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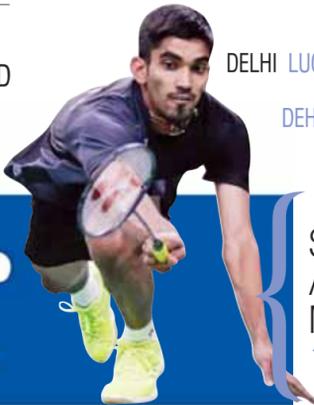
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SEN, SRIKANTH ASSURED OF MEDALS 12 SPORT

Omicron cases soar to 107 in India

Delhi reports 10 new cases, Maha 8; Govt warns against non-essential travel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The Omicron variant of the coronavirus is "spreading rapidly" with 11 States reporting altogether 107 cases. The Health Ministry has warned that 19 districts were at high risk of a surge in Covid-19 cases. The national Capital reported ten more Omicron cases on Friday, taking its tally to 20.

The Ministry also urged people to avoid non-essential travel and stay away from large crowds and gatherings. The Ministry's caution comes in the wake of approaching Christmas and New Year celebrations. Globally the variant has been detected in 91 countries. The Ministry also pointed out that the districts with over 5 per cent Covid positivity rate will have to mandatorily ensure that restrictive measures were followed for at least two weeks unless the rate comes down below 5 per cent. Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said 10 new cases of the new Covid variant Omicron have been detected in the national Capital, taking the tally to 20. Ten of these patients have been discharged, he said.

The Minister said 10 out of the 40 samples sent for genome



A team of doctors from Lucknow during a mock-drill at a Covid-19 hospital as a part of preparedness for a possible new wave of the viral disease, in Noida on Friday PTI Photo

sequencing tested positive for the new variant. The Minister had on Thursday said many international travellers are turning out Covid positive upon arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport.

Maharashtra on Friday recorded eight more Omicron cases, taking the total number of the new Covid-19 variant cases in the State to 40. A report released by the Pune-based National Institute of Virology (NIV) said that of the eight news cases, six cases were from Pune, while one case each

from Mumbai and the twin townships of Dombivli-Kalyan in the neighbouring Thane district. Of the total 40 Omicron cases recorded so far, Mumbai accounted for 14, followed by Pimpri-Chinchwad where 10 cases have been found. There are in all six cases in Pune, while Kalyan-Dombivli and Osmanabad have recorded two cases each. Latur, Buldhana, Nagpur and Vasai-Virar have registered one case each.

Warning against lowering the guard in the wake of

Omicron transmission, ICMR DG Dr Balram Bhargava told reporters that "this is the time to avoid non-essential travel, mass gatherings and it is very important to observe low-intensity festivities."

Maharashtra — the worst-hit Covid State — has recorded the maximum number of Omicron cases — 40, followed by Delhi (20), Rajasthan (17), Karnataka (8), Telangana (8), Gujarat (5), Kerala (5), Andhra Pradesh (1), Chandigarh (1), Tamil Nadu (1) and West Bengal (1).

Citing the WHO warning on the fast transmission of the new mutated variant, Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal said that it's likely that Omicron will outpace Delta variant where community transmission occurs.

"There is no evidence to suggest that vaccines are not effective against Omicron variant of coronavirus," he added and assured that sufficient systematic and strategic sampling is being undertaken for genome sequencing for detection of Omicron cases in India.

On Covid front, the official said, "Maharashtra continues to account for more than 55% of the total active cases. A total of 99,763 active cases were recorded across the country as of December 2. Around 15 districts across the country have more than 10% positivity rate, whereas 18 districts have positivity ranging between 5-10%. These are still a matter of concern for us, we are continuously in talks with those States."

The case positivity for the last one week is 0.65 per cent. Currently, Kerala contributes 40.31 per cent to the total number of active cases in the country, he pointed out. Agarwal further said that daily cases in India have stayed below 10,000 for the past 20 days, while the positivity rate has been recorded at 0.65% for the past 1 week.

Dr Bhargava said that we have been discussing anti-viral Covid-19 pills and added that we have found that these pills need to be given very early,

SC raps Kerala, Raj, Maha for delay in aid to kin of Covid preys

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday pulled up the Kerala, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra Governments over delays in compensating the families of those who died because of Covid-19. The court also issued notice to the Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and Delhi Governments, seeking additional data on the subject.

Justice MR Shah and Justice BV Nagarathna slammed the "sorry state of affairs" in Kerala, and said, "As a welfare state it is their duty to pay compensation to people who have already suffered."

In October, the court approved the payment of ₹50,000 to the families of those who died due to Covid; this was to be paid over amounts paid by centre and state under various schemes.

even before the diagnosis of the disease. "Scientific data is still not supported in a big way that the pills will be useful at the moment," he added.

On Covid-19 vaccination, Agarwal said, "India is administering Covid-19 vaccine doses at the highest rate in the world and the daily rate of doses administered is 4.8 times the rate of doses administered in the USA and 12.5 times the rate of doses administered in the United Kingdom."

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Capt, BJP stitch alliance after 7 rounds of talks

Seat sharing to be announced at 'an appropriate time'

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Former Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh will fight the great electoral battle of Punjab against the army he once headed with the help of his erstwhile foes.

Completely reversing the previous election's scenario, Capt Amarinder and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday sealed the alliance, while leaving the decision on seat-sharing to be announced at "an appropriate time".

It took "seven rounds of talks" between Capt Amarinder and the several leaders of the saffron brigade to seal this deal. Rajya Sabha member and an Akali stalwart Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa's party — Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Sanyukta — is likely to join the evolving alliance between the BJP and Capt Amarinder's new outfit — the Punjab Lok Congress (PLC).

Speculated ever since he quit the Congress the previous month, Capt Amarinder, along with Union Minister and Punjab BJP affairs' in-charge Gajendra Singh Shekhawat,



announced the decision in New Delhi after their meeting. "We had met in Chandigarh earlier... Union Home Minister (Amit Shah) and our president (JP) Nadda have also given indications regarding this. So today, we can say we (the BJP and Capt Amarinder) will fight Punjab polls together... About the remaining issue and seat sharing, we will convey this at an appropriate time," said Shekhawat after the meeting.

Capt Amarinder, accompanied by his son Raninder Singh and close aide Bharat Inder Singh Chahal, said talks regarding the alliance have been going on "for many days". "Today, our alliance is confirmed. Only seat-sharing talks are going on... We are all prepared, and 100 per cent, we will win," he said.

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NBCC fined ₹1 cr for violating construction ban order in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has imposed a penalty of ₹1 cr on the National Building Construction Corporation (NBCC), a public sector company, for violating the construction ban in the city.

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Friday also ordered the sealing of one of the NBCC construction sites for operating in the night and violating the Supreme Court's anti-pollution norms.

Addressing the media, the Minister said, "NBCC was recently caught trying to covertly continue construction activities in pitch-black darkness at night at its Netaji Nagar site. The same site had previously been inspected by the DPCC on December 3, when a notice was issued and fine of ₹5 lakh was imposed on the NBCC. Despite this, the agency was found to be repeatedly violating the ban, and hence a fine of ₹1 crore has been imposed on them."

The Government has set up 11 night patrol squads to keep a close watch on construction and demolition works.

Meanwhile, the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and adjoining areas on Friday said the restriction on construction and demolition will continue in Delhi-National Capital Region.

Schools above Class 6 allowed to conduct physical class

New Delhi: Considering that children are out of school for about two years leading to frustration among them with serious adverse effect on their studies, the central air quality panel on Friday allowed authorities in Delhi-NCR to resume physical classes for students in classes 6 and above, colleges and other educational institutions with immediate effect.

China's stance in Indo-Pacific a concern: French Def Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

France on Friday expressed concern over growing aggressive stance of China in the Indo-Pacific region and stressed the need for ensuring freedom of navigation and adherence to international maritime rules.

Making this point here, visiting French Defence Minister Florence Parly also said France and India continue to face the threat of terror attacks and the challenge of terrorism has to be dealt with in a comprehensive manner.

She made these observations during a seminar organised by a think tank before her high profile talks with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Her remarks about Indo-Pacific came against the backdrop of India, the US, Japan and Australia forging an alliance (Quad) and holding a series of naval exercises in the region in the last one year. Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the first in-person meeting of heads of the Quad nations in the US two months back. Also, Australia, the US and



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his French counterpart Florence Parly at National War Memorial during the latter's visit to India, in New Delhi on Friday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

the UK formed a coalition — AUKUS — some time back to safeguard their interests in the region. This alliance did not go down well with France.

Noting that China is a major country and there are areas, including in fighting against climate change, where cooperation can be envisaged, she said, "China is also a partner for trade and commerce but we see that China is getting more and more aggressive in the region, and it is even more specific when it comes to the (South) China Sea," she said. "France and, if I may, India

share the same views on something which is key -- I mean the international maritime law, the freedom of navigation is not only a principal concept. This is among the set of rules we comply with, but is also something which puts at risk the freedom (of) navigation and trade," Parly said.

"We see that sometimes there are attempts to close this (South) China Sea and we want to make sure that this freedom of navigation is respected," the French Defence Minister noted.

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Jolt for Didi as SC stays Bengal Govt panel's probe into Pegasus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATTA

In a setback to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the Supreme Court on Friday stayed the probe ordered by her into the allegations of surveillance by using Pegasus software.

The Bengal Government has set up a commission under (retired) Madan B Justice Lokur to probe the scandal. The former chief justice of Calcutta High Court Jyotirmay Bhattacharya was a member of the commission of inquiry.

A bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli took note of the plea that despite the assurance of the West Bengal Government that the Lokur panel would not proceed with the inquiry, the commission has commenced its work.

The apex court on October 27 had appointed a three-member panel of cyber experts to probe the alleged use of Israeli spyware Pegasus for surveillance of certain people in India, saying every citizen needs protection against privacy violation and mere invo-



cation of national security by the State does not render the court a mute spectator.

The SC on Friday also allowed petitioner NGO Global Village Foundation to make the Justice Lokur Commission a party in the proceedings. The NGO had opposed the parallel probe by the Lokur Commission.

While constituting the probe panel, Mamata had launched an all-out attack on the BJP Government for putting Opposition parties and their leaders, including herself, under surveillance.

"It is very dangerous that the Opposition parties and those who do not support this Government's policies should be put under surveillance like this ... do you call it a democracy ... I have put plastered the camera of my phone out of fear and have been speaking to my advisers in person and not over the phone ... I have also advised Ministers and other key people to maintain extreme privacy in such cases," the CM had said. She also alleged that her election adviser Prashant Kishore too had been put under surveillance.

CAPSULE

COLD WAVE LIKELY TO HIT N INDIA IN 5 DAYS: IMD
New Delhi: Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions are likely over Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, parts of Gujarat and north Rajasthan over the next five days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday.

US APPROVES IMPORT BAN FROM CHINA
Washington: US Senators gave final congressional approval Thursday to a Bill barring imports from China's Xinjiang region unless businesses can prove they were produced without forced labour.

1 DIES AS 43 JUMBOS RAID C'GARH VILLAGE
Korba: A 71-year-old woman was trampled to death when a herd of 43 marauding wild elephants raided a village in Chhattisgarh's Korba district on Friday, officials said.

Amazon's approval to acquire stakes in Future Coupons suspended

CCI slaps ₹202 crore as penalty

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant development, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Friday suspended its more than two-year-old approval for Amazon's deal to acquire stake in Future Coupons Pvt Ltd and also imposed a ₹202 crore penalty on the e-commerce major for certain contraventions.

This comes amid a bitter legal battle between Amazon and Future Group over the latter's proposed ₹24,713 crore deal with Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL). Against this backdrop, Future Group had complained to the CCI. In a 57-page order, the regulator said the approval for



the Amazon-Future Coupons deal "shall remain in abeyance". Citing certain contraventions, CCI said those have arisen "from a deliberate design on the part of Amazon to suppress the actual scope and purpose of the combination" and that it finds no mitigating factor. Consequently, fines totalling ₹2 crore have been imposed on Amazon.

For failure to notify the combination in the requisite terms, the watchdog has also slapped a penalty of ₹200 crore.

The parties involved in the combination were Amazon.Com NV Investment Holdings LLC (Amazon) — a direct subsidiary of Amazon.Com Inc — and Future Coupons.

"We are reviewing the order passed by the Competition Commission of India, and will decide on next steps in due course," an Amazon spokesperson said in a statement.

While approving the deal in November 2019, CCI had also mentioned the order shall stand revoked if, at any time, the information provided by the acquirer was found to be incorrect.

"This approval should not be construed as immunity in any manner from subsequent proceedings before the Commission for violations of other provisions of the (Competition) Act," it had said.

On November 29, the Supreme Court gave two more weeks' time to Amazon to appear and argue before the CCI which had declined adjournment of hearing in a

case related to revocation of approval given to the e-retailer for the deal with Future Coupons.

In August 2019, Amazon had agreed to purchase 49 per cent in unlisted Future Coupons, which owns 7.3 per cent equity in listed Future Retail through convertible warrants, with the right to buy into the flagship Future Retail after a period of 3 to 10 years.

In August 2020, RRVL said it will acquire the retail and wholesale business, and the logistics and warehousing business of Future Group for ₹24,713 crore. The scheme of arrangement entails the consolidation of Future Group's retail and wholesale assets into one entity Future Enterprises Ltd and then transferring it to Reliance Retail. The deal has been contested by Amazon, an investor in Future Coupons.

N Koreans banned from laughing for 10 days!

Pyongyang: To mark the 10th anniversary of the death of former Supreme Leader Kim Jong Il, North Korea banned its citizens from laughing for 10 days from December 17 to mark the 10th anniversary of his death.

This year, the mourning period has been extended to 11 days as this is the 10th death anniversary. Generally, a 10-day mourning period is observed every year.

The ban on laughing is among several restrictions imposed on North Koreans to mark the occasion. North Koreans have been banned from drinking alcohol, laughing, shopping for groceries, or engaging in leisure activities, a resident of the border city of Sinuiju told Radio Free Asia.



Citizens visit the bronze statues of their late leaders Kim Il Sung, left, and Kim Jong Il on Mansu Hill in Pyongyang, North Korea Thursday on the occasion of 10th anniversary of demise of Kim Jong Il AP

Despite massive economic shocks caused by draconian anti-virus measures and long-dormant diplomacy with the United States, North Korea shows no signs of political instability.

Continued on Page 2

BJP accuses Kerala's ruling Left of insulting Gen Rawat

New Delhi: The BJP on Friday accused "left-minded" political leaders in Kerala and those associated with the State Government of "insulting country's heroes" like Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, who died in a chopper crash last week along with his wife and 12 other defence personnel.

"Left-minded political operatives in Kerala have denigrated the deaths of Late Gen. Bipin Rawat, his wife and 12 other bravehearts in the tragic helicopter accident earlier this month," Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said at a press conference here.

"This is absolutely objectionable and disgusting that a political party in power in a state has insulted our bravehearts," he said.

Another BJP leader and Union Minister V Muraleedharan alleged that Rawat and other military per-

sonnel who died in the crash were being "denigrated" in Kerala with the "active connivance" of the Left government in the state.

BJP chief spokesperson Anil Baluni, who like Rawat hails from Uttarakhand, said it was painful to see people using unfortunate remarks to insult heroes like him.

Chandrasekhar said the Left has created a political culture "where it is absolutely okay for people working in a state government or members of a political party in a state to denigrate Indian heroes. While it may be some junior-level lawyers, leaders of the communist party who say these things; this is reflective of the larger political culture that Left has created and encouraged".

This must be called out, he added. Rawat and those who perished with him in the crash served the country with distinction, and there is no doubt

in any Indian's mind about his distinguished services, Chandrasekhar said, referring to the outpouring of public emotions following the tragedy.

Some people were arrested in different states for posting messages on social media which were seen to be "insulting" to the country's top military officer or even celebrating his demise.

Muraleedharan noted that one of the officials who died in the crash belonged to Kerala.

Chandrasekhar said he himself is son of a military official, and added that he found it "objectionable, and disgusting" that a political party in power in Kerala will insult the tradition of service Rawat represented. BJP spokesperson Rajyavardhan Rathore, a retired Army officer, alleged that some political parties have fallen so much in their lust for power that they are not sparing even the Army. **PTI**

Vietnam delegates call on Vice Prez

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Vietnam delegation on Friday called on Vice President of India and Chairman of Rajya Sabha M. Venkaiah Naidu. Naidu said that Buddhism is a strong connecting link between the two cultures and societies and Vietnam is an important pillar of India's Act East policy.

Naidu welcomed Vuong Dinh Hue, Chairman, National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of the Vietnam and other members of the Parliamentary Delegation of Vietnam.

Welcoming the delegation, Naidu stated that under the leadership of Vuong Dinh Hue, the National Assembly of

Vietnam is playing an important role in shaping Vietnam's COVID-19 pandemic response, including socio-economic revival.

Recalling his visit to Vietnam in 2019 to attend the International Vesak Day celebration, Naidu stated that during his visit, he observed the rich influence of Buddhism in the daily life of the people of Vietnam which had truly enriched the way of life of people and also acting as a strong connecting link between the two cultures and societies.

The delegation led by Vuong Dinh Hue appreciated the friendly relationships between the two countries and hoped that such visit would further strengthen the existing relationship.

ED arrests Bengaluru-based CAs in ₹1,500 cr multi-level marketing scam

Under Prevention of Money Laundering Act

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested chartered accountants Anzar and Abhilash Thomas, both residents of Bengaluru, co-founders and owners of the Indus Viva MLM Pyramid Scheme, under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in a ₹1,500 crore multi-level marketing scam.

The ED initiated investigation based on an FIR registered by Gachibowli police station, Cyberabad. The company is embroiled in a multi-level

marketing scam having illegal pyramid type structure and is working under the guise of direct selling business, the ED said in a statement.

The company engaged large number of distributors and did rigorous marketing about the commission schemes of the company stating that there is a great opportunity of quick and easy money by becoming a member and then in turn making further enrollments.

In order to project their fraud pyramid scheme as a legitimate business, they introduced some products which were by their own admission valued at only 20 percent of the sale revenue and in reality are completely worthless.

The membership fee paid by new clients used to pay com-

mission to old clients. By giving false promises and inducements, company enrolled around 10 lakh members and collected around Rs1,500 crore since its inception, it said.

The PMLA probe revealed that Anzar and Abhilash Thomas floated subsidiary companies in Indusviva Group and diverted the funds to these entities and also blatantly siphoned off the collected funds into their personal accounts.

The diverted funds were used to acquire properties/assets in the name of individuals and companies. The accused were produced before the PMLA Special Court, Rangareddy, and have been remanded to 14-day judicial custody till December 30, it added.

Prime Minister to lay foundation stone of Ganga Expressway today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to give fillip to infrastructure development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of the much-hyped Ganga Expressway at Shahjahanpur on Saturday.

Last month, the prime minister inaugurated the Purvanchal Expressway and on January 4, he is scheduled to inaugurate the Bundelkhand Expressway.

The 594-km-long six-lane Ganga Expressway will be built at a cost of over Rs 36,200 crore. Starting near Bijauli village in Meerut, the expressway will extend till Judapur Dandu village of Prayagraj, meandering through Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, HarDOI, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh, and Prayagraj.

"Upon completion of work, it will become the longest expressway of Uttar Pradesh, connecting the western and eastern regions. A 3.5-km-long airstrip for assisting emergency take-off and landing of India Air Force planes will also be constructed on the expressway at Shahjahanpur. Besides, an industrial corridor is also proposed to be built along the Ganga Expressway," a top government official said in Lucknow on Friday. The official hoped that the new expressway would give a fillip to multiple sectors, including industrial development, trade, agriculture, tourism, etc., and provide a big boost to socio-economic development of the region.

UP under Yogi tops in custodial deaths, hunger index, farmers' suicides: SP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the Yogi Adityanath government has taken Uttar Pradesh to top position in the country in custodial deaths, hunger index and farmers' suicides.

Addressing a crowd in Rae Bareilly during Vijay Rath Yatra on Friday, Akhilesh said, "Those who claim to make Uttar Pradesh number one in the country have actually taken it to the top position in custodial deaths, hunger index, farmers' suicides, in selling public enterprises and banks and in burying cows alive. Can anyone imagine that live cows can be buried?"

"Yogi Adityanath also claims that UP is number one in 'Ease of Doing Business'. I am curious as to in which fields is UP in the top position? In UP, there is no Ease of Doing Business but 'Ease of Doing Crime'. Look at the condition of roads. If you smash a coconut on a newly-built road during inauguration, the coconut won't break, but the road will. The BJP leaders would soon use tomato instead of coconut for inaugurating roads.

The fact is that the BJP government has failed to deliver to the people on all fronts and would be wiped out of the state in the upcoming assembly elections. People will not rest till they throw out the Uttar Pradesh engine of the so-called double engine government," the SP chief stressed. Akhilesh also targeted the BJP over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence and said, "Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni should be sacked from the Union Cabinet by the PM.

HC stays notice to Nawab Malik over Wankhede's cousin complaint

Nagpur: The Bombay High Court here on Friday stayed a notice issued by a court in Washim district of Maharashtra to state minister Nawab Malik in an atrocities act complaint filed by NCB officer Sameer Wankhede's cousin.

Malik's lawyer Jagvijay Singh Gandhi said that Wankhede's cousin Sanjay Wankhede had filed a complaint at a special court in Washim, seeking registration of a case under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against the NCP leader. On December 4, the Washim court issued a notice to Malik seeking his reply, he said. "We challenged the notice before the Nagpur bench of the High Court contending that the complaint is not backed by affidavit. Besides, we need not have been made party for the purpose of the directions the complainant was seeking," the lawyer told PTI.

"Moreover, the complaint does not disclose any cognizable offence. Therefore it must be quashed," advocate Gandhi added. The complaint alleged that Malik's tweets and public statements claiming that Sameer Wankhede was a Muslim but obtained a bogus caste certificate hurt the complainant Sanjay Wankhede's sentiments. **PTI**

Toll rises to six in Gujarat factory blast

Ahmedabad: With the recovery of one more body on Friday, the death toll in a deadly blast-and-fire incident at a chemical plant in Panchmahal district of Gujarat increased to six, a senior government official said.

A team of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) has been called in to clear the debris and search for another worker who was missing, said district collector Sujal Mayatra. Five workers were killed and 16 others injured in a huge explosion and subsequent fire at a plant of Gujarat Fluorochemicals Limited (GFL) situated near Ranjitnagar in Ghoghamba tehsil on Thursday morning. Following a day-long search and rescue operation, fire services teams pulled out five bodies from the rubble.

As local villagers said that some workers were still missing, an SDRF team was called in, said Mayatra. "The body of a sixth worker was found today. Since one more person is still missing as per villagers, the toll may rise.

