which showed off her toned body. The balloon sleeves crop shirt and matching palazzo pants paired with black shades, black stilettos and hair tied up in a ponytail with just a hint of blush and

lip gloss upped the glam factor. The actress revealed that she was proud of being the first Indian superstar to judge the Miss Universe. Talking about the work front, Rautela will play Poonam Mishra, the real-life wife of Inspector Avinash Mishra, played by Randeep Hooda in the web film Inspector Avinash. Rautela will also appear in a few more south Indian films, including the Telugu feature *Black Rose*, in which is the lead, and a 200 crore Tamil blockbuster starring Saravana. The next schedule for the film is set to start soon. Apart from that she shared the official poster for her forthcoming film *Dil Hai Gray*, which is a Hindi version of the Tamil film *Thiruttu Payale 2*.

Every day, almost 93 per cent of the children around the world under the age of 15 breathe or are exposed to toxic air. This is no surprise considering the pace at which the toxins are being released in the environment. The elderly and children are vulnerable to environmental hazards and air pollution is one of the most life-threatening among all of them.

Children, however, are exposed to air pollution even before they are born. There is an alarming rise in the number of pregnancy complications due to bad air quality including slowed foetal growth, delayed lung expansion and lower birth weights that is linked to more number of premature babies in the present scenario. This is due to the exposure of the mother to various air pollutants while being pregnant.

The impact of air pollution on the children can be related to certain high-risk health issues. Some of them are:

Respiratory/Asthmatic issues

The major cause for an alarming rise of respiratory issues in children is definitely the pollution from vehicles, particularly from the traffic in the metro cities. Though there are strict rules from the government to regulate pollution being expelled by the vehicles. Infants and children who are exposed to this develop severe respiratory and breathing issues including cough, pneumonia and even mortality at times. Therefore, extra care while travelling and minimising the exposure in densely polluted areas is essential.

Complications due to lower immunity

Studies by Stratford University prove that lower immunity of an infant is directly linked to the complications from the exposure of the mother to various air pollutants dur-



POISON IN THE AIR

The growing pollution in the environment can severely impact the health and growth patterns of children and infants, says DR SRIKANTHA

ing pregnancy. This results in premature birth, even before their lungs are fully expanded. They are therefore more prone to pneumonia, breathing issues etc. They can also later develop fatal illnesses like lung cancer and other pulmonary disorders.

Stagnant physical and mental growth

One may wonder how a child's growth is related to air pollution. But a child's growth is affected and can be limited due to health issues arising from various factors of air pollution. They can become mentally and emotionally drained as they will be restricted to the four walls of the house or hospital, wherein, child-



hood, the golden time in a person's life, is not experienced to the fullest.


Neurological and cardio-respiratory issues

Early exposure to air pollution for infants can result in severe neurotoxic issues even decades after exposure. Changes in the autonomous function of the organs results in dras-

tic neurological imbalance of the heart, brain and other vital functions of the body. Almost 90 per cent of the children, particularly in the metro cities of India have been diagnosed with neurological complications that are connected to the various air pollutants.

We should take the blame for what is happening right now. During our childhood there were more trees and less smoke, more open places and less concrete jungles, lesser factories in highly populated areas and lesser vehicles on roads. Although we cannot rewind and bring all these to the present, as responsible citizens, we can contribute to help bring down air pollution by using public transport, walking wherever possible, burning less fossil fuels and creating awareness among others.

(The author is a JT, consultant — paediatric pulmonology and sleep medicine — Aster RV Hospital, JP Nagar, Bengaluru.)




NOT A LOVE STORY FOR AGES?

At a time when marriages don't last, **ABHISHEK BACHCHAN** and **AISHWARYA RAI**'s marriage stood the test of time even though they did not have a publicised 'love story for the ages'.

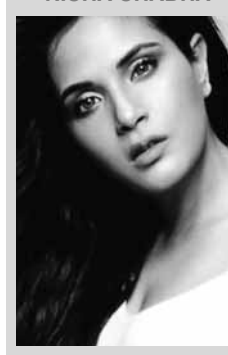
Abhishek recently appeared on The Ranveer Show podcast as he recalled his first meeting with Aishwarya, "I was working as a production boy and was sent to scout for locations in Switzerland. They were also shooting there for *Aur Pyar Ho Gaya*. It was the first time I interacted with her. And whenever she talks about it, she jokingly says, 'I couldn't understand a word of what you were saying' due to my Boston accent."