Search operation is on," the collector said. Of 16 injured workers, 14 have received minor injuries while two suffered over 50 per cent burns, Mayatra said.

Those who have suffered minor injuries will be given discharge by Saturday evening, he said. **PTI**

Velumani accuses DMK of political vengeance

Coimbatore: Former Minister and AIADMK Whip S P Velumani on Friday accused the ruling DMK of indulging in politics of vengeance against AIADMK leaders.

Addressing a demonstration of nearly 10,000 party workers and general public here against the DMK, Velumani said false cases were being foisted on former Ministers belonging to the AIADMK and raids conducted on them out of political vengeance.

Stating that hardly a few election promises had been implemented by the present DMK regime, he said unprecedented growth had been witnessed in Coimbatore district during the previous regime.

Requesting medical aspirants not to resort to suicide over NEET, he said former Chief Minister K Palaniswami had allotted 7.5 per cent reservation and DMK government has not taken any step to implement NEET. **PTI**

Capt, BJP stitch alliance after 7 rounds of...

From Page 1

"The question is who will contest on which seat...So, winnability is the sole criteria...We will see on seat-to-seat basis...Whoever is capable to win will be fielded...if it is the BJP's candidate, we will support, and it will be vice versa, they will support ours," said Capt Amarinder.

Notably, the BJP, which has always played a second fiddle to the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) during the decades of alliance, is eyeing larger share of seats in the alliance. Sources told The Pioneer that BJP want nearly 70 seats, out of total 117.

Capt Amarinder has all along been insisting on forging the alliance not in terms of seats, rather determining the allocation of seats as per the chances of a candidate to win "regardless of the party".

The former Chief Minister has also made it clear that his party would not take "any disgruntled" or "leftover" Congress leader in the party, but they will only be inducted as per the party's policy.

The alliance has added the fourth dimension to an increasingly intense contest that, just months ago, seemed to be heavily skewed in favour of the State's ruling party - the Congress.

"Our alliance would definitely win...We have no contest with anyone...Neither with SAD, nor with AAP nor with anyone else," said Capt Amarinder.

Citing "repeated humiliation" by the Congress top brass, Capt Amarinder step down as the Chief Minister in September, and later quit the Congress party, after floating his political party.

Even before formally quitting the Congress, Capt Amarinder had started talks with the BJP for an alliance in Punjab, and openly made clear his intent while indicating a "resolution" of farmers' issue.

Expressing his desire to arrive as seat-sharing with the BJP, Capt Amarinder had put one condition - resolution to the farmers' issue to their satisfaction - giving enough indications that repealing of the three contentious farm laws is round the corner.

It is believed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to withdraw the controversial farm laws was taken, to some extent, by keeping the BJP's Punjab plans in mind. Notably, the BJP, which has been contesting polls in alliance with the SAD for many decades, was left by its ally in protest against the agri laws - thus forcing the saffron party to look for an alternative considering not having a strong base in the State.

Later, both Capt Amarinder and Shekhawat shared their pictures, hugging each other, on Twitter, while sharing the news of the alliance. "Met union minister & BJP4India in-charge for Punjab, Shri @gssjodhpur in New Delhi today to chalk out future course of action ahead of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha elections.

We have formally announced a seat adjustment with the BJP for the 2022 Punjab Vidhan Sabha elections," tweeted Capt Amarinder. Shekhawat also tweeted, "After 7 rounds of talks, today I confirm that BJP & Punjab Lok Congress are going to fight the upcoming Punjab Assembly elections together. Topics like seat share will be discussed later."

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, BHOPAL
Water Work Department
Municipal Corporation Rest House, Shyamla Hills, Bhopal
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
First-Call
Deposit Work

Online tenders are being invited for the following work from the appropriated firm that Registration in the office of Madhya Pradesh (Central Registration Cell). The tender documents can be obtained online on the website <https://mptenders.gov.in> as per Key Dates in the Notice published on the above website and detailed information can also be seen on website <https://mptenders.gov.in>

Corrigendum for this NIT shall not be issued separately in news papers. Corrigendum regarding correction can be seen on the website <https://mptenders.gov.in>

S. No.	Tender ID	Details of Work	Estimated Cost (INR)	Earnest Money (EMD)	Tender Fee (INR)	Period of Work
1.	2021_UAD_173546_1	Survey, Designing Drawing, Providing laying, testing, and commissioning of different size DI-K9 pipe line from Bhadbhada Police Chowki to Suraj Nagar Square Under Zone 06, Bhopal. Deposit Work Estimated based on SOR. -MPUAD Water supply Sewerage and tube well Works, 2021	10674766.00	53374.00	10000.00	180 Days Including Rainy Seasons

Key Dates:-

Publish Date	16-Dec-2021 09:00 AM	Bid Opening Date	17-Jan-2022 11:00 AM
Document Download /Sale Start Date	16-Dec-2021 09:00 AM	Document Download /Sale End Date	15-Jan-2022 06:00 PM
Clarification Start Date	NA	Clarification End Date	NA
Bid Submission Start Date	16-Dec-2021 09:00 AM	Bid Submission End Date	15-Jan-2022 06:00 PM

T.N 933/021/022
Municipal Corporation, Bhopal

DELHI JAL BOARD (GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NE)-III
G.T ROAD SHAHDARA, DELHI-110032
E-mail:- eenelli.ii@gmail.com Ph No. 22596645

Press Short NIT No. 55(2021-22)

S. No.	Name of Work	Amount put to tender Rs.	Tender/Fees (in Rs.)	EMD (in Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Trapping of Janta Mazdoor Colony JCs waste water drain into sewer in Babarpur AC-67 EE(M) 67 Tender I.D No. 2021_DJB_212976_6	27,32,922/-	500/-	EMD Exempted	17.12.2021	28.12.2021

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<https://delhi.govtprocurement.gov.in>)
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 841/2021-22 "Stop Corona - Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing and Maintain Hygiene" EX. ENGINEER (NE)-III

DELHI JAL BOARD (GOVT. OF N.C.T OF DELHI)
OFFICE OF THE ADDL. CHIEF ENGINEER (M-10)
ENGINEERS BHAWAN, 2ND FLOOR, ANDREWS GANJ, NEAR MOOL CHAND CROSSING, NEW DELHI-110049
Mail:- acem10djb@gmail.com

NIT No.4/ACE (M-10)/AEE (T) M-10/2021-22

S. No.	Name of Work	Reserve price	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Last date and time for download & RTGS through e-procurement solution
1.	Improvement of sewerage system by replacement of sewer line at back side of JCO Club and adjoining area of A-Block Defence Colony in South-II (AC-42 Kasturba Nagar).	3060792/-	2021_DJB_212912_7 16.12.2021	01.01.2022 upto 2.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at (govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in)
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 835/2021-22 "Stop Corona - Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing and Maintain Hygiene" ASSTT. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (T) M-10

Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency
First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatiraj, Opp-IT Park, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun

Ref. No.: 2455/11-02(xvi)/ITCO/URRDA/21 Dated: 17.12.2021
PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice

The Executive Director, WAPCOS Limited on behalf of URRDA, Government of Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of Bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Districts of **Almora for 02 number of package** with estimated cost totaling to **Rs. 4.44 Crore** and District of **Bageshwar for 05 number of Package** with estimated cost totaling **Rs.9.97** including their maintenance for Five years from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent*.

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 17-12-2021

Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstenders.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB at WAPCOS Ltd, plot No. 209, Phase-I, Basant Vihar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, on a date mentioned in SBD, on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the bid either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date and time of submission of bids.

Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 23-12-2021 01:00 PM.
For further details please log on to www.pmgstenders.gov.in

Chief Engineer, URRDA, DEHRADUN

* Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.
Note: For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2976077 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA
WORKS DEPARTMENT Tender call Notice

B-811 E-mail: rbcirclekhurda@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle-14/2021-22 Memo No - 1778 Dt. . 14.12.2021

The Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Building works as detailed in the table below:

1. Nature of Work	: Building Works
2. No of Work	: 4 Nos
3. Tender Cost	: Rs.10000.00 (On-Line)
4. Class of Contractor	: A Class and Special Class
5. Available of Bid document in the Website	: From 10.00 AM of Dt. 24.12.2021 to 05.00 PM of Dt. 07.01.2022
6. Last Date of receipt of tender	: Dt.07.01.2022 upto to 5.00 PM
7. Date of opening of Bid	: Dt. 10.01.2022 at 11.30 AM

8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha
OIPR-34127/11/0020/2122

China's stance in Indo-Pacific... 107...

From page 1

Parly said France wants to preserve the Indo-Pacific as an open and inclusive area and that must be free from any "coercion". She also said the Indo-Pacific is not an artificial juxtaposition of the Indian and Pacific oceans. It should be understood as a wide geographical continuum facing common challenges.

On the scourge of terrorism, she said "Terror has struck France and Europe repeatedly over the last few years and has not spared the Indo Pacific, including India. This fight is not over and will continue for many years to come." She also said the threat has not waned in the backdrop of the situation in Afghanistan.

From Page 1

India has so far administered 82.8 crore first doses and 53.72 crore second doses. Overall, more than 136 crore doses have been administered in the country which is 2.8 times the total doses administered in the US, it said.

India logged 7,447 new coronavirus infections taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 3,47,26,049, while the active cases declined to 86,415, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday. The death toll climbed to 4,76,869 with 391 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 a.m. A decline of 830 cases has been recorded in the active Covid-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

Delhi-NCR schools allowed to reopen in phased manner

All schools reopening today for Class 6 and above

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management has allowed schools in Delhi and NCR to reopen in a phased manner. The commission has suggested reopening the schools for students of classes 6 and above only with immediate effect. Further, the commission has added that schools for students of classes up to 5 can reopen from December 27, 2021.

After the announcement made by the Commission for Air Quality Management, the Delhi government has allowed all schools to resume physical classes from Class 6 onwards from December 18.

"All the Government, Government aided, unaided recognised, NDMC, MCDs and Delhi Cantonment Board Schools will reopen from December 18 for classes 6 onwards," read the circular.

City government has earlier

closed all schools and colleges in view of the increased air pollution however the parents in Delhi last week took to Twitter demanding reopening of schools and made a Twitter campaign with #backtoschool, where concerns were raised as the decision of closure of schools will hamper the learning of students.

Reviewing the situation and keeping mental wellness of children at top most, the Delhi government had approved the Commission to allow reopening of schools.

Releasing an order, CAQM said that after receiving large number of representations arguing the compelling necessity to open the schools and educational institutions and following the directions of Supreme Court, the Commission examined the requests of various organisations regarding relaxations on restrictions imposed. "CAQM reviewed the restrictions



imposed on opening of schools, colleges and educational institutions vide Direction No. 46 dated 02/12/2021.

The Commission directed all the State Governments of NCR and GNCTD to follow a phased re-opening approach in respect of schools, colleges and educational institutions located within the NCR.

State Governments of NCR and GNCTD have been advised to take immediate decision for resumption of physical classes in schools (standard VI onwards), colleges, educational institutions, skill development & training institutes, other training institutes and libraries. The Commission also directed the State Governments of NCR and GNCTD to take the decision for resumption of physical classes, for students up to V standard, w.e.f. 27th December, 2021, duly considering the Air

Quality Index (AQI) and the winter vacation schedule," it said.

CAQM said it has received arguments that were made for the reopening of schools were children are out of school for about two years leading to frustration among children with serious adverse effect on their studies, large number of students are not able to get the facility of online education; As per the academic programme, schools are required to impart education to children for about 220 days annually and not opening schools are hampering physical and mental health as well as emotional growth of children and students and parents have been approaching school authorities to reopen schools. "Taking into consideration the submissions made and in light of improvement of AQI of Delhi from 'Severe' to 'Very Poor' category, the Commission via its Direction No. 50 today directed the State Governments of NCR and GNCTD allowed reopening of schools and educational institutions in a phased manner," it said.

Tata Power-DDLSA to hold 'Lok Adalat' to settle power theft cases

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited will organise a 'Special Lok Adalat' in association with the Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLSA) on 19th December to settle cases of direct theft and meter tampering.

The discom will organize it at Mata Sundari Lane and Rohini, sector 3 through physical and virtual mode, strictly in adherence to Covid-19 safety guidelines. A senior discom official said that the session will provide Tata Power-DDL consumers/litigants, residing in North and North-West Delhi, a one-time opportunity, for

an amicable and on-the-spot settlement of their power theft cases, relating to both direct theft and meter tampering. The official further said that cases that are either pending in any Court of Law will be taken up by the Lok Adalat. Consumers desirous of settling their power theft cases can either attend in person or through their authorised representatives carrying authorisation letter, photo ID and a copy of their theft bill.

"This is the last opportunity being provided to these consumers to settle their power theft cases. In case of a default, the company will be compelled to initiate criminal proceedings against these consumers," he added.

Namaz offered in open in G'gram despite Hry CM announcement

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Despite Haryana Chief Minister's Manohar Lal Khattar announcement that Namaz will not be tolerated in the open, the Friday Namaz was again offered in six places under heavy police deployment in Gurugram.

Khattar had asserted that the offering of Namaz in the open cannot be tolerated and the need to find an amicable solution.

The CM had said that the Government has withdrawn the designated places permission given to offer Friday prayers at certain sites. Offering public prayers is leading to clashes and that should not happen. Earlier, Hindu and Muslim organisations had agreed on 18 new sites for open namaz prayers include 12 mosques, dargah, waqf board properties and six public areas.

However, there were again disruptions of 'Jumma' prayers were reported in Gurugram. Some Hindu groups refused to allow Friday Namaz in Udyog Vihar industrial area on Friday and force Muslim community people to chant 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' which led to verbal spat

Snatchers drag woman for 100m

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old woman was dragged for around 100 meters during a snatching bid and later fell on the road in Shalimar Bagh area. The incident took place on December 16, nine years after the Nirbhaya gangraped took place.

The CCTV footage of the incident also went viral on social media. In the video, it is seen that two persons on a scooter approach woman and later try to escape after snatching her mobile phone. The woman holds the pillion rider

and is dragged for around 100 meters and later falls on road.

According to police, they have apprehended one of the accused while police teams are looking for another accused.

According to Usha Rangnani, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Northwest district, a police control room (PCR) call was received at Shalimar Bagh police station regarding snatching of a mobile phone from a woman on Thursday around 6.40 PM following which a police team was dispatched for the spot.

In the enquiry, it was revealed that at around 5.30 pm, victim Payal, who works in Fortis Hospital as front office assistant, was going home after her duty.

When she reached red light near hospital, two persons came on a scooter. While the pillion rider snatched her phone, she caught him from his jacket and was dragged along with the scooter and later fell down. She sustained abrasion injuries on her knees. She was discharged from the hospital on Thursday soon after the treatment," said the DCP.

Now lodge OC violations plaint, just send email to DTCP

Gurugram: In a bid to curb Occupation Certificate (OC) violations, the Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) Gurugram has created an email ID to lodge complaints related to OC violations in license colonies.

DTCP officials said that the emails sent to them would be resolved within 10 to 15 days and a dedicated team of the enforcement wing would be monitoring the communication with applicants.

The department said on Thursday that emails for violations of OCs can be sent to dtpenfoc@gmail.com.

RS Bhat, the district town planner, said that the purpose of these email IDs is to get OC violation related complaints and to curb further violations in sectors.

"The government has already increased the floor area ratio (FAR) from 145 to 264 in sectors despite the people are making illegal construction like bathroom on balcony and rooms in the still parking area," he said.

The official said if anyone gets information about illegal construction can lodge complaints through the email ID along with photos.

"Through emails, we received some complaints that construction work in violation of norms is being carried out in some parts of the city so we took action and 50-60 OC has been cancelled recently and around 100 OC's are under scanner," Bhat said.

"Director-General Department of Town & Country Planning Haryana has given strict orders that OC violations should be controlled otherwise it will be loaded on infrastructure. The department has also formed five teams for regular checking in sectors. The team will submit the report by December 25," he added.

The officials said after stern actions taken by the department OC applications has been reduced earlier from 150 to 50. An accurate application that fulfills norms has been cleared within 5-7 days.

"To stop illegal construction after getting an OC we have called Home Developer Associations President and Secretary to inform developers that violations in any term will not be tolerated and if they violated prescribed norms FIR will be registered against them," Bhat mentioned.

Man killed, wife injured in clash with shanty owner

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 38-year-old man was killed and his wife injured after they were allegedly assaulted by their landlord in east Delhi's Trilokpuri area, police said on Friday. Police said that they have nabbed three persons, including the owner of the shanty in which the victims live.

According to police, Mayur Vihar police station received an information on Friday at 12.10 am that one Maheshwari (36), a resident of Trilokpuri, was admitted in a hospital in injured condition and her husband Kale Khan was declared brought dead. He has injury marks on his chest and head.

Later, another information was received that one Murgan (49), a resident of Trilokpuri, was also admitted, police said.

During enquiry from the son of the deceased, it was found that on Thursday around 11 pm, Murgan came to their home. His father has taken a shanty on rent from Murgan. An argument ensued between his mother Maheshwari and Murgan when he asked for rent and electricity bill, said Priyanka Kashyap, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), East district.

Murgan caught hold the hairs of his mother and in retaliation, she slapped him. After sometime, the minor along with his brother and his parents was standing outside his house when Murgan, Armugam, Sahil and Ajay came there, the DCP said.

Armugam stabbed his father in chest with a knife. Murgan assaulted his mother and his father in head with a rod like object. Sahil and Ajay also pelted stones on them, police said.

On hearing commotion, people gathered there. His mother and father were taken to LBS Hospital where his father was declared brought dead and his mother is undergoing treatment, said the DCP.

UTTAR PRADESH EXPRESS PRADESH

THE LONGEST EXPRESSWAY OF UTTAR PRADESH

FOUNDATION STONE LAYING

GANGA EXPRESSWAY

594 km. long from Meerut to Prayagraj

by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Date : 18 December, 2021 | Time : 12:00 PM
Venue : Railway Ground, Rauza, Shahjahanpur

In august presence of

Yogi Adityanath

Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Keshav Prasad Maurya Deputy Chief Minister Uttar Pradesh	Santosh Kumar Gangwar MP Bareilly	B.L. Verma Minister of State Cooperation and Development of North Eastern Region Govt. of India	Suresh Kumar Khanna Minister, Finance, Parliamentary Affairs and Medical Education Uttar Pradesh
Satish Mahana Minister Industrial Development Uttar Pradesh	Jitin Prasada Minister, Technical Education Uttar Pradesh	Nitin Agrawal Deputy Speaker, Vidhansabha Uttar Pradesh	Mahesh Chandra Gupta Minister of State, Urban Development, Overall Urban Development, Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation, Uttar Pradesh
Arun Kumar Sagar MP, Shahjahanpur	Ashok Kumar Rawat MP, Mirsikh	Sanghmitra Maurya MP, Badaun	Dharmendra Kumar Kashyap MP, Aonla
Mamta Yadav Chairman, District Panchayat, Shahjahanpur	Manvendra Singh MLA, Dadraul	Veer Vikram Singh 'Prince' MLA, Katra	Roshan Lal Verma MLA, Tilhar
			Chetram MLA, Powayan

Dharamveer Prajapati
Minister of State
Industrial Development
Uttar Pradesh

Jal Prakash
MP, Hardoi

Helpful in setting up food processing units, storage houses, market and milk based industries

Considerable reduction in pollution level, fuel cost and travel time

Agriculture, commerce, tourism and industries will get encouragement in the developing regions of Rohilkhand and Vinhdya

In the form of Industrial corridor, the expressway will connect production units, development centres and agricultural production areas with the national capital

Opportunities for establishment of educational training and medical institutions

Watch the live telecast on DD News DD National/Uttar Pradesh Youtube.com/dduttarpradesh UPGovtOfficial CMOUttarpradesh CMOfficeUP

Soch Imaandaar, Kaam Dumdaar

Information and Public Relations Department, Uttar Pradesh

India, France agree to strengthen bilateral ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
India and France on Friday agreed to further strengthen their bilateral defence and strategic ties besides working together to enhance cooperation in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums. The two sides also agreed to explore possibilities for joint venture in weapon manufacturing. These were the major take-aways from the talks between visiting French Defence Minister Florence Parly and her Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh here.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his French counterpart Florence Parly at National War Memorial during the latter's visit to India, in New Delhi on Friday
Ranjana Dimri / Pioneer

France also offered to supply more Rafale fighter jets to India if it requires with Parly saying the use of the same aircraft by the two strategic partners is a reflection of "real asset and strength" in their ties.

France was also ready to supply the naval version of the jets for the second aircraft carrier INS Vikrant likely to be inducted into the Navy late next year. The carrier is indigenously designed and built here and is now undergoing mandatory sea and other trials.

India bought 36 Rafale jets worth over Rs 60,000 crore from France and the induction process into the IAF is on with 33 of them already in service now. The remaining jets will arrive next year. India and France had inked a Government-to-Government deal for the Rafale jets in 2016.

As regards talks, a wide range of bilateral, regional, defence and defence industrial cooperation issues were discussed in the annual meeting. The visiting minister also called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Incidentally, she had visited India last year when the first batch of four Rafale jets were inducted into the IAF at Ambala.

The Ministers reviewed the existing military-to-military cooperation, which has increased in spite of pandemic challenges. They discussed ways to increase defence cooperation in all domains. India and France have recently concluded their annual bilateral Army Exercise, Shakti, with focus on counter-terrorist operations, in France in November. Defence industrial cooperation was discussed with focus on future collaborations and co-production between the two countries, officials said after the high profile parleys.

The Ministers acknowledged their convergences on number of strategic and defence issues.

They expressed commitment to work together to enhance cooperation in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums. France is the current chair of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and shall take over the Presidency of European Union from January 01, 2022. The two Ministers decided to work closely on a number of issues during the French Presidency.

On France willing to off-

er more Rafale jets, Parly said earlier in the day during a seminar "I am very happy that the Indian Air Force is satisfied with its Rafale and we are very proud that despite Covid, the 36 aircraft will be delivered on time according to the contract... It's a real achievement."

"Using the same aircraft is a real asset and strength. I am sure that there is room for new developments. We are ready to answer any additional needs of request that could be made by India," she said.

The French minister also referred to India's planned induction of a second aircraft carrier and indicated that France will be interested in supplying the carrier-based jets.

"We know that the aircraft carrier will soon be... That aircraft are needed. We are open and ready to provide any other Rafale if this is India's decision," she said.

The first batch of five Rafale jets, manufactured by French aerospace major Dassault Aviation, arrived in India on July 29 last year.

others laying papers on ministers' behalf with prior notice and permission. There have been occasions when ministers were not present in the House when their names are called for the laying certain official papers and others had to do so on their behalf. Meanwhile, Naidu also lauded chairpersons of some of the parliamentary standing committees for their timely reports and holding regular meetings.