fairtalk
KANGANA RANAUT



'Growing up, we heard many stories of successful rich men marrying much younger women. Women being more successful than their husbands was as major crisis, forget marrying a younger man. So, it is nice to see rich and successful women, leading ladies of Indian film industry breaking the sexist norms. Kudos to men and women both for redefining gender stereotypes.'

dailytalk
RICHA CHADHA



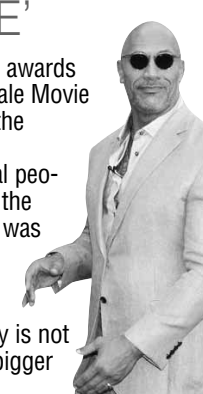
'The storyline is the hero of the series. Sports and glamour have always gone hand in hand for years. It's just that no one really thought of bringing these things together and creating a story out of it. There is immense love for sports in our country and the same goes for glamour, too. The combination of the two proved lethal which explains the success of *Inside Edge*.'

'THIS IS SO MUCH BIGGER THAN ME'

DWAYNE JOHNSON took home three awards — People's Champion Award, The Male Movie Star, and The Comedy Movie Star at the People's Choice Awards 2021.

The Rock expressed, "The original people's champion, Muhammad Ali, was the greatest of all time. I met him when I was a little boy. He was kind, funny and always wonderful to me."

"Years later, standing here with you guys, who voted for me, the irony is not lost on me. I realise this is so much bigger than me," he added.



DIGITALISING ECONOMY ONE STEP FURTHER

City Union Bank launches ‘RuPay On-the-Go’, a contactless solution, in collaboration with NPCI

City Union Bank (CUB) in collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and its manufacturing partner Sessaasi announced the launch of RuPay On-the-Go contactless wearable keychain for its debit card customers. The announcement was made by Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister for Railways, Communications, Electronics & Information Technology, at Azadi Ka Digital Mahotsav in New Delhi. CUB is launching this payment mode to enable customers to make payments on the go.

The keychain supports fast and convenient payments, with users simply having to bring their keychain close to the retailer's PoS. The solution allows the bank's customers to carry payment cards on their keychains, making for fast and convenient payments upto ₹5,000 in all Rupay enabled Point of Sale devices (PoS) without entering a PIN. Customers would be required to hold the keychain in front of the PoS devices during



payment similar to tapping the card on PoS. For payments above ₹5,000, customers need to tap, followed by their PIN. Currently, the keychain will be linked to the operative account of the customers. However, as part of the second phase of the launch,

CUB is planning to integrate the wearables with prepaid/credit cards to serve non-CUB customers as well.

Dr N Kamakodi, MD & CEO of CUB expressed, "City Union Bank is delighted to associate with NPCI to launch our

'Pay on the Go' Key Chain solution. This contactless wearable keychain will be part of the daily life style and enable customers to tap and make cashless payments securely. This would increase digital payment behaviour among customers, especially

younger generation and students which enables faster check out and less waiting in queue with features to set the spend limit, enable/disable on the usage through Netbanking and CUB's 'All in one Mobile APP'."

KEY FEATURES

- ♦ Customers can enable & disable the wearable to make payment as and when needed using CUB's net banking or mobile banking.
- ♦ Customers can set their own per day limit, per transaction limit from CUB's net banking or mobile banking.
- ♦ It is a fully self-assisted model and can be managed by the customers on their own.
- ♦ An SMS will be sent for each transaction to the registered mobile number.
- ♦ Keychain can be blocked immediately by calling the customer care/ by sending SMS/ net/mobile banking, if needed.
- ♦ The keychain can be requested through netbanking / mobile banking and also at the CUB branches.



Global motto: Zero-carbon sources

KOMAL KUMAR SINGH gives his views on the changing energy politics, China's dominance in manufacturing supply chains, and joint efforts between India and the United States in the energy transition

What is the goal of the energy transition?

The energy transition is the way of transforming fossil-fuel-based energy sources to zero-carbon energy sources. Wind energy, electric vehicles, and solar energy are a few examples.

This has become a global motto in recent years. All worldwide leaders in business and government are sharing their energy transition plans for their companies or countries.

According to IERA, the goal is to transfer the global energy sector from fossil fuels to zero-carbon energy sources by the second half of this century.

The bottom line is to provide affordable, reliable, and increasingly sustainable energy.

What are your thoughts on the energy transition?

Just as the smart phone changed the landscape of communication, the energy transition will change the landscape of energy. It will provide world easily accessible clean energy.

Simultaneously, it will change global energy politics. The world will no longer be reliant on oil-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia.

It will provide a variety of energy options at competitive prices. Many parts of the world are still in need of electricity. It will change as a result of the energy transition.

How do you envision India's energy transition?

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on the country's 75th Independence Day about energy-independent by 2047. India's government established a road map and has achieved significant progress in the energy transition during the last few years. India has encouraged the widespread use of energy-efficient LED lighting in most homes, and driven an explosion in the use of renewable energy sources, led by solar power, among other things. India came in fifth place in the Solar Country Rankings, ahead of the United Kingdom,



France, and Italy.

India will achieve energy independence solely through an energy transition.

What role may India play in its energy transition?

According to the Wall Street Journal, China presently manufactures 75 per cent of all lithium-ion battery cells. The same China continues to dominate the solar panel supply.

As indicated previously, energy transition is lowering reliance on oil-rich countries, but on the other hand, China is getting control of the manufacture and supply of renewable energy equipment for world demand.

India is home to highly skilled workers who support industries in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere. In terms of manufacturing, India is a low-cost powerhouse for the global market. Automation and digitalisation are expert fields in which India has a large pool of IT workers. Partnership between India and the United States in which high-end technology from the United States is combined with skilled labour and low-cost manufacturing from India can provide an alternate supply chain.

What is the outlook for the oil and gas industry?

With the global population expected to touch the nine-billion mark by 2040, the International Energy Agency IEA's annual study predicts that global energy demand will more than double from today. And along with other accessible renewable energy sources, oil and gas will continue to be in demand.

Major oil and gas companies have already stated plans to cut carbon emissions and are actively pursuing it. Companies are reviewing its strategies and supply chain to compete in the new market dynamics. The oil and gas industry will continue to work on lowering overall operating costs and investing in cleaner energy.

(The author is an energy and supply chain expert.)

On a December Evening, SRM University-AP observed its 1st convocation conferring degrees to 294 undergraduates. Dignitaries across the world joined together to embrace the special moment on December 1 at the SRM University-AP campus in a hybrid mode. Dr Andrew D Hamilton, president of New York University, graced the event as the chief guest. An honorary doctorate was awarded to the guest of honour, Dr S e t h u r a m Panchanathan, the director of National Science Foundation, USA.

Dr Hamilton expressed his greatest admiration towards the new university and its first batch of students. Being associated with established heritage universities all his life, he expressed his utmost joy to be a part of a nascent university full of promises and potential to create a long and illustrious history. The achievements of the past three years are an active example of the limitless possibilities that SRM University-



Achieving milestones

SRM University-AP celebrates its 1st convocation

AP nurtures. He also gave his opinion saying that this era is in critical need of higher education. Similar to the story of Robert Louis Stevenson, universities have the responsibility to 'punch through darkness', and SRM University-AP must be one of the vanguards. "It is extraordinary to see so many laurels to be

brought by the students amid COVID-19 and a worldwide pandemic," opined Dr Hamilton extending an open invitation to SRMAP fraternity to visit NYU and be a part of it.

In his speech, Dr Panchanathan expressed his sincere gratitude upon receiving the honorary doctorate. In his advice to

the graduating batch, he presented a mantra of six C's to follow in life to be worthy of honour and respect. First, a great journey begins with 'curiosity'. To propel towards progress, you must foster curiosity and never cease asking questions. Second, you must always find the 'courage' to stay positive. Trust your abilities and

embrace your failures making those into stepping stones towards success. Third, true success can never be achieved alone. It is always a 'collaborative' game. Fourth, effective 'communication' is the key. Get people excited about what you are doing and accelerate the development with your expertise. Fifth, 'commitment' is the essence of success. Be a life-long learner and dedicated to excellence. Lastly, 'compassion' is the factor to bind all these together. Dr Panchanathan encouraged the graduands to learn these mantras by heart, and success will find them in life.

President of SRM University, Dr P Sathyanarayanan, mentioned that the education system in India is going through a transformation with the newly enacted National Education Policy-2020. SRM University-AP aims to be the vanguard of this transition. After the successful introduction of academics, SRMAP embarks on an even more ambitious challenge of extending its research wings to add value to society. "I am proud to confess that despite being a nascent university, SRM University-AP has created a niche for itself through its research projects funded by the Government of India and reputed industry giants," asserted Sathyanarayanan, congratulating the faculty for their incessant support and guidance to the students. "Above all, I extend my love and appreciation to my dear graduands who are joined here to receive their degrees," added Dr Sathyanarayanan.