"The Ministers who are supposed to lay papers on the table of the House having given notice to the Chair should not be absent from the House. In extreme circumstances — there would be some occasions — if there is any problem, they must approach the Chair in advance and seek permission."

"Some of them are doing it while others think it is casual. It cannot be casual, it cannot be usual," he said, asserting he will not allow such things in the future.

Naidu asked Leader of the House Piyush Goyal and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi to take notice. He said he was not objecting to

Modi meets UP BJP MPs, 'Teni' not present

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Against the backdrop of an ongoing hectic poll-campaign in the Assembly election bound Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday met BJP MPs from the State which, however, significantly missed the MP from Kheri Ajay Mishra 'Teni' whose resignation as a Central Minister is being demanded by the Opposition parties in connection with the Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

It was the PM's fourth such

interaction in the Winter Session of Parliament with party MPs categorised Statewise. "Teni's son is among the 13 accused arrested in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence on October 3 during Farmers agitation in UP in which eight People were killed."

"Teni" is a Brahmin, an influential caste in the UP which is to go to polls in less than three months.

Around 36 MPs from the State attended the breakfast meeting with Modi.

The number was report-

edly restricted to less than the total strength of the party in Parliament from Uttar Pradesh due to Covid-19 protocols, sources said.

The discussion was focused on how MPs could foster better communication between constituents and themselves.

Modi told UP MPs what he also said to the party MPs from five southern states a day before that they should organize cultural and sports events in their areas to encourage both health and a sporting spirit and identify talents.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS IN RAJYA SABHA Ministers can't take it casually, says Naidu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Peeved over absence of Ministers in the Rajya Sabha, Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday said they cannot take it "casually" and "it cannot be usual" and asked the Government to take notice.

He made these observations when some ministers were absent from the house even though papers were listed against their names and others presented the papers on their behalf.

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DGCA: 1.05 cr travelled by air in Nov in domestic flights

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday shared data saying around 1.05 crore domestic passengers travelled by air in November, 17.03 per cent higher than the 89.85 lakh who travelled in October.

The data showed that domestic passengers travelling by air during the period from January 2021 to November 2021 were 726.11 lakh versus 556.84 lakh during the corresponding period of previous year thereby registering annual growth of 30.40 per cent and monthly growth of 65.50 per cent. This indicates a major revival in the confidence of the travellers in air travel in the country.

"IndiGo carried 57.06 lakh passengers in November, a 54.3 per cent share of the domestic market, SpiceJet flew 10.78 lakh passengers, accounting for a 10.3 per cent share of the market", the data showed. Go First (previously known as GoAir), Air India, Vistara, AirAsia India and Alliance Air carried 11.56 lakh, 9.98 lakh, 7.93 lakh, 6.23 lakh and 1.20 lakh passengers, respectively, in November, the data showed.

The occupancy rate for SpiceJet was 86.7 per cent in November. The November

Don't privatise public sector banks, Varun urges Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Speaking against the Centre's move to privatise public sector banks on the plea that they "alone failed to recover NPAs", BJP MP Varun Gandhi on Friday asked the Government to desist from privatising them given their huge capacity to employ people across the country and social role.

In a tweet, Varun said private bank may not support self-help groups, provide rural banking and loans to SMEs.

"As we push towards privatising public sector banks, we must take pause to note that they employ almost a million, while helping self-help groups,

providing rural banking and giving loans to SMEs. All things that private banks may not pursue", the MP from Pilibhit, UP, said.

In another tweet in Hindi, Varun sought the union finance Minister to consider pushing Banking bill (amendment) 2021, only after discussing it with the "all affected groups".

He said there is "no basis" for privatising PSU banks "only on the basis that it is only banks which failed to recover their NPAs".

Varun indicated that Government was as much accountable for Non-recovery of NPAs of the PSU banks in the country.

CBI files chargesheet against Corporation Bank former CMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday said it has filed a chargesheet against then CMD, Corporation Bank, Ramnath Pradeep besides then Chief Manager and then Senior Manager of the bank in a case related to loss of Rs 79 crore to the public sector lender.

Besides Pradeep, the then Chief Manager SN Murthy Shankar, the then Senior Manager AP Shiva Kumar have also been named in the chargesheet.

The CBI had registered a case on June 16, 2017 on a complaint from Corporation Bank, Mumbai against a Mumbai-based private company Parekh Aluminex and others including its Directors, Chartered Accountant & unknown others. The private company incorporated in 1994 was engaged in manufacturing of Aluminum Foil Containers etc.

The accused had allegedly conspired and availed various credit facilities to the tune of Rs 60 crore from Corporation Bank (now UBI), the CBI said in a statement.

They had also allegedly diverted the funds and deployed it in real estate and other non-related business activities by way of loans/advances in different real estate projects. An alleged loss of Rs. 79.04 crore was caused to Corporation Bank.

New drug could treat patients with Covid pneumonia: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Namilumab drug — an anti-tumor drug — may be used to effectively treat some patients hospitalised with Covid-19 pneumonia, according to a study published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine journal.

However, the researchers said that as the sample size has been small, more investigations are needed in this regard.

The team, including researchers from the University of Birmingham and the University of Oxford, UK, had

tested namilumab in patients hospitalized with Covid-19 pneumonia. They were receiving 'usual' care, as well as having high levels in their blood of a marker of inflammation known as C reactive protein (CRP).

"Our research has provided important proof-of-concept evidence that namilumab reduces inflammation in hospitalised patients with Covid-19 pneumonia," said Ben Fisher, co-chief investigator of the trial at the University of Birmingham and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (UHB).

"However, our sample size is too small for a definitive assessment of clinical outcomes and further studies are required for this, as well as to understand better the population that may benefit most," Fisher said.

Namilumab targets a 'cytokine' which is naturally secreted by immune cells in the body, but in uncontrolled levels is believed to be a key driver of the excessive and dangerous lung inflammation seen in Covid-19 patients.

The trial carried out between June 2020 and February 2021 involved

patients aged over 16 with Covid-19 pneumonia either being treated on a ward or Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at nine hospitals across the UK.

The study involved 54 patients receiving 'usual care' — treatment with steroids and oxygen or ventilation — and 57 patients given usual care as well as a single intravenous dose of 150mg of namilumab.

As well as Covid-19 pneumonia, all study participants had CRP levels greater than 40mg/L. The researchers compared the probability of the reduction of levels of CRP in patients.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public at large through this notice that my client Sardar Satnam Kaur w/o late sdr. Ranjit Singh r/o G-75 Karamgura New Delhi-110015, have discovered, sequestered & disintegrated his son namely Atamjit Singh and his wife Iyoti Kumari from his movable & immovable properties because the above name persons are misbehaving & out of control of my client Sardar Satnam Kaur. If anyone dealing with them, may do so at his/her risk, caused & consequences & my clients shall not be responsible for their acts and deed. Whatsoever. The above names has no title, right or interest in any property of my client Sardar Satnam Kaur. **SUMIT KUMAR (ADVOCATE) Enrol. No. D/839/2018**

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE FOR SIGNALLING WORKS
E-Tender No.: 687-ST-C-NGP-LLC GATE, Date: 13.12.2021.
Work: Interlocking of New LC Gates with Indoor and Outdoor works between section 'BHV-SEY' and 'SEY-PED' in connection with GC work between (CWA-NIR-MFR) of Nagpur Division of South East Central Railway.
Tender Value: ₹ 64,18,584/- (₹ Sixty Four Lakh Eighty Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Four Only).
Date of Opening Tender: 04.01.2022 at 15.30 hours.
For further details/purchase of tender document, eligibility criteria and the complete details for 'E' tender document, please contact our website: www.treps.gov.in
Dy.Chief Signal & Telecom.Eng./CPRI/110/281 Con Nagpur.
fSouth East Central Railway @social

FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

Whereas in the above noted petition the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities amount of Rs xxx. As per record to be standing in the name of Late Dr. Mahesh Chand Sharma deceased.
Whereas the 10.01.2021 at 10'o clock in the forenoon has been fixed for hearing or the application notice is hereby given to this concerned.
Given under my hand and the seal of the court on this 07.12.2021.
(Shirish Aggarwal)
Admn civil Judge-cum / Addl Rent Controller (seal) (Central) Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DELHI JAL BOARD OFFICE OF THE EX.ENGINEER (NE) II R-POCKET DILSHAD GARDEN DELHI-95

S.No	Name of Work	Amount put to tender to Tender	EMD Amount	Tender Fees	Date of release of tender in procurement solution	Last date/time of receipt of tender through eprocurement solution
1	P/L House Service Sewer Connection in notified area for left out portion of F-Block Dayapur, Ward no-62E in Karawal Nagar AC-70 Tender ID No. 2021_DJB_212857_3	36,91,119.00	EMD Exempted	500.00	16.12.2021	27.12.2021 upto 02:30 P.M.
2	P/L House Service Sewer Connection in notified area for Gali No. 1 to 4, F-Block Dayapur, Ward no-62E in Karawal Nagar AC-70 Tender ID No. 2021_DJB_212857_4	49,22,771.00	EMD Exempted	500.00	16.12.2021	27.12.2021 upto 02:30 P.M.

All the terms and conditions including: technical specification and special conditions is available on Delhi Govt Website <https://delhi.govtprocurement.com>.

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 84(2021-22) *Stop Corona; Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene* (Sukhpal Chauhan) EX. ENGINEER (NE-II)

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NORTH EAST)-I 2142 JANTA FLATS G.T.B.ENCLAVE DELHI-110093

PRESS NIT NO-57 (2021-22)

(1) Detail of the work:

S.N	Name of Work	Amount put to tender	Date of release of tender in E-Procurement solution	Last date / time of receipt of tender through E-Procurement solution
1	Providing new water connection including water meter and replacement of non functional water meters in ward no-E-54 in AC-68 Gokalpur under AEE(M)-68	37,68,618.00	17-12-2021 2021_DJB_212951_1	29-12-2021 2:10 PM
2	Providing new water connection including water meter & replacement of non functional no-E-55 in AC-68 Gokalpur under AEE(M)-68	37,40,521.00	17-12-2021 2021_DJB_212951_2	29-12-2021 2:10 PM
3	Providing new water connection including water meter & replacement of non functional no-E-53 in AC-68 Gokalpur under AEE(M)-68	31,34,842.00	17-12-2021 2021_DJB_212951_3	29-12-2021 2:10 PM
4	Providing new water connection including water meter & replacement of non functional water meters in ward no-E-52 in AC-68 Gokalpur under AEE(M)-68	30,97,380.00	17-12-2021 2021_DJB_212951_4	29-12-2021 2:10 PM

Further details in this regards can be seen at <https://delhi.govtprocurement.com>
Sd/- Sukh Pal Chauhan EX. ENGINEER (NORTH EAST)-I

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the general public that MR. MAHAVIR S/O. LATE MR. RAM KUMAR & MR. SATBEIR S/O. LATE MR. RAM KUMAR is owner of property in respect of Property Bearing No. ONE PLOT UNDER KHEWAT / KHATA NO. 853/975, KHASRA NO. 1397/8892 (0-19-0), AREA MEASURING 325 SQ. YARDS OUT OF 19 PAKA B/S/WA, SITUATED IN MOJUA, KHANSA, UNDER GURUGRAM NAGAR NIGAM, SUB-THESLI, KADIAPUR, DISTRICT, GURUGRAM, HARYANA, basis on the transfer deed dated 20.10.2021 (document No 8445) and revenue records. All persons are hereby informed that MR. MAHAVIR S/O. LATE MR. RAM KUMAR & MR. SATBEIR S/O. LATE MR. RAM KUMAR has approached ART Housing Finance (India) Ltd to take a loan. If anybody has any charge/interest in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 14 days of the present. For Mrs. Prasoona Lata, Advocate, SG Associates (Law Firm) Unit No 7, Basement, Plot No C 78, Sector 2, Noida, UP 201301. E-MAIL: sgassociatespl@gmail.com, Ph: 7011172754, 8130200837

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the general public that Mr. Vijay Kumar Sharma S/o Mr. Chandan is the owner of Freehold Residential Plot No. J-70, Flat No. G-1, Ground Floor Area measuring 700 Sq. Ft., out of Kharsa No. 10765/2/1048, Situated in the Block-I, Dilshad Extn., Village Jhimi Tahsilpur, Illaga Shabdara Delhi, vide registered general power of attorney dated 30.10.2020. All persons are hereby informed that Mr. Satyvir Singh & Mrs. Indu Singha are purchasing this property from Vijay Kumar Sharma vide a registered Sale Deed & has approached Fullerton India Home Finance Company Ltd to take a loan for the same. If anybody has any charge/interest in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present. For Mrs. Prasoona Lata, Advocate, SG Associates (Law Firm) Unit No 7, Basement, Plot No C 78, Sector 2, Noida, UP 201301. E-MAIL: sgassociatespl@gmail.com, Ph: 7011172754, 8130200837

PM asks Mayors to ensure LED bulbs widely used

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asked Mayors of all cities across the country to ensure that LED bulbs are used widely in the streetlights and homes of their cities and take-up this work in "mission mode" and make cities "divyang-friendly".

Addressing the All India Mayors' Conference through video conferencing, the Prime Minister referred to the recent developments in the ancient city of Varanasi and recalled his statement that the development of Kashi can be a roadmap for the entire country.

The Prime Minister said most of the cities in our country are traditional cities, developed in a traditional way. In this era of modernisation, the antiquity of these cities is equally important. He remarked that these cities can teach us how to preserve heritage and local skills.

The Prime Minister insisted that destroying the existing structures is not the way but emphasis should be on rejuvenation and preservation. This should be done in accordance with the requirements of modern times.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri were among those present on the occasion.

Modi asked Mayors to ensure that LED bulbs are used widely in the streetlights and homes of their cities. He asked them to take this up "in a mission mode." Modi also told Mayors to see that every facility in their city is "divyang-friendly" as per 'Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan-Accessible India Campaign'.

He said "we should always think of using existing schemes for new uses and taking them forward."

IMD predicts cold to severe cold wave in some parts of country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday predicted cold wave to severe cold wave conditions in some parts of the country, including Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Rajasthan in the next five days.

Dense to very dense fog, ground frost conditions are likely in some areas, it said. Meanwhile, temperature is likely to drop a few notches in some parts of the country including Delhi.

According to the IMD, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Saurashtra and Kutch could witness a cold wave or a severe cold wave from December 17 to 21. A cold wave is likely over north Rajasthan from December 18 to 21, while one is predicted for west Uttar Pradesh from December 19 to 21, and Gujarat from December 19 to 20.

"Cold wave conditions are predicted for Jammu, Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad, HP and Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana & Chandigarh during the next four days. Gujarat is likely to witness cold wave conditions over the next three days; West UP is expected to witness cold wave conditions between December 19 and 21," it said.

The IMD added gradual fall in minimum temperatures by 2-3°C over most parts of Northwest India and Maharashtra; by 3-5°C over most parts of Central India during the next four days.

The IMD records a cold wave when the minimum temperature is equal to or less than 10 degree Celsius at a weather station in the plains, and is 4.5 degrees to 6.4 degrees below the normal temperature for that period.

Modi to be awarded highest civilian decoration conferred by Kingdom of Bhutan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be awarded Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo or the Order of The Druk Gyalpo, the highest civilian decoration conferred by the Kingdom of Bhutan for the unconditional friendship and support extended over the years and particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Modi is the first foreigner to receive the coveted award. Modi had earlier been recipients of highest civilian honours in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, UAE, Palestine, Bahrain, Maldives and Russia. He also received the Legion of Merit by the US Government in 2020.

"Overjoyed to hear His Majesty pronounce Your Excellency Modiji's @narendramodi name for the highest civilian decoration, Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo," Prime Minister of Bhutan Lotay Tshering tweeted on December 17, 2021, the country's National Day.

Modi thanked Bhutan's king for according the country's highest civilian decoration on him, and said India will always cherish the country as one of its closest friends and neighbours and will continue to support its development journey in every possible way. The PM tweeted that he admires Bhutan for its unique model of sustainable development and the deeply spiritual way of life. "Successive Druk Gyalpos — Their Majesties the Kings — have given a unique identity to the Kingdom, and nurtured the special bond of neighbourly friendship that our nations share," he said.

The Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo is being awarded to Prime Minister Modi for the unconditional friendship and support extended over the years and particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large that, Original Encumbrance Deed dated 05.02.2008 executed by the President of India through L&DO in favour of Mrs. Jai Wani. W/o Mr. Bhawan Nath Bhargava through her attorney Mr. Vinod Bhai. S/o Bela Ram Behin in respect of entire property (Vidoc No. 1642) is not available/lost. Mr. Avinder Singh who is purchasing the Left Portion of "Floor of House No. 803/2-A, area measuring 150 Sq. Yds, but up on Plot No.803/2-A, area 300 Sq. Yds, situated in the layout plan of Malviya Nagar, New Delhi; from Mrs. Anita Verma W/o. Mr. Paul Verma, who is owner/attorney holder of the aforesaid property vide Notarized General Power of Attorney dated 04.04.1939, notarized Agreement to sell & Regd. WILL dated 31.03.1999 and same to be finance & mortgage by Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. If any person having any type of claim/right/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, liens etc. **Lucem Legal LLP**
269, Rama House, Ground Floor, Masjid Moh. Opp. Uday Park, South Extn., New Delhi-110049
Contact # 911-40046316

PUBLIC INFORMATION

It is informed that my client Mrs. Nisha Aggarwal w/o Mr. Jai Prakash Aggarwal is owner of Built up Third Floor Portion of Property bearing No. F-207, area measuring 125 sq. yds., i.e., 104.51 sq. mtrs., out of Killa No. 52/22 & 59/2, situated at abadi of F-Block, Mangla Bazar, Laxmi Nagar, in Village Khrueji Khas, Illaza Shabdara, Delhi-110092. That on 16.09.2015, my client lost the following documents: 1.Original Registered GPA dated 15.04.2002 executed by Mrs. Sudha Jain in favour of Mr. Vishal Jain. 2.Original Notarized ATS dated 15.04.2002 executed by Mrs. Sudha Jain in favour of Mr. Vishal Jain. 3.Original Notarized Receipt dated 15.04.2002 issued by Mrs. Sudha Jain in favour of Mr. Vishal Jain. 4.Original Registered Will dated 15.04.2002 executed by Mrs. Sudha Jain in favour of Mr. Vishal Jain. 5.Original Notarized receipt dated 22.08.2003 executed by Mr. Vishal Jain in favour of Mrs. Nisha Aggarwal. 6.Original Notarized ATS dated 24.06.2010 executed by Mrs. Nisha Aggarwal in favour of Mr. Jai Prakash Aggarwal. 7.Original Receipt executed by Mrs. Nisha Aggarwal in favour of Mr. Jai Prakash Aggarwal. 8.Original Mutation Letter issued by the concerned authority in favor of Mrs. Nisha Aggarwal. The above loss of document was reported in the concerned police station on 16.12.2021 and a police complaint was registered bearing LR No. 1063629/2021. In case, anyone finds the above-mentioned documents they may return the same to the rightful owner or at the address of the undersigned and if the same is misused shall be at his/her own risk. That my client intends to mortgage the said immovable property for her bonafide requirements to Cholangam Ltd. Investment & Finance Company Limited, Whosoever is having any objection to the said mortgage, or anyone has claim or right or interest in the property shall contact the undersigned within 07 days failing which it shall be presumed that there is no objection. New Delhi/Delhi DATE: 17.1

PDP, NC slam land conversion regulation

Under new norm DC is empowered to allow use of farmland for non-agri purposes

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After the Administrative Council headed by Lt-Gov Manoj Sinha approved the regulations framed by the board of revenue for conversion of agriculture land for non-agricultural purposes two mainstream Kashmir based parties reacted sharply claiming the move is aimed at engineering 'demographic' changes and 'disempowering' locals.

Under the new regulations, the District Collector has been empowered to grant permission to the change in land use from agricultural to non-agricultural purposes in accordance with the procedure as to be notified by the board of Revenue.

The permission is to be granted within 30 days of filing

of the application with a provision of deemed approval if no decisions are taken. The powers have been delegated to the District Collector to grant permission for land up to 12 1/2 standard acres against a fee of 5 percent of the market value of the land notified under the Stamps Act.

Apparently this decision has unnerved some of the valley based politicians.

First of all former Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party Chief Mehbooba Mufti in her tweet said the move is aimed at engineering demographic changes by allowing outsiders to buy land in J&K.

Mehbooba tweeted, "JK admin's new policy enabling conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural purposes reveals their nefarious designs

of engineering demographic changes. The development agenda is a ruse. Latest regulation doesn't even require the 15 yr domicile certificate as a prerequisite.

After depriving locals of their rightful share of govt jobs, such abrupt policy decisions that pave the way for outsiders to buy land in J&K are taken only to further disempower locals".

On the other hand National Conference Vice President and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah invoked his grandfather Sheikh Mohd Abdullah's land to the tiller reforms while opposing the move.

Omar tweeted, "Allowing use of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes is another nail in the coffin of the 'land to the tiller' reforms in J&K.

This landmark reform has been a major reason for the low levels of poverty and it will also threaten the food security of the people of J&K. Raising other concerns Omar said the fact that this conversion of land use doesn't even require the 15 year domicile certificate as a prerequisite will also rekindle fears about the motives behind such decisions.

Meanwhile, sharing details of the regulation a statement issued by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations said, "The regulations empower the applicant to commence the non agriculture use on the permitted land within one year from the date of the order issued by the District Collector in this behalf.

However, the land can be diverted and used only for the purpose specified in the per-

mission. Moreover, the regulations provide exemption from seeking the permission in cases of conversion for construction of residential house or farm-related buildings and storages with a ceiling of 400 Sq. mtrs (17 Marla).

The Assistant Commissioner (Revenue), Sub-Divisional Magistrate and Tehsildar concerned have been entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of these regulations within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

Besides, it will be the duty of every Agriculture Extension Officer to report cases of violation to the revenue officers and any neglect on this account can attract disciplinary action for dereliction of duty, the statement said.

NAGALAND FIRING

Rally seeking justice for victims held in Kohima

Kohima: Thousands of people took part in the 'Peoples' Rally' held here on Friday, demanding justice for the 14 civilians killed by security forces in Nagaland recently and scrapping of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from the North-eastern region.

Participants of the rally walked from the Old MLA Hostel junction in the heart of state capital Kohima to the Raj Bhavan, a distance of around 2.5 kilometres, and submitted a memorandum on the demands to the governor's secretariat.

Besides members of the Naga Students' Federation (NSF) which organised the rally, representatives of the North East Students' Organisation (NESO), All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and apex bodies of several tribal bodies took part in it.