Self-reliance in crucial technology

DR SAMIR V KAMAT inaugurates the 66th ISTAM annual conference at VIT AP University, Amaravati

The 66th annual conference of the Indian Society of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (ISTAM) is being held virtually at VIT AP University, Amaravati from December 3-5.

Dr Samir V Kamat, distinguished



scientist and DG, Naval Systems and Materials at DRDO, was the chief guest, as he inaugurated the 66th ISTAM annual conference. In his address, he advised the current

generation to work towards making the country self-sufficient and self-reliant on crucial technologies.

Dr G Viswanathan, founder and chancellor, VIT

Group of Institutions, emphasised on the importance of research in the growth of a nation, and VIT is the top institute in terms of research publications.

Vice-chancellor Dr S V Kota Reddy mentioned that VIT-AP university is committed to continue towards its goal of becoming a global hub of research and development.

Dr G Radhakrishnamacharya, the president of ISTAM, disclosed grand plans for the next five years to come.



Dr M Kannagi, joint director of Medical and Rural Health Services, Vellore district, giving away medal and certificate to the winner at the valedictory function of the 'AIDS Awareness Week' at Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore. The chairman of Naruvi Hospitals, Dr GV Sampath, Dr Anand Chitra, the Vellore district AIDS prevention and control officer, hospital's vice-chairperson, Anitha Sampath, executive director, Dr Paul Henry and chief of medical services, Dr Aravindan Nair, are also seen in the picture.

Rising high

KRIBHCO chairman makes history by being elected as first Indian president of ICA-AP

Dr Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, the chairman of KRIBHCO has been elected as president of International Cooperative Alliance — Asia Pacific (ICA-AP). He becomes the first Indian occupying this position by defeating Chitose Arai of Japan by 102 votes in the election held at Seoul, South Korea. Cai Zhen Hong of China and Dr Abdullah Fattah Abdullah of Malaysia were elected as the vice presidents of the ICA- AP.

The 15th Regional Assembly of International Cooperative Alliance — Asia Pacific Region was held from November 28-30 at Seoul. This meeting was held of 11 directors belonging to China, South Korea, Malaysia, India, Nepal, Iran, Vietnam, Philippines, Japan, Australia, and Sri Lanka. Dr Yadav's rise to the highest position of the Asia Pacific region in cooperative politics is a sign of the robust cooperative movement in India.

Directors and other top officials from KRIBHCO gave a grand welcome to their chairman on arrival at the New Delhi Airport.



International Film City project, under Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, commences

Yamuna Expressway 1,000 acres of land in sector 21, located on Yamuna Expressway under the Industrial Development Authority area, has been identified for the ambitious project of Film City by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. 220 acres would be for commercial use and 780 acres for industrial use. This project is supposed to be developed through a private developer following proper guidelines.

According to the PPP guidelines, the information for inviting global tender in the event of agreement on the bid document of the government level commit-

tee PPPBEC was published in the newspapers on date November 22 and the global tender date November 23 on the e-tender website. The pre-bid meeting was convened today November 8. Around 20 interested firms/companies like L&T, Balaji, Oriental Structural Engineers, Cistula Tulip Group, Godrej properties, E&YLLP, Immagicon infra pvt ltd, REC international limited, and so on, through VC and by attending the Authority Auditorium.

Queries made by the institutions will be settled by the government level committee PPPBEC as per the PPP Guidelines.

Tribute to the great man

Northern Railways paid homage to Dr B R AMBEDKAR on his 65th death anniversary



Every year, December 6 is observed as Manapariniwan Diwas in the country to mark the death anniversary of Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr B R Ambedkar.

Ashutosh Gangal, the general manager of Northern Railway paid tribute to Dr Ambedkar on his 65th death anniversary at the headquarters office, Baroda House, New Delhi. Senior railway officials and staff were present on the occasion, kept two minutes silent and remembered Dr Ambedkar.

Speaking on the occasion, Gangal said that the ideals and thoughts of great leader continue to inspire generations. His dedicated life for equality and rights in society is an inspiration for all of us.



The National MSME Expedition Team comprising of Deputy Director Publicity and Chief Editor, Laghu Udyog Samachar Harendra Pratap Singh, Assistant Director Dr Harish Yadav, Media Innovators Manjari Kumari and Uma Yadav reached Delhi from Sambhal District of UP on December 8. Union Minister of MSME Narayan Rane flagged off the National MSME Expedition on November 27.

The team led by Pratap Singh travelled more than 3,500 kms distance by road during 12 day expedition.

The National MSME Expedition Team covered five states in the first phase of the Expedition. The team organised 75 MSME sabhas in rural and urban areas to propagate the MSME schemes on occasion of Azadi Amrit Mahotsav being celebrated from March 12, 2021 to August 15, 2023 in the country.