The protestors raised slogans denouncing the killing of 14 civilians by army para-commandos in Oting area of Mon district in a botched up operation and its aftermath in the North-eastern state on December 4 and 5.

They also held banners and placards some of which

read, "Nagas are not terrorists", "Ban AFSPA, not our voice" and "Justice for Oting victims".

NSF president Kegwayhun Tep, Peoples' Rally organising committee convener Vipool Kintso, NESO advisor Samujjal Bhattacharya and other leaders submitted a memorandum, addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to the governor's secretariat at Raj Bhavan.

In the memorandum, the NSF - the apex students' body of Naga students of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland - demanded immediate justice for the slain youths of Oting and all Naga victims of alleged army excesses, repeal of the AFSPA, and expedition of finding out the solution to the Naga political problem.

Altogether 14 civilians in Nagaland's Mon district were killed in three consecutive episodes of firing by security forces, the first of which has been claimed to be a case of mistaken identity.

Shah had told the Lok Sabha that the army had received information on the movement of insurgents in Mon and '21 Para Commando' unit had laid an ambush. PTI

It is wrong to generalise human rights violated due to AFSPA in NE: NHRC chief

Guwahati: Justice Arun Mishra, the chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), on Friday said it would be wrong to generalise that human rights get violated due to imposition of AFSPA in some of the northeastern states. He also pointed out that the NHRC cannot examine or hold a debate on the legality or constitutionality of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

"It cannot be generalised that human rights are violated due to imposition of AFSPA. The government should be reviewing the need for application or withdrawal of the Act," Justice Mishra told reporters, after the conclusion of a two-day camp here. He, however, asserted that the commission views custodial deaths or extra-judicial killings "very seriously" and all cases must be reported or it may take suo-moto cognisance. PTI

Tabling of anti-conversion Bill: Cong makes daily presence of MLAs in K'taka House must

Belagavi: Amid reports that the BJP government in Karnataka is likely to introduce the contentious anti-conversion bill during the ongoing winter session of the State legislature, Opposition Congress on Friday issued a "Whip", asking its members to mandatorily take part in the assembly proceedings next week.

The winter session of legislature that began here on December 13 is scheduled to go on till December 24.

Stating that matters of utmost public importance are coming up for discussion next week, the Whip issued by the Opposition's Chief Whip in the assembly Ajay Dharam Singh has asked all the members to mandatorily participate in the proceedings from December 20-24, from the beginning till conclusion.

Leader of Opposition in the state assembly Siddaramaiah has already said

that the Congress party will not allow the anti-conversion bill to be passed.

The proposed anti-conversion bill that is also being opposed by Christian community leaders, according to official sources, is expected to come before the Cabinet on Monday and once cleared there, it is likely to be introduced in the legislative assembly and council.

The bill is expected to have penal provisions, and may also insist that the persons who wish to convert to another faith file an application before the Deputy Commissioner two months prior.

Also, the person who wishes to convert is likely to lose the religion of his or her origin and facilities or benefits attached with it, including reservations; however, one is likely to receive the benefits entitled to, in the religion he or she converts to. PTI



Christmas decorations at the Jio World Drive, Bandra Kurla Complex, in Mumbai, Friday, Dec 17, 2021

Pink Police force launched in Goa

Panaji: The Goa police's 'Pink Force' to respond to crime against women, children and tourists was launched on Friday by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. The CM said the Pink Force would start in 11 police stations in the initial stage before being expanded to all units. "The all-women force has been trained to handle all kind of situations and would be working to prevent crime.

The force will be operational round the clock he said. PTI

Corrigendum

Sub: Corrigendum for "Leasing of SLR parcel space".

Ref: (i) Tender published date: 30.11.2021 and Tender opening date: 23.12.2021.
(ii) Tender published date: 14.12.2021 and Tender opening date: 05.01.2022.

It is to inform all concerned, that in the NIT for leasing of SLR parcel space which was published on 30.11.2021 in various English & Hindi newspapers, scheduled to be opened on 23.12.2021 through IREPS portal i.e. www.ireps.gov.in "R-1 Compartment of train no. 14206 Ex. DLI to AYC and F-1 compartment of train no. 14208 Ex. DLI to PBH (item no. 8 & 9 of NIT) are withdrawn due to administrative reasons".

Also, another NIT for leasing of SLR parcel space which was published on 14.12.2021 in various English & Hindi newspapers, scheduled to be opened on 05.01.2022 through IREPS portal i.e. www.ireps.gov.in "FSLR Compartment of train no. 22868 Ex. NZM to DURG (item no. 50 of NIT) is withdrawn due to administrative reasons".

Other information of both NITs shall remain unchanged.

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Song eulogising 'mother Tamil' to be TN State anthem

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu Government on Friday announced 'Tamil Thai Vaazhthu,' an invocation song in praise of Mother Tamil, as the State anthem and directed that all present during its rendition should remain standing.

The decision comes in the wake of the Madras High Court recently ruling

that 'Tamil Thai Vaazhthu' is a prayer song and not an anthem.

"There is no statutory or executive order requiring the attendees to stand up when Tamil Thai Vaazhthu is sung. But highest reverence and respect ought to be shown to Tamil Thai Vaazhthu," the court had said.

Chief Minister M K Stalin said a Government Order to this effect has been issued, mandating that all barring the differently abled persons should remain standing when the 55 second long song is sung.

It should be sung before start of any functions in all educational institutions, universities, government offices,

public sector undertakings and other public fora in the state, Stalin said in a statement quoting the GO.

In 2018, at a function here, pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi remained seated when the Vaazhthu was sung and this had led to an outrage. Subsequently, led by a

party leader, Kan Ilango, protesters assembled before the Rameswaram branch of Kanchi Math raising provocative slogans.

They allegedly entered the math premises wearing footwear and when the manager of the religious institution protested, he was criminally intimidated. Following the manager's

complaint, an FIR was registered.

Quashing the FIR, since the petitioner-party leader and complainant-math manager have 'shaken hands' the Madurai Bench of the High Court had said in its order dated December 6, 2021 that the pontiff is seen sitting in a 'Dhyana' posture with his eyes closed. PTI

Cong a 'part-time' party, AAP, TMC experimenting, dividing Goa: BJP

Panaji: Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Friday took a dig at the Congress, saying that it is now a 'part-time' party which is slowly vanishing from the country, and added that parties from Delhi and West Bengal have arrived in Goa ahead of the Assembly elections to carry out their experiments and to create division.

The Congress hit back at Fadnavis for his 'part-time' party remark and said the BJP has failed to produce any formidable leader in Goa and hence it has to poach functionaries from other parties to shore up its ranks, and point-

ed out that it lost power in adjoining Maharashtra in 2019.

Besides the Congress, Fadnavis also targeted the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which rules Delhi, and the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC), which is in power in West Bengal. Both these parties have announced their decision to contest the assembly polls in Goa due in early 2022.

Slamming the TMC and Banerjee, the former Maharashtra CM said there is no democracy left in West Bengal and that the state is at the top in terms of unemployment and crime. PTI

Fadnavis, who is BJP's election in-charge of Goa, was addressing a gathering in Panaji after the induction of former Porvorim MLA Rohan Khaunte into the party fold. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and BJP's state unit chief Sadanand Shet Navade were also present on the occasion.

"People are here for experiment. They want to conduct experiment of their own (political) parties in Goa. But Goans are wise enough to understand all this. Goans know who will be with them and who will fly away after the election," the former Maharashtra chief minister said. PTI

Silver Line rail project: Discontent in Kerala Cong mounting against Tharoor

Thiruvananthapuram: Discontent is brewing in the State unit of the Congress party over its Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor's reluctance to sign a letter prepared by the MPs from the party-led UDF to the Centre against the state government's semi-high speed rail corridor and his open praise of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for his "investment-friendly" initiatives.

An unfazed Tharoor on Friday said in a tweet that on some issues it is necessary to put political differences aside and shared his photo with the CM.

Veteran Congress leader and former KPC president Mullappally Ramachandran today flayed the Thiruvananthapuram MP saying that he should learn party discipline, while Leader of Opposition in the state

Assembly V D Satheesan said the Congress would examine Tharoor's stand and take an appropriate decision.

While attending a programme here on Thursday, Tharoor praised Vijayan, saying he, as an administrator, was trying to change the impression that the southern state was not investment-friendly. The statement came days after he refused to sign a letter prepared by the UDF MPs against the multi-crore Silver Line semi-high speed rail corridor linking the north and south ends of Kerala, a flagship infrastructure project of the Left government.

"Tharoor may be an international-renowned person, writer or an orator. But, he has to learn the principles and discipline of the Indian National Congress", said Ramachandran. PTI

Man dies after being thrashed by hotel staff

Hyderabad: A man died after allegedly being beaten up by some hotel staff members here, who suspected his intentions, when he went into the hotel's cellar after midnight, police said on Friday.

The man, a labourer from Odisha, entered the cellar on December 15 when some staff members were celebrating the birthday of a colleague there, they said.

They allegedly questioned him and beat him up.

Those working at the hotel found his father's (who lives in Odisha) mobile number in his pocket and told him about the incident on Thursday morning.

The father informed his daughter-in-law and she took her husband home. PTI

8 more Omicron cases logged in Maha, tally 40

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI Maharashtra recorded eight more Omicron cases on Friday, taking the total number of the new Covid-19 variant cases in the state to 40.

A report released by the Pune-based National Institute of Virology (NIV) said that of the eight news cases, six cases were from Pune, while one case each from Mumbai and the twin townships of Dombivli-Kalyan in the neighbouring Thane district.

Of the total 40 Omicron cases recorded so far, Mumbai accounted for 14, followed by Pimpri-Chinchwad where 10 cases have been found. There are in all six cases in Pune (rural), while there are two cases each Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), while

Kalyan-Dombivli and Osmanabad have recorded two cases each. Latur, Buldhana, Nagpur and Vasai-Virar have registered one case each.

The swab samples of all those eight persons who have tested positive for Omicron were taken in the first week of December. "All eight patients are men. They are aged between 29 and 45 years. While seven patients were asymptomatic, the remaining one showed symptoms of Omicron," a state public department bulletin said.

According to preliminary information, four patients from Pune have a history of travel to Dubai, while two are their contacts. One patient from Mumbai had travelled to USA and the other patient from

KDMC had travelled to Nigeria.

Of the infected patients two are in hospital while six are at home in isolation. "The close contacts of these patients are being tracked. All patients have been vaccinated," the health bulletin said.

Meanwhile, the authorities said the total number of passengers who arrived at Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur airports since December 1 was 1,14,446 (16,617 from At-risk countries and rest 97,829 from other countries), while passengers whose RT-PCR tests have been done are 19165 (16,617 from high-risk countries and 2548 from other countries). Similarly, RT-PCR positive and samples sent for genomic sequencing was 81.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

For the convenience of rail passengers, Railways have decided to increase the passengers carrying capacity by augmenting following Express Trains from the dates shown against each :-

AUGMENTATION OF COACHES				
Train No. & Name	Existing Composition	Augmented by	Revised Composition	Date w.e.f. (Originating Station)
12687/12688 Madurai - Chandigarh - Madurai Express	3 Tier AC-3, Sleeper-9, 2nd Seating-4, 2nd Class Divyang Friendly-2, Pantry-1= 19 Coaches	2 Tier AC-1 Sleeper-1	2 Tier AC-1, 3 Tier AC-3, Sleeper-10, 2nd Seating-4, 2nd Class Divyang Friendly-2, Pantry-1= 21 Coaches	Ex. Madurai from 02.01.2022
			2nd Class Divyang Friendly -2, 2 Tier AC-1, 3 Tier AC-3, Sleeper-11, 2nd Seating-4, Pantry-1= 22 Coaches	Ex. Chandigarh from 07.01.2022
22613/22614 Rameswaram - Ayodhya Cantt. - Rameswaram Express	2nd Class Divyang Friendly-2, 3 Tier AC-3, Sleeper-10, 2nd Seating-3, Pantry-1= 19 Coaches	2 Tier AC-1 Sleeper-1, 2nd Seating-1	2nd Class Divyang Friendly -2, 2 Tier AC-1, 3 Tier AC-3, Sleeper-11, 2nd Seating-4, Pantry-1= 22 Coaches	Ex. Rameswaram from 19.12.2021
			2nd Class Divyang Friendly -2, 2 Tier AC-1, 3 Tier AC-3, Sleeper-11, 2nd Seating-4, Pantry-1= 22 Coaches	Ex. Ayodhya Cantt. from 22.12.2021

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

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Ants in pants

A section of orthodox parents is crying hoarse over a school's decision to introduce unisex uniforms

It is not funny how what we wear can create friction in society. It is as if fashion maligns culture. For some, the baggage of illogical and impractical traditions is lighter to carry than the weight of change. Take the case of girl students. Why does it always have to be girls, or women, when it comes to experimenting with change or conflicting with it? The latest is a section of Muslim community unhappy with a Kozhikode school in Kerala introducing unisex uniforms. A notice of the Government Higher Secondary School said boys and girls will wear trousers and shirts. If the girls wish to wear scarves or mufflers to cover their heads to respect their religious beliefs, they are allowed to do so. Is that what hybrid culture is, a mingling of the retro and the modern, a fusion of *haute couture* and tradition? That is a debate for another day. The school principal said they consulted the stakeholders — the students and their parents — before affecting the change. Incidentally, the move comes close on the heels of salesgirls in Kerala winning a court battle to get the right to sit while on duty. However, some conservative Muslims in Kozhikode are miffed at their girls dumping skirts for pants. They have organised protest marches, intent on making it a political issue. They must have realised the futility of the protest because no women joined them.

The Government, too, believes a uniform uniform bridges the gender gap and is a sprightly step towards gender equality. Some Kerala schools had introduced three-fourth pants a couple of years ago despite facing opposition. It would have been welcome had the debate been on whether the concept of gender neutrality that is sweeping across the world should impact school uniforms. The issue here, however, is quite narrow. It is a patriarchal objection to girls wearing pants. One of the Kozhikode protesters let the cat out of the bag by arguing that women wanting to progress does not mean they wear the same clothes as men. He makes two other points. One, that pants are "undemocratic" because they amount to a denial of "diversity". Imagine! Two, it is a "liberal" approach. That, surely, is the crux of the problem. The orthodox does not want progress to pass it by, leaving it alone by taking away the children. The girl students are thrilled to wear pants to school. They may have been more thrilled if they had a choice. The whole theory of empowerment of women goes for a toss if it is not about them having a choice. Reacting to a similar neutral uniform row in Ernakulam last month, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor remarked that making girls wear pants is no different from making them wear skirts. Why cannot they have the freedom to choose a uniform that makes them feel comfortable and confident? Wonder why boys are never asked to mandatorily wear *dhoti* and *kurta*.

PICTALK



Tourists take a boat ride at Ana Sagar Lake during sunset in Ajmer

PTI

An object lesson

Online classes are the way forward as these help save time, fuel and lessen health risks

The intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic might have ebbed but the cataclysm caused by it continues unabated. Several States are reeling under the impact of Omicron, the latest dreaded variant of the virus, and an impending threat of the third wave. Medical fraternity is worried about the pandemic's after-effects on children more than on the elderly. Uncharacteristically, complaints about 'memory fog' (loss of memory) are galore among the young citizens. Till the pandemic receded, the Government shut down schools and colleges and opted for online classes, which proved to be successful to a limited extent. But now that most State Governments have ordered the reopening of educational institutes, many parents are circumspect of sending their children to schools and colleges, fearing they may get afflicted by the bronchial affliction. Online classes are here to stay, according to many national award-winning school teachers and professors with decades of teaching experience. Dr C Ramakrishnan Nair, a venerated teacher for whom online classes were an altogether new experience, says the medium is more powerful than taking physical classes.

"If the teacher and the student are equally serious about studies, online classes are the best method to resolve the issues of scarcity of classrooms, poor infrastructure and the shortage of good teachers. The teacher can interact with students on a one-on-one basis and make sure that they have comprehended what has been taught," says Dr Nair, who takes hundreds of students across the country every day through the complex maze of various Indian laws and Constitution. His is not the lone voice. Sukumaran Periyachur, a national award-winning teacher, and Shylendran, a teacher in Navodaya Vidyalaya, are of the view that online classes are safe, secure and make education accessible to all. "The only section which would be affected because of this technological advancement is the private school managements who literally hold the education system to ransom," say these two teachers. Another voice of authority is Isro's former chairperson G Madhavan Nair, who feels that if the Centre invests a few thousand crores in launching communication satellites, the entire education system in the country could be brought under the online network. The innovation would help save commute time and energy, fuel bills (with the exception of practical experiments) and learning could be done without external disturbances.

Reasons for dearth of Muslim leaders



PRAFULL GORADIA

Since 1762, a number of Muslim chieftains showed the spark with some good ideas but could not command the increasing followers

Salman Khurshid's defence of what he said about Hindutva as well as others defending him brings out a stark fact. Muslims of the subcontinent have failed to throw up a leader of stature since Akbar, the Mughal emperor. Akbar showed the way of integrating with the rest of the populace. He conquered territory after territory, consolidated his empire and ruled for five decades. He made it possible for his successors to rule well for a century and poorly until 1762.

Thereafter, the British began to rule for nearly two centuries, with a number of Muslim chieftains who had ideas but could not command the increasing followers. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was a sincere officer who pleaded for educating Muslim youth but could not go beyond Aligarh and declaring that Hindus and Muslims were separate nations. Justice Ameer Ali was the first Indian High Court judge but migrated to England after he retired. Maulana Muhammad Ali was active and imaginative but he was obsessed with retaining the Caliph on the Turkish throne. It was his uppermost priority and he died too early to have greater influence.

Poet Iqbal wrote an extremely popular song, or *tarana* — *Saare jahan se achcha Hindustan hamara* — which Indian military bands play with alacrity even now. However, upon returning to India after a long tour of Europe, Iqbal underwent a revolution of mind and sponsored a division of India into the northeastern provinces and the rest. In short, he sponsored a confederate partition of India; he became a separatist.

Chaudhary Rehmat Ali, a Cambridge scholar, coined the name 'Pakistan' and did little else. Thereafter followed Qaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who was a true secularist until he arrived at the parting of ways with Gandhiji at the Calcutta plenum of the Congress in 1928. Earlier, popular Congress leader Sarojini Naidu described Jinnah as the "best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity". He regularly wore lounge suits, never *chudidhar* pyjamas and sher-



wani, which were mostly tailored at Saville Row London, the world's best for men's clothes. He became used to a peg or two of whiskey after sundown and enjoyed pork sandwiches in the afternoon. He did not know how to perform the *namaz* and seldom prayed any other way. This is according to his brother Ahmed, who was my grandfather's friend who resided at 401, Girgaum Road, Bombay. According to him, they were culturally Parsee; Mohammad married a Parsee, Ruttie Petit. Their daughter married Sir Neville Wadia.

Jinnah, in Gujarati, means tiny, which was his grandfather's name. When he converted from the Lohana, a Hindu caste, he continued being called Jinnahbhai but returned to India as Jinnah. He became a barrister in two years but was too young to be awarded the recognition. He had to stay back for two more years. He had learnt many an English habit and had no interest in religion.

On being sidelined by Gandhi in the Congress, Jinnah went away to London to continue his law practice and became arguably the highest paid barrister across



MUSLIMS OF THE SUBCONTINENT HAVE FAILED TO THROW UP A LEADER OF STATURE SINCE AKBAR, THE MUGHAL EMPEROR. AKBAR SHOWED THE WAY OF INTEGRATING WITH THE REST OF THE POPULACE

the British Empire. He had bought himself an impressive mansion in Hampstead in north London. In 1934, the Muslim League began persuading him to return to India because the party had become moribund. On the assurance that he would be made president for life, Jinnah returned to Bombay. He dictated terms to the League, whose other leaders did what Jinnah said. When the party did not do well in the 1937 elections, he decided to blow the bugle for Pakistan on March 22, 1940. To quote from his speech: "The Hindus and Muslims have different religious philosophies, social customs and literatures. They neither intermarry nor inter-dine and, indeed, they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their views on life and of life are different. It is also quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes in different episodes. Very often, the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap."

The point we are stressing is that Muslims find it diffi-

cult to throw up a tall leader. Jinnah was successful in getting Pakistan but he played the role of a brilliant advocate rather than a leader. The only beneficiaries of Pakistan were a few migrants from UP, a few Gujarati businessmen from Bombay and the Punjabis who still dictate to the rest of their country centred around Lahore. The majority of Pakistanis went with Bangladesh. The rest feel that they are under Islamabad's heel. Yet, more Muslims remain in India than in Pakistan. Their economy is in a shambles. It is still agrarian, if not also backward. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the hill districts are in the 19th, if not the 18th, century while Sindh is unhappy and Balochistan wants to secede.

Incidentally, another beneficiary of Pakistan was Jinnah who established his place in history as the founder of a nation. What is the reason for the paucity of leadership? Is it the comprehensiveness of the scriptures? Have they covered all aspects of life?

(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

ATTACK IS THE BEST FORM OF DEFENCE

Sir — The Bangladesh Liberation War, also known as the Bangladesh War of Independence or simply the Liberation War in Bangladesh, was a revolution and an armed conflict sparked by the rise of the Bengali nationalist and self-determination movement in what was then East Pakistan during the 1971 Bangladesh genocide. It was a bold and purposeful decision to give full autonomy to the Indian Army back then by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Similar to the freedom she gave to General Sam Manekshaw to liberate Bangladesh in 1971; Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 gave the same liberty to General Krishnaswamy Sundarji to evict the Chinese from Sumdorong Chu valley in Arunachal Pradesh. The recent Balakot surgical strike to eliminate Pakistani terrorists is another striking example.

There is no scope for buying time at this juncture from these eternal enemies at the Line of Control. Attack is the best form of defence and the Indian armed forces can strike the hard way to drive away the enemy once and for all. We remember the soldiers who laid their lives in these operations on the 50th Year of the Liberation War in Bangladesh. It is a proud day for our forces for these successful operations across the border.

MR Jayanthi | Mumbai

IS MAN NO LONGER A SOCIAL ANIMAL?

Sir — If being reminded that the aphorism 'live and let live' needs to be modified to suit the modern times is in itself a straightforward and unemotional statement difficult to comprehend; 'live and help others live' as the new cliché is sure to raise enough eyebrows. In an age where the 'self' has taken precedence over all other aspects of relationships, it is hard to perceive any special efforts being made towards giving shape to such a noble thought.

When it comes to awareness about our immediate vicinity, it is generally believed that concerns for our neighbours come first and then the community. But in most of the metro cities, even today, people are

Why so many elephant deaths?



The gigantic but lovable elephant is placed in schedule 1 of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Many projects are in place in India to save this magnificent creature from extinction. But the stark reality is that elephant deaths have surged significantly over the last few years. As many as five elephants died due to collisions with trains in Tamil Nadu and Assam in November and early December this year. This perennial "train-elephant collision" has been studied for a very long time but halfhearted measures have not helped.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

unaware of the existence of residents next door. In these modern times where man's materialistic pursuits have morphed him into a caricature of insensitiveness, emotional connections hardly exist between people. Hence it is difficult to gauge any empathy building up for fellow beings. Considering that man by nature is a social animal, cordial interactions between people are expected. But personal interests always seem to gain the better of people and hence 'minding my own business' has become the social norm more so now than it was ever before.

Pachu Menon | Margao

DURGA PUJA GETS HERITAGE STATUS

Sir — Durga Puja is a Hindu religious celebration that has evolved into a cultural and secular occasion. It has also become a spot for social and artistic gatherings. Durga Puja, also known as Durgotsava or Sharadotsav, honours and pays respect to Hindu goddess Durga and commemorates

Durga's victory over Mahishasur. It originated in the Indian subcontinent. The emotion and joy of Durga Puja will soon be known world over as it has been accorded heritage status by a top UN body.

For the first time in Asia, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) has inscribed Kolkata's Durga Puja on the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (ICH), giving Bengalis and Indians a cause for celebration. Durga Puja joins other Indian cultural practices and manifestations on the ICH list, including the Kumbh Mela, Bengal and Odisha's Chhau dance, Manipur's Sankirtana, Yoga, Ramlila, Buddhist chanting in Ladakh and Nawruz. "A subject of tremendous pride and excitement for every Indian", Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted.

Khushbu Khatri | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

He (PM Modi) fears only one thing — losing an election. I'm glad that he fears at least something.



Congress leader —P Chidambaram

The Omicron variant is going to spread rapidly in the US and a winter of severe illness and death awaits the unvaccinated.



US President —Joe Biden

Very interesting that I'm promoting one of the most iconic film franchises of all time and I'm still referenced as "the wife of..."



Actor —Priyanka Chopra



Sourav Ganguly is the BCCI president and surely should be asked why there is this discrepancy.

Former India captain —Sunil Gavaskar

Mamata Banerjee is trying hard to be recognised as the face of Opposition but I have no doubt that she will fail.



BJP leader —Roopa Ganguly



FIRST COLUMN

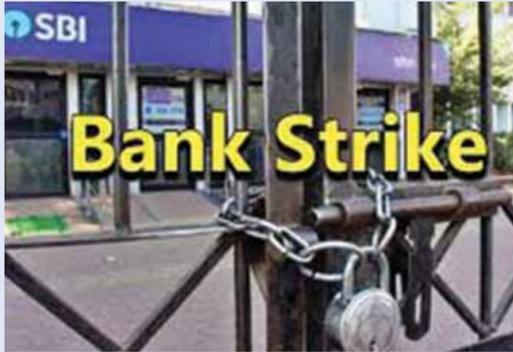
THE BANKERS' STRIKE IS MERE TOKENISM

As the general public is not with the unions, there is no way they can stop privatisation of banks



S KALYANASUNDARAM

Banking operations, including cheque clearances across the country, got affected as bankers under the aegis of the United Forum of Bank Unions have gone on a nationwide strike to protest against the proposed privatisation of two government banks. The United Forum of Bank Unions which is an umbrella body of nine unions has given the strike call for December 16 and 17. For the same demand they have abstained from work on March 15 and 16 also. Earlier as part of budget announcement, the Finance Minister had informed that two unnamed public sector banks will be privatized. Bank workers going on strike is not a new phenomenon, but over the years the strength of the unions to bargain 'based on their right to strike work' has depleted. It is well settled under different labour laws that employees have a right to strike work to highlight their demands as any management can have the right of lock-out or lay off, all subject to conditions. Long



time ago, we had only public sector banks and some private sector old generation banks and the workers of these banks were all well organized under communist unions. The workers had different settlements that were reached under Industrial Disputes Act and there was not much scope for the management to deviate from any of these. There used to be a system of 'collective bargaining', which in a lighter vein used to mean that the 'management will bargain' but ultimately 'unions will collect'. However, in 1990s, new private banks, like ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank etc, had come into existence. These banks have adopted technology for providing service and the role of labour unions has been curtailed by keeping all the staff under officer cadre. Over the years, these banks have acquired sizeable business also. As the employees of new private sector banks are not under these unions, these private banks function without any disruption. Even in public sector banks, when customers are having facility of online banking, the employees' strike does not disrupt transactions. Alternate channels like internet banking, mobile banking, ATM etc ensure that customer service is not affected. The only major service which is affected is clearing house function where cheques are cleared under the Cheque Truncation System administered by Reserve Bank of India. Though most of the employees obey the command of the unions and strike work, they are not happy about it. Under the principle of no-work-no-pay, they forego the wages of the days of strike. Moreover, when they resume the work next day, there will be added pressure of work without any compensation. When the issue involved is other than service conditions, they feel that they are unnecessarily dragged into the issue which is political. And many of them are not convinced with the ideology of the unions also. Everyone knows that the government will carry on their agenda as they have got the mandate of the people. With the majority they have in both the houses of parliament, any amendment to Acts required will be carried out. As the unions are totally opposing the move of the government, they lose the opportunity of bargaining for the welfare of their employees after privatization. If the unions are tactful, instead of blindly opposing the privatization, they can bargain for the welfare of the employees in those banks and cooperate with the government. In any case the government will carry out its agenda. When the general public is also not with the unions, there is no way that they can stop privatization of banks. The strike is just tokenism.

(The writer is a retired banker. The views expressed are personal.)

Insects help richly in ecological restoration



BKP SINHA

Insects help break down organic matter like corpses and animal faeces. This is important as it reuses nutrients, making them available for aerating the soil

Rewilding is a progressive way to conserve the environment. It is a form of environmental conservation and ecological restoration which has significant potential to increase biodiversity, create self-sustaining environments, and mitigate climate change.

There are two main approaches to rewilding: First, it enables degraded lands to recover by preventing anthropogenic influences, and allowing nature to conserve itself with minimum human interference. Second, re-introducing lost or dwindling plant or animal species into their natural environment, enabling restoration of their populations and ecological balance.

Rewilding does not take place only in protected areas or remote locations. Examples of this can be seen in many cities. Over the years, mining has caused rampant destruction in parts of the Aravalis, in Gurugram, Haryana. An NGO led by Latika Thukral and her team has healed nearly 550 acres of land and converted it into the Aravali Biodiversity Park by planting thousands of saplings. Today, it is a repository of native flora and fauna, which also has a water-conservation zone, and is an educational space for spreading awareness about environmental issues. Similarly, Yamuna Biodiversity Park of Delhi is an example of the successful restoration of barren land.

Kaikondanahalli Lake, which lies on the south-eastern periphery of Bengaluru, was severely polluted with sewage and solid waste. Following a newspaper report, the corporation planned to restore this lake with the support of groups formed of local residents, experts from engineering, education, ecology, etc. A year after restoration, over 50 species of birds and a great variety of butterflies, snakes, and frogs began to appear. There has been an enormous increase in animal and insect species since then. Regeneration of Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary in Rajasthan is also an example of the revival of a degraded ecosystem.

This article will briefly discuss the importance of restoration of insect habitats, which is currently untouched despite their tremendous potential and biological contributions in restoration of biodiversity in urban areas. The term 'Biodiversity' is used to describe the enormous variety of life on Earth. It refers to all of the species in a particular region or ecosystem which encompass plants, bacteria, animals, humans and other living things.

Insects are critical to agriculture, human health, and bioresources because they play important role in cycling of nutrients, disperse seeds, pollinate plants, maintain soil structure, improve fertility, and control population of other organisms. Insects are at the base of the food chain, therefore their recovery is a prerequisite for the recovery of other species.

They provide various kinds of useful services which are described below:

Insects possess significant amounts of



THE CONSERVATION OF INSECTS CAN RICHLY BENEFIT FROM INSECT-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND POLITICAL ADVOCACY. HENCE, WE HAVE NUMEROUS WAYS TO CONSERVE INSECTS AND CAN USE ANY OR ALL OF THEM TO SLOW DOWN INSECTS' DECLINE. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE INSECTS' WORLD FOR A THRIVING FUTURE

(The writer is a former IFS officer. The views expressed are personal.)



nutrients required by both humans and animals such as proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, fibres, minerals etc. In South America, caterpillars, beetles, grasshoppers, and crickets are popular foods. Approximately \$500 million worth of tinned silkworm pupae are exported from Thailand.

The pollination process of many flowering plants and crops relies on animals — primarily insects. Animal induced pollination is crucial to the production of the food we eat.

Predatory insects feed on pests that threaten crops, thus performing the role of pesticides without chemicals. This reduces pest-control costs and increases crop yields, while reducing pesticide residues.

Insects also contribute to the breakdown of organic matter like fallen litter, corpses and animal faeces. This is important since it reuses nutrients, making them available for aerating the soil.

Some plants produce fruit and seeds that are eaten and collected by ants. They bring these seeds to their nests to eat and it is possible that some seeds are dropped along the way and others may be cached in the soil. These seeds may germinate and establish plants at a new location. Therefore, ants play a crucial role in the dispersal of fruit and seeds from plants. There are over 150 plant species that depend on insects for dispersal.

Similarly, honeybees pollinate and help plants grow, breed, and produce food. To keep the cycle of life going, bees transfer pollen between flowering plants. Most of the food we consume depends on pollination, particularly by bees: like almonds, apples, squash etc.

We also rely on insects for silk, dye, honey, wax and medical and

genetic research.

It was once stated by EO Wilson, a noted biologist: "If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos."

An ecosystem is based on the coexistence of species and communities alongside the environment. The rivet popper hypothesis was proposed by Ecologist Paul Ehrlich to illustrate the consequences of species extinction on ecosystem. He compares key species to airplane rivets and claims that if those rivets were gradually removed, the plane would also crash. Similarly, if key species are removed from an ecosystem, their absence would eventually harm the ecosystem not immediately but in the long run.

There are many countries where pollinators have disappeared and people are forced to hand pollinate apples, pears and passion fruits, etc. Therefore, the loss of insects from the food chain would negatively impact human food supplies.

A recent study led by experts revealed that darkling beetle (indigenous to East Asia including the Korean peninsula) larvae are capable of decomposing plastic components by breaking them down at the molecular level. Researchers discovered that the larvae of the beetle in the order Coleoptera (Plesiophthalmus davidis) can decompose polystyrene, which earlier was difficult to break down due to its unique molecular structure. Currently, there are more than 50 known species of plastic eaters, including the greater wax moth, providing hope for scientists seeking to reduce

plastic pollution.

Thus, insects constitute a substantial part of our ecosystem but the number and diversity of insects are decreasing due to habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. Preservation and restoration of habitats that support insect diversity are essential to their conservation, otherwise many of these species will become extinct.

Therefore, every home, school, and local park should dedicate a portion of their lawn space as a natural habitat which would provide the insects a conducive environment. Pesticides and insecticides such as Neonicotinoids should be prohibited in local vegetation and green areas since they harm insect populations and mandate nature-rich development practices. Furthermore, artificial light at night can harm and kill many creatures including amphibians, birds, insects and plants. For example, most nocturnal insects are attracted to artificial lights that indirectly kill insects via exhaustion or through predation before dawn. Therefore, protecting dark night skies will benefit insect populations. Growing native plants provides more benefits to native insects due to their close ecological relationships. There are many insect species that depend on these plants for food and nesting sites and become prey for birds and other wildlife, so native plants indirectly attract numerous vertebrates. Insects' conservation can richly benefit from insect-friendly environmental policies and political advocacy. Hence, we have numerous ways to conserve insects, and we can use any or all of them to slow insect declines.

It is imperative that we protect and preserve the insects' world for a thriving future.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THOSE WHO SAID WE DON'T ALLOW DURGA PUJA IN BENGAL SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF THEMSELVES. TODAY, THEIR FALSEHOOD STANDS EXPOSED.

—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

MAMATA BANERJEE



WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN HOW THE TMC TWICE TRIED TO STOP DURGA PUJA IMMERSION AS THE DATE OF MUHARRAM CLASHED WITH IT.

—BJP NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

DILIP GHOSH

Preserving the linguistic diversity of Northeast India

Since English is the preferred medium of instruction, learners have remained aloof from the benefits that come with education in mother tongue

The north-eastern region of India is blessed with unparalleled ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. The land of seven sisters and a brother, it is the most diverse part of the most diverse nation, being home to a number of plain and hill tribal communities having their own cultures, traditions, livelihood practices, language and dialects.

As for linguistic diversity, in Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, around 23, 20, and 15 languages, respectively, are in use and Meghalaya is home to Khasi, Garo and Pnar/Jaintia languages. The languages used across the region belong to five different language families, namely, Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, Austro-Asiatic and Tai-Kadai.



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

(The writer is Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal.)

However, these are not recognised by respective governments as official languages.

The pace of development in the region is exerting massive pressure on the autonomous tribal communities. As such, some of these languages and dialects encompassing cherished civilizational discourses have already become 'vulnerable' to 'morbund'. The contributing factors to the vanishing of languages in the region are better job prospects in English, conversion to Christianity and impact of churches in the choice of lingua franca and inappropriate language policies framed for administrative conveniences.

A mother tongue is vital for design thinking and comprehension and creating the mind-set necessary for holistic



development. Moreover, learning in a foreign language also brings a sense of alienation from one's own culture and heritage leading to an inferiority complex, whereas learning in mother tongue helps develop a better sense of one's cultural traits. Thus, learning in the mother-tongue is of paramount significance in improving the quality of education. Since English is the preferred medium of instruction in India, learners have remained aloof from the benefits that come with education in the mother tongue. UNESCO has

also recommended the use of mother tongue in the early years of schooling to enable children to learn to read and write alongside introducing them to the early mathematical and academic concepts. In order to capitalise on the advantage of learning in the mother tongue, The NEP 2020 emphasises mother tongue as medium of instruction at least up to the fifth standard. This policy also envisages integrating teaching and learning of Indian languages with school and higher education at every level.

It is in this backdrop that the announcement made by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in the recently concluded North East Education Conclave on NEP-2020 organised by Assam

Government and Shamkardev Education and Research Foundation for making Guwahati the Language Laboratory of India and for creating safe educational zones is significant. He also emphasised capitalizing on the strength of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, biotic and abiotic diversities of North-eastern region for its emotional integration with the rest of the country.

Thus, the North-eastern States should not adopt English as the State language merely for administrative conveniences but embrace regional languages as State languages as many languages are being pushed to the endangered category without the official status and patronage. Major dialects should be given scripts so as to promote them to the

status of languages. The policy of the three-language formula should be revisited to promote regional languages. Dictionaries and learners' books need to be written for every language and dialect spoken in the north-east. A group of people needs to be trained in languages spoken in the region for the purpose of translation, as is being done for international languages. Customs and traditions should be penned down in every language and dialect.

Skilled teachers for every language should be there for the purpose of teaching and creating ICT enabled e-materials in those languages. High-quality programmes in translation and interpretation should be offered in all the languages of the NER. Every

central university in the north-east should be sanctioned a Centre for Preservation and Promotion of Local Languages and Dialects (CPPLD) for implementing these and other imperatives for preserving linguistic diversity and harmonious inter-relationships of the tribal communities with nature, ecology and cosmos.

We are running out of fuel with the passing away of senior citizens, and without a holistic language policy, languages and dialects are getting increasingly marginalised, causing a decline in our traditional knowledge base about tribal cultures, traditions, livelihood practices, environmental ethics, nature centric development, etc which are necessary ingredients for securing the future of the region.

US senators nods import ban on China

Senators gave final congressional approval on Thursday to a bill barring imports from China's Xinjiang region unless businesses can prove they were produced without forced labour, overcoming initial hesitation from White House and what supporters said was opposition from corporations.

The measure is the latest in a series intensifying US penalties over China's alleged systemic and widespread abuse of ethnic and religious minorities in western region, especially Xinjiang's predominantly Muslim Uyghurs. The Biden administration also announced new sanctions Thursday targeting several Chinese biotech and surveillance companies, a leading drone manufacturer and government entities for their actions in Xinjiang.

The Senate vote sends bill to President Joe Biden. Press secretary Jen Psaki said this week that Biden supported measure, after months of White House declining to take a public stand on an earlier version of legislation. The United States says China is committing genocide in its treatment of

Uyghurs. That includes widespread reports by rights groups and journalists of forced sterilization and large detention camps where many Uyghurs allegedly are compelled to work in factories.

China denies any abuses. It says steps it has taken are necessary to combat terrorism and a separatist movement. The U.S. cites raw cotton, gloves, tomato products, silicon and viscose, fishing gear and a range of components in solar energy as among goods alleged to have been produced with help of the forced labour.

Xinjiang is a resource-rich mining region, important for agricultural production, and home to a booming industrial sector. Detainees also are moved outside Xinjiang and put to work in factories, including those in apparel and textiles, electronics, solar energy and automotive sectors, the US says.

"Many companies have already taken steps to clean up their supply chains. And, frankly, they should have no concerns about this law," Sen. Marco Rubio, the Florida Republican who introduced the earlier version of the legislation with Oregon Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley, said in a statement.

China vows to respond after US enacts Xinjiang sanctions

AP ■ BEIJING

The China will take all necessary measures to safeguard its institutions and enterprises, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Friday after the US Senate passed a law barring imports from the Xinjiang region unless businesses can prove they were made without forced labour.

The spokesman, Wang Wenbin, said the measure approved Thursday "indicates that the U.S. has no scruples about smearing China by every means." The relevant actions seriously undermine the principles of market economy and international economic and trade rules, and seriously damage the interests of Chinese institutions and enterprises," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

"China strongly deplores and rejects that and urges the U.S. to immediately correct its mistake. China will take all necessary measures to

resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese institutions and enterprises," Wang said without elaborating.

The law is the latest US penalty over China's alleged systemic and widespread abuse of ethnic and religious minorities in its far western region, especially Xinjiang's predominantly Muslim Uyghurs. President Joe Biden is expected to sign the law after overcoming initial hesitation from the White House and what supporters said was opposition from corporations.

He also announced new sanctions Thursday that target several Chinese biotech and surveillance companies, a leading drone manufacturer and government entities for their actions in Xinjiang. Despite numerous independent investigations finding forced sterilization and large detention camps where many Uyghurs allegedly are compelled to work

in factories, China has denounced all such claims as the "lie of the century." It portrays them as part of an effort to stifle China's growth and damage its reputation. China at first denied the prison-like camps exist but later said they were voluntary centers for job training and de-radicalization. It now says all "students" have graduated.

"The U.S. government is trying to strangle the economy of Xinjiang through its industrial and supply chains under the false pretenses of 'forced labor' and 'violations of human rights,'" the official Xinhua News Agency said Friday, citing a report by the Institute for Central Asia Studies under Lanzhou University in northwestern Gansu province. The U.S. says raw cotton, gloves, tomato products, silicon, fishing gear and a range of solar energy components are among goods allegedly made with help from forced labour.

Soaring infections rattle Europe, fuel dread about holidays

AP ■ LONDON

Soaring infections in Britain driven in part by omicron variant of coronavirus rattled Europe on Thursday, prompting new restrictions on the Continent and fueling a familiar dread on both sides of Atlantic about entering a new phase of pandemic just in time for the holidays.

Much remains unknown about omicron, but officials increasingly warn that it appears more transmissible than delta variant, which has already put pressure on hospitals worldwide. With so many questions unanswered, uncertainty reigned over how quickly and how severely to crack down on Christmas travel and year-end parties. After the U.K. recorded its highest number of confirmed new COVID-19 infections since pandemic began, France announced Thursday that it would tighten entry rules for those coming from Britain.

Hours later, country set another record, with a further 88,376 confirmed COVID-19 cases reported Thursday, almost 10,000 more than day before.

Travel curbs augur somber Christmas amid omicron uncertainty

AP ■ LONDON

Travel restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of the omicron variant of the coronavirus are hammering the already beleaguered travel and tourism industries and adding to the gloom in Europe in the midst of the crucial holiday season.

Travelers are rearranging or canceling trips because of tightening rules. Eurostar, which operates trains across the English Channel, sold out of tickets to France on Friday before new travel restrictions to and from Britain went into effect.

Much remains unknown about the new variant, although increasing evidence indicates it spreads more easily. While researchers race to figure out how severe it is and how well vaccines work against it, the uncertainty itself is also

causing some to change their plans. Amanda Wheelock, 29, a grad student at the University of Michigan, canceled a trip to France with her partner as cases spiked there. Even though the surge isn't necessarily due to omicron, the uncertainty about the new variant, and a new requirement that all US travelers have to test negative before flying back to the US, made her worry that the trip would be more stressful than fun. Instead, she's traveling to the Anchorage, Alaska, area to see friends.

She feared that she would spend much of her trip trying to avoid getting infected — thus not able to take full advantage of being in France. "A vacation with a lot of stress probably not a great vacation," said Wheelock, who is from Arvada, Colorado. She is not alone.

UN leader urges 'concrete' moves on year-end vaccine goal

AP ■ NEW YORK

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres exhorted the world on Thursday to make "concrete" progress within days toward a now-distant goal of vaccinating 40% of the global population against COVID-19 before the year ends.

"Vaccine inequity is giving variants a free pass to run wild," Guterres—working from home because of exposure to the coronavirus—told reporters by videoconference as countries grappled with the spread of the virus' omicron variant. "The strategy of vaccine hoarding, the strategy of vaccine nationalism or strategy of vaccine diplomacy has failed. This new variant has demonstrated this failure," said Guterres, who came into contact last week with someone who tested positive for virus; it's not clear which version. Guterres has since tested negative but said he's remaining in

isolation until the end of this week. Scientists have long warned that patchy vaccination raises the risk of worrisome coronavirus variants emerging. That's because the more the virus spreads, the more chances it has to mutate. While there are many unknowns about the new omicron variant, the World Health Organization says it's spreading faster than any other variant to date.

With little more than two weeks to go, 98 countries have yet to meet the WHO's 40%-vaccinated target, Guterres said. Forty countries haven't vaccinated even 10%.

"All countries, especially those that have potential of responsibilities, must take concrete action in coming days to make greater progress" toward year-end goal, Guterres said. He added that they need to "be far more ambitious" in moving toward the WHO's next benchmark: inoculating 70% of world by middle of next year.

MBS now uncrowned King amid concerns over father's health

AP ■ RIYADH

From greeting foreign leaders to heading regional summits, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is taking over reins from his elderly father and becoming Saudi Arabia's uncrowned king.

With increased concerns over nearly 86-year-old King Salman's health, Prince Mohammed, 36, is taking charge of presidential meetings and reception of dignitaries, with king rarely making public appearances.