Spreading awareness

The National MSME Expedition Team covered five states in the first phase of its 12-day expedition

The team travelled via Faridabad, Ballabgarh, Palwal, Agra, Firozabad, Fatehpur, Kanpur, Allahabad, Rewa, Varanasi, Buxar, Ara, Patna, Chhapra, Champaran, Gorakhpur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Sultampur, Kannauj, Lucknow, Anupshahar and Sambhal.

In Patna, Saiyed Shah Nawaz Hussain, Minister of Industries, Government of Bihar flagged off the expedition for onward journey.

In Lucknow, Siddharth Nath Singh, Minister of MSME, Government of Uttar Pradesh flagged off on December 7. In Sambhal District, Gulabo Devi, State Minister of Education, Government of Uttar Pradesh

flagged off the expedition team for Delhi.

During the entire course of journey, the team spread awareness about MSME schemes among thousands of people directly and millions of people indirectly.

In Champaran, noted freedom fighter and ex-minister of Bihar Brajkishore Singh handed over National flag to the team. Amit Azad, the grandson of the great revolutionary of the freedom struggle Chandrashekhar Azad handed over National flag to the team in Lucknow.

The team succeeded in dissemination of the information about the MSME schemes in an infotainment manner.

Kohli removed from ODI captaincy as Rohit becomes new white-ball captain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli was on Wednesday removed as India's ODI captain with the national selection committee making Rohit Sharma the sole white-ball leader of the team till the 2023 50-over World Cup.

In another significant development, Ajinkya Rahane was removed from Test vice-captaincy, a position which was also given to Rohit.

The BCCI announced the 18-member squad for the three Test series which doesn't include all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, spinner Axar Patel, and opener Shubman Gill due to various injuries.

Hanuma Vihari has made a comeback in the main squad while Ishant Sharma has been able to retain his place despite poor form.

Squad: Virat Kohli (Capt), Rohit Sharma(vc), KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Shreyas Iyer, Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant(wk), Wriddhiman Saha(wk), R Ashwin, Jayant Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Mohd. Shami, Umesh Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur, Md. Siraj.

Standby Players: Navdeep Saini, Saurabh Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Arzan Nagwaswalla.



England out for 147 on Day 1

AP ■ BRISBANE

England captain Joe Root won the toss, opted to bat and lost opener Rory Burns on the very first delivery of the Ashes series, a late swinging yorker from Australia pacer Mitchell Starc.

It set the tone for the opening two sessions Wednesday, which were more like open season for Australia's pace bowling pack.

Pat Cummins took the last three wickets and finished with a five-wicket haul in his first innings as Australia captain. The England innings finished with ominous thunder and lightning starting to the west and south of the Gabba.

Heavy rain and bad light combined to prevent any further play on Day 1.

The overcast conditions rapidly grew more gloomy for the visitors after Starc's early strike, with Josh Hazlewood



dismissing Dawid Malan (6) and Root (0) as England slipped to 11-3 in the sixth over.

When Cummins took his first wicket — star allrounder Ben Stokes (5) caught low at

slip. Ollie Pope and Jos Buttler settled the innings, combining in a 50-run stand to staunch the flow of wickets before both were out in their 30s.

Buttler played an expansive drive for his fifth boundary to reach 39 but was out next ball from Starc, edging behind to Alex Carey as England slumped to 112-6. England added six runs before Pope (35) topped an attempted hook and was caught by Hazlewood diving forward near the fine-leg boundary, giving allrounder Cameron Green his first test wicket.

Cummins had Ollie Robinson (0) caught behind and Mark Wood (8) caught at short-leg and the stadium lights were turned on before he had Chris Woakes (21) caught in the deep by Hazlewood to finish off the innings.

Cummins returned 5-38 from 13.1 overs, with Starc and Hazlewood taking two wickets apiece.

PTI ■ MOHALI

HIMMAT SCORES HUNDRED IN COMFORTABLE DELHI VICTORY OVER JHARKHAND

Veteran opener Shikhar Dhawan failed to trouble the scorers but talented Himmat Singh anchored the chase with a fine century as Delhi easily beat Jharkhand by six wickets in a group C league game of the Vijay Hazare Trophy on Wednesday.

Batting first, Jharkhand scored 263 for 8 with skipper Virat Singh contributing a patient 79 and Kaushal Singh chipping in with 69.

Delhi skipper Pradeep Sangwan scalped three for 46.