While Prince Mohammed has been considered de facto leader since his appointment as heir to throne in June 2017, his growing prominence has never been more apparent than when he met with French President Emmanuel Macron in early December, and led Gulf Cooperation Council summit on Tuesday. King Salman, who usually heads the annual meeting after warm embraces and friendly handshakes, was a no-show.

2,500 Myanmar villagers flee Army troops into Thailand

AP ■ BANGKOK

Fighting between Myanmar government forces and ethnic guerrillas has sent about 2,500 villagers fleeing across the border into Thailand, a Thai army officer said on Friday.

The exodus was biggest since April, when several thousand villagers from Myanmar's eastern state of Karen fled to Thailand following airstrikes by Myanmar government forces in territory held by Karen ethnic minority. They were allowed to stay for a few days then returned to Myanmar. The Karen are one of several ethnic minorities who have been battling for decades for greater autonomy from Myanmar's central government.

Fighting between two sides is intermittent, but heated up after military in February seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

A Thai army officer in western border province of Tak told The Associated Press that around 2,500 villagers from Myanmar had crossed Moei River, which marks border, since Thursday to seek shelter in Thailand's Mae Sot district.

The officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to release information, said Thai authorities provided evacuees -- mostly women and children -- with humanitarian assistance including shelter and food, and tested them for COVID-19.

US regulators lift in-person restrictions on abortion pill

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday permanently removed a major obstacle for women seeking abortion pills, eliminating a long-standing requirement that they pick up the medication in person.

Millions of American women will now be able to get a prescription via an online consultation and receive pills through mail. FDA officials said a scientific review supported broadening access, including no longer limiting dispensing to a small number of specialty clinics and doctor's offices. But prescribers will still need to undergo certification and training. Additionally, agency said

dispensing pharmacies will have to be certified. The decision is latest shift in the polarized legal battle over medication abortion, which has only intensified amid disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is certain to spur legal challenges and more restrictions in Republican-led states.

Earlier this year FDA stopped enforcing in-person requirement because of the pandemic. Under Thursday's decision, the agency permanently dropped 20-year-old rule, which has long been opposed by medical societies, including American Medical Association, which say restriction offers no clear benefit to patients. The FDA's latest scientific review stems from a 2017 lawsuit led by

the American Civil Liberties Union, which argued that the agency's restrictions block or delay medical care, especially for people in low-income and rural communities.

The ACLU hailed elimination of strictest requirements but said regulators should have gone further and allowed prescribing by any physician and broader pharmacy dispensing. Abortion opponents said FDA decision would result in more drug-related side effects and complications for women. Physicians who prescribe the drug, mifepristone, will have to certify that they can provide emergency care to deal with potential adverse effects, including excessive bleeding, FDA officials said Thursday.

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Advertisement is invited to inform general public at large regarding cancellation of units of already allotted customers through the 1st draw of lots dated 24.06.2019, 2nd draw of lots dated 01.08.2020 and 3rd draw of lots dated 22.01.2021 due to non-payment despite several reminders, in the Residential Apartments in the Affordable Group Housing Project Kavyam is being developed by Agrante Realty Ltd Sector-108, Gurugram, Haryana, as per terms and conditions of the policy prescribed by the Town & Country Planning Department, Government of Haryana vide notification no PF-27/48921 dated 19.08.2013 & amendments thereof (details available at the Department website, i.e. www.topharyana.gov.in).

S.No.	Application No.	TYPE	Unit No.	Applicant Name	Co-Applicant Name
1	3833	Type-1	TC-1202	Shripal Singh	N/A
2	4439	Type-3	TD-107	Varun Arya	N/A
3	3773	Type-1	TA2-802	Vijay Kadian	Shri Devi

It is to inform to all above allottees that it is last & final opportunity to restore the allotment after making the all dues till date within seven working days, otherwise it shall be considered as cancelled and the same shall be allotted to the aspiring applicants under the applicable provisions of policy prescribed by the Town & Country Planning Department, Government of Haryana vide notification no PF-27/48921 dated 19.08.2013 & amendments thereof.

Office address: Agrante Realty Ltd Unit No. 122 Suncity Trade Tower, Sector-21, Gurgaon-122016
CIN: U70101DL2013PLC248731
Contact at: - website: www.kavyamhomes.com; 0124-4769500-599, 8800499383, 8800499674

Office of Executive Engineer Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan
32 Rajpur Road, Dehradun-248001 Phone No/Fax: 0135-2742028, E-mail: - eenorth-uj-s-nic.in

Letter No: 2140 /E-Tender notice/21-22 Dated: 16.12.2021

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING e-Tender notice

On behalf of the Chief General Manager, Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun online tenders in **Two Bid System**, on item rate contract basis, are invited for the following works in District Dehradun (Uttarakhand) from technically and financially capable bidders, registered with Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan/Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam in appropriate class & category up to prescribed date & time on the portal as mentioned in terms and conditions.

Bid No.	Name of Work	Bid Security (Earnest Money)	Cost of Bid Document (In Rs)	Period of completion of works
03	Strengthening of vishvanath Enclave And Defence Enclave, Danda Nooriwala, Sahastradhara Road Ward no-60, Nagar Nigam Under North Division, District Dehradun	As Per GoUK Order No-121(1)/XXVII(7)/21-32/2007 संशोधन विभाग 29-04-2021 Bidder have to submit Bid Security declaration	₹5000.00 + 18%GST	12-months

The tender time schedule (Key Dates) is as follows:-

Bid No.	Description	Time Schedule (Key Dates)
1	Date of Online Publication	18.12.2021 at 11:00 Hrs
2	Document download : Start Date	19.12.2021 at 11:00 Hrs
3	Pre-Bid Meeting : Date	23.12.2021 at 11:00 Hrs
4	Bid Submission : Start date	29.12.2021 at 11:00 Hrs
5	Bid Submission : End date	06.01.2022 upto 17:00 Hrs
6	Offline Submission of Documents (Cost of bidding Document, Bid Security, Original affidavits and all supporting Document in support of qualification).	07.01.2022 upto 17:00 Hrs
7	Date of Technical Bid Opening	10.01.2022 at 11:00 Hrs
8	Date of Financial Bid Opening	14.01.2022 At 11:00Hrs

Executive Engineer (North)

RAJASTHAN STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER (S/P) JHOTWARA ROAD, JAIPUR
TEL No. 0141-2281912, 2281913 Email: -gmsrprtc@gmail.com

E-Tendering Notice

NIT-05
E-tender invited for the purchase of Tyre retreading material
For further details you can visit online website <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> or from e-procurement cell RISL, Yojana Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C- Scheme, Jaipur-302005 and contact on Toll Free number No. 1800-3070-2232 (Help Desk be contacted directly in the following mobile nos. 91-7878007972 and 91-7878007973 10.00 AM to 06.00 PM on all working days), and e-mail: eproc@rajasthan.gov.in
UBN No RTC2122GLOB00294
Raj.Samwadi/C/21/9536 Advt. No. 161/2021-22 General Manager (S/P)

National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

Corporate Office : 3rd Floor, PTI Building, 4-Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

NOTICE TO KEY PROFESSIONALS REGISTERED ON INFRACON WEB PORTAL OF MORT&H

1. INFRACON is a web based National Portal for Consultancy Firms which facilitates the hosting of CVs of Key personnel and Credentials of Consultancy Firms since 2015 under MoRT&H maintained by NHIDCL.

2. The CVs of Key Personnel in INFRACON Portal are currently under the process of Background Verification and the issues in CVs have been intimated through Official Emails and through notifications in respective INFRACON IDs. The portal gets updated in a dynamic manner; hence, the Key Personnel are advised to continuously monitor the Portal for important updates.

Note: a) In case your issues/queries have been resolved then this Notice may be ignored.
b) Key personnel are also advised to refrain themselves from any unwanted non-factual complaints as it will invite strict legal action apart from debarment.

For details of observations on your INFRACON CVs, refer to our Email from support-infracon@gov.in or by logging into your INFRACON ID on www.infracon.nic.in
davp 37112/11/0004/21-22

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE, BUILDING THE NATION

LORDKANHIYA INFOTECH LLP
LLPIN: AAF-4647
Regd. Office: 68, Chandlerok Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034

"FORM NO. URC-2"
Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Act (Pursuant to section 374(b) of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the Companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014)

1. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application is proposed to be made after fifteen days hereof but before the expiry of thirty days hereinafter to the Registrar of companies at Delhi that **LORDKANHIYA INFOTECH LLP** a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares.

2. The Principal objects of the company are as follows:-
Carrying on the business of Traders, Merchandisers, Importers, exporters of computers, its parts, allied products and developing any type of software, giving of services

3. A copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the proposed company may be inspected at the registered office at 68, Chandlerok Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 on any working day

4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Central Registration Centre (CRC), Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Plot No. 6,7,8, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, District Gurgaon (Haryana), Pin Code-122050, within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.

Dated: 18th December, 2021

Name(s) of Applicant(s)
1. Vijay Garg
2. Ashish Garg

IMPORTANT NOTICE

For the convenience of rail passengers, Railways have decided to change the composition of the following Express Trains from the dates shown against each:-

Train No. & Name	Existing Composition	Revised Composition	Date w.e.f. (Originating Station)
16317 Kanyakumari-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Himsagar Express	AC-3 Tier-03 Sleepor-10 General-03	AC-2 Tier-01 AC-3 Tier-02 Sleepor-10	From Kanyakumari: 15.04.2022
16318 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-Kanyakumari Himsagar Express	Parcel (SLR)-02 Pantry-01	General-03 Parcel (SLR)-02 Pantry-01	From Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra: 18.04.2022

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

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
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Office of the Superintending Engineer, Construction Circle,
Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Kathgodam, Haldwani.
(E-mail: sepeyjal_ntl@yahoo.co.in, Phone :- 05946-298296)

E-Tendering/Tender Notice

Letter No. 6099 / 613 / 545 Date 17-12-2021

Name of Work :- Over Head Tank, Pipe Line, FHCT, Pump House, Boundary Wall & Appurtenant works in following Water Supply Schemes

S. No.	Name of Scheme	Estimated cost	Period of completion of work:
1	Majhola-2 MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 419.69 Lakh	12 months
2	Gangi MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 376.84 Lakh	12 months
3	Gausi Kunwa MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 422.52 Lakh	12 months
4	Jhankat MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 425.94 Lakh	12 months
5	Aencheta MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 358.71 Lakh	12 months
6	Haraiya MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 219.60 Lakh	12 months
7	Haldwua MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 427.95 Lakh	12 months
8	Pindari MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 424.60 Lakh	12 months
9	Chikaghat MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 266.06 Lakh	12 months
10	Bar ki Dandi MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 375.94 Lakh	12 months
11	Deyudi MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 250.16 Lakh	12 months
12	Pandari MVS W/S Scheme	Rs. 425.46 Lakh	12 months

Key Dates :-

1	Date of Online Publication	18.12.2021 at 17:00hrs.
2	Document Download : Start Date	20.12.2021 at 10:00hrs.
3	Document Download : End Date	03.01.2022 at 17:00 hrs.
4	Pre Bid Meeting	24.12.2021 at 14:00 hrs.
5	Bid Submission : Start Date	20.12.2021 at 10:00hrs.
6	Bid Submission : End Date	03.01.2022 at 17:00 hrs.
7	Offline submission of documents (Cost of bidding document, Bid Security, Original Affidavits & all the Supporting Documents in support of qualification)	04.01.2022 upto 17:00 hrs.
8	Date of Technical Bid Opening	05.01.2022 at 11:00 hrs
9	Date of Financial Bid Opening	To be announced Later
10	Details of tender, corrigendum or cancellation etc may be obtained at web site: www.uktenders.gov.in	Superintending Engineer

Benchmarks bleed as virus, taper trigger global retreat; log weekly losses

Mumbai: The Sensex plummeted 889 points while the Nifty sank below the 17,000-mark on Friday, in line with a selloff in global markets as hawkish central banks amid rising Omicron cases sparked a retreat from riskier assets. Continued selling by foreign institutional investors put further pressure on domestic bourses, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 889.40 points or 1.54 per cent to finish at 57,011.74. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty plunged 263.20 points or 1.53 per cent to 16,985.20. IndusInd Bank was the top laggard on the Sensex chart, shedding 4.89 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, HUL, Titan, HDFC, Bajaj Finserv and SBI. In value terms, Reliance Industries and HDFC twins accounted for around half of the benchmark's losses. Only five index components managed to close in the green -- Infosys, HCL Tech, PowerGrid, Sun Pharma and

TCS, surging up to 2.84 per cent. "Weak global sentiments inundated domestic indices as markets are digesting the hawkish stance of major international central banks amid surging Omicron cases," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. "While the European Central Bank took a small step in rolling back the crisis-era stimulus although holding down borrowing costs next year, the Bank of England surprised the markets by raising interest rates for the first time since the onset of the pandemic. Continued FII selling created tension among domestic investors. Barring IT, all sectors bled," he added. During the week, the Sensex slumped 1,774.93 points or 3.01 per cent and Nifty tanked 526.10 points or 3 per cent. Kurian, Senior EVP and Head-Equity Research, Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company, said emergence of the Omicron coronavirus variant, inflation concerns. **PTI**

BSE, NSE come out with guidelines on technical glitches for members

New Delhi: Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE have put out comprehensive guidelines for handling technical glitches at members' end in order to prevent disruptions. Under the new framework, members will have to pay Rs 20,000 per day in case of failure to report the incident to the exchanges within the required timeline, BSE and NSE said in separate circulars. The guidelines outline technology infrastructure and system requirements that a member should put in place to prevent any incident of business disruption resulting from technical glitches. Also, the guidelines prescribe a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for reporting of technical glitches by members, handling business dis-

ruption, management of such business disruption, including declaration of disaster and framing of provisions for disciplinary action in case of non-compliance in reporting or inadequate management of business disruption. Technical glitches include malfunction in hardware, software or any products and services provided by members. The exchanges said members with a client base of more than 50,000 unique registered clients across all bourses will be required to mandatorily establish a business continuity plan or disaster recovery set up to ensure that there is well-defined continuity plan in case of such business disruptions. The move will ensure that there is continuity of business and stability in operations of

members in case of any technical glitches, so that interest of investors and market at large is not adversely impacted, the circulars issued on Wednesday noted. With regards to reporting requirements, the exchanges have asked members to intimate them about the incident within two hours from the start of the glitch. Besides, a preliminary incident report will be submitted to the exchange within T+1 day of the incident (T being the date of the incident). The report will include the date and time of the incident, its details, effect and the immediate action taken. Further, Root Cause Analysis (RCA) of the issue will have to be submitted within 21 working days. **PTI**

Forex reserves decline USD 77 mn to USD 635.828 bn

Mumbai: Declining for the third consecutive week, India's forex reserves dipped by USD 77 million to reach USD 635.828 billion for the week ended December 10, RBI data showed on Friday. In the previous week, the reserves had slid by USD 1.783 billion to USD 635.905 billion. In the reporting week ended December 10, the dip in the forex kitty was on account

of a decline in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA dropped by USD 321 million to USD 572.86 billion, as per the data. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Value of the gold reserves rose by USD 291 million by USD 38.709 billion in the reporting week. The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were down by USD 37 million to USD 19.089 billion. The country's reserve position with the IMF also increased by USD 10 million to USD 5.17 billion, the data showed. **PTI**

Airtel prepays ₹15,519 cr to DoT to clear all deferred liabilities for 2014 spectrum

New Delhi: Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Friday said it has paid Rs 15,519 crore to the government towards prepayment of its entire deferred liability pertaining to spectrum acquired in the 2014 auction. The company had acquired 128.4 MHz spectrum (including Telenor spectrum) for a consideration of Rs 19,051 crore in the 2014 auction, Airtel said in a statement. The company estimates that the prepayment to Department of Telecom (DoT) will likely result in interest cost savings of at least Rs 3,400 crore over the residual life for

fully substituted capital. In a statement, Airtel said it has prepaid Rs 15,519 crore to clear all deferred liabilities for the spectrum acquired in 2014. "These liabilities were due in annual instalments from FY2026-2027 to 2031-2032, and carried an interest rate of 10 per cent (the highest rate among the deferred liabilities and borrowings) and an average residual life of 7 plus years," the statement added. Airtel said it continues to exercise flexibilities towards a stronger and efficient capital structure. **PTI**

Jalan-Kalrock consortium approaches NCLT to fast-track Jet Airways resolution

Mumbai: The winning consortium of Jet Airways on Friday said it wants to infuse funds in the airline and has approached the NCLT to fast-track implementation of the resolution plan approved by the insolvency court in June this year. The consortium also said it plans to restart domestic operations at the earliest in 2022 as a full-service carrier. The Murari Lal Jalan and Florian Fritsch consortium, which emerged as the winning bidder for Jet Airways after the completion of the resolution process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, said it wants to commence payments to all stakeholders. **PTI**

Rupee firms up gains to end at 76.06 against dollar

Mumbai: The rupee pared its initial losses to settle marginally higher by 3 paise at 76.06 against the US dollar on Friday, even as concerns over foreign fund outflows and rising crude oil prices weighed on overall sentiment.

The local unit, however, recorded its fourth weekly decline amid growing concerns over the Omicron variant of coronavirus. Firming up of crude oil prices too weighed on the local unit. At the interbank foreign

Gold climbs ₹398; silver zooms ₹1,033 on global cues

exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 76.23 a dollar, registering a decline of 14 paise from the last close. During the day, it pared its losses and settled at 76.06 (provisional) against the American currency. On a weekly basis, the rupee depreciated 28 paise against the US dollar. **PTI**

New Delhi: Gold price in the national capital on Friday rallied by Rs 398 to Rs 47,762 per 10 gram reflecting gains in precious metal prices in the international market, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at Rs 47,364 per 10 gram. Silver also gained Rs 1,033 to Rs 61,147 per kg from Rs 60,114 per kg in the previous trade. In the international market, gold was trading with gains at USD 1,808 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 22.62 per ounce. **PTI**

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
E-Tender Notice
Coach MLR Workshop, Jhansi
Tender Notice No.: T_21-22_DPC23009_NOTICE Date: 14.12.2021
Chief Workshop Manager, Coach MLR Workshop, Jhansi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender from reputed contractors for following work:-

Tender No.	Description of Work	Qty.	Tender Cost (₹)	Completion period
T_21-22_DPC 23009	Conversion of 1400 HP DPC23009 to Inspection Car.	One work	64,23,31,43 (Rs. Sixty four lakhs twenty three thousand three hundred seventeen & paise forty three only)	03 months

Earnest money: ₹ 0/-, Tender doc. cost: ₹ 0/-. 1. Tender will be closed at 10.00 Hrs. on 14.01.2022 and is available on Indian Railway E-Tendering website www.ireps.gov.in. 2. For detailed information please visit Indian Railway E-Tendering website www.ireps.gov.in. 1305/21 FA
North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in North Central Railway@CPRONCR

सार्वजनिक सूचना
सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि आवंटित भूखण्ड संख्या-700, पॉकेट-एन, सैक्टर-20, क्षेत्रफल-300 वर्गमीटर. आवंटन संख्या-YEA008608, आवंटित/अंतरिकी LATE MOHD. SALEEM की मृत्यु के उपरांत उनकी माता MRS. MEHARUN NISHA द्वारा उक्त भूखण्ड का नामान्तरण अपने नाम कराने हेतु म्यूटेशन प्रपत्र प्रस्तुत किये गये हैं। अतः इस म्यूटेशन के संबंध में किसी को कोई आपत्ति हो तो प्रकाशन की तिथि से 35 दिन के अंदर अपनी लिखित आपत्ति प्राधिकरण कार्यालय में दर्ज कराने का कष्ट करें, अन्यथा नियमानुसार प्राधिकरण अभिलेखों में आवंटित/अंतरिकी LATE MOHD. SALEEM की मृत्यु के उपरांत उनकी माता MRS. MEHARUN NISHA का नाम दर्ज कर दिया जायेगा।
सहायक महाप्रबन्धक-(सम्पत्ति)

UJVN Limited
H.O.: "UJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com
Letter No: 996 Short term Tender Notice Date: 16/12/2021
Office of the Executive Engineer (C&M) MB-II Joshiyara, Uttarkashi invites sealed Tender from interested parties. Brief summary of tenders is given below:
Tender No: 18/EE(C&M)/MB-II/Joshiyara/2021-22
Name of work: Renovation & Modification work of P-II Residential Building at Joshiyara colony, Uttarkashi.
Estimated cost : Rs. 19,37,273.00(excluding GST)
Date of availability of bid document on website : 16-12-2021
Last Date for submission of Tender : 30-12-2021 up to 16.00 Hrs
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvn.com"
"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY" Executive Engineer (C&M)

Sale Notice
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Case Details	Asset Details
(ICICI) Bank Ltd Vs Vipin Nagpal, Suit No.1432-19	Vehicle No-HR51AG9317, Make & Model - MARUTI SWIFT VXI, Manu. Year-2010
(ICICI) Bank Ltd Vs Dev Prakash, CS (Comm) 1121-20	Vehicle No-UP16BW6148, Make & Model - HYUNDAI I-20 SPORTZ CRDI, Manu. Year-2018
(ICICI) Bank Ltd Vs Sajid Malik, Cs (Comm) No. 83/2021	Vehicle No-UP16BP6145, Make & Model - MARUTI SWIFT ZDI, Manu. Year-2017
(ICICI) Bank Ltd Vs Dimple Chaudhary, CS No.2772/19	Vehicle No-UP14DJ9744, Make & Model - HYUNDAI EON ERA PLUS, Manu. Year-2017, Reserve Price : Rs 1,20,000, EMD Amount Rs 12,000. EMD is to be made in favour of ICICI BANK LIMITED PAYABLE AT DELHI AND BIDDER HAS TO BRING ORIGINAL EMD AT SITE WITH KYC

Auction Date : 27-December-2021 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Venue: Godara Yard, Khewat No:166/1,
Near Atul Kataria Chowk, Behind Gyan Devi School, Sec-17, Sukhrai, Gurugram- 122022.
Contact Person- Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)
Terms of Sale
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself / themselves / itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come to site with original KYC proofs to participate in the auction and also original DD of EMD wherein applicable. Successfully approved bidder shall have to deposit sale amount (Excluding EMD amount if applicable) within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. In case if you fail to make the remaining sale amount within 5 days, your EMD amount will be forfeited wherein you have submitted EMD.
The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, SD Tower, Community Center, Plot no- 7, Rohini Sector-8, New Delhi-110085, for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicle.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
चतुर्थ वृत्त, लोक निर्माण विभाग, रुद्रपुर (उधम सिंह नगर)
Phone Fax : 05944-240921 E-mail - sepwudsn@gmail.com
पत्रांक-4036/23 एम-04/2021 दिनांक 17/12/2021
राष्ट्रीय प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक अल्पकालीन निविदा (e-tendering)
महामहिम राज्यपाल उत्तराखण्ड की ओर से अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, चतुर्थ वृत्त, लोनि वि. रुद्रपुर (उधम सिंह नगर) द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा टेंडर-बिड विड सिस्टम के अन्तर्गत निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित सभी सूचनायें वेबसाइट <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> पर दिनांक 20.12.2021 से उपलब्ध होंगी।

क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	घरौहर घनराशि (लाख में)	निविदा का मूल्य (रु० में)	निविदा की वैधता (दिवस)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	फर्म / टेकेंदार की श्रेणी
1	वित्तीय वर्ष 2020-21 में मा० मुख्यमन्त्री घोषणा संख्या 336/2021 के अन्तर्गत जनपद उधमसिंह नगर के विधानसभा क्षेत्र खटौटा में ग्राम बड़ी अंजनिया नहर होते हुए 17 मील चौड़ा तक नव निर्माण का कामशेकरी कार्य।	3.58	5000.00 + 18 % GST	120 दिन	12 माह	केन्द्र / राज्य सरकार के विभाग / उपक्रम में मांग की जायेगी श्रेणी वी एवं उच्चतर में पंजीकृत
2	मा० मुख्यमन्त्री जी की घोषणा संख्या 28/2021 के अन्तर्गत जनपद उधमसिंह नगर के विधानसभा क्षेत्र खटौटा के अमाऊ खेतलसण्डा खाम में 04 कि०मी० आन्तरिक मार्ग में टाईल (सी०सी०) मार्ग का निर्माण कार्य।	4.10	5000.00 + 18 % GST	120 दिन	12 माह	-तदेव

नोट:- क्रमांक 01 पर अंकित कार्य की निविदा स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में आमन्त्रित की जा रही है।
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता

Office Of Executive Engineer, Maintenance Division, Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan
Lane No-1, Tarun Vihar, Mothrowala Road, Dehradun-248001
Phone No/Fax. 0135 2671940, E-mail - eemdujs@rediffmail.com
Letter No. 3705 /E-Tender Notice/2021-22 Date : 16.12.2021
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING e - Tender Notice
On behalf of the Chief General Manager, Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun online tenders in **Two Bid System**, on item rate contract basis (inclusive of all materials & taxes) are invited for the following works in District Dehradun (Uttarakhand) under Jal Jeevan Mission from technically and financially capable bidders, registered with Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan/ Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam in appropriate class & category up to prescribed date & time on the portal as mentioned in terms and conditions.