In reply, opener Dhawan, who is due to go to South Africa for the ODI series, was snapped by Anukul Roy off Varun Aaron's bowling.

But Dhruv Shorey (64 off 82 balls) and Himmat (113 not out off 124 balls) added 127 for the second wicket inside 25 overs to bring things under control.

While Shorey hit seven boundaries, Himmat, considered one of the

States hustle for Vijay Hazare Cup

best talents to have come out of Delhi stable, had 11 fours and a six to his credit. Delhi did wobble a bit at 183 for 4 but Himmat had company from Khsitiz Sharma (43 not out off 39 balls) as their unbroken stand of 81 ensured that they reached home with as many as three overs to spare.

Thakur's five-for sets up seven-wicket win for Vidarbha

Young fast bowler Yash Thakur returned with a career-best five-wicket haul as Vidarbha notched up a comprehensive seven-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in an Elite group A match of the Vijay Hazare One-Day Trophy here on Wednesday.

The 22-year-old from Kolkata snapped five wickets for 53, while Akshay Wakhare (2/51) and Darshan Nalkande (2/37) also chipped in with two wickets each as Vidarbha bundled out HP for 213 in 46 overs at the Dadoji Konddev stadium.

Skipper Rishi Dhawan was the top-scorer for HP with a 50-ball 61.

Vidarbha then returned to over-haul the victory target, reaching 216 for three in just 39.5 overs, riding on half-centuries from Atharva Taide (64) and Yash Rathod (76 not out). Akshay Wadkar also contributed with a 59-ball unbeaten 44.

Gurvinder Singh (2/39) and Mayank Dagar (1/48) were the only bowlers to get wickets for Himachal Pradesh. In another match at Brabourne Stadium, Gujarat produced a clinical bowling display to dismiss Jammu and Kashmir for 171 and then returned to achieve the total in 36.5 overs losing five wickets.

SHAHRUKH SHINES AS TN OUTCLASSES MUMBAI; BIG WIN FOR KARNATAKA

Big-hitting batter M Shahrulkh Khan starred with a blistering 66 off 35 balls as Tamil Nadu started their

campaign in the Vijay Hazare Trophy One-Day cricket tournament with a superb 54-run win over defending champions Mumbai in an Elite Group B match here on Wednesday.

Sent in to bat by Mumbai skipper Shams Mulani, Tamil Nadu got off to a quick start with newbie B Sai Sudharsan (24 off 24 balls, 4 fours) and captain N Jagadeesan (20) laying the groundwork for a big score.

The dismissal of the two openers in the space of four runs to experienced pacer Dhawal Kulkarni (3 for 45 from 10 overs) saw comebackmen M S Washington Sundar and B Indrajith come together for the third wicket.

The duo added 75 runs with Washington, who is playing after an injury setback, striking three boundaries during his 58-ball 34.

He looked good before being dismissed caught and bowled by Tushar Deshpande (2/57).

Dinesh Karthik, back in the side after missing the Mushtaq Ali tournament, looked to get a move-on and made 32.

The entry of Shahrukh, who smashed a last ball six to star in Tamil Nadu's triumph in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament, changed the complexion of the game.

TRIPURA POSTS CRUSHING 210-RUN WIN OVER ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Former Gujarat batter Samit Gohel hammered 135 (128 balls, 10 fours, five sixes) to star in Tripura's comprehensive 210-run win over Arunachal Pradesh in a Vijay Hazare Trophy Plate Group match here on Wednesday.

Batting first, Tripura amassed 336 for 4 in 50 overs with Gohel, captain K B Pawan (64) and Rajat Dey (44 not out) adding substance to the total.

Gohel and Pawan added 133 runs for the third wicket in quick time to put Tripura on the road to a big total. After their big stand, Dey and Manisankar Murasingh (34 not out, 11 balls, 2X4, 3X6) added 41 runs in just 15 deliveries to swell the total.

Chasing 337 for a win, Arunachal were never in the hunt and kept losing wickets at regular intervals to be bundled out for 126 in the 40th over.

Former Tamil Nadu spinner Rahil Shah did the bulk of the damage, scalping four wickets conceding just 16 run in 10 overs while Ajoy Sarkar took 3 for 15.

In another match, captain Uday Kaul smashed an unbeaten 121 to help Mizoram romp to a seven-wicket win over Bihar.



Sajid's bowling leads Pakistan past B'desh in 2nd test

AP ■ DHAKA

Offspinner Sajid Khan ended with a match haul of 12-128 as Pakistan broke Bangladesh's stubborn resistance to secure an innings and eight-run victory in the rain-hit second and final test on Wednesday.

Bangladesh was forced to follow-on after being wrapped up for 87 in the first innings and was bowled out for 205.

With the light gradually fading, Bangladesh's last-wicket pair of Taijul Islam and Ebadot Hossain resisted for 34 balls to raise a hope of salvaging the test. But Sajid broke the

partnership, dismissing Taijul leg-before to help Pakistan win the game.

Sajid claimed 4-86, the fourth-best individual total by a Pakistani bowler in an innings, to follow up his first-innings 8-42.

Pakistan declared its first innings at 300-4 after only 63.2 overs were possible in the first three days because of rain and bad light.

The third day was entirely washed out and only 6.2 overs were possible on Day 2.

Resuming on 76-7, Bangladesh was quickly dismissed for 87 and Babar Azam forced the follow-on.

Barty wins 2nd WTA Player of Year; Krejickova gets 2 honors

AP ■ ST PETERSBURG

Ash Barty's Wimbledon title and hold on the No. 1 ranking helped her win WTA Player of the Year for the second time in voting results announced.

Barbora Krejickova was selected as Most Improved Player and shared the Doubles Team of the Year award with Katerina Siniakova on Tuesday. Krejickova was the first woman since 2000 to win both the singles and doubles championships at the French Open.

Emma Raducanu was picked as Newcomer of the Year after winning the U.S. Open at age 18 and becoming the first player to go from qualifying rounds all the way to a Grand Slam title.

Carla Suárez Navarro is the



Comeback Player of the Year after returning from Hodgkin's Lymphoma to play on tour and represent Spain in the Billie Jean King Cup finals.

Barty also was the WTA Player of the Year in 2019. This season, she led the tour with

five titles, including her second Grand Slam championship at the All England Club.

The 25-year-old Australian also finished at No. 1 in the year-end rankings for the third season in a row.

Krejickova had never won a singles title before taking three in 2021, including at Roland Garros, and she rose from No. 65 at the end of 2020 to a high of No. 3 in the singles rankings.

Krejickova and Siniakova were recognized as the Doubles Team of the Year for the second time, after 2018. They won the French Open, the WTA Finals and an Olympic gold medal together this year.

India win 41 medals at Asian Youth Para Games

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian para-athletes on Wednesday returned from Bahrain after claiming a whopping 41 medals in their best-ever show at the Asian Youth Para Games.

The Indian contingent won 12 gold, 15 silver, and 14 bronze medals at the continental Para youth games held in Riffa city.

India won most medals in athletics with 22 players finishing at the podium -- eight won gold, six bagged silver, and eight secured bronze.

The Indian para shuttlers returned claimed 15 medals with Tokyo Paralympian Palak

Kohli, Sanjana Kumari, and Hardik Makkar claiming three medals each.

In swimming, India won three medals, including one silver and two bronze, while the country also secured a silver in powerlifting.

Over 700 athletes from around 30 countries participated in the continental youth showpiece event that took place from December 2 to 6.

The athletes competed across nine sports - Para athletics, Para badminton, bocchia, goalball, Para powerlifting, Para swimming, Para table tennis, Para taekwondo, and wheelchair basketball.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA.
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
RWS&S DIVISION, RAYAGADA.
E-mail: eerwsrsgd@gmail.com, Phone- 8280408061 .
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH E-Procurement.
Tender Identification No.07/RWS/SGD/2021-22.

1) Name of Works:-
1) Supplying & Laying of rising main and distribution system pipe line of UPVC/DI/GI, construction of Compound wall RCC OGR/ ESR, SV/NRV Chamber, Air Valve Pillar stand post etc for different PWS projects & Spring Based Water Supply Projects in Rayagada District.
2) Total Number of Works :- 4 Nos. (Detailed list available in the website)
3) Estimated Cost :- From Rs.349.81 Lakhs to 388.95 Lakhs
4) Class of Contractor :- A & Special Class
5) Period of completion :- 11 months respectively

| Procurement Officer. | Bid Identification No. | Availability of tender online for bidding | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| | | From | To |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Superintending Engineer, Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Division Rayagada. | Online Tender/07/RWS/SGD/2021-22 | 10.12.2021 at 12.00 Hours | 24.12.2021 upto 17.00 Hours |

NB:- Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
OIPR-25007/11/0012/2122

Superintending Engineer, RWS&S, Division, Rayagada

ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD
(A Gold Rated State PSU)
OIO Sr. GENERAL MANAGER, Rengali Hydro Electric Project,
P.O. RENGALI DAM SITE, PIN: 759105, DIST: ANGUL (ODISHA)
TEL: 06760-277214, FAX: 06760-277324 e-mail: sgmei500@gmail.com