Bid No.	Name of Work	Bid Security (Earnest Money)	Cost of Bid Document (in Rs)	Period of completion of works
01	Construction of Majri Water Supply Scheme Including Laying, Jointing testing & commissioning of Rising main & Distribution System, Construction of OHT, Development of Tube well & all appurtenance civil and E&M works etc complete	As Per GoUK Order No-121(1)/XXVII(7)/21-32/2007 टी०पी० निनांक 29-04-2021 Bidder have to submit Bid Security declaration	₹ 4000.00 + GST	12 months
02	Construction of Baluwala Water Supply Scheme Including Laying, Jointing testing & commissioning of Rising main & Distribution System, Construction of OHT, Development of Tube well & all appurtenance civil and E&M works etc complete		₹ 4000.00 + GST	12 months
03	Construction of Dhakrani Water Supply Scheme Including Laying, Jointing testing & commissioning of Rising main & Distribution System, Construction of OHT, Development of Tube well & all appurtenance civil and E&M works etc complete		₹ 4000.00 + GST	12 months
04	Construction of Khairi Kalan Water Supply Scheme Including Laying, Jointing testing & commissioning of Pipeline Distribution System, Repairing of OHT, Pump House, and SITC of Pumping Plants etc complete		₹ 4000.00 + GST	12 months
05	Construction of Purdad Supply Scheme Including Supply, Installation, testing & commissioning of Gravity Main & Distribution System, Construction of Clear Water Reservoir etc complete		₹ 4000.00 + GST	12 months
06	Construction of Gauri Mafi Water Supply Scheme Including Laying, Jointing testing & commissioning of Pipeline Distribution System, Repairing of OHT, Pump House, and SITC of Pumping Plants etc complete		₹ 4000.00 + GST	12 months
07	Construction of Bhagwanpur Julo Water Supply Scheme Including Laying, Jointing, testing & commissioning of Gravity main & Distribution System Repairing of CWR, construction of source work etc. complete		₹ 4000.00 + GST	12 months

The tender time schedule (Key Dates) is as follows: -

S. No.	Description	Time Schedule (Key Dates)
1	Date of Online Publication	20.12.2021 at 11:00 Hrs
2	Document download : Start Date	20.12.2021 at 11:00 Hrs
3	Pre-Bid Meeting : Date	24.12.2021 at 11:00 Hrs
4	Bid Submission : Start date	28.12.2021 at 11:00 Hrs
5	Bid Submission : End date	03.01.2022 upto 17:00 Hrs
6	Offline Submission of Documents (Cost of bidding Document, Bid Security, Original affidavits and all supporting Document in support of qualification).	03.01.2022 upto 17:00 Hrs
7	Date of Bid Opening	04.01.2022 at 11:00 Hrs
8	Date of Financial Bid Opening	To be intimated later

"जल संचय-जीवन संचय"
Executive Engineer

AXIS BANK LIMITED
PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS
THE BORROWERS, IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGED IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAVE AVAILED THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY AVAILED. AS THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPAY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT, THE BANK IS CONSTRAINED TO INVOLVE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HEREUNDER ON 28.12.2021 AT 12.30 PM TO 3.30 PM ON "AS IN WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHAT EVER THERE IS" AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS".
DETAILS OF BORROWERS AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT

SR. NO.	BRANCH NAME	CUSTOMER NAME	LOAN AC NO.	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING	DATE OF RECALL	GROSS WEIGHT
BRANCH NAME: ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]						
1.	ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	DIMPLE SINGHAL	920060049642952	1040376	30-Apr-21	378.5
2.	ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	GURMEET KAUR CHAWLA	920060049809308	1017223	25-Mar-21	318.6
3.	ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	TARUN KUMAR	920060052313982	569436	23-Apr-21	193.2
4.	ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	TARUN KUMAR	920060052314901	556594	23-Nov-21	183.3
5.	ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	URMILA	92006001911050	539101	22-Jun-21	135
6.	ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	RAGHAVENDRA CHAUBEY	919060060899427	28399	25-Mar-21	16
BRANCH NAME: DARYAGANJ, DELHI [DL]						
7.	DARYAGANJ, DELHI [DL]	VIRENDER KUMAR	920060052494256	167512	20-May-21	57.8
8.	DARYAGANJ, DELHI [DL]	ANKIT GUPTA	920060051281150	61688	25-Mar-21	20.3
BRANCH NAME: FARIDABAD [HR]						
9.	FARIDABAD [HR]	POOJA RANI	920060047959047	301166	26-Dec-20	14.2
10.	FARIDABAD [HR]	DEEPAK PAUL	920060052772394	162843	15-Mar-21	51.7
11.	FARIDABAD [HR]	SUBHASH CHAND	921060050991239	149940	23-Apr-21	95.4
12.	FARIDABAD [HR]	ASHOK KUMAR	921060053783152	42510	22-Jun-21	6.7
13.	FARIDABAD [HR]	UDAY KUMAR	921060051397294	117945	7-Jun-21	48.2
14.	FARIDABAD [HR]	SANTOSH SHARMA	919060069952165	119110	7-May-21	69.9
15.	FARIDABAD [HR]	AMAR JEET	920060052755657	92923	22-Jun-21	9.2
BRANCH NAME: KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]						
16.	KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]	GAUTAM CHANDRA DAS	920060053089026	214572	18-Jan-21	77.7
17.	KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]	MOHD FAHAD SALIM	920060013241374	151984	25-Mar-21	67.5
18.	KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]	SUNDER SINGH	920060052064994	148996	27-May-21	52.7
BRANCH NAME: LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]						
19.	LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	ANJU SAINI	920060050589001	2050188	22-Jun-21	602.05
20.	LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	SUHAVINI SINGH	920060050445658	1593577	27-Nov-20	481
21.	LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	JAI PRAKASH ADVANI	921060050932261	108699	30-Apr-21	39.7
22.	LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	SHABIR KHAN	92006000442968	65806	22-Jun-21	39.7
23.	LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	YOGENDER KUMAR	920060043691341	45074	23-Nov-21	26.2
BRANCH NAME: NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]						
24.	NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]	RICHH PAL SINGH	920060050656214	34983	16-Apr-21	11.5
BRANCH NAME: NOIDA [UP]						
25.	NOIDA [UP]	RAJ KUMAR	920060049929017	670448	22-Jun-21	227.8
26.	NOIDA [UP]	RAJ KUMAR	920060049290282	387239	22-Jun-21	107.9
27.	NOIDA [UP]	PREETI BALA	921060050983397	115470	22-Jun-21	4.8
28.	NOIDA [UP]	BIVASH MONDAL	920060051255229	112171	22-Jun-21	39.3
29.	NOIDA [UP]	NEETU	920060050010728	101521	30-Apr-21	33.6
30.	NOIDA [UP]	NEETU	920060050040095	89334	30-Apr-21	29.4
BRANCH NAME: ROHINI, DELHI [DL]						
31.	ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	YOGESH	920060050545430	336841	18-Jan-21	106.6
32.	ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	NIDHI SINGLA	92006004947361	280555	20-May-21	108.1
33.	ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	AMRESH KUMAR SINGH	920060050599170	204806	30-Apr-21	74.9
34.	ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	RAGENDER KUMAR AGARWAL	919060062340178	430107	23-Nov-21	193.3
35.	ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	SANDEEP KUMAR	920060050994134	255734	7-Aug-21	81.4
BRANCH NAME: SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]						
36.	SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	SUMAYIA AHMED	920060049889582	153447	22-Jun-21	62.4
37.	SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	PRIVANKA SINGH	92006000804474	85352	22-Jun-21	18.2
38.	SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	NOORDEEN	92006003358437	81678	25-Mar-21	39.2
39.	SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	HATENDRA SINGH	920060011907517	51483	25-Mar-21	22.8
40.	SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	LOKESH SINGH	921060053755827	49469	23-Nov-21	20.7
41.	SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	ARVIND KUMAR	92106004986029	33633	20-May-21	10.8
42.	SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	HARISH KUMAR	921060049757262	268875	20-May-21	100.3
43.	SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	NITIN KUM				

TRAVEL BUG

IN A FOREST FULL OF BUTTERFLIES

The area around Ramnagar in Uttarakhand might be known for tigers but NIVI SHRIVASTAVA finds it to be a haven for winged creatures also



Did you know that just like bees, butterflies are excellent indicators of environmental changes? Not only do they play a vital role in an ecosystem by pollinating billions of flowers and trees, but they also warn about the climatic changes and rise in temperature of the earth by their life-cycle patterns. According to experts, there are 1,327 identified species in India but due to data deficiency, one cannot put them in the endangered category. In the forests of Ramnagar, adjoining the Jim Corbett Park known for tigers, one can find myriad varieties of butterflies and moths in the Terai West region of Kumaon, Uttarakhand.

On a balmy winter day, I travelled with some butterfly experts to discover the hidden aspects of eco-tourism in this area. Just 250 km away from Delhi by road, it's convenient to plan a last-minute getaway to explore this offbeat forest region solo or in a group. The best time to visit this quiet town is mid-November to mid-June when the jungle safari is open for the public and the weather is pleasant to explore the forest on foot.

The Ramnagar forest belt, especially the Kyari region, is blessed with a variety of flora and fauna and hence a wide variety of butterflies and birds are found here. As we crossed the semi-arid Khichdi River at Corbett Tiger Reserve to reach our destination, I couldn't help but notice the monkeys perched on lush green pines and a curious herd of deer crossing our path and guiding us into the dense forests. There are many places to stay inside the forest as well as close to it. The adventure lovers can book luxury tents while those who prefer leisure accommodations can stay at resorts and hotels that are operational in the tourist season. Early morning is the best time to find butterflies in their natural habitat near the Kosi River forest area where many local villagers go to catch fish and some mushroom enthusiasts trek to collect the rare fungi varieties that only grow here. During the nature walk, one can hear the wild calls of birds and see butterflies fluttering over wildflowers. On close inspection, one can even see the various stages of a butterfly's lifecycle on the trunk of an old tree. Right from the cluster of eggs to metamorphosis into larva, pupa and adult butterfly — the forest fauna nurtures these colourful creatures in every stage of their life.

As for the myriad butterflies, one can spot the Common Mormon, Oak Leaf, Common Mapwing, Plain Tiger, One-Spot Grass, Walnut Blue as well as various types of Hairstreak butterflies like White-Spotted, Wonderful, Dull



Green, Brown Gorgon across the forests. Experts have even reported some rare species of Swallowtails, Five Bar Swordtails and Redbreasts in this region.

To highlight the attractions and create awareness about butterflies, a month-long festival for tourists and local children was held recently in Ramnagar. Anil Oraw, regional director (North), the Ministry of Tourism, informed, "People so far know Jim Corbett Park for tigers but the whole Bhabar belt around the National Park is also very unique. We want more people to enjoy the forest area and the Titli Tyar programme was one such initiative to spread awareness about the beautiful butterflies, moths and rare birds."



As part of the awareness for butterflies, Sohail Madan, an ecologist from Bombay Natural History Society, mentioned how chemical poisoning with man-made fertilisers and linear infrastructures (roads and highways, electric power lines, railway lines, canals, pipelines, fire-breaks and fences) in cities and towns are hampering the habitat of butterflies. He says, "Habitat loss is the primary reason for the fall of insect population coupled with the use of chemical poison and anthropogenic pressure. To prevent this, we must plant native host plants, stop the use of chemical poisons and raise our voice against linear infrastructure development."

It is a fact that butterflies need the sun to survive and ecological experts studying their behavioural patterns point out that every specific butterfly sub-species requires a specific temperature to continue its life cycle. Any delay in their annual patterns could be a clear indicator of changes in average temperatures, leading to the inference of climate change. "Although, scientifically inconclusive, a comprehensive study of butterflies may lead us to decipher the subtle evolution of nature and climate around us," mentioned Saurav Bhattacharya, founder member of Tyar Foundation. His non-profit organisation hosted the Titli Tyar festival centred around butterflies to impact the wildlife tourism industry through tourists and the local community. "Did you know that moths and butterflies are the same species? And that one comes out with the sun and the other in the darkness of the night. All creatures are created equal and were supposed to have an equal share of the environment. With a higher intellect, humans have evolved into supreme beings with the biggest footprint. However, micro-fauna such as the amazing butterflies have an equally significant role to play in the scheme of nature. With a multi-pronged life cycle, butterflies are involved in many crucial aspects of ecology. From feeding on the host plants as a caterpillar to being the high protein nutrition of birds and reptiles, from helping floral pollination to being indicators of a diverse and



healthy habitat, this species is an absolute miracle in our sacred environment," informed Bhattacharya as he guided us through the butterfly trail.

After an informative butterfly exploration, one can also visit the untouched Corbett falls and have a little picnic in the jungle with proper precautions. This pristine waterfall is located 25 km away from Ramnagar and is surrounded by teak wood forest. After reaching the parking area near the forest, you will have to trek 1.5km up to get there but the walk is worth remembering.

— The writer is a freelance journalist who reports on responsible travel and hospitality trends

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LIVING A FAMILY-ENTERTAINER

AMOL PARASHAR, SMRITI KALRA, and KEVIN DAVE reveal that they had a lot of fun during the shoot of their recent satirical and witty film, *Cash*, in a heart-to-heart with KHUSHBU KIRTI

With the recent release of the film *Cash*, my mind was transported to 2016 when we had queued up in long lines in front of ATMs under scorching heat. Many might say it was a terrible time, the remaining might recall it as a petulant move by the government. But as director Rishabh Seth mentioned, the filmmakers or the actors are not here to pass judgement on it or their stance on it, even today, remains very neutral. They want to take people back to that time and remind them that we all got past this together. And when you go back in time — even if you thought that it was dark time then — you can always, in retrospect, laugh it off. The idea behind the film was to use collective consciousness and evoke laughter instead of pain.

Cash, directed by Rishabh Seth and produced by Vishesh Bhatt, stars Amol Parashar, Smriti Kalra, Swanand Kirkire, Kevin Dave, and Gulshan Grover. The light-hearted dramedy, that centers around the period of demonetisation and rising entrepreneurship in India, started streaming on Disney+Hotstar.

Read on for excerpts from a heart-to-heart with the young actors, Smriti, Amol and Kevin:

Tell us a bit about your characters.

You're a street smart entrepreneur (Armaan), Amol. Let's start with you.

AP: Yes! (all pumped up) Armaan Gulati is a street-smart entrepreneur and that kinda encapsulates his whole personality because he's a hustler and keeps brimming with new ideas. He is always thinking and wants to become a wealthy person like Elon Musk, wants to succeed in life. His wild dream is to create a successful start-up. Demonetisation is the trigger of a new idea because a lot of businesses failed at the time and he realised he

could take advantage of their failure. He decided to help people convert their money. Armaan is joined by Neha and Soda to culminate his plans.

They try various ways — funny and bizarre — to convert this money and that was what might've happened at the same. People to desperate to save their black money. So, you know, the guy is a bit of an opportunist, in a way. I'm saying this because his heart is clean, even if his ideas are twisted.

Smriti, we've loved the character of Suvreen Guggal you've played before. How was this new avatar you donned?

SK: Thank you! (cheerful) Since you just mentioned Suvreen, Neha — the character that I play in the film — is 180° opposite (laughs). So, Neha is sassy, she's feisty, she's independent, confident and extremely *jugaadu*. She is a natural fixer and someone who can double-cross you for her own good. So, Armaan and Soda approach Neha and while Armaan is smart and has a lot of ideas, Neha has tons of contacts up her sleeve. And, so, they're the perfect fit — for a start-up.

She's someone you would want on your team, because she's so *jugaadu*, she'll find one way or another to do her job. In a way, she orchestrates things so that is Neha, something I'm completely not, something I've completely never been, and a very, very different character that I've played and have thoroughly enjoyed.

KD: So, I'm playing Soda in the film, who is Armaan's best friend and is, thus, always stuck with him. In the name of the said friendship, poor Soda always ends up in trouble as Armaan's accomplice (chuckles). First, he denies all of Armaan's ideas but eventually gives in. Soda is loyal, however, Armaan and Soda are poles apart. Like Amol said, Armaan is a



hustler, while Soda is a coward. He finds problems in everything, while Armaan finds opportunities in the same. Smriti's character sort-of balances the two, you know. So, the trio sets on this new endeavour.

We know Cash is a satirical take on a very serious event, how do you think the drama and comedy mingle into the seriousness of it?

AP: Kevin had rightfully said it in the last interview, 'tragedy *mei bhi* comedy *hoti hai*'. At that time, none of us would've wanted to have a funny take on this. But, now, from a distance once you've crossed the event, you

can laugh about even the bitter parts. Now that it is in the past, that is an advantage we have, people now remember it as a memory. We're now laughing on how these people that are trying to convert their money in all the stupid and bizarre ways. We're not laughing at people that have probably faced real misery. These are people — the people who had black money on them and were running from here to there to somehow save themselves — we cannot have sympathy with. We would sympathise with other people who, in the process of because of your money laundering, had to face difficulties.

SK: You know, the script is so well-written by Arsh Bora, the writer, and Rishabh Seth, the director, that I was just smiling all through, so the comedy, drama and satire were well-blended, served to us on a plate. It's a fast-paced situational comedy, based on the chaos created in the situation. Our job was, thus, made easier. We just had to imbibe the script and live the characters.

What do you feel about the shift from home viewing to OTT? Has the shift given an impetus to stories based on real events?

AP: Exactly, opposite genre from

AP: Um, I believe we used to have stories from real events earlier, too. OTT has a wider audience and so, yes, people watch this stuff there.

SK: The thing is that the content on OTT platforms is at the tip of your fingers, you're empowered to pause/play.

AP: Yes, and there's more responsibility in OTT, to write better. Because in theatres, you'd buy a ticket, would be entitled to stay because you've paid so much for one film. Here, OTT is cheaper and you have the liberty to watch so much more content.

KD: And there is luxury of having this audience in OTT, but also there's the responsibility of entertaining them also. There are so many options and that puts pressure, of a good kind, on the stories you choose and tell.

SK: Which is why films and television will up their game because of healthy competition. Every genre has expanded, one of which is real-life based content. People are experimenting on this medium. (pauses and adds) Which is good!

What is one thing that this thing (portraying social reality) has taught you, Kevin?

KD: We should not hoard black money... (everyone breaks into laughter).

(He chuckles and continues) As actors? We learnt what limits people can go to, to save themselves, to get out of trouble when, clearly, they are in the wrong.

SK: I think, I learnt the importance of contacts, something that I don't have. Also, that there's always a way out, you know.

You recently worked in Sardar Udham Singh, and the genres are poles apart. How was the experience?

AP: Exactly, opposite genre from

Udham Singh which was a very serious film. *Cash* was fast-paced comedy that I fully enjoyed. To be open to other's ideas of funny, as an actor, there are four-five ways of approaching the same scene and being funny and the greed was that we wanted to shoot everything. So, a lot of sweat and tears.

I came out a different human being, I had fun, I worked with lovely people and got to make a fun film.

What was the most exciting part of the film, Smriti?

SK: It's my first film, man! (pumped up) I'm so excited.

I went for different paths in life — I was a science student and then some time later, an RJ before stumbling upon acting. I'm grateful to the director for having faith in me.

KD: It was real nice to have a good relationship with the writer and producer and the entire team. And felt youthful and fun to be a part of this story.

Choked is yet another film on demonetisation. How is it similar to or different from Cash, Kevin?

KD: Um, there's no similarity whatsoever except that the concept is demonetisation.

What is one thing that the audience should look out for?

AP: Have fun and enjoy the humour. It is a very tightly written screenplay, there's not a single dull moment, so, sit back and enjoy, fellas! The film doesn't preach, it's simple.

SK: Also, the topic is such, with very relatable main characters that it makes for a great family entertainer. There's something there for everyone!

KD: Basically, each and every character is written so well, you might have not seen these, and that will be the freshness of the film people will look forward to.