No. RHEPIC & PIPUR-II-64 / 7200 Date: 06.12.2021
CAD-2196

NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO. RHEP-40/2021-22

Sealed tenders are invited in two part i.e. (i) Techno Commercial bid and (ii) Price bid in separate sealed envelopes from reputed firm / Agency / Contractor

| Sl. No. | Description of services | Cost of tender (non-refundable) in Rs. | EMD in shape of DCI Banker's Cheque only (Refundable) in Rs. | Period of availability of tender at OHPC website | Last date & Time of receipt of tender | Date & Time of opening of Techno Commercial bid |
|---------|--|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Replacement of Damaged Thrust Pads, checking healthiness of Runner Disc Alignment of Unit 3 and Bring back the Unit to Service of Rengali power house, RHEP, Rengali | Rs.7,08,00/- Rs. 6,00,00/- + GST @ 18% | In Lieu of EMD, Bid security declaration form to be submitted | From 08.12.2021 to 17.12.2021 up to 03:30 PM | 08.12.2021 up to 04:00 PM | 08.12.2021 up to 04:00 PM |

For details and further correspondence / corrigendum, please visit our website www.ohpcindia.com
OIPR-04005/11/0034/2122

C & P Head, RHEP,Rengali

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KEONJHAR

1stCorrigendum Notice
No. 4670 / Date: 07.12.2021 /
The date of availability of tender date of opening of Technical Bid & Financial Bid invited vide Bid Identification No. Road Online NCB No.327 (eProcurement Notice No.4648Dtd. 04.12.2021) of Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Circle, Keonjhar is here by rescheduled as below due to some un-avoidable circumstances.

| Procurement Officer | Bid Identification No. | Availability of tender On-line for bidding | Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification. | Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/C C.E.E., RW Circle, Keonjhar. |
|---|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar | Bridge Online NCB No. 327 | From Dt.08.12.21 at 11.00 A.M. To Dt.17.12.21 up to 5.00 P.M. | Dt.16.12.21 up to 5.00 P.M. | Dt.18.12.21 at 11.00 A.M. |

All other contents remain unchanged.
OIPR-25177/11/0018/2122

Chief Construction Engineer, R.W. Circle, Keonjhar.

ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED
(A GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA UNDERTAKING)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
LIFT IRRIGATION DIVISION KENDRAPARA
E-mail: eeolickdp@yahoo.in Tel. No.06727 220393
e - Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No: 1926 /LID.KDP / 2020-21 ,Date 06.12.2021

1. Name of the O.I.T : Executive Engineer Lift Irrigation Division, Kendrapara
2. Name of the Work : Revival of 36 nos CLIPs on "Turnkey" and percentage rate basis.
3. No.of Packages : 33 Nos
4. Tender Amount : Varies from 9.85 Lakh to 29.42 Lakh
5. Date and time of availability of bid documents in the portal for online bidding : From 1100 hours dt.21.12.2021 to 1700 hours dt. 27.12.2021
6. Date of seeking clarification: 24.12.2021 up to 1300hours
7. Last date and time of receipt of bids in the portal: Up to 1700hours dt.27.12.2021
8. Date of opening of Technical & Financial Bids: 1100hours dt.28.12.2021
9. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal of Govt. of Odisha i.e. www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
10. Corrigendum/addendum, if required shall be available in the above portal.
OIPR-32147/11/0005/2122

Sd/- Executive Engineer L.I. Division, Kendrapara

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
P.H. DIVISION, BALANGIR,
Ph. No. - (06652 - 234647)
Email. ID - cephbgr@yahoo.co.in
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Bid Identification No. SE PH BGR 34/2021-22 Dt. 03.12.2021

01. Name of the Work : 01 No
02. Estimated Cost : Rs. 70.35 Lakhs
03. Period of Completion : 04 (Six) Calendar Months
04. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 11.00 AM of dt. 09.12.2021 to 5.00 PM of dt. 22.12.2021
05. Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal : 5 PM of dt. 22.12.2021
06. Date & Time of opening of bids : At 11.00 AM of dt.23.12.2021
07. Name and Address of the Officer : Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Balangir, At- Tulsinagar, Dist- Balangir-767001

Further details can be seen from the web site <http://tenders.ori.nic.in> or www.tendersorissa.gov.in
OIPR-13005/11/0023/2122

Superintending Engineer P.H. Division, Balangir