Living the avatar

Actor AVINASH WADHAWAN has changed his body language, attire and attitude to get into the skin of his character in *Aggar Tum Na Hote*. By TEAM VIVA

Zee TV recently launched a fresh Zromantic drama, *Aggar Tum Na Hote*, which showcases the extent to which a nurse goes to treat her patient. The story revolves around Niyati Mishra — a young, hard-working, and dedicated nurse and Abhimanyu Pandey who is a charming, rich young man dealing with mental instability. While the show has a unique storyline, it is Abhimanyu and Niyati's camaraderie that has become the talk of the town. While the leads Simaran Kaur and Himanshu Soni have made an impression on the audience, one such character who has mesmerised the audience with his impactful performance is Avinash Wadhawan. Wadhawan has been a part of Zee TV's *Piyaa Albela* before and now he is making a comeback on television after almost three years as Gajendra Pandey in the show.

Wadhawan plays the pivotal role of Abhimanyu's father, who is a very influential, rich, and suave power broker based in Uttar Pradesh. He is a very strong and authoritative man and there is no task that he cannot complete once he sets his mind to. He loves his family too much and would do anything to keep them together. His character has a dark side, but as his story unfolds, we get to know how he is so caring towards his family. His relationship with his son has a lot of friction but he has a heart of gold for the people in need. He has even

donned a new look to play this emotionally challenging role of Gajendra in debonair style, Wadhawan is very excited to show the different shades of his character with his impeccable acting skills and his new suave.

Talking about his role, Wadhawan says, "It feels great to be back on television after a forced sabbatical of around two and half years (laughs). Talking about coming back to television, I feel that the kind of public reach television has, no other medium offers that, be it cinema or OTT. When I was first narrated about my character, I was extremely excited after listening to the story as I was looking out for a good role and Gajendra's character is very complex and I've never played a role like this in all my earlier shows. The story is like an emotional rollercoaster and has some immersive drama that shows a strained but deeply bonded relationship between a father and his son."

He adds, "I'm enjoying enacting this role and I have even changed my body language, attire and attitude to get into the skin of my character. Personally, my nature is opposite to Gajendra's loud, ruthless, and show-off nature so it is a bit more challenging, and I couldn't relate to it. But I am trying my best to portray the role."

(To know more, stay tuned for *Aggar Tum Na Hote* every Monday to Friday at 10:30pm, on Zee TV.)

The poster boy of content cinema, Ayushmann Khurrana, is hugely keen to play India's golden boy at the Olympics, Neeraj Chopra, in case a biopic is made on him.

Khurrana, who is riding on tremendously positive reviews and word of mouth for his recent release *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* in which he is tackling the issue of inclusivity of the transgender community, says, "I'm constantly inspired by real people who do extraordinary things. Right now, I'm hugely inspired by Neeraj Chopra and what this youth icon has achieved on the world stage and made our nation incredibly proud."

Khurrana is keen to play Chopra in case he chooses to not play himself and act in his biopic. Khurrana adds, "The resolve and the nerves of steel that he showcased at the Olympics to a win gold for India needs to be saluted. I would love to play him in a biopic if it's

India's golden boy

Bollywood star AYUSHMANN KHURRANA would love to play NEERAJ CHOPRA if the latter chooses to not play himself in his biopic. By TEAM VIVA



'THE RESOLVE AND NERVES OF STEEL THAT HE SHOWCASED AT THE OLYMPICS TO WIN GOLD FOR INDIA NEEDS TO BE SALUTED. I WOULD LOVE TO PLAY HIM IN A BIOPIC MADE IN NEAR FUTURE'

made in the near future and if Neeraj chooses to not play himself on screen. Such achievements need to be celebrated and the life stories of such heroes need to be told to people across the country."

In his debut at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Chopra won the gold medal in javelin throw. As of 2021, he is one of only two Indians to have won an individual Olympic gold medal (the other being Abhinav Bindra), as well as the youngest-ever Indian Olympic gold medalist in an individual event and the only one to have won gold in his Olympic debut.

RULING OTT SPACE

TEAM VIVA picks brave, untold and clutter-breaking films that dominated 2021

Nothing about the entertainment industry was predictable or cliched in 2021 as filmmakers and storytellers moved beyond tired narratives to explore new milieus, themes and issues. Here are some of our favourites that ruled the OTT space this year:

200 HALLO HO

This Sarthak Dasgupta directorial and Yoodlee production bravely mainstreamed a story about caste-based atrocities, the denial of justice and the inevitable retribution that follows when hundreds of Dalit survivors strike a blow to avenge the systematic suppression of their pain and violation. Inspired by true events, this ZEE5 original slow burns to reach a moment of cathartic explosion when 200 women take law into their own hands to respond to centuries of erasure. Starring Amol



Palekar, Rinku Rajguru, Barun Sobti and others, the film equated Dalit identity with power and not just victimhood and reminded us why we must tell and hear more such stories.

JAI BHIM



This Jyothika and Suriya production will go down in history as one of the most important films about Dalit rights. The Tamil legal drama is directed by T J Gnanavel and stars Suriya and Lijomol Jose with K Manikandan, Rajisha Vijayan, Prakash Raj, Rao Ramesh and others. Like *200 Hallo Ho*, this film too is based on a true incident and recounts how in 1993, Justice K Chandru, fought relentlessly to get justice for Sengenni and Rajakannu. The lives of this tribal couple are forever changed when Rajakannu is first arrested

and then goes missing from police custody. What follows next is wrenching and eye-opening. *Jai Bhim* also became the first Indian film to top the IMDb ratings.

SHERNI

Sherni is yet another example of how director Amit V Masurkar is pushing the thematic limits of Hindi cinema. Produced by T-Series and Abundantia Entertainment, *Sherni* had a solid female lead in Vidya Balan who played an upright and conscientious Forest Service officer caught in the corruption and inertia of a cruel and incompetent system. Sharat Saxena, Vijay Raaz, Ila Arun, Brijendra Kala, Neeraj Kabi and Mukul Chaddha played supporting roles. The film highlight-



ed little known aspects of animal and human conflict and how habitat destruction is pushing wildlife on the margins of forests and into a spiral of extinction.

SHERSHAHH

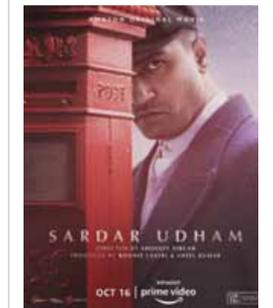


A war film without jingoism seems like an anomaly but this Dharma and Kaash Entertainment production pulled this off while paying a passionate tribute to Param Vir Chakra-awardee Captain Vikram Batra. Directed by Vishnuvardhan, the film showed us how an idealistic young man who loved life as much as his country, made the ultimate sacrifice during the Kargil war. It also celebrated his eternal love story with a girl who chose to celebrate his memories and his life even after losing him tragically. Sidharth

Malhotra as Vikram Batra played possibly the role of a lifetime while Kiara Advani played his girlfriend Dimple Cheema.

SARDAR UDHAM

Vicky Kaushal continues to stun with his ability to become every character he gets to play and *Sardar Udham* is no exception. This historical drama helmed by Shoojit Sircar, and produced by Rising Sun Films in collaboration with Kino Works, gives Kaushal another chance to display his depth and histrionic range as an actor as he plays the titular character of an iconic freedom fighter who assassinated Michael O'Dwyer in London to avenge the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The film is a far cry from hurried entertainers and takes viewers on an intense journey to meet the man who tried to right a historic wrong.



Young Sen, Srikanth assured of maiden medals

PTI ■ HUELVA (SPAIN)

In a historic first, India were assured of at least two medals in the men's singles competition of the ongoing BWF World Badminton Championships after the seasoned Kidambi Srikanth and young Lakshya Sen entered their maiden semifinals of the marquee event here on Friday.

However, it was disappointment for defending champion PV Sindhu, who lost to familiar foe Tai Tzu Ying in the women's singles quarterfinals.

India are assured of at least a silver as Srikanth and Sen will face each other in the first semifinal on Saturday.

It turned out to be a historic day for Indian badminton as first Srikanth, seeded 12th in the showpiece tournament, sent Mark Caljouw of the Netherlands packing with a 21-8 21-7 win in a match that lasted just 26 minutes.

And then the unseeded Sen fought his heart out to get the better of China's Jun Peng Zhao 21-15 15-21 22-20 in an enthralling three-



game encounter lasting one hour and seven minutes.

The two will join the legendary Prakash Padukone (bronze in 1983)

and B Sai Praneeth (bronze in 2019) as the Indian medal winners at the showpiece.

Sindhu, who lost her quarterfi-

nal match against Tai Tzu, has won five medals in the showpiece while Saina Nehwal has two medals to her name.

The women's doubles pair of Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa had also won a bronze in 2011.

The world number 14 Srikanth was ahead 11-5 at the first game's change of ends and from 14-8, he took seven straight points to pocket it in a jiffy.

The second game was no different as Srikanth completely outplayed his opponent. From 4-3, it was Srikanth all the way as he zoomed to another seven straight points. From 17-7, Srikanth pocketed another four points on the trot to win the match.

In the women's singles, Sindhu suffered a straight-game defeat to world number one Tai Tzu of Chinese Taipei to bow out of the championships.

The top-seeded Tai Tzu beat Sindhu 21-17 21-13 in an energy-sapping match that lasted 42 minutes.

Sindhu found it difficult to match Tai Tzu's speed, court coverage and drop shots as has been the case many times earlier though the Indian produced some fine cross-court smashes.

Sindhu, who also stumbled to many unforced errors during the match, was always playing a catch-up game. She managed to do that in the second game at one stage but lost steam later on.

The win extended the head-to-head record between the two top players to 15-5 in favour of the Chinese Taipei player.

The world number seven and double Olympic-medallist Sindhu had also lost to Tai Tzu in the Tokyo Games semifinals earlier this year.

Tai Tzu, on the other hand, avenged her defeat to Sindhu in the 2019 World Championships at the same stage.

The two players -- friends off the court -- were tied 2-2 early on but Tai Tzu shifted gears quickly to take a lead of 11-6 at the change of ends in the first game.

Sindhu made a recovery to narrow down the gap to 16-18 and then 17-19 with some fine cross-court smashes. But the Indian could not maintain the tempo till the end as she hit wide twice to lose the first game in 17 minutes.

The second game was more

closely fought, but again Tai Tzu led 11-8 at the change of ends after Sindhu made an error in judgment.

But two brilliant smashes for which Tai Tzu had no answer saw the gap narrowing to just one point at 10-11.

Tai Tzu took the next point but Sindhu produced another cross-court smash to make it 11-12. The Chinese Taipei player then sent the shuttle wide for Sindhu to level the scores at 12-12.

The nimble-footed Tai Tzu took the next three points but then hit on the nets. An unsuccessful line call challenge saw Sindhu trail 13-16.

The Indian hit on to the net next and could not reach to a drop shot from her great rival to trail by five points at 13-18.

Sindhu continued her unforced errors as she hit wide and then missed Tai Tzu's smash to lose the match.

In HS Prannoy, another Indian is still in the reckoning for a place in the men's singles semifinals as he will take on Kean Yew Loh of Singapore later in the day.

England limps to 17-2 after Australia declares at 473-9

AP ■ ADELAIDE

Marnus Labuschagne became the first player to hit three centuries in day-night test matches while captain Steve Smith missed out on a ton as Australia strangled England with a powerful total of 473-9 declared in the second Ashes test on Friday.

Labuschagne made 103 and Smith scored 93 before Australia's tailenders knocked off some quick runs against England's worn-out bowlers and Australia declared after tea.

England limped to 17-2 in 8.4 overs -- still trailing by 456 runs -- before a massive flash of lightning took the players off the field and brought an early closure to the second day's play.

Michael Nesser got a wicket off his second ball in test cricket when he had Haseeb Hameed (6) caught at mid-on after Mitchell Starc had Rory Burns (4) caught in the slips off a delivery which went across

the left-hander and took the shoulder of the bat.

Starc (39 not out) and Nesar (35) had earlier shared a rapid half century stand for the eighth wicket after England seemed to have contained the damage and had Australia on 390-7 at tea.

Jhye Richardson lofted Chris Woakes (1-103) for a big six off his second ball over midwicket before Smith declared when Richardson was caught behind off Woakes.

Ben Stokes, who dropped a hard catch of Starc off his own bowling, finished with 3-113 but Australia removed both England openers cheaply before play was called off early.

Smith and Alex Carey (51) combined in a 91-run sixth wicket stand before Anderson removed both batsmen in successive overs just before tea. Smith shuffled back across the line and was adjudged lbw and Carey chipped an easy catch in the covers.

Earlier, England took three wickets



during an even first session after Australia resumed on 221-2.

In a dramatic 40 minutes to start the day, Labuschagne, resuming on 95, edged Jimmy Anderson to third man for four to record the sixth century of his career and

first in the Ashes.

Moments later he was caught behind off Ollie Robinson, retreating all the way to the boundary rope before replays showed it had been a no-ball.

Labuschagne eventually fell in the

400th minute of his innings, lbw after trying to leave a ball in Robinson's next over that came back at him.

Of the 3,068 players in test cricket's 144-year history, only Don Bradman, George Headley, Herbert Sutcliffe and Mike Hussey have reached 2,000 runs faster than Labuschagne's total in 34 innings.

Bradman achieved his 2,000 runs in 22 innings, Jamaican Headley in 32 and England's Sutcliffe and Australia's Hussey in 33.

Labuschagne has now scored centuries in three consecutive day-night tests at the Adelaide Oval, averaging almost 100 and with just one score below 40.

Australia's humungous first innings total could prove significant in the outcome of the game. All eight teams which have posted 300 or more batting first in day-night tests have gone on to win. And the eight teams to pull up short of that mark have all lost.



Rohit Sharma, Jadeja begin rehab at NCA

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India white-ball captain Rohit Sharma and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja have started their rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy here after being ruled out of the upcoming Test series in South Africa due to injuries.

The two senior players were seen at the NCA with India U-19 captain Yash Dhull in his social media posts. The U-19 team is currently camping at the NCA ahead of the Asia Cup beginning in the UAE from December 23.

Rohit, who was named ODI captain last week replacing Virat Kohli, was to travel to South Africa as vice-captain of the Test team for the series starting on December 26 but a hamstring injury during training ruled him out.

His expected recovery time is between three to four weeks.

India 'A' captain Priyank Panchal was named in place of Rohit in the Test squad, which reached South Africa on Thursday for the series.

The senior opener, who took charge as T20I captain against New Zealand last month, is expected to be available to lead the team for the ODI leg of the South Africa tour, which is to take place in January.

Jadeja has been ruled out of the South Africa tour due to a knee injury which he sustained during the home New Zealand Test series last month.

He may take a longer time to recover from his injury.

Andy Flower appointed head coach of IPL's Lucknow franchise

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former Zimbabwe captain Andy Flower was on Friday appointed as the head coach of the yet-to-be-named Lucknow franchise, which will make its debut in the 2022 Indian Premier League.

Flower was working with Punjab Kings as assistant coach for the past two seasons.

KL Rahul, who was Punjab's skipper for the last two seasons, is also expected to move to the Sanjiv

Goenka-owned franchise.

"I am incredibly excited to be joining the new Lucknow franchise and I am very grateful for the opportunity. Since my very first tour to India in 1993, I have always loved touring, playing and coaching in India," said Flower in a statement.

"The passion for cricket in India is unrivalled and it is a real privilege to lead an IPL franchise and I am looking forward to working closely with Dr Goenka and the Lucknow team.

"I will relish the challenge to build something meaningful and successful with the Lucknow franchise, I am looking forward to meeting the management and staff when I visit Uttar Pradesh in the new year."

Goenka added: "As a player and a Coach Andy has left an indelible mark in the history of cricket. We respect his professionalism and hope he will work with our vision and add value to our team."

The Zimbabwean great, who coached England to the T20 World Cup title in 2010 and also the number one spot in Test rankings, is at the helm of Punjab Kings owned franchise in the Caribbean Premier League -- Saint Lucia Kings.

India lose 0-1 to B'desh in SAFF U-19 Women's Championship

PTI ■ DHAKA

India lost by a solitary goal to hosts Bangladesh for their first defeat in the SAFF U19 Women's Championship here on Friday.

India had earlier registered comfortable victories over Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

Shamsunnahar's seventh minute strike from the penalty spot made the difference between the two sides.

The match began with both teams going hard from the first whistle as Bangladesh looked to make the most of their physical prowess and pressed the Indian defenders high up the pitch.

The first opportunity of the game went to Bangladesh, who were awarded a penalty in the seventh minute which was converted by Shamsunnahar.

Although, Bangladesh went on an attacking mode and dominated possession after the goal, India got an excellent opportunity to restore parity in the 40th minute when Sumati Kumari passed a ball to Mariyammal whose left-footer went straight into the hands of Bangladesh goalie Rupna.

Pakistan sweeps virus-hit West Indies in Twenty20 series



AP ■ KARACHI

Pakistan completed a clean sweep in the three-match Twenty20 series against a virus-hit West Indies with a resounding seven-wicket win on Thursday.

Run-machine Mohammad Rizwan rounded off the year with his 12th half century in Twenty20

internationals by scoring 87 while captain Babar Azam made 79 in Pakistan's blistering run-chase of 208-3 in 18.5 overs.

The West Indies squad was further depleted on the morning of the match when three more players tested positive for the coronavirus, increasing the number of cases to nine -- six players and three support personnel -- in the tourists' camp.

The West Indies' top-order batters, led by captain Nicholas Poonran's blazing 64 off 37 balls, still did well to post 207-3 after the tourists had won the toss and elected to bat.

"Rizwan and I thought of going till the end and keep managing the run rate," Babar said. "Our bench strength got a good workout too and it's a great sign for me as a captain."

Verstappen celebrates F1 title at FIA Awards as Hamilton snubs ceremony

AP ■ PARIS

Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff were the two most remarkable absentees at the season-ending FIA Awards gala that was held in Paris.

Wolff had confirmed earlier that neither he nor Hamilton would attend the ceremony, despite the top three drivers in the World Championship standings effectively being required to be present and

despite Hamilton being the FIA Personality of the Year.

Max Verstappen, who won the F1 title in the last lap of the last race of the season in Abu Dhabi last Sunday, was officially presented with the championship trophy.

It was also the last gala attended by an emotional Jean Todt as FIA President after 12 years at the helm of the motor sport's world governing body.

Anti-doping bill, which empowers NADA, introduced in Lok Sabha

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A bill which seeks to provide statutory framework for the functioning of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), empowering it to conduct raids besides strengthening measures to tackle drug abuse in Indian sports was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

It was introduced by Sports Minister Anurag Thakur amid protests by the opposition over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

It is intended to provide a "statutory framework for the operation of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) and other dope testing laboratories and for creation of a National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports to strengthen anti-doping activities in

sport."

The bill seeks to give NADA powers of "investigation, levying sanctions for Anti-Doping Rule Violations, the disciplinary procedures to be adopted and the powers of inspection, sample collection and sharing and free flow of information." The clause 19 of the bill provides NADA the power of "entry, search and seizure by any person authorised by the agency for the purpose of determining if any anti-doping rule violation has been committed."

"The procedure to be adopted shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973."

Earlier, NADA had no authority to conduct raids and its anti-doping appeal panel has held the same. Many former sportspersons, head of National Sports Federations and experts have been call-



ing for an anti-doping legislation to give more teeth to the existing rules made under the WADA Anti-Doping Code.

It also provides for the establishment of the NDTL and other dope testing laboratories.

The NDTL is currently suspended by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) for failing to meet technical requirements.

If passed by the Parliament, it will give legislative backing to anti-doping norms in the country.

It will also give effect to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation International Convention against Doping in Sport. India signed the convention in 2005 and ratified it in November 2007.

After this, the government established the NDTL in 2008 and the NADA in 2009 to fulfil the country's commitments.

The NADA and NDTL, established as societies under Societies Registration Act, will be dissolved and reconstituted.

Under clause 34, "all the rights and liabilities of the Society shall be transferred to, and be the rights and liabilities of, the National Anti-Doping Agency or the National Dope Testing Laboratory, as the case may be, established under this Act."

The NADA will be constituted as a body corporate by the same name and will continue to have its head office in New Delhi.

The agency shall be headed by a Director General to be appointed by the central government.

This Board will constitute a National Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel and Anti-Doping Appeal Panel for the purpose of determining the consequences of anti-doping rule violations. The bill lays down the circumstances, acts or conduct which will constitute an anti-doping violation, including possession, presence, use or attempted use, trafficking or attempted trafficking, administration of any prohibited substance or prohibited methods, refusing or failing to submit sample, whereabouts failure.

Harmanpreet's double strike hands India 3-1 win over Pakistan

PTI ■ DHAKA

Vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh scored a brace as Olympic bronze-medallists India defeated arch-rivals Pakistan 3-1 to register their second consecutive win and virtually qualify for the semifinals of the Asian Champions Trophy men's hockey tournament here on Friday.

Harmanpreet (8th, 53rd minutes) converted two penalty corners, while comebackman Akashdeep Singh, who couldn't make the Tokyo

Olympics squad, found the net from a field effort in the 42nd minute for his second goal of the tournament.

Pakistan's lone goal was scored by Junaid Manzoor in the 45th minute.

It was India's second win in the tournament after their 9-0 drubbing of hosts Bangladesh, while Pakistan are still winless, having drawn goal-less against Japan in their opening match.

India had earlier drawn 2-2 against Korea in their tournament opener.

India are currently leading

the points table with seven points from three games and will take on Japan in their last round-robin match of the five-team tournament on Sunday.

Pakistan, meanwhile, have just one point from two games.

India and Pakistan were the joint winners in the last edition of the tournament in Muscat after the final was washed out.

The Indians completely dominated possession in the first two quarters while Pakistan preferred to sit back. But they defended admirably



save for Harmanpreet's lone strike.

The play was mostly on the Pakistan half in the first two quarters as Indians pressed hard from the onset and created a couple of chances but credit must go to goalkeeper Mazar Abbas who was brilliant overall. But expectedly, it was India who took the lead in the eighth minute when Harmanpreet converted the team's first penalty corner with a powerful low flick to the left of the Pakistan goalie. Four minutes later, skipper Manpreet Singh's deflection

from outside the circle was saved by an alert Abbas.

The second quarter continued in the same manner as India made numerous inroads but the Pakistan defence was upto the task.

While Pakistan defence stood out, the team's forward line looked unimpressive as it failed to register a single shot on the goal or secure a penalty corner.

Leading 1-0 at half time, the Indians kept up the pressure on the Pakistan goal and increased their lead in the

42nd minute when Akashdeep slapped in Sumit's drive from the left flank with a reverse hit.

But the fighting Pakistanis didn't give up hope and upped their game from here on, reducing the margin 27 seconds from the end of the third quarter through Manzoor's diving deflection from Abdul Rana's pass. If the first three quarters belonged to India, Pakistan gave Manpreet and his men a run for their money in the final quarter, which produced end-to-end enthralling hockey